00 Quiet Talks on Power

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01 - Personal Contact With Jesus: The Beginning of

1 - Personal Contact With Jesus: The Beginning of Service.
By S.D. Gordon

(John i:35-51.)

The Beginning of an Endless Friendship.

About a quarter of four one afternoon, three young men were standing together on a road leading down to a swift-running river. It was an old road, beaten down hard by thousands of feet through hundreds of years. It led down to the river, and then along its bank through a village scatteringly nestled by the fords of the river. The young men were intently absorbed in conversation.

One of them was a man to attract attention anywhere. He was clearly the leader of the three. His clothing was very plain, even to severeness. His face was spare, suggesting a diet as severely plain as his garments. The abundance of dark hair on head and face brought out sharply the spare, thoughtful, earnest look of his face. His eyes glowed like coals of living fire beneath the thick, bushy eyebrows. He talked quietly but intensely. There was a subdued vigor and force about his very person.

One of the others was a very different type of man. He was intense too, like the leader, but there was a fineness and a far-looking depth about his eye such as suggests a gray eye rather than a black. His hair was softer and finer, and his skin too. In him intensity seemed to blend with a fine grain in his whole make-up. The third man was a quiet, matter-of-fact looking fellow. He did not talk much, except to ask an occasional question. The three men were engaged in earnest conversation, when a fourth man, a stranger, came down the road and, passing the three by, went on ahead.

The leader of the three called the attention of his companions to the stranger. At once they leave his side and go after the stranger. As they nearly catch up to him, he unexpectedly turns and in a kindly voice asks, "Whom are you looking for?" Taken aback by the unexpected question, they do not answer, but ask where he is going. Quickly noticing the point of their question, he cordially says, "Come over and take tea with me."

They gladly accepted the invitation, and spent the evening with him. And the friendship begun that day continued to the end of their lives. Both became his dear friends. And one, the fine-grained, intense man, became his closest bosom friend. He never forgot that day. When he came years after to write about his hospitable friend, found that afternoon, he could remember every particular of their first meeting. We must always be grateful to John for his simple, full account of his first meeting with Jesus.

An Ideal Biography.

His simple story of that afternoon contains in it the three steps that begin all service. They looked at Jesus; they talked with Jesus; forever to the end of their lives they talked about Him. Here are the two personal contacts that underlie all service, that lead into all service. The close personal contact with Jesus begun and continued. And then personal contact with other men ever after. The first always leads to the second. The power and helpfulness of the second grow out of the first.

There is a little line in the story that may serve as a graphic biography of John the Herald. There could be no finer biography of anybody of whom it could be truly written. It is this: "Looking upon Jesus as He walked, he said look." He himself was absorbed in looking. Jesus caught him from the first. He was ever looking. And he asked others to look. His whole ministry was summed up in pointing Jesus out to others.

He was ever insisting that men look at Jesus. Looking, he said "look." His lips said it, and life said it. John's presence was always spelling out that word "look," with his whole life an index finger pointing to Jesus. If we might be like that. Every man of us may be in his life, in the great unconscious influence of his presence, a clearly lettered signpost pointing men to the Master. All true service begins in personal contact with Jesus. One cannot know Him personally without catching the warm contagion of His spirit for others. And there is a fine fragrance, a gentle, soft warmth, about the service that grows out of being with Him.

The beginning of John's contact with Jesus that day, and Andrew's, was in looking. Their friend the herald bid them look. They found him looking. They did as he was doing. Following the line of his eyes, and of his teaching too, and of his life, they looked at Jesus. And as they looked the sight of their eyes began to control them. They left John and quickened their pace to get nearer to this Man at whom they were looking. There never was a finer tribute to a man's faithfulness to his Master than is found in these men leaving John. They could not help going. They had been led by John into the circle of Jesus' attractive power. And at once they are irresistibly drawn toward its center.

The basis of the truest devotion and deepest loyalty to Jesus is not in a creed but in Himself. There must be creeds. Whatever a man believes is of course his creed. Though as quickly as he puts it into words he narrows it. Truth is always more than any statement of it. Faith is always greater than our words about it. We do not see Jesus with our outer eyes as did these men in the Gospel narrative. We cannot put out our hands in any such way as Thomas did and know by the feel. We must listen first to somebody telling about Him.

We listen either with eyes on the Book, or ears open to some faithful mutual friend of His and ours. What we hear either way is a creed, somebody's belief about Jesus. So we come to Jesus first through a creed, somebody's belief, somebody's telling: so we know there is a Jesus, and are drawn to Himself. When we come to know Himself, always afterwards He is more than anything anybody ever told us, and more than we can ever tell.

The Eyes of the Heart.

Looking at Jesus--what does it mean practically? It means hearing about Him first, then actually appealing to Him, accepting His word as personal to one's self, putting Him to the test in life, trusting His death to square up one's sin score, trusting His power to clean the heart and sweeten the spirit, and stiffen the will. It means holding the whole life up to His ideals. Aye, it means more yet; something on His side, an answering look from Him. There comes a consciousness within of His love and winsomeness. That answering look of His holds us forever after His willing slaves, love's slaves. Paul speaks of the eyes of the heart. It is with these eyes we look at Him, and receive His answering look.

There are different ways of looking at Jesus, degrees in looking. Our experiences with Jesus affect the eyes of the heart. When this same John as an old man was writing that first epistle, he seems to recall his experience in looking that first day. He says "that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld."[1] From seeing with the eyes he had gone to earnest, thoughtful gazing, caught with the vision of what he saw. That was John's own experience. It is everybody's experience that gets a look at Jesus. When the first looking sees something that catches fire within, then does the inner fire affect the eye and more is seen.

You have been in a strange city walking down the street, looking with interest at what is there. But all at once you are caught by a sign that contains a familiar name, and at once a whole flood of memories is awakened.

