"LIGHT IN A HIDDEN WAY"

A Brilliant Sunday Sermon By Rev. Robert Collyer.

Every Life Should Be An Open Self-Contained Providence—Lose Not Heart and Soul.

BROOKLYN, N. Y.—Dr. Robert Collyer, who recently passed his eightieth birthday, preached Sunday morning in the Second Unitarian Church. The audience filled the church and listened with great attention to the eloquent words of the famous preacher. Dr. Collyer took for his subject "Light on a Hidden Way." His text was Job iii:23: "Why is light given to a man whose way is hid?" He said:

"The Book of Job," says Thomas Carlyle, "is one of the grandest things ever written with a pen; our first statement, in books, of the problem of the destiny of man and the way God takes with him on this earth; grand in its simplicity and epic melody, sublime in its sorrow and reconciliation; a choral melody, old as the heart of man, soft as the summer midnight, wonderful as the world with its seas and stars; and there is no other thing in the Bible, or out of it, of equal merit." I suppose it is not possible now to tell whether the book is a true story or a sort of Oriental drama. The question is one that will always keep the critics at work as long as there are rational and what ought, in all fairness, to be called not rational schools in theology. My own idea is that the rude outline of the story was floating about the desert, as the story of Lear or Macbeth floated about in later times among our own fore-elders, and that, like those great dramas, it was taken into the heart of some man now forgotten and came out again endowed with this wondrous quality of inspiration and life, that will bear it onward through all time. But whatever the truth may be in this direction this is clear, that when Job put the question I have taken for a text he was as far down in the world as a man can be who is not abased by sin.

Job had been the richest man in the countryside, honored by all who knew him for his wisdom, his goodness or his money. He was now so poor that, he says, men derided him whose fathers he would not have set with the dogs of his flock. He had been a sound, healthy man, full of human impulses and activities; he had been sight to the blind, feet to the lame, a father to the poor and a defender of the oppressed. He was now a diseased and broken man, sitting in the ashes of a ruined home; his fires all gone out, his household goods all shattered, his children all dead, and his wife, the mother of his ten children, lost to the mighty love which will take ever so delicate and true-hearted a woman at such a time and make her a tower of strength to the man. His wife, who should have stood, as the angels stand, at once by his side and above him, turned on him in his uttermost sorrow, and said, "Curse God, and die."

Two things, in this sad time, seem to have smitten Job with unconquerable pain. First, he could not make his condition chord with his conviction of what ought to have happened. He had been trained to believe in the axiom we put up in our Sunday-schools, that to be good is to be happy. Now he had been good and yet here he was, as miserable as it was possible for a man to be. And the worst of all was, he could not deaden down to the level of his misery. The light given him on the divine justice would not let him rest. His subtle spirit, pierced, restless, dissatisfied, tried him every moment. Questions like these came up in his mind: "Why have I lost my money? I made it honestly, and made good use of it. Why is my home ruined? I never brought upon it one shadow of disgrace. Why am I bereaven of my children, and worse than bereaven of my wife? If this is the result of goodness, where is cause and effect? What is there to hold on by, if all this misery and mildew can come of upright, downright truth and purity?"

Questions like these forced themselves upon him and would not be silenced. If these spirits that troubled him could have whispered, "Now, Job, what is the use of your whining? You know that you have got just what you deserve; that you are a poor, old pewter Peckniff, with not one grain of real silver about you. Your whole life has been a sham."

The second element in Job's misery seems to lie in the fact that there appeared to be light everywhere except on his own life. If life would only strike a fair average; if other good men had suffered, too, or even bad men—then he could bear it better. But the world went on just the same. The sun shone with as much splendor as on his wedding day. The moon poured out her tides of moulton gold, night fretted the blue vault with fires, trees blossomed, birds sang, and young men and maidens danced under the palms. Other homes were full of gladness. This man had sold his clip for a great price; the lightning had slain Job's sheep. That man had done well in dates; the tornado had twisted Job's trees down. Nay, worst of all, here were wicked men, mighty in wealth; their houses in peace, without fear; their children established in their sight, sending forth little ones like a flock, spending their days in prosperity and yet saying, "Who is the Almighty that we should fear Him?" While here he was, a poor wreck, stranded on a desolate shore; a broken man, crying, "Oh, that it were with me as in days gone by, when the candle of the Lord shone round about me; when I took my seat in the market place, and justice was my robe and diadem! When I think of it, I am confounded. One dieth in the fullness of his prosperity, wholly at ease and quiet; another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, not having tasted pleasure. How is it? What does it mean? Why is light given to a man whose way is hid?"

Now, I suppose that not many men ever fall into such supreme desolation as this, that is made to centre in the life of this most sorrowful man. "It is the possible of that which is in itself positive." But then, it is true that we may reach out in all directions and find men and women who are conscious of the light shining, but who cannot find the way; whose condition will not chord with their conception of life, and who, in a certain sense, would be better if they were not so good. The very perfection of their nature is the way by which they are most easily bruised. Keen, earnest, onward, not satisfied to be below their own ideal, they are yet turned so woefully this way and that by adverse circumstances that, at the last, they come to accept their life as a doom, and bear it in grim silence, or they cut the masts when the storm comes and drift, a helpless hull, broadside to the breakers, to go down finally like a stone.

