

IN HIS STEPS.

"What Would Jesus Do?"

By CHARLES M. SHELDON.

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(CONTINUED.)

"Now, in acting on this standard of conduct I have reached a conclusion which will no doubt cause some surprise. I have decided that the Sunday morning edition of The News shall be discontinued after next Sunday's issue, shall state in that issue my reasons for discontinuing. In order to make up to the subscribers the amount of reading matter they may suppose themselves entitled to, we can issue a double number on Saturday, as is done by very many evening papers that make no attempt at a Sunday edition. I am convinced that, from a Christian point of view, more harm than good has been done by our Sunday morning paper. I do not believe that Jesus would be responsible for it if he were in my place today. It will occasion some trouble to arrange the details caused by this change with the advertisers and subscribers. That is for me to look after. The change itself is one that will take place. So far as I can see, the loss will all on myself. Neither the reporters nor the pressmen need make any particular changes in their plans."

Edward Norman looked around the room, and no one spoke. He was struck for the first time in his life with the fact that in all the years of his newspaper life he had never had the force of the paper together in this way. "Would Jesus do that? That is, would he probably run a newspaper on some loving family plan where editors, reporters, pressmen and all met to discuss and devise and plan for the making of a paper that should have in view?"

He caught himself drawing almost away from the facts of typographical unions and office rules and reporters' enterprise and all the cold businesslike methods that make a great daily successful. But still the vague picture that came up in the mailing room would not fade away, even when he had gone into his office and the men had gone back to their places with wonder in their looks and questions of all sorts on their tongues as they talked over the editor's remarkable actions.

Clark came in and had a long serious talk with the chief. He was thoroughly roused, and his protest almost reached the point of resigning his place. Norman guarded himself carefully. Every minute of the interview was painful to him, but he felt more than ever the necessity of doing the Christlike thing. Clark was a very valuable man. It would be difficult to fill his place. But he was not able to give any reasons for continuing the Sunday paper that answered the question, "What would Jesus do?" by letting Jesus print that edition.

"It comes to this, then," said Clark finally. "You will bankrupt the paper in 30 days. We might as well face that fact."

"I don't think we shall. Will you stay by The News until it is bankrupt?" asked Edward Norman, with a strange smile.

"Mr. Norman, I don't understand you. You are not the same man this week that I ever knew."

"I don't know myself either, Clark. Something remarkable has caught me up and borne me on, but I was never more convinced of final success and power for the paper. You have not answered my question. Will you stay with me?"

Clark hesitated a moment and finally said "Yes." Norman shook hands with him and turned to his desk. Clark went back into his room stirred by a number of conflicting emotions. He had never before known such an exciting and mentally disturbing week, and he felt now as if he were connected with an enterprise that might at any moment collapse and ruin him and all connected with it.

Sunday morning dawned again on Raymond, and Henry Maxwell's church was again crowded. Before the service began Edward Norman attracted general attention. He sat quietly in his usual place about three seats from the pulpit. The Sunday morning issue of The News containing the statement of its discontinuance had been read by nearly every man in the house. The announcement had been expressed in such remarkable language that every reader was struck by it. No such series of distinct sensations had ever disturbed the usual business custom of Raymond. The events connected with The News were not all. People were eagerly talking about the strange things done during the week by Alexander Powers at the railroad shops and by Milton Wright in his stores on the avenue. The service progressed upon a distinct wave of excitement in the pews. Henry Maxwell faced it all with a calmness which indicated a strength and purpose more than usual. His prayers were very helpful. His sermon was not so easy to describe. How would a minister be apt to preach to his people if he came before them after an entire week of eager asking: "How would Jesus preach? What would he probably say?" It is very certain that Henry Maxwell did not preach as he had done two Sundays before. Tuesday of the past week he had stood by the grave of the dead stranger and said the words, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," and still he was moved by the spirit of a deeper impulse than he could measure as he thought of his people and yearned for the Christ message when he should be in his pulpit again.