The little Jericho Jew peering down from the low out-reaching sycamore branch was full of curiosity to see the Man that had changed his old friend Levi Matthew so strangely. But that curiosity quickly changes into something far deeper and more tender as Jesus comes to abide in his own home.

That lonely-lifed, sore-hearted woman on the Nain road looked with startled wonder out of those wet eyes of hers as Jesus begins talking to her dead son. What love and faith must have been in her looking as Jesus with fine touch brings her boy by the hand over to her warm embrace again!

We are Changed.

Looking at Jesus changes us. Paul's famous bit in the second Corinthian letter has a wondrous tingle of gladness in it. "We all with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are changed from glory to glory."[2] The change comes through our looking. The changing power comes in through the eyes. It is the glory of the Lord that is seen. The glorious Jesus looking in through our looking eyes changes us. It is gradual. It is ever more, and yet more, till by and by His own image comes out fully in our faces.

We become like those with whom we associate. A man's ideals mold him. Living with Jesus makes us look like Himself. We are familiar with the work that has been done in restoring old fine paintings. A painting by one of the rare old master painters is found covered with the dust of decades. Time has faded out much of the fine coloring and clearly marked outlines. With great patience and skill it is worked over and over. And something of the original beauty, coming to view again, fully repays the workman for all his pains.

The original image in which we were made has been badly obscured and faded out. But if we give our great Master a chance He will restore it through our eyes. It will take much patience and a skill nothing less than divine. But the original will surely come out more and more till we shall again be like the original, for we shall see Him as He is.

The old German artist Hoffmann is said to visit at intervals the royal gallery in Dresden, where he lives, to touch up his paintings there. Even so our Master, living in us, keeps touching us up that the full beauty of His ideal may be brought out.

How often a girl growing up into the fullness of her mature young womanhood calls out the remark, "You are growing more and more like your mother." And the similar remark is heard of a young man developing the traits and features of his father.

There is a law of unconscious assimilation. We become like those with whom we go. Without being conscious of it we take on the characteristics of those with whom we live. I remember one time my brother returned home for a visit after a prolonged absence. As we were walking down the street together he said to me, "You have been going with Denning a good deal"--a mutual friend of ours. Surprised, I said, "How do you know I have?" He said, "You walk just like him." What my brother had said was strictly true, though he did not know it. Our friend had a very decided way of walking. As a matter of fact, we had been walking home from the Young Men's Christian Association three or four nights every week. And unconsciously I had grown to imitate his way of walking.

That sentence of Paul's has also this meaning, "We all with open face reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are changed." We stand between Him and those who don't know Him. We are the mirror catching the rays of His face and sending them down to those around. And not only do those around see the light--His light--in us, but we are being changed all the while. For others' sake as well as our own the mirror should be kept clean, and well polished so the reflection will be distinct and true.

The Outlook Changed.

Looking at Jesus changes the world for us. It is as though the light of His eyes fills our eyes and we see things all around as He sees them. Have you ever gone out, as a child, and looked intently at the sun, repressing the flinching its strength caused and insisting on looking? You could do it for a short time only. It made your eyes ache. But as you turned your eyes away from its brilliance you found everything changed. You remember a beautiful yellow glory-light was over everything, and every ugly jagged thing was softened and beautified by that glow in your eyes. Looking at the sun had changed the world for you for a little.

It is something like that on this higher plane, in this finer sense. That must have been something of Paul's thought in explaining the glory of Jesus that he saw on the Damascus road. "When I could not see for the glory of that light." The old ideals were blurred. The old ambitions faded away. The jagged, sharp lines of sacrifice and suffering involved in his new life were not clearly seen. A halo had come over them.

I recall a bit of a poem I ran across in an old magazine somewhere. It was one of those vagrant, orphan poems with fine family lineaments that find their way unfathered into odd corners of papers. It told about a man riding on horseback through a bit of timber land in one of the cotton states of the South.

It was a bright October day, and he was riding along enjoying the air and view, when all at once he came across a bit of a clearing in the trees, and in the clearing an old cabin almost fallen to pieces, and in the doorway of the cabin an old negress standing. Her back was bent nearly double with the years of hard work, her face dried up and deeply bitten with wrinkles, and her hair white. But her eyes were as bright as two stars out of the dark blue, it said.

And the man called out cheerily, "Good-morning, auntie, living here all alone?" And she looked up, with her eyes brighter yet with the thought in her heart, and in a shrill keyed-up voice said, "Jes me 'n' Jesus, massa." But he said a hush came over the whole place, there seemed a halo about the old broken-down cabin, and he thought he could see Somebody standing by her side looking over her shoulder at him, and His form was like that of the Son of God.

How poor and limited and mean her world looked to him as he rode up. But how quickly everything changed as he saw it through her seeing of it. With the keen insight into spirit things so often found in such simplicity among her race, she had gotten the whole simple philosophy of life. Her world was changed and beautiful in the loneliness of the woods by reason of her Master's presence.

This removes the commonplace at once clear out of one's life. There is no drudgery nor humdrum nor hardship, because everything is for Jesus, and seen through His eyes. Whatever comes in the pathway of his work is gladdest joy, whether an obscure narrow round of home work or shop or store, or leaving home for a strange land far across the sea with a peculiarly uncongenial spirit atmosphere. Contact with Jesus, seeing Him, changes all for us.

Talking with Jesus.

These two men in the story went from their first looking into closer contact. They looked at Jesus. Then they talked with Jesus. It was at His own request. He wanted them. He wanted their friendship and their help. Having started, it was easy for them to go. Having seen, they naturally wanted more. At least two hours they talked, maybe longer. Judging by what they did as soon as they got away, it was a most wonderful talk for them.