A young man comes to town from the country full of purpose and hope. He finds difficulties confront him; he strives, but remains poor. At last, when hungry and faint and alone, the devil comes—a nice person, probably, but still a devil—and tempts him. The young man yields. Or, he succeeds, and then slides into the belief that there is a Providence that will keep him prosperous because he is a good man. Disaster comes, and he loses his all, including his belief in God. Or, a maiden leaves her home full of trust and love. Under adverse conditions she loses hope, and asks: "Why is life given when the way is hid?"

Or, here, in the larger life, is a prince and leader of men. The roots of his power begin to ramify through all the land. He seems to be the one indispensable man of the time. In the sorest need of all, he is smitten down and dies. Or here is a great cause, reaching back into a great principle. The light of the divine justice shines on the principle and so wins men to it that they cannot rest. Year after year they will stand, suffering, toiling, dying for their cause; but the way does not open. Yet they cannot choose but follow the light. If the light had not shone so in our own land we might have ground along in some sort of affinity to slavery. It was light poured on the conscience of the nation that brought on the war; it was light shining through the darkness that kept the nation steady. Had no such light shone, we should have constructed a new Union with the shackles of the slave for a wedding ring. But the light stood like a wall of fire; yet how long it was only a light shining on a hidden way! Our homes, black with desolation; fathers, mothers, wives, only putting on a cheerful look, because they would not, by their sadness, dishearten the great heart of the nation.

And so, I say, in men and nations you will find everywhere this discord between the longing that is in the soul, and what the man can do. Our life, as some one said of the Cathedral of Cologne, seems to be a broken promise made to God.

Now, in trying to find some solution of this question, I want to say frankly that I cannot pretend to make the mystery all clear, so that it will give you no more trouble; because I cannot put a girdle around the world in forty minutes, and also because a full solution must depend greatly on our own dissolution. I believe, also, that the man who thinks he has left nothing unexplained, in the mystery of providence and life, has rather explained nothing. I listen to him, if I am in trouble, and then go home and break my heart all the same, because I see that he has not only not cleared up the mystery, but that he does not know enough about it to trouble him. The "Principia" and the Single Rule of Three are alike simple and easy to him because he does not know the Rule of Three. And so I cannot be satisfied with the last words which some later hand has added to the book that holds this sad history. They tell us how Job has all his property doubled, to the last ass and camel—has seven sons again and three daughters, has entire satisfaction of all his accusers, lives a hundred and forty years, sees four generations of his line and then dies—satisfied.

Need I say that this solution will not stand the test of life, and that if life, on the average, came out so from its most trying ordeal, there would be little need for our sermons. For then, every life would be an open, self-contained providence and the last page in time would vindicate the first. Men do not so live and die; and such cannot have been the primitive conclusion of the history. It has deeper meaning and a sublimer justification, or it had never been inspired by the Holy Ghost.

And this issure to suggest itself to you as you read the story, that Job, in his trouble, would have lost nothing and gained very much if he had not been so impatient in coming to the conclusion that God had left him, that life was a mere apple of Sodom, that he had backed up to great walls of fate and he had not a friend left on the earth. His soul, looking through her darkened windows, concluded the heavens were dark. The nerve, quivering at the gentlest touch, mistook the ministration of mercy for a blow. He might have found some cool shelter for his agony; he preferred to sit on the ashes in the burning sun. He knew not where the next robe was to come from; this did not deter him from tearing to shreds the robe that was to shelter him from the keen winds. It was a dreadful trial at the best; it was worse for his way of meeting it; and, when he was at once in the worst health and temper possible, he said: "Why is light given to a man whose way is hid?" Is not this now, as it was then, one of the most serious mistakes that can be made? I try to solve great problems of providence, perhaps, when I am so unstrung as to be entirely unfitted to touch their more subtle, delicate and far reaching harmonies. As well might you decide on some exquisite anthem when your organ is broken, and conclude there is no music in it because you can make no music of it, as, in such a condition of life and such a temper of the spirit, try to find these great harmonies of God. When I am in trouble, then, and darkness comes down on me like a pall, the first question ought to be, "How much of this unbelief about providence and life, like Cowper's sense of the unpardonable sin, comes from the most material disorganization? Is the darkness I feel in the soul, or is it on the windows through which the soul must see?" Then, clear on this matter, the man tried so will endeavor to stand at the first, where this sad hearted man stood at the last, in the shadow of the Almighty, if he must stand in a shadow, and hold on to the confidence that somewhere within all this trial is the eternal, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Friends speculate all about the mystery, and their conclusions from their premises are entirely correct; but they have forgetten to take in the separate sovereign will of God, as working out a great purpose in the man's life, by which he is to be lifted into a grander reach of insight and experience than ever he had before. Job said: "I suffer, I am in darkness and disappointment and pain, because it is fate." Job's friends said: "No, you suffer because you have sinned. Rushes never grow without mire." They were both wrong, and all wrong. He suffered because that was the divine way of bringing him out of his sleek, well satisfied content; and when through suffering this was done he said: "I have heard of Thee with mine ears, but now mine eye seeth Thee."