Now that Sunday had come and the people were there to hear, what would the Master tell them? He agonized over

his preparation for them, and yet he knew he had not been able to fit his message into his ideal of the Christ. Nevertheless no one in the First church could remember hearing such a sermon before. There was in it rebuke for sin, especially hypocrisy; there was definite rebuke of the greed of wealth and the selfishness of fashion, two things that First church never heard rebuked this way before, and there was a love of his people that gathered new force as the sermon went on. When it was finished, there were those who were saying in their hearts, "The Spirit moved that sermon." And they were right.

Then Rachel Winslow rose to sing, this time, after the sermon, by Henry Maxwell's request. Rachel's singing did not provoke applause this time. What deeper feeling carried people's hearts into a reverent silence and tenderness of thought? Rachel was beautiful, but the consciousness of her remarkable loveliness had always marred her singing with those who had the deepest spiritual feeling. It had also marred her rendering of certain kinds of music with herself. Today this was all gone. There was no lack of power in her grand voice, but there was an actual added element of humility and purity which the audience strictly felt and bowed to.

Before the service closed Henry Maxwell asked those who had remained the week before to stay again for a few moments for consultation and any others who were willing to make the pledge taken at that time. When he was at liberty, he went into the lecture room. To his astonishment, it was almost filled. This time a large proportion of young people had come, but among them were a few business men and officers of the church.

As before, Henry Maxwell asked them to pray with him, and, as before, a distinct answer came in the presence of the Divine Spirit. There was no doubt in the minds of any one present that what they proposed to do was so clearly in line with the Divine will that a blessing rested on it in a very special manner.

They remained some time to ask questions and consult together. There was a feeling of fellowship such as they had never known in their church membership. Edward Norman's action was well understood by them all, and he answered several questions.

"What will be the probable result of your discontinuance of the Sunday paper?" asked Alexander Powers, who sat next to him.

"I don't know yet. I presume it will result in a falling off of subscriptions and advertisements. I anticipate that."

"Do you have any doubts about your action? I mean do you regret it for fear it is not what Jesus would do?" asked Henry Maxwell.

"Not in the least, but I would like to ask for my own satisfaction if any one of you here thinks Jesus would issue a Sunday morning paper?"

No one spoke for a minute. Then Jasper Chase said: "We seem to think alike on that, but I have been puzzled several times during the week to know just what he would do. It is not always an easy question to answer."

"I find that trouble," said Virginia Page. She sat by Rachel Winslow. Every one knew who Virginia Page was, wondering how she would succeed in keeping her promise.

"I think perhaps I find it specially difficult to answer the question on account of my money. Jesus never owned any property, and there is nothing in his example to guide me in the use of mine. I am studying and praying. I think I see clearly a part of what he would do, but not all. 'What would Jesus do with a million dollars?' is my question really. I confess that I am not yet able to answer it to my satisfaction."

"I could tell you what to do with a part of it," said Rachel, turning her face toward Virginia.

"That does not trouble me," replied Virginia, with a slight smile. "What I am trying to discover is a principle of Jesus that will enable me to come the nearest possible to his action as it ought to influence the entire course of my life, so far as my wealth and its use are concerned."

"That will take time," said Henry Maxwell slowly. All the rest in the room were thinking hard of the same thing. Milton Wright told something of his experience. He was gradually working out a plan for his business relations with his employees, and it was opening up a new world to him and them. A few of the younger men told of special attempts to answer the question.

There was almost general consent over the fact that the application of the Jesus spirit and practice to everyday life was the serious thing. It required a knowledge of him and an insight into his motives that most of them did not yet possess.

When they finally adjourned after a silent prayer that marked with growing power the Divine presence, they went away discussing earnestly their difficulties and seeking light from one another.

Rachel Winslow and Virginia Page went out together. Edward Norman and Milton Wright became so interested in their mutual conference that they walked on past Norman's home and came back together. Jasper Chase and the president of the Endeavor society stood talking earnestly in one corner of the room. Alexander Powers and Henry Maxwell remained even after all the others had gone.