This Jesus took them at once. His face, His presence, His talk, Himself filled all their sky. Everything swung around into a new setting. He was its center. All things began to adjust themselves for these men about Jesus. He was irresistible to them. These two men went through some most trying experiences as a result of the friendship formed that evening hour, but these counted not in the scale with Him. They never got over the talk with Him that twilight hour.

That two hours' talk lengthened out into many another during the years immediately after. They got into the habit of referring everything to Him, and of judging everything by what He would think. It was so clear to the end of their lives. For a little over three years did they keep Him by their side actually, physically. But the habit of keeping Him there was fixed for all the longer after years. The looking at Jesus and talking with Jesus ever went side by side clear to the end of the years.

It will be so. Getting a good look at this Master draws one off into the quiet corner with the Book to listen and talk and learn more. And out of this naturally grows (if one will give a little attention to good gardening rules) the habit of talking with Him all the time. In the thick of the crowd, in the solitude of one's duties, with hands full of work, the heart talks with Him and listens, and sometimes the tongue talks out too. Our common word for it is prayer. Prayer precedes true service, and produces it, and sweetens it. Only the service that grows up naturally out of this personal contact with Jesus counts and tells and weighs for the most.

Getting Somebody Else.

These two men went away from Jesus that evening only to come back with some others. They went from talking with Him to talking with others for Him. Their personal contact was the beginning of their service. This is one of the famous personal work chapters. There are three "findeths" in it. Andrew findeth his brother Peter. That was a great find. John in his modesty doesn't speak of it, but in all likelihood he findeth James his brother. Jesus findeth Philip and Philip in turn findeth Nathaniel, the guileless man.

That word findeth is very suggestive, even to being picturesque. It tells the absence of these other men. Their whereabouts might be guessed, but were not known. There was in the searchers a purpose, and a warmth in the heart under that purpose. As Andrew looked and listened he said to himself, "Peter must hear this; Peter must see this Man." And perhaps he asks to be excused and, reaching for his hat, hastens out to get his brother and bring him back to the house. He wants more himself, but he'll get it with Peter in too. And so it would be with John likely.

Peter had to be searched for. Most men do. He was probably absorbed with all his impulsive intensity in some matter on hand. May be Andrew had to pull quite a bit to get him started. But he got him. Andrew was a good sticker: hard to shake him off. His is a fine name for a brotherhood of personal workers. And when Peter once got started he never quit going. He stumbled some, but he got up, and got up only to go on. Most men need some one to get them started. There's need of more starters, more of us starting people moving Jesus' way.

I think the memory of this evening's work with Peter must have come back very vividly to Andrew one morning a few years afterwards. It's up on the hills of Judea, in Jerusalem. There's a great crowd of people standing in the streets, filling the space for a great distance. There are some thousands of them. They are listening spellbound to a man talking. It is Peter. And down there near by, maybe holding Peter's hat while he talks, is Andrew. His eyes are glowing. And if you might listen to his heart talking, I think you would hear it saying softly, "I'm so glad I brought Peter that evening I met Jesus." Peter's talk that day swung three thousand men and women over to Jesus. Somebody has said that if Peter were their spiritual father, certainly Andrew was their spiritual grandfather. And I think God reckons the thing that way, too.

There is a great deal of good talk these days about regenerating society. It used to be that men talked about "reaching the masses." Now the other putting of it is commoner. It is helpful talk whichever way it is put. The Gospel of Jesus is to affect all society. It has affected all society, and is to more and more. But the thing to mark keenly is this, the key to the mass is the man. The way to regenerate society is to start on the individual.

The law of influence through personal contact is too tremendous to be grasped. You influence one man and you have influenced a group of men, and then a group around each man of the group, and so on endlessly. Hand-picked fruit gets the first and best market. The keenest marksmen are picked out for the sharpshooters' corps.

The True Source of Strong Service.

One morning with a friend I walked out of the city of Geneva to where the waters of the lake flow with swift rush into the Rhone. And we were both greatly interested in the strange sight which has impressed so many travellers. There are two rivers whose waters come together here, the Rhone and the Arve, the Arve flowing into the Rhone. The waters of the Rhone are beautifully clear and sparkling. The waters of the Arve come through a clayey soil and are muddy, gray, and dull. And for a long distance the two waters are wholly distinct. Two rivers of water are in one river-bed, on one side the sparkling blue Rhone water, on the other the dull gray Arve water, and the line between the two sharply defined. And so it continues for a long distance. Then gradually they blend and the gray begins to tinge all through the blue.

I went to the guide-book and maps to find out something about this river that kept on its way undefiled by its neighbor for so long. Its source is in a glacier that is between ten thousand and eleven thousand feet high, descending "from the gates of eternal night, at the foot of the pillar of the sun." It is fed continually by the melting glacier which, in turn, is being kept up by the snows and cold. Rising at this great height, ever being renewed steadily by the glacier, it comes rushing down the swift descent of the Swiss Alps through the lake of Geneva and on. There is the secret of purity, side by side with its dirty neighbor.

Our lives must have their source high up in the mountains of God, fed by a ceaseless supply. Only so can there be the purity, and the momentum that shall keep us pure, and keep us moving down in contact with men of the earth. And we must keep closer to the source than is the Rhone at Geneva, else the streams flowing alongside will unduly influence us. Constant personal contact with Jesus is the beginning ever new of service.

02 - The Triple Life: The Perspective of Service.

2 - The Triple Life: The Perspective of Service.
By S.D. Gordon

(Luke ix:1-6; x:1-3, 17; John xx:19-23; Matthew xxviii:18-20.)

On An Errand for Jesus.

You remember there were four times that Jesus picked out a group of men, and sent them on a special errand. About the middle of the second year of His public life, He chose out twelve men and commissioned them for a special bit of work. Six months before the tragic end, He chose seventy others and sent them out in twos into all the places He was planning to visit Himself. It was a remarkable campaign for carrying the news which He was preaching into all the villages of that whole country through which His journey south lay.