If I had never gone into darkened rooms, where the soul stands at the parting of the worlds; or sat down beside widows and little children, when the desire of their eyes was taken away with a stroke, or grasped the hands of strong men, when all they had toiled for was gone, nothing left but honor; or ministered to men mangled on the battlefield beyond all telling; and heard in all these places where darkness was on the way, melodies, melodies that I never heard among the commonplaces of prosperity, I could not be so sure as I am that God often darkens the way so that the melody may grow clear and entire in the soul.

There is a story in the annals of science touching this principle, that we cannot struggle faithfully with these things and leave them as we found them. Plato, piercing here and there with his wonderful Greek eyes:

"Searching through all, he felt and saw
The springs of life, the depths of awe,
To reach the law within the law,"

was impressed by the suggestive beauty of the elliptic figure. He tried to search out its full meaning, but died without the sight. A century and a half after Plato, Appolonius came, was arrested in the same way, took up the question where Plato left it, tried to find out its full meanings, and died without the sight. And so, says a fine writer, for eighteen centuries some of the best minds were fascinated by this problem, drew from it strength and discipline; and yet, in all this time, the problem was an abstract form, a beautiful or painful speculation. It did not open out into any harmonious principle. There was light on the thing, but no light on the way. In the full time, Kepler came; sat down to the study; and by what we call the suggestion of genius, but ought to call the inspiration of the Almighty, found that the orbits of the planets were elliptical, and he died. Then Newton was born, took up the problem where Kepler had laid it down, made all the established facts the base of his mightier labors; and, when he had done, he had shown that this figure, this problem, which had held men spellbound through the ages, is a prime element in the law of universal gravitation—at once the most beautiful theory and the most absolute conclusion of science. Then men could see how it was, because God had made the light shine on the thing, that the way was found. From Newton back to Plato, in true apostolic order, every man, bending over this mystery of a light where there was no way, and wrestling faithfully with it, had not only grown more noble in his own soul in the struggle, but had done his share toward the solution found by this greatest and last, who was also "born under the law that they might receive the adoption of sons."

So, I tell you, is this restless search for a condition that shall answer to our conception; this fascination, which compels us to search out the elliptic of providence, the geometric certainty underlying the apparent eccentricity. And every struggle to find this certainty; every endeavor to plumb the deepest causes of the discord between what the nature bears and what the soul believes; every striving to find the God of our loftiest faith in our darkest day, will, in some way, aid the demonstration, until, in the full time, some Newton of the soul will come and, gathering the result of all these struggles between our conception of life and our condition in life, will make it the base of some vast generalization, that will bring the ripest conclusions of the science of providence into perfect accord with the grand apostolic revelation. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God."

We wrong the deepest revelations of life when we are not content to let this one little segment in the arc of our existence stand in its own simple, separate intention, whether it be gladness or gloom; and trust surely, if we are faithful, the full and perfect intention must come out in the full range of our being. God seldom perhaps never, works out His visible purpose in one life, how, then, shall He in one life work out His perfect will? The dumb poetry in William Burns, the father, had to wait for Robert Burns, the son; Bernardo waited to be perfected in his son, Torquato Tasso; William Herschel left many a problem in the heavens for John Herschel to make clear; Leopold Mozart wrestled with melodies that Chrysostom Mozart found afterward of themselves in every chamber of his brain, and Raymond Bonheur needed his daughter Rosa to come and paint out his pictures for him. Dr. Reid has said, that when the bee makes its cell so geometrically, the geometry is not in the bee, but in the geometrician that made the bee. Alas, if in the Maker there is no such order for us as there is for the bee! If God so instruct the bee; if God so feed the bird; if even the lions, roaring after their prey, seek their meat from God; if He not only holds the linnet on the spray, but the lion on the spring, how shall we dare lose heart and hope?

So, then, while we may not know what trials wait on any of us, we can believe that as the days in which this man wrestled with his dark maladies are the only days that make him worth remembrance, and but for which his name had never been written in the book of life; so the days through which we struggle, finding no way, but never losing the light, will be the most significant we are called to live. Indeed, men of all ages have wrestled with this problem of the difference between the conception and the condition. Life is full of these appeals, from the doom that is on us to the love that is over us—from the God we fear to the God we worship. The very Christ cries once: "My God! Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Yet never did our noblest and best, our apostles, martyrs and confessors, flinch finally from their trust, that God is light; that life is divine; that there is a way, though we may not see it; and have gone singing of their deep confidence, by fire and cross into the shadow of death. It is true, nay, it is truest of all, that "men who suffered countless ills, in battles for the true and just," have had the strongest conviction, like old Latimer, that a way would open in those moments when it seemed most impossible. Their light on the thing brought a commanding assurance that there must somewhere, sometime, be light on the way.