"I want you to come down to the shops tomorrow and see my plan and talk to the men. Somehow I feel as if you could get nearer to them than any one else just now."

"I don't know about that, but I will come," replied Henry Maxwell, a little sadly. How was he fitted to stand before 800 or 8000 workmen and give them a message? Yet in the movement of his weakness, as he asked the question, he rebuked himself for it. What would Jesus do? That was an end to

SPECIALISTS FAILED.



Mrs. C. A. Merrill, of Chetopa, Kans., suffered from a peculiar nervous trouble which baffled the skill of leading specialists. She says: "I cannot say enough in praise of Dr. Miles' Nervine. I suffered agonizing pain in left side of my head and I thought it would drive me insane. Specialists in Cincinnati and Kansas City treated me without benefit. Then I began taking Dr. Miles' Nervine and obtained prompt relief, and finally a permanent cure."

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the discussion. He went down the next day and found Alexander Powers in his office. It lacked a few minutes of 12, and the superintendent said, "Come up stairs, and I'll show you what I've been trying to do."

They went through the machine shops, climbed a long flight of stairs and entered a very large empty room. It had once been used by the company for a storeroom.

"Since making that promise a week ago I have had a good many things to think of," said the superintendent, "and among them is this: Our company gives me the use of this room, and I am going to fit it up with tables and a coffee plant in the corner there where those steam pipes are. My plan is to provide a good place where the men can come up and eat their noon lunch and give them, two or three times a week, the privilege of a 15 minutes' talk on some subject that will be a real help to them in their lives."

Maxwell looked surprised and asked if the men would come for any such purpose.

"Yes, they'll come. After all, I know the men pretty well. They are among the most intelligent workmen in the country today, but they are, as a whole, entirely removed from all church influence. I asked, 'What would Jesus do?' and, among other things, it seemed to me he would begin to act in some way to add to the lives of these men more physical and spiritual comfort. It is a very little thing, this room and what it represents, but I acted on the first impulse to do the first thing that appeared to my good sense, and I want to work out this idea. I want you to speak to the men when they come up at noon. I have asked them to come up and see the place and I'll tell them something about it."

Henry Maxwell was ashamed to say how uneasy he felt at being asked to speak a few words to a company of workmen. How could he speak without notes or to such a crowd? He was honestly in a condition of genuine fright over the prospect. He actually felt afraid of facing these men. He shrank from the ordeal of confronting such a crowd, so different from the Sunday audiences he was familiar with.

There were half a dozen long rude tables and benches in the great room, and when the noon whistle sounded the men poured up stairs from the machine shop below and, seating themselves at the tables, began to eat their lunch. There were perhaps 800 of them. They had read the superintendent's notice, which he had posted up in various places, and came largely out of curiosity.

They were favorably impressed. The room was large and airy, free from smoke and dust and well warmed from the steam pipes.

About 20 minutes of 1 Alexander Powers told the men what he had in mind. He spoke very simply, like one who understands thoroughly the character of his audience, and then introduced the Rev. Henry Maxwell of the First church, his pastor, who had consented to speak a few minutes.

Henry Maxwell will never forget the feelings with which for the first time he confronted that grimy faced audience of workmen. Like hundreds of other ministers, he had never spoken to any gathering except those made up of people of his own class in the sense that they were familiar in their dress and education and habits to him. This was a new world to him, and nothing but his new rule of conduct could have made possible his message and its effect. He spoke on the subject of satisfaction with life, what caused it, what its real sources were. He had the great good sense on this first appearance not to recognize the men as a class distinct from himself. He did not use the term "workmen" and did not say a word to suggest any difference between their lives and his own.

The men were pleased. A good many of them shook hands with him before going down to their work, and Henry Maxwell, telling it all to his wife when he reached home, said that never in all his life had he known the delight he

then felt in having a handshake from a man of physical labor. To say that was an important one in his Christian experience, more important than he knew. It was the beginning of a fellowship between him and the working world. It was the first plank laid down to help bridge the chasm between the church and labor in Raymond.