Then the evening of that never-to-be-forgotten resurrection day, under wholly changed conditions, He again commissions ten men of that first twelve. Things had radically changed with Jesus. And there had been a bad break in the loyalty of these men. Two of their number are absent. Judas has gone to his own place, and Thomas was not there that evening. His absence cost him a week of doubting and mental distress. Ten of the old inner circle are commissioned anew. And then do you remember the last time they were together? It was about six weeks later, on the rounded top of the old Olives Mount, the eleven men with the Master. Four times He commissioned a group of men for some service He wanted done.

There are two things in these four commissions that make them alike. The same two things are in each. The first thing is this: they are bidden to "go." That ringing word "go ye" is in, each time. "As the Father hath sent Me even so send I you." It is a familiar word to every follower of Jesus then, and now, and always. A true follower of His always is stirred by a spirit of "go." A going Christian is a growing Christian. A going church has always been a growing church. Those ages when the church lost the vision of her Master's face on Olives, and let other sounds crowd out of her ears the sound of His voice, were stagnant ages. They are commonly spoken of in history as the dark ages. "Go" is the ringing keynote of the Christian life, whether in a man or in the church.

The second thing found always in each of these commissions is this: they were qualified, or empowered to go. Whom God calls He always qualifies. Where His voice comes His Spirit breathes. If there has come to you some bit of a call to service, to teach a class, or write a special letter, or speak a word, or take up something needing to be done. And you hesitate. You think that you cannot. You are not fit, you think, not qualified. The thing to do is to do it.

If the call is clear go ahead. Need is one of the strong calling voices of God. It is always safe to respond. Put out your foot in the answering swing, even though you cannot see clearly the place to put it down. God attends to that part. Power comes as we go.

The Parting Message.

Just now I want to talk with you a bit about the last one of these commissions, the Olivet commission. I do not know just what day it was given or at what hour. But I have thought it was in the twilight of a Sabbath evening. There's a yellow glow of light filling all the western sky running along the broken line of those hills yonder, and through the trees, and in upon this group of men standing.

Here in full view lies little Bethany fragrant with memories of Jesus' power. Over yonder, those tree tops down in a bit of valley with the brook--that is Gethsemane. And farther over there is the fortress city of Jerusalem. And just outside its wall is the bit of a knoll called Calvary. Here under these trees every night that last week of the tragedy Jesus had slept out in the open, with His seamless coat wrapped about Him. This is the spot He chooses for the good-by word. It is full of most precious, fragrant memories.

Here is the man who has been Simon, but out of whom a new man was coming these days, Peter, the man of rock. And here are John and James, sons of fire and of thunder, sons of their mother. And there, little Scotch Andrew. At least our Scotch friends seem to have adopted him as their very own. And close by his side is his friend with the Greek name, Philip. And here the man to whom Jesus paid the great tribute of naming him the guileless man.

And the others, not so well known to us, but very well known to Jesus, and to be not a whit less faithful than their brothers these coming days. But somehow as you look you are at once irresistibly drawn past these to Him--the Man in the midst. The Man with the great face, torn with the thorns, and cut with the thongs, but shining with a sweet, wondrous, beauty light.

It is the last time they are together. He is going away; coming back soon, they understand. They do not know just how soon. But meanwhile in His absence they are to be as He Himself would be if He remained among men. They are to stand for Him. And so with eyes fixed on His face they look, and listen, and wonder a bit, just what the last word will be.

What would you expect it to be? It was the good-by word between men who were lovers, dearest friends. The tenderest thing would be said and the most important. The one going away would speak of that which lay closest down in His own heart. And whatever He might say would sink deepest into their hearts, and control their action in the after days.

He had been talking to them very insistently, about an hour before, down in the city, about waiting there until the Holy Spirit came upon them. And that word has fastened itself into their minds with newly sharpened hooks of steel points. Now He talks about their being His witnesses, here at home among their own folks, and out among their half-breed Samaritan neighbors, whom they didn't like, and then--with eyes looking yearningly out and finger pointing steadily out--to the farthest reach of the planet. And now, as He is about to go, this is the word that comes from those lips:

> "All power hath been given unto Me.
> Therefore go ye,
> And make disciples of all nations."

A Secret Life of Prayer.

There are four things in that good-by word. Three are directly spoken, and one is not spoken, but directly implied. First is this, your chief work is to win men. That is directly said. The second is implied--it is the toughest task you ever undertook. That is implied in this that it will take more power than they have. A power that only He has. A supernatural power. And we all know how true that is. Of all luggage man is the hardest to move. He won't move unless he will. Every man of us that has ever tried to change somebody's else purpose knows how impossible it is unless by the inward pull. You simply cannot without the man's consent. The third thing is this: I have all the power needed. The fourth this: You go.

And the Master meant to tell them, and to tell us, this: that a man should lead a triple life, three lives in one. We sometimes hear of a man leading a double life in a bad sense. In a good sense, every one of us should be living a triple life, three distinct lives in one. The first of these three lives is this: a secret life, lived with Jesus, hidden from the eyes of men. An inner life of closest contact with Him, that the outside folks know nothing about.

Notice again the four statements in that good-by word. Your chief concern is to win men. It is the toughest task you ever undertook: it will take supernatural power. I have all the power you need. Instinctively you feel as though the fourth thing should be, "I will go." That would seem to be the logical conclusion. "No," Jesus says, "you go." Plainly if we are to do something taking supernatural power, and we haven't any such power of ourselves, there must be the closest kind of contact with the source of power. The man who is to go must be in the most intimate contact with the Man who has the powers needed in the going.

And this is simply a law of all life, given to us here by life's greatest Philosopher. The seen depends upon the secret always. The outer keys upon the inner. The life that men see depends wholly upon the life that only the Master sees. David had power to slay the lion and bear in secret, away from the gaze of men, before he had power to slay the giant before the wondering eyes of two nations. The closet becomes the swivel of the street.