Aim High.

If one seems to promote his own personal welfare, it is at the best a low aim, unworthy of a true man. Selfishness, or selfness, even of the highest sort, is ever below what is superior to a man and any man and every man should always be aspiring and striving toward that which is superior to himself.

There are two vital difficulties in the way of a selfish man's strivings for his own personal good, even the highest. In the first place, it is a man's duty to seek what is more important than his own personal good; and in the second place, the man who strives to secure his own highest personal good is pretty sure to fail in his pursuit. Any man who does his duty and fills his place has some object of pursuit which he deems more important than himself; and, on the other hand, only the man who lives for something outside of himself is successful in his striving. It is a mistake and a folly to strive in an effort where, at the best, he will hopelessly fail. In every sphere of life the highest interest of self comes as an incidental consequence of living for something which one deems superior to self. Self is at the best unworthy of our life and endeavors.

A citizen who lives for himself, for his own welfare and happiness, is not likely to have happiness, or to find true enjoyment, or to secure the highest personal welfare. His fellow-citizens are pretty sure to be giving their thoughts and best regard to those who show themselves worthy of their devotion and honor.

Striving to gain in one's own way one's personal good is, at the best, a low aim. A better way is living for others, denying self for the good of others, or in obedience to God, and to honor Him. Those who live for self dishonor God and lose their best selves. Those who live for God, or for those to whom they are sent or set in the providence of God, honor God, and incidentally have honor secured to themselves.—Sunday School Times.

"Pray Through."

An interesting incident of how far-reaching is the influence of two words, occurred recently at Liverpool, England, during the Torrey-Alexander meeting. Mr. Alexander had occasion to go with a friend to one of the leading banks in the city, in order to exchange some American coinage for British currency. While he was waiting at the counter he traced on the blotting paper in front of him the words "Pray through," which he had been using in the course of an address. These words formed the motto of the convention at the Moody Bible Institute at Chicago. Almost unconsciously Mr. Alexander wrote the two words several times on the blotting paper; then, having finished his business in the bank, he and his friend left. Shortly afterwards a customer of the bank came in. He had been passing through a time of great anxiety, and while he was waiting at the counter his eye fell on the words, "Pray through." It interested him, and he asked the clerk who had written them. The clerk was not able to tell him, but the gentleman felt it was a direct message to himself to cease his anxiety and to con- His crown; be sure that unless you follow tinue in prayer until the cause of it was removed, or he was given strength to understand the Divine plan.

Helping the Poor.

The great need of the world to-day is not some one to bear its burden for it, but some one who will teach it how to bear its own burden. There is much done for the poor and afflicted in the name of charity that falls far short of the highest helpfulness. On every hand organizations are springing up to provide food for the hungry and clothing for the naked, and some Christians are foolish enough to say that they are of more value to the community than the church. To improve a man's circumstances without improving the man is to do him more of evil than of good. It is better to open the eyes of the blind and thus enable him to provide for himself than to give him alms. The cure of pauperism will not be found in the generosity of the rich, but in the regeneration of the poor.—W. W. Weeks, D. D.

Marvels of Memory.

The newspapers are telling of the remarkable feat of a postal clerk who in a civil service examination did not make a single error in properly sorting 42,000 test postal cards, each representing a postoffice in a certain territory assigned. This was done at the rate of thirty-three and one-half cards a minute. Far more noteworthy is the memory of an expert piano player, who will play an entire season's concerts without a note of printed music before him. His memory is so perfect that hundreds of thousands of notes must be at the orderly and instant disposal of the will. And this is combined with a multiplicity of synchronous recollections of timbre, tempo, expression, etc. The mystery is at present past the hinting of any explanation, and this fact is as beautiful as it is appalling. It shows us how far we are from any real science of psychology.—American Medicine.

Prophecy by a Babe.

An extraordinary story comes from Penryhn in Wales. The wife of a quarryman was bathing her 3-months-old babe when she was thunderstruck to hear the child say plainly in Welsh, "Next year will be a terrible year, mother."

The mother rushed in terror to the next door and told what she had heard to a neighbor, who ran immediately back, picked up the infant as she soothed and caressed it coaxingly asked if it had told its mother that next year would be a terrible year.

To her astonishment the child looked at her and said: "Yes," and fell back dead. The story has been discussed far and near and the two women have been cross-questioned without shaking their story.

At Penryhn, where the people are rather primitive and religious, there is much foreboding.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL

International Lesson Comments For February 14.

Subject: Jesus Forgives Sins, Mark ii., 1. 12—Golden Text, Mark ii., 10—Memory Verses, 3-5—Commentary on the Day's Lesson.

1. A palsied sinner brought to Christ (vs. 1-4). 1. "And again." At the close of the missionary tour in Galilee. "Capernaum." Which was his home or headquarters. "It was noised." The news spread very rapidly. "In the house." Either the house which He occupied with His mother and His brethren (Matt. 4: 13), or possibly that of St. Peter.