Alexander Powers went back to his desk that afternoon much pleased with his plan and seeing much hope in it for the men. He knew where he could get some good tables from an abandoned eating house at one of the stations down the road, and he saw how the coffee arrangement could be made in a very attractive feature. The men had responded even better than he anticipated, and the whole thing could not help being a great benefit to them.

He took up the routine of his work with a glow of satisfaction. After all, he wanted to do as Jesus would, he said to himself.

It was nearly 4 o'clock when he opened one of the company's letter envelopes which he supposed contained orders for the purchasing of stores. He ran over the first page of typewritten matter in his usual quick, business-like manner before he saw that he was reading what was not intended for his office, but for the superintendent of the freight department.

He turned over a page mechanically, not meaning to read what was not addressed to him, but before he knew it he was in possession of evidence which conclusively proved that the company was engaged in a systematic violation of the interstate commerce laws of the United States. It was a distinct and unequivocal breach of law as if a private citizen should enter a home and rob the inmates. The discrimination shown in rebates was in total contempt of all the statutes. Under the laws of the state it was also a distinct violation of certain provisions recently passed by the legislature to prevent railroad trusts. There was no question that he held in his hand evidence sufficient to convict the company of willful, intelligent violation of the law of the commission and the law of the state also.

He dropped the papers on his desk as if they were poison, and instantly the question flashed across his mind, "What would Jesus do?" He tried to shut the question out. He tried to reason with himself by saying it was none of his business. He had supposed in a more or less indefinite way, as did nearly all of the officers of the company, that this had been going on right along in nearly all the roads. He was not in a position, owing to his place in the shops, to prove anything direct, and he had regarded it all as a matter which did not concern him at all. The papers now before him revealed the entire affair. They had through some carelessness in the address come into his hands. What business of his was it? If he saw a man entering his neighbor's house to steal, would it not be his duty to inform the officers of the law? Was a railroad company such a different thing? Was it under a different rule of conduct, so that it could rob the public and defy law and be undisturbed because it was such a great organization? What would Jesus do?

Then there was his family. Of course if he took any steps to inform the commission it would mean the loss of his position. His wife and daughters had always enjoyed luxury and a good place in society. If he came out against this lawlessness as a witness, it would drag him into courts, his motives would be misunderstood, and the whole thing would end in his disgrace and the loss of his position. Surely, it was none of his business. He could easily get the papers back to the freight department and no one be the wiser. Let the inquiry go on. Let the law be defied. What was it to him? He would work out his plans for bettering the conditions just about him. What more could a man do in this railroad business, where there was so much going on anyway that made it impossible to live by the Christian standard? But what would Jesus do if he knew the facts? That was the question that confronted Alexander Powers as the day wore into evening.

The lights in the office had been turned on. The whir of the great engine and the crash of the planer in the big shop continued until 6 o'clock. Then the whistle blew, the engines slowed down, and the men dropped their tools and ran for the blockhouse. Alexander Powers heard the familiar click, click of the blocks as the men filed past the window of the blockhouse just outside. He said to his clerks: "I'm not going just yet. I have something extra tonight." He waited until he heard the last man deposit his block. The men behind the block case went out. The engineer and his assistants had work for half an hour, but they went out at another door.

At 7 o'clock that evening any one who had looked into the superintendent's office would have seen an unusual sight. He was kneeling down, and his face was buried in his hands as he bowed his head upon the papers on his desk.

CHAPTER III.

If any man cometh unto me and hateth not his own father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters—yes, and his own life also—he cannot be my disciple. * * * And whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

When Rachel Winslow and Virginia Page separated after the meeting at the First church on Sunday, they agreed to continue their conversation the next day. Virginia asked Rachel to come and lunch with her at noon, and Rachel accordingly rang the bell at the Page mansion about half past 11. Virginia herself met her, and the two were soon talking earnestly.

"The fact is," Rachel was saying after they had been talking a few minutes, "I cannot reconcile it with my judgment of what he would do. I cannot tell another person what to do, but I feel that I ought not to accept this offer."