In crossing the ocean there are two great dangers to be dreaded and guarded against, aside from the storms that may arise. The greater of these is an abandoned ship. One that through some stress of storm has been left by the sailors in the attempt to save their lives. It is most dangerous because it sends no warning ahead of its presence. In crossing the Atlantic by the more northern routes the other danger is from the icebergs that may be met in the steamer's path. If a fog obscure the lookout the boat is slowed down, and a man kept busy with line and thermometer taking the temperature of the water. The iceberg is kindlier than the derelict, in the chill it sends out. The presence of the danger can so be detected, and measures taken to avoid it.

But the great danger here is not simply in the huge mountain of ice that you see looming up against the sky, great as that is. It is in the unseen ice. Hidden away below is a mountain of ice twice as large and heavy as that seen above the water's surface. The danger lies in the terrific force of a blow from this hidden pile that would crush the strongest steel steamer, as I might crush an egg-shell in my fingers.

We all admire the beauty of the trees that rear their heads, and send out their branches, and make the world so beautiful with their soft green foliage. But have you thought of the twin tree, the unseen tree that belongs to these we see? For every tree that grows up and out with its beauty and fruit there is another. The twin tree goes down and out.

Sometimes, as far as this we see goes up, the other goes down; as far as the branches go out so far do the underneath branches go out, sometimes farther. This unseen tree is ever busy drawing moisture, and food from the soil and sending it, ceaselessly sending it, up to the upper tree. The beauty and fruitfulness above are because of this secret life of the tree.

I remember as a boy going to the bathroom in our home one day to draw some water. But none came. There were a few drops, and some sputtering--there's very apt to be sputtering when there is nothing else--but no flow of water. And I wondered why. Soon I found that the main pipe in the street was being fixed, and the water had been cut off at the curb. There was water in the pipe clear from the curbstone up to the spigot, but I could not get it because the reservoir connection under the ground had been turned off.

I have met some people since then that made me think of that. There is a reservoir of water, clear and sweet, with which they have had connection, and are supposed still to have. But when some thirsty body comes up for a bit of refreshment, there's some sputtering, some noise, may be a few stray drops--but no more. And folks seem thirstier because they were expecting a cool, satisfying drink that never came.

I think I know why it is so. The secret connection with the reservoir has been tampered with. There must be the secret contact with Jesus cultivated habitually if there is to be a sweet, strong outer life. And not cultivated by hothouse methods. Such plants won't stand the chilly air outside the glass-house. Cultivated by natural, simple contact with Jesus, over His Word, habitually, until everything comes under the influence of that secret life.

One day a man was standing on a busy downtown thoroughfare in Cleveland waiting for a car. There was a thick, dirty wire hanging down from the cross arm high up of the wire pole. He happened to stop there. And absorbed in thought, he mechanically put out his hand and took hold of the wire. Instantly a look of intense agony came into his face. His arm, and whole body began twisting and writhing. Then he fell to the ground lifeless. The dirty-looking wire had direct connections with the power-house. It was throbbing with a strong current. It was a "live" wire.

Some men who have seemed quite unattractive in the light of some modern standards have been found on touch to be charged with a life current of tremendous power. And some others, outwardly more attractive, have been found to be as powerless as a dead wire. And some there have been, and are, very winsome and attractive in themselves, and charged with the life current too. The great thing is the secret connections carefully maintained with the source of power.

There must be the closest kind of touch with God if His plan through us for a planet is to carry out. We do not run on the storage battery plan, but on the trolley plan, or the third rail. There must be constant full touch with the feed wire or rail. And that "must" should be spelled in capitals, and printed in red, and triply underscored.

A man must plan for the bit of quiet time daily, preferably in the early morning, alone with Jesus; with the door shut, the Book open, the spirit quiet, the mind alert, the knee bent, the will bent too. If it be resolutely planned for it can be gotten in every life. If not planned for with a bit of red iron in the will, it will surely slip out. And the man will surely slip down.

Here is found the spirit in which a man may live all the day long, wherever his feet may tread, in the fierce competition of trade, or in the deadly enervation of some society circles. Out of such a man shall breathe, all unconsciously to himself, an atmosphere fragrant as a mountain breeze over a field of wild roses. This is the first life Jesus bids us live.

An Open Life of Purity.

The second life we are to live is the exact reverse of this. It is indeed the outer side of this: an open life of purity lived among men for Jesus. Note again the logic of that good-by word. Your chief business is to be down there in the thick of the crowd, winning men out of the dust and dirt up into a new life of purity. It is the hardest job any man ever undertook. It is practically impossible unless you have a power quite more than human. Jesus quietly says, "I have the power that will do it."

Again you feel that He must say next, "I will go." The thing must be done. It is the one thing worth while. It will require a power we haven't. He has it. You feel as though He must do the going. "No," He says, with great emphasis. "You go. You be I; you live my life over again, down there among men." The "Ye" and "Me" in that sentence are meant to be interchangeable words.

He is asking us to live His life over again among men. No, it is more than that. He is asking us to let Him live His life over again in each of us. The Man with the power that men can't resist would reach out to them through us. He would be touching them in us. Jesus said, "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." He said again, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Jesus embodied the Father to men. He asks us to take His place and embody Himself to men.

Paul understood this thoroughly. In writing to the friends throughout Galatia, whom he had won up to Jesus, he says, "I have been crucified with Christ." There is an old dead "I." "Nevertheless I live." There is a new living "I." "Yet not I--the old I--but Christ liveth in me." He was the new I. There was a new personality within Paul. I never weary of recalling what Martin Luther said about that verse in the comment he made on Galatians. You remember he said, "If somebody should knock at my heart's door, and ask who lives here, I must not say 'Martin Luther lives here.' I would say 'Martin Luther--is--dead--Jesus--Christ--lives--here.'"