2. "Many were gathered." The audience included Pharisees and doctors of the law who had come from the towns of Galilee, Judea and Jerusalem (Luke 5: 17). They had come to inspect and criticise this new Teacher. "About the door." There was a great concourse of people so that the house and court were both filled. "Preached the word." The doctrine of the Son of God. They had come partly to criticise and partly out of curiosity, and now Jesus seizes the opportunity to preach the gospel. We should be instant in season and out of season to point others to Jesus. Preaching and healing went together and made a powerful impression.

3. "Come unto Him." Access to Jesus seemed impossible. There were many obstacles in the way. Should they have waited for a convenient season? No. They must force their way to Christ. "Bringing one." He was young, for Jesus calls him son, but he was full grown, for it required four to carry him. There are many so weak and discouraged that they cannot go to Jesus without assistance; we should always be ready to help such. "Sick of the palsy." Palsy, a contraction of the word paralysis, is a disease that deprives the part affected of sensation, or the power of motion, or both. This patient is utterly helpless. The disease is considered incurable. "Borne of four." Each one holding a corner of the "pallet," or bed, which was merely a thickly badded quilt or mat. There was co-operation in this work. One could not have done it; it needed four. In the union of hearts and hands there is strength. United they had no difficulty.

4. "The press." It seemed quite impossible for the crowd to make an opening sufficiently large for them to pass through. "Uncovered the roof." Luke says, "through the tiling." In the Eastern countries the houses were flat-roofed and joined together, so one could walk upon them from one end of the city to the other. These housetops were places of prayer and meditation, and from the housetops criers proclaimed the times of public worship. Outside stairs always led to the roof. "Broken it up." They took up the tiling. They determined that nothing should stand in their way. "Let down." Imagine the surprise of the crowd as this opening through the tiles appeared, and a pallet was let down before them.

II. Christ forgives sins (vs. 5-7). 5. "Saw their faith." Many of the gifts of healing and restoration were obtained through the faith and prayers of the friends of the sufferers. See Matt. 8: 13; Mark 5: 36; John 4: 50. Jesus "saw" their faith. Real faith acts. Their holy boldness pleased Him. "Thy sins are forgiven" (R. V.) Our first great need is the forgiveness of sins. Jesus rightly puts this ahead of the healing of the body. We cannot doubt that this paralytic was a conscience-stricken young man. The conditions necessary to forgiveness are repentance, confession, forsaking sin and faith.

6. "Certain of the scribes." The scribes were the leaders of the nation, the theologians, legislators, politicians. They had come up from Jerusalem and other places for the purpose of opposing him. "In their hearts." They had not spoken openly. 7. "Blasphemies." To blaspheme is to slander God or speak impiously against God. In this case they supposed that Christ was taking to Himself what belongs to God only. He is intruding on the divine rights. The blasphemer was to be put to death by stoning. "But God only." They rightly understood that all sins are sins against God, and therefore only God could forgive them. See Psa. 51: 4.

III. Christ heals disease (vs. 8-12). 8. "Jesus perceived." In telling them the thoughts of their hearts Jesus gave them the fullest proof of His divinity. He "searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts." No sin escapes His notice. "Why reason ye?" Matthew says: "Wherefore think ye evil?" Why are you putting a misconstruction on my words? 9. "Whether it is easier." Both are equally easy and equally difficult. Everything is equally easy to that power which is unlimited. A universe can be as easily produced by a single act of the divine will as the smallest part of matter.

10. "That ye may know." External miracles are the proof of internal ones. Christ was conscious of divine power. If failure had been the result His humiliation would have been overwhelming and final. He proposes now to prove His divinity beyond question. "Son of Man." This is the title which Christ most frequently applied to Himself, sometimes interchanging it with the "Son of God." He appropriated to Himself the prophecy of Daniel (Matt. 26: 63, 64; Dan. 7: 13). It is applied to Christ more than eighty times in the New Testament. 1. It implies His humiliation (Matt. 8: 20), and that He, the Son of God, became true man (Rom. 8: 3). 2. That He was the one perfect man, sinless, and complete in every human virtue. 3. That He was the representative man, elevated above individual, class and national prejudices. 4. That He was, officially, the representative of the human race in His life and death for man. "Power on earth." They were thinking of God as being in heaven, and Jesus calls attention to the fact that there is power on earth now to forgive sins. The Son of Man has come to earth and has brought this power with Him.

11. "Arise." Here is the test. Christ shows His ability to forgive sins by His ability to heal. 12. "He arose." The man had a part to perform. Had he not acted at the word of command he could not have been healed. He exercised the power of his will and put forth the necessary effort to arise, believing that strength and healing would be given him. "Before them all." This thing was "not done in a corner." Christ's miracles were performed in the most public manner and were never questioned by those who witnessed them. "Amazed." Luke adds: "They were filled with fear." "Glorified God." They had a high degree of reverence for God and were filled with admiration for His power and goodness. "On this fashion." Christ's works are without precedent. He acts independently and advises with no one. They had seen three marks of His divinity: 1. Forgiving sins. 2. Perceiving thoughts. 3. Healing disease. The works of Christ are astonishing the world to-day. He is the same mighty Saviour as ever, and is still able to forgive sins, perceive thoughts and heal diseases.