"What will you do, then?" asked

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Virginia, with great interest. "I don't know yet, but I have decided to refuse this offer."

Rachel picked up a letter that had been lying in her lap and ran over its contents again. It was a letter from the manager of a comic opera offering her a place with a large traveling company for the season. The salary was a very large figure, and the prospect held out by the manager was flattering. He had heard Rachel sing that Sunday morning when the stranger had interrupted the service. He had been much impressed. There was money in that opera, so said the letter, and the manager wanted a reply as soon as possible. "There's no virtue in saying 'No' to this offer when I have the other one," Rachel went on thoughtfully. "That's harder to decide, but I've made up my mind. To tell the truth, Virginia, I'm completely convinced in the first case that Jesus would never use any talent like a good voice just to make money. But, now, take this concert offer. Here is a reputable company to travel with an impresario and a violinist and a male quartet, all people of good reputation. I'm asked to go as one of the company and sing leading soprano. The salary (I mentioned it, didn't I) is to be guaranteed—\$900 a month for the season. But I don't feel satisfied that Jesus would go. What do you think?"

"You mustn't ask me to decide for you," replied Virginia, with a sad smile. "I believe Mr. Maxwell was right when he said we must each one of us decide according to the judgment we felt for ourselves to be Christlike. I am having a harder time than you are, dear, to decide what he would do."

"Are you?" Rachel asked. She rose and walked over to the window and looked out. Virginia came and stood by her. The street was crowded with life, and the two young women looked at it silently for a moment. Suddenly Virginia broke out as Rachel had never heard her before.

"Rachel, what does all this contrast in conditions mean to you as you ask this question of what Jesus would do? It maddens me to think that the society in which I have been brought up, the same to which we are both said to belong, is satisfied, year after year, to go on dressing and eating and having a good time, giving and receiving entertainments, spending its money on houses and luxuries and occasionally, to ease its conscience, donating, without any personal sacrifice, a little money to charity. I have been educated, as you have, in one of the most expensive schools of America, launched into society as an heiress, supposed to be in a very enviable position. I'm perfectly well, I can travel or stay at home, I can do as I please, I can gratify almost any want or desire, and yet when I honestly try to imagine Jesus living the life I have lived and am expected to live and doing for the rest of my life what thousands of other rich people do I am under condemnation for being one of the most wicked, selfish, useless creatures in the world. I have not looked out of this window for weeks without a feeling of horror toward myself as I see the humanity that pours by this house."

Virginia turned away and walked up and down the room. Rachel watched her and could not repress the rising tide of her own growing definition of discipleship. Of what Christian use was her own talent of song? Was the best she could do to sell her talent for so much a month, go on a concert company's tour, dress beautifully, enjoy the excitement of public applause and gain a reputation as a great singer? Was that what Jesus would do?

She was not morbid. She was in sound health, was conscious of great powers as a singer and knew that if she went out into public life she could make a great deal of money and become well known. It is doubtful if she overestimated her ability to accomplish all she thought herself capable of. And Virginia—what she had just said made Rachel with great force because of the similar position in which the two friends found themselves.

Lunch was announced, and they

went out and were joined by Virginia's grandmother, Miss Page, a handsome, stately woman of 65, and Virginia's brother, Rollin, a young man who spent most of his time at one of the clubs and had no particular ambition for anything but a growing admiration for Rachel Winslow, and whenever she dined or lunched at the Page mansion, if he knew of it, he always planned to be at home.

These three made up the Page family. Virginia's father had been a banker and again speculator. Her mother had died ten years before her father within the next year. The grandmother, a southern woman in birth and training, had all the traditions and feelings that accompany the possession of wealth and social standing that have never been touched. She was a shrewd, careful business woman of more than average ability. The family property and wealth were invested, in large measure, under her personal care. Virginia's portion was, without any restriction, her own. She had been trained by her father to understand the ways of the business world, and even the grandmother had been compelled to acknowledge the girl's capacity for taking care of her own money.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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