I wonder if any of us has ever been taken for Jesus. I wonder if anybody has ever mistaken any of us for Him. You remember, He used to move among men after the resurrection, and while they would feel the gentle winsomeness of His presence and talk, they did not recognize Him. Has somebody run across you or me sometime, and been with us a little while, and then gone away saying to himself, "I wonder if that was Jesus back again in disguise. He seemed so much like what I think Jesus must have been--I wonder."

Well, if it were so, of course we would not be conscious of it. A Jesus-man is never absorbed in thinking about himself. He is taken up with Jesus, and with folks. A man is always least conscious of the power of his own presence and life. Everybody else knows more about it than he does. Plainly this is the Master's plan for each of us. And more, it is the result when He is allowed free sway.

The controlling principle of His life was to please His Father. The pervading purpose and passion was to win men out and up. The characteristics of His life were purity, unselfishness, sympathy, and simplicity. We are to be as He. He was the Father to all the race of men. Each of us is to be Jesus to his circle.

Please notice I'm not talking about lips just now but about lives. The life is the indorsement of the lips. It makes the words of the lips more than they sound or seem. Or, it makes them less, sometimes pitiably less, little more than a discount clerk ever busily at work. The words ever go to the level of the life, up or down. Water seeks its level persistently. So do one's words, and they find it more quickly than the water, for they go through all obstructions. And the life is the leveler of the words, up or down.

So far as this second life is concerned a man's lips might be sealed, and his tongue dumb, but his life in its purity and simplicity, its unselfishness and sympathetic warmness will ever be spelling out Jesus. And He will be spelled out so big and plain that the man hurriedly running, or lazily creeping, or half blind in a cloud of dust, will be stopping and reading. If there were but more re-incarnations of Jesus how folks would be coming a-running to Him.

Do you remember that prayer in blank verse of the old Scottish preacher and poet and saint, Horatius Bonar? He said:

"Oh, turn me, mould me, mellow me for use.
Pervade my being with Thy vital force,
That this else inexpressive life of mine
May become eloquent and full of power,
Impregnated with life and strength divine.
Put the bright torch of heaven into my hand,
That I may carry it aloft
And win the eye of weary wanderers here below
To guide their feet into the paths of peace.
I cannot raise the dead,
Nor from this soil pluck precious dust,
Nor bid the sleeper wake,
Nor still the storm, nor bend the lightning back,
Nor muffle up the thunder,
Nor bid the chains fall from off creation's long enfettered limbs.
But I can live a life that tells on other lives,
And makes this world less full of anguish and of pain;
A life that like the pebble dropped upon the sea
Sends its wide circles to a hundred shores.
May such a life be mine.
Creator of true life, Thyself the life Thou givest,
Give Thyself, that Thou mayst dwell in me, and I
in Thee."

An Active Life of Service.

The third life is a life of active service, of aggressive earnestness in winning men. I say aggressive. That word does not mean noise and dust, shuffling of feet, and bustling confusion. It means rather the steady, steady movement of the sun which noiselessly, dustlessly, moves onward, hour after hour, day in and day out, regardless of any storms, or disturbances. It means the quiet, peaceful, but resistless uninterrupted movement of the moon rising night after night, and going through its circle of action. Earnestness means the burning of the inner spirit. Its fires dim not, for they are fed continually from secret sources.

This third life is spoken of directly: "Go ye and make disciples." The going is to be continued until folks farthest away have heard. Some people are bounded by the horizon of the town where they live, some by the particular church to which they belong, some the denomination, some the state, or even the nation. Jesus fixes the horizon of His follower as that of the world. Jesus was visionary. He talked about all nations, a race, a world.

All are to go. They are to go to all. Some may be made wholly free, by arrangement with their fellow-followers, to give their full strength and time to the direct going and telling. These are highly favored in privilege. Some of these may go to deserted darkened places in the home land. Some may go to the city slum, which in its dire need is of close kin to the foreign-mission land. These are yet more highly favored in privilege.

Some may go to those far distant lands where Jesus is not known, where the need of Him is so pathetically great. These are the most highly favored in the privilege of service accorded them. Many others have been left free of the necessity of earning bread and home and clothing and so have a rare opportunity of devoting themselves to the going, as the Spirit of Jesus guides. Many are given the talent to earn easily, and so, if they will, may give much strength to service.

The great majority everywhere and always are absorbed for most of the waking hours of the day in earning something to eat, and something to wear, and somewhere to sleep. Yet where there is the warm touch with Jesus there will come the yearning for purity, and the life of service. With these as with all there may be the service, strong and sweetly fragrant. There is always some bit of spare time, with planning, that can be used in direct service in church, or school, or mission. And the secret life of prayer will give a steadiness that will guard against the over-use of one's strength.

There can be a personal going to some in words tactfully spoken. There is the life of sweet purity and gentle patience always so winsome, that speaks all the time in musical tones to one's circle. There is an enormous, unconscious aggressiveness about such a life. Then there can be the going through gold. And the entire planet can be brought under one's thumb of influence through the strangely simple power of prayer.

I have been running across some new versions of this last word of Jesus. A sort of re-revisions they are. I have not found them in the common print, but printed in lives, the lives of men. The print is large, chiefly capitals, easily read. These lives are so noisy as to quite shut out what the lips may be saying. There are variations in these translations.

Sometime the message is made to read like this: "All power hath been given unto Me, therefore go ye, and make--coins of gold--oh, belong to church of course--that is proper and has many advantages--and give too. There are advantages about that--give freely, or make it seem freely--give to missions at home and abroad. That is regarded as a sure sign of a liberal spirit. But be careful about the proportion of your giving. For the real thing that counts at the year's end is how much you have added to the stock of dollars in your grasp. These other things are good, but--merely incidental. This thing of getting gold is the main drive."