Remedied.

Women have a resourcefulness that men can never hope to attain. A young lady named Kate —— was married the other day. When on her honeymoon she had occasion to make some purchases in a shop, and ordered the goods to be sent to her at the Royal hotel. But in an absent-minded moment she gave her maiden name to the shopkeeper.

She had scarcely reached the door, however, when she noted her mistake. With admirable wit she stepped back and said to the shopman:

"Oh, by the way, send that package to Miss Kate ——, care of Mrs. —— Royal Hotel," and she swept out of the shop as if she had been married fifteen years—London Tit-Bits.

Minister Rebuilds Church.

Rev. W. A. Lewis of the Cherry Valley, Pa., Methodist church is a handy man. His church was recently rebuilt, and he did the painting, mason and carpenter work, and even carried the bricks and mortar up a 60-foot ladder.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR NOTES.

February 14—"What Will Real Friendship Do?"—I Sam. 20:1-23.

Scripture Verses.—2 Chron. 20:7; James 2:23; Prov. 27:6, 9, 17; John 15:13, 14; Sam. 18-1; Prov. 14:20, 21; 17:7; 18:24; 27:6.

Lesson Thoughts.

True friendship involves much more than mere affection; it means to seek in every way the welfare of those whom we love, even at our own cost; it means also confidence in them, and a real desire to gratify every proper wish, in short, true friendship means real, devoted service.

The strongest bond of earthly friendships is a common friendship with the truest of all friends, who is also our perfect example in the exercise of friendship.

Selections.

Friendship is kept and cherished by little acts of love, by mutual helpfulness, by dwelling on the virtues rather than the faults of friends, by mutual service in some nobler cause, by love of God.

Hail, friendship! since the world began,
Heaven's kindest, noblest boon to man.
All other joys, with meteor fire,
Quenched in the mists of time, expire.
But thou, unhurt by fortune's blast,
Shin'st brightest, clearest to the last.

True friendship can only be made between true men. Hearts are the soil of honor. There can be no lasting friendship between bad men. Bad men may pretend to love each other; but their friendship is a rope of sand, which shall be broken at any convenient season. But if a man have a sincere heart within him, and be true and noble, then we may confide in him.

Do not keep the alabaster boxes of your love and tenderness sealed up until your friends are dead. Fill their lives with sweetness.

What worth is eulogy's blandest breath
When whispered in ears that are hushed in death?
No, No! If you have but a word of cheer,
Speak it while I am alive to hear.

Prayer.—O Thou true and loving friend, we pray that all our earthly friends may be Thy friends, and may this bind us all closely together. Help us to value more Thy wonderful friendship, and make us daily more worthy of it; as Thou hast loved us, may we love one another, and all for Thy dear name's sake. Amen.

EPWORTH LEAGUE MEETING TOPICS.

February 14—Real Friendship—(I Sam. 20, 1-23.)

History and literature furnish many noble examples of true friendship: Damon and Pythias; Socrates and his friends Plato, Crito, Phaedon; Arthur and his Round Table; Johnson and his immortal group; Lamb and his companions; the Concord circle; Schiller and Goethe; Arthur Hallam and Tennyson. But neither history nor literature has a more charming picture of real human friendship than we have here. It has a romance, a beauty, a pathos, all its own.

Friendship is rooted in the natural desire for companionship. The normal man wants society. Though lord of all he surveys in solitude, he would say, "Better dwell in the midst of alarms than reign in this horrible place."

The root of real friendship is mutual affinity. Amos asks, "Can two walk together unless they are agreed?" Eagle and snail, blooded steed and clumsy ox, lion and lamb, cannot companion together. Neither can philosopher and fool, dull-souled sot and refined, aspiring spirit. When Jonathan and David met after the victory over Goliath each saw in the other youth so comely, so sincere, so valiant, so generous, so chivalrous, that it was as though each saw in the other a reflection of himself and said to his soul, "Ah! there is one after my own heart." Henceforth their souls were knit together.

Friendships that are fed only on similarity of taste, like occupations, congenial tempers, may endure a while and be a blessing as long as they last, but will never clothe themselves in the rich blossoms and ripe fruits of true heart affections, and will find it hard to endure through the winter of adversity. That fed by love is perennial. Jealousies, rivalries, skulking envies, wither and die in its aroma. Love's sweet breath is their poison. Jonathan could not be jealous of David so long as he loved him as his own soul.

Real friendship comes to its flower in sympathy and loving service. Its blossoms exhale sweetness for the stricken heart and yield the soothing balm of helpful ministries. Even Job's friends, blundering comforters though they were, wanted to do something for him in his sorrow. They were irritating instead of soothing and helpful, but they saw at least that they ought not to leave him alone with his grief. How inexpressibly comforting to David, when hunted like a patridge by Saul, to know that he had the sympathy of a great heart like Jonathan's! Yes, and loving help. True friends will seek to bless each other in the most delicate, kindly, generous manner. They will be more to each other in adversity than when all goes well. Never was Jonathan so much to David as when David was a fugitive in peril.

White Black Bird Is Shot.

A genuine albino black bird has just been shot near Catterick Bridge, Yorkshire, England. Scientific ornithologists have clearly enough explained the physiological nature of albinism in birds, but it is still a mystery what originates these physiological conditions, and also why it is that very dark-plumaged birds, such as blackbirds, rooks, etc., are more liable to albinism, pure or partial, than any others. It is strange, for instance, that white robins are rare, and it is notable that the last found in this country was obtained in Yorkshire (Sedbergh district). Last summer a perfectly white sand martin was seen by hundreds in the Bentham (Yorkshire) district, and three or four in other parts of the north of England. House martins, also barn swallows, are liable to assume albinism, and many records are preserved in Yorkshire. As for "pied" blackbirds, rooks and such like, they are as common as the proverbial blackberries, whereas in the whole of England there are probably not more than two records of albino woodcocks.

The Sunday Breakfast Table

One Day at a Time.

One day at a time! That's all it can be;
No faster than that is the hardest fate;
And days have their limits, however we
Begin them, too early and stretch them too late.

One day at a time! Every heart that aches
Knows only too well how long that can seem;
But it's never to-day which the spirit breaks;
It's the darkened future without a gleam.

One day at a time! A burden too great
to be borne for two can be borne by one;
Who knows what will enter to-morrow's gate?
While yet we are speaking all may be done.

One day at a time!—but a single day,
Whatever its load, whatever its length,
And there's a bit of Scripture to say
That according to each shall be his strength.

The One Just Record.

The only absolutely just record of our lives is with God. He searcheth our hearts. He knows the motive of our best and worst deeds. We may succeed in deceiving others, but we cannot deceive Him. Our sorrows and our shame, our desires and our purposes, our imagination and mental struggles, our ideals and dreams—all, all are known to Him Who readeth our lives, Who "hath set our secret sins in the light of His countenance."

These are our records. What is the lesson for us? Can we expunge what we have written? Never. But do we not talk of a past covered by atoning blood? Yes, the love of God can heal the wound that sin has made, but nothing can remove the scar. We must keep our records clean. We must learn to say no to sin promptings and world syrens that lure us to ill.

What of the record we have left in the minds of them? If it be unfavorable, the only way to heal it is to compel them to change their estimate by giving them plain evidence of a changed life. The record from faults may remain, but we can write across it some such sentence as this: "He is a changed man. He is not what he once was. He is living a holy and blameless life." And what of God's book of judgment? I bring you good news. He promises to cover our sins from His own sight and remember them against us no more forever. He offers to cast them into the sea of forgetfulness. And all for the sake of His eternal Son. "With Him is mercy and plenteous redemption." But, remember, there is only one way to obtain that pardon, that remission. It is His way. "There is none other name."—Rev. C. C. Albertson.

True and False Toleration.

Many people confuse tolerance and indifference. They think they are tolerant in their feelings, when, as a matter of fact, they do not care enough to have any feeling. How often will a man who is deeply interested in politics speak and act most bitterly towards those whose political principles are not his own, and yet think himself tolerant because he does not care enough about matters of religion to mind differences of opinion there? Matters of truth and faith are worth feeling about. They are so much worth feeling about that it is better to be bigoted because we feel strongly about them, than it would be not to feel about them at all. The old Puritan who has written as his epitaph in the ancient Massachusetts churchyard:

"Let men of God in church and nation watch
'Gainst such as would a toleration hatch."

is more honorable in our eyes than the modern dilettante who feels very strongly about the color of his cravats, but has no feeling about errors in religious truth. Yet there is a genuine and Christian toleration which is not indifference. It consists with the most deep and serious feeling. This toleration cares about truth, and cares about what seem errors in its teaching; but it rests confidently in faith that truth will win its own victories in God's good time; and it acts consistently on the knowledge that love is greater even than truth, and must break the path in places where truth has not yet appeared. This is the tolerance of faith and charity, which a man shows in places where he feels deeply, whether those places be in politics or in religion.

Sympathy's Lifting Power.

A world without sympathy would be a cruel abiding place. Those who have suffered and received expressions of true sympathy from friends would hardly dare we require to watch over and mange our think what their suffering would have been without a spoken word of comfort from a living soul. We are often tempted to feel that any word of sympathy we may speak or write to another, at a time of special trial, is not worth the doing; that so many such words will be spoken to that one that our own will count for nothing. The prompting to keep silent in another's time of sorrow is a false one. Spoken sympathy is as a mantle of love; it comforts, strengthens and inspires. Our Lord Jesus Christ longed for sympathy. There is no more affecting passage in the record of His life than that which tells of the failure of His chosen and dearest friends to watch and sympathize with Him in the hour when His soul was "exceeding sorrowful." There has never been a word too much of sympathy spoken to a sorrowing one. Sympathy's very cumulation forms a great force that uplifts and strengthens. It is needed by the weak; it is still more needed by the strong. It is within every one's power to give it. And God, who is love, will bless it always.—Sunday School Times.