Please understand me, I never heard any of these folks talk in this blunt way with their tongues. So far as I can hear, they are saying something quite different. But what their tongues are saying is made indistinct and blurred by some noise near by.

Other translations I have run across have this variation: "Make a place for yourself, in your profession, in society. Make a comfortable living;--with a wide margin of meaning to that word 'comfortable'--belong to the church, become a pillar, or at least move in the pillar's circle, give of course, even freely in appearance, but remember these are the dust in the scale, the other is the thing that weighs. All of one's energies must be centered on the main thing."

May I ask you to listen very quietly, while I repeat the Master's own words over very softly and clearly, so that they may get into the inner cockles of our hearts anew? "All power hath been given unto Me; therefore go ye, and make disciples of all nations." These other translations are wrong. They are misleading. The one main thing is influencing men for Jesus.

The Perspective of True Service.

It is not the only thing by any means. There is a multitude of things perfectly proper and that must be done and well done. But through all their doing is to run this one strong purpose. These other things are details, important details, indispensably important, yet details. The other is the one main thing toward which the doing of all the others is to bend and blend.

Please mark keenly that there are three lives here; three in one. The secret life of prayer, the open life of purity, the active life of service Not one, nor the other, not any two, but all three, this is the true ideal. This is the true rounded life. And note sharply that this gives the true perspective of service. The service life grows up out of the other two. Its roots lie down in prayer and purity. This explains why so much service is fruitless. It isn't rooted. There is no rich subsoil.

It seems to be a part of the hurt of sin that men do not keep the proportion of things balanced, and never have. In former days men shut themselves up behind great walls that they might be pleasing to God. They shut out the noise that they might have quiet to pray. They thought to shut out the sin that they might be pure, forgetting that they carried it in with them.

In our day things have swung clean over to the other extreme. Now all is activity. The emphasis of the time is upon doing. There is a lot of running around, and rushing around. There is a great deal of activity that seems inseparable from dust. The wheels make such a lot of noise as they go around. Doing that does not root down in the secret touch with Jesus, may be quite vigorous for a time, but soon leaves behind as its only memory withered up branches. This is a practical age, we are constantly told. Things must be judged by the standard of usefulness. That is surely true, and good, but there is very serious danger that the true perspective of service be lost in the dust that is being raised.

The imprint of this disproportion or lack of proportion can even be found in the theological teaching of long ago and now. At one time religion was defined as having to do with a man's relation to God. That was emphasized to the utter hiding away of all else. In our own day the swing is clear over to the other side. Definitions of religion that make everything of helping one's brother and fellow, are the popular thing. There seems to be a sort of astigmatism that keeps us from seeing things straight. Though always there have been those that saw straight and lived truly.

Mark keenly that true touch with God always brings the longing to be pure, and the loving of one's fellow. The nearer one gets to God the nearer will he find himself getting to men. Often we find ourselves getting new wonderful glimpses of God as we are eagerly helping somebody. Up seems to include out, as though the line that drew us up to God led through men. Yet with that always goes the other fact that touch with God makes one long to be alone with Him.

There are always the three turnings of a true life, upward, inward, outward. Upward to God, inward to self, outward to the world. The more one knows God the keener is the longing to get off with Himself alone, the deeper is the yearning to be pure, and the stronger is the passion to help others regardless of any sacrifice involved.

A Long Time Coming.

There is an old story that caught fire in my heart the first time it came to me, and burns anew at each memory of it. It told of a time in the southern part of our country when the sanitary regulations were not so good as of late. A city was being scourged by a disease that seemed quite beyond control. The city's carts were ever rolling over the cobble-stones, helping carry away those whom the plague had slain.

Into one very poor home, a laboring man's home, the plague had come. And the father and children had been carried out until on the day of this story there remained but two, the mother and her baby boy of perhaps five years. The boy crept up into his mother's lap, put his arms about her neck, and with his baby eyes so close, said, "Mother, father's dead, and brothers and sister are dead;--if you die, what'll I do?"

The poor mother had thought of it, of course, What could she say? Quieting her voice as much as possible, she said, "If I die, Jesus will come for you." That was quite satisfactory to the boy. He had been taught about Jesus, and felt quite safe with Him, and so went about his play on the floor. And the boy's question proved only too prophetic. And quick work was done by the dread disease. And soon she was being laid away by strange hands.

It is not difficult to understand that in the sore distress of the time the boy was forgotten. When night came, he crept into bed, but could not sleep. Late in the night he got up, found his way out along the street, down the road, in to where he had seen the men put her. And throwing himself down on the freshly shoveled earth, sobbed and sobbed until nature kindly stole consciousness away for a time.

Very early the next morning a gentleman coming down the road from some errand of mercy, looked over the fence, and saw the little fellow lying there. Quickly suspecting some sad story, he called him, "My boy, what are you doing there?--My boy, wake up, what are you doing there all alone?" The boy waked up, rubbed his baby eyes, and said, "Father's dead, and brothers and sister's dead, and now--mother's--dead--too. And she said, if she did die, Jesus would come for me. And He hasn't come. And I'm so tired waiting." And the man swallowed something in his throat, and in a voice not very clear, said, "Well, my boy, I've come for you." And the little fellow waking up, with his baby eyes so big, said "I think you've been a long time coming."

Whenever I read these last words of Jesus or think of them, there comes up a vision that floods out every other thing. It is of Jesus Himself standing on that hilltop. His face is all scarred and marred, thorn-torn and thong-cut. But it is beautiful, passing all beauty of earth, with its wondrous beauty light. Those great eyes are looking out so yearningly, out as though they were seeing men, the ones nearest and those farthest. His arm is outstretched with the hand pointing out. And you cannot miss the rough jagged hole in the palm. And He is saying, "Go ye." The attitude, the scars, the eyes looking, the hand pointing, the voice speaking, all are saying so intently, "Go ye."