Be Cheerful.

We ought to be as cheerful as we can, if only because to be happy ourselves is a most effectual contribution to the happiness of others. There is no doubt some selfish satisfaction in yielding to melancholy; in brooding over grievances, especially if more or less imaginary; in fancying that we are victims of fate. To be bright and cheerful often requires an effort; there is a certain art in keeping ourselves happy; in this respect, as in others, we require to watch over and manage ourselves almost as if we were somebody else. —Sir John Lubbock.

Right Leading and Right Following.

If we see a good example we well may imitate it. But we are not to be always remembering what has been done successfully. What can be done we should consider. God has set before us great principles for our imitation and guidance. Lord Bacon says: "Set it down to thyself, as well to create good precedents as to follow them." It is well to tread in the steps of those who have gone the right way before us. It is even better to tread in a way that shall lead others aright, as they are influenced by us. Are we leading aright, as we seek to follow right precedents?

Easy Way of Measuring Heights.

Anybody who knows how to take the altitude of the sun or a star with a sextant, and wishes to take that of any distant hill, steeple, or the like, should put a tea-tray on the ground, fill it with water, and then retire from it until the top of the hill, steeple, or what not is reflected in the liquid. Now take the sextant, and make the image of the summit coincide with its reflection in the liquid. The angle of elevation will thus, obviously, have been measured double. Half of this will give the measurement required.

THE GREAT DESTROYER

SOME STARTLING FACTS ABOUT THE VICE OF INTEMPERANCE.

The Drunkard and the Law—The Immense Majority of Topers Have Walked With Open Eyes Into a Trap Already Crowded by Victims.

The State Commission of Prisons is disposed to take a partly medical and a largely charitable view of drunkenness. In its annual report the Commission shows that nearly one-third of the commitments to jails and penitentiaries in New York during the past year were for the offence of intoxication, and says:

"This offence should not be treated strictly as a crime. Drunkenness has in it no element of malice—one of the usual and necessary elements of crime. Habitual drunkenness arises largely from mental weakness, and its treatment should partake of the characteristics which the State has deemed wise to use in other cases of mental aberration. There is a large distinction between the man who cannot control his appetite for drink and the man who wilfully and maliciously commits an offence against the person or property of another. The law should recognize this distinction. The present practice of sending him to jail or to a penitentiary, branded as a criminal, to consort with thieves, only depraves and discourages him, and at the same time inflicts punishment and privation upon his family. Some wiser method of dealing with this offence should be ascertained and adopted."

There is a lot of truth in all that, of course, but there is also dangerous doctrine.

A man may not know what he is doing when drunk, but he knows what he is doing when he begins to drink. If he is a lunatic in his cups and commits crime, it is the law's theory that, as he is a voluntary lunatic, he should be held responsible for his acts. And that is common sense.

No doubt in some cases drunkenness is a disease—in the case of the born dipsomaniac, who periodically yields to the impulse to cast aside all self-restraint, and also in the case of the man who has drunk steadily until his whole system is poisoned. Both need the doctor more than the policeman.

But it is also true that the dipsomaniac who has a really "uncontrollable impulse" to drink is rare. The average dipsomaniac is paralleled by the man who knows that he has a hereditary tendency to consumption. In each instance the duty is imposed to seek conditions of life least favorable to the encouragement of the tendency. Forewarned should mean forearmed.

The immense majority of drunkards are men who have simply acquired a habit that has strengthened into a vice. They have walked with open eyes into a trap already crowded with victims.

The drunkard is to be pitied, but pity given in too generous measure does harm. It reduces the man's sense of responsibility for his sins. It obscures the truth that in all save one case in a hundred the drinker is suffering from the weakness of will that follows upon habitual self-indulgence.

Every man who controls his appetites, or has lost control of them, knows as a fact of experience that the will can as readily be made strong by exercise as the muscles, or rendered flabby by disuse.

The State Commission of Prisons means well. Its spirit is kindly. We believe it is right in holding that the State should make a distinction between the man with whom drinking is a disease, and the wilful, sensual drunkard. The place for the first is the hospital, the place for the latter, as now, is the jail.

But when all is said this great fact is true:

A man should be master of himself, and every man who has not something fatally the matter with his make-up to start with can be master of himself if he honestly tries.

Let us be just to the drunkard, and merciful, but for his own sake, and the sake of his family and the community, don't coddle him.—New York American.

A Warning Incident.

In the Pineville Democrat Lora S. Lamance reports the following instructive incident, full of warning for drinkers and encouragement for abstainers and temperance