And as I follow the line of those eyes, and the hand, there comes up an answering vision. A great sea of faces that no man ever yet has numbered, with answering eyes and outstretching hands. From hoary old China, from our blood-brothers in India, from Africa where sin's tar stick seems to have blackened blackest, from Romanized South America, and the islands, aye from the slums, and frontiers, and mountains in the homeland, and from those near by, from over the alley next to your house maybe, they seem to come. And they are rubbing their eyes, and speaking. With lives so pitifully barren, with lips mutely eloquent, with the soreness of their hunger, they are saying, "You're a long time coming."

Shall we go? Shall we not go? But how shall we best go? By keeping in such close touch with Jesus that the warm throbbing of His heart is ever against our own. Then will come a new purity into our lives as we go out irresistibly attracted by the attraction of Jesus toward our fellows. And then too shall go out of ourselves and out of our lives and service, a new supernatural power touching men. It is Jesus within reaching men through us.

03 - Yokefellows: The Rhythm of Service.

3 - Yokefellows: The Rhythm of Service.
By S.D. Gordon

(Matthew xi. 25-30; Luke x:1, 17, 21-24.)

The Master's Invitation.

It was about six months before the tragic end that Jesus sent out thirty-five deputations of two each. He was beginning that slow memorable journey south that ended finally at the cross. These men are sent ahead to prepare the way. By and by they return and make a glad exultant report of the good results attending their work. Even the demons had acknowledged the power of Jesus' name on their lips.

As He was listening Jesus looked up, and said, "Father, I thank Thee." And then, as though He could see those great crowds to whom they had been ministering in His name, He said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

There are two invitations here, "come" and "take." There are two sorts of people. Those who are tugging and straining at work, and carrying heavy burdens, and then those who have received rest, and are now asked to go a step farther. There are two kinds of rest, a given rest, and a found rest. The given rest cannot be found. It comes as a sheer out gift, from Jesus' own hand. The found rest cannot be given, may I say? It comes stealing its gentle way in as one fits into Jesus' plan for his life.

Many folks have accepted the first of these invitations. They have "come" to Jesus, and received sweet rest from His hand. But they have gone no farther. At the close of that first invitation there is a punctuation period, a full stop. Some of the old schoolbooks used to say that one should stop at a period and count four. Well, a great many people have followed that old rule here, and more than followed. They have stopped at that period, and never gotten past it. I want just now to ask you to come with me as we talk together a bit about this second invitation, "Take My yoke."

Jesus used several different words in tying people up to Himself. There is a growth in them, as He draws us nearer and nearer. First always is the invitation "Come unto Me." That means salvation, life. Then He says, "Follow Me," "Come after Me." That means discipleship. "Learn of Me" means training in discipleship. "Yoke up with Me" means closest fellowship. "Abide in Me" leads one out into abundant life. "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you," means living Jesus' life over again. And then the last "Go ye" is the outer reach of all, service for a world.

Surrender a Law of Life.

Just now we want to talk together over this little three-worded sentence from Jesus' lips, "Take My yoke." What does it mean? Well, that word yoke is used in all literature outside of this book, as well as here, to mean this: surrender by one and mastery by another one. Where two nations have fought and the weaker has been forced to yield, it is quite commonly spoken of as wearing the yoke of the stronger nation. The Romans required their prisoners of war to pass under a yoke, sometimes a common cattle yoke, sometimes an improvised yoke, to indicate their utter subjugation. These Hebrews to whom Jesus is speaking are writhing with sore shoulders under the galling yoke of the Romans. One can imagine an emphasis placed on the "My." As though Jesus would say, "You have one yoke now; change yokes. Take My yoke."

There is too a higher, finer meaning to this surrender when by mutual arrangement and free consent there is a yielding of one to another for a purpose. And so what Jesus means here is simply this--surrender. Bend your head down, bend down your neck, even though it's a bit stiff going your own way, and fit it into this yoke of mine. Surrender to Me as your Master.

And somebody says, "I don't like that. 'Surrender!' that sounds like force. I thought salvation was free." Will you please remember that the principle of surrender is a law of all life. It is the law of military life, inside the army. Every man there has surrendered to the officers above him. In some armies that surrender has amounted to absolute control of a man's person and property by the head of the army. It is the law of naval service. The moment a man steps on board a man-of-war to serve he surrenders the control of his life and movements absolutely to the officer in command.

It is the law in public, political life. A man entering the President's cabinet, as a secretary of some department, surrenders any divergent views he may have to those of his chief. With the largest freedom of thought that must always be where there are strong men, yet there must of necessity be the one dominant will if the administration is to be a powerful one. It is the law of commercial life. The man entering the employ of a bank, a manufacturing concern, a corporation of any sort, in whatever capacity, enters to do the will of somebody else. Always there must be the one dominant will if there is to be power and success.

And then may I hush my voice and speak of the more sacred things very softly and remind you of this. Surrender is the law of the highest form of life known to us men. I mean wedded life. Where the surrender is not by one to the other, but by each to the other. Two wills, always two wills where there is strong life, yet in effect but one. Two persons but only one purpose.

And so you see, Jesus, the Master, the greatest of earth's teachers and philosophers, is striking the keynote of life when here He asks us to surrender freely and wholly to Himself as the autocrat of our lives. He asks us to bend our strong wills to His, to yield our lives, our plans, our ambitions, our friendships, our gold, absolutely to His control.

Free Surrender.

And if you still do not like the sound of that word surrender. It has a harsh sound that grates upon your nerves. Will you please notice the first word of that little sentence--"Take." Jesus does not say in sharp, hard tones, "Come here; bend down; I'll put this yoke on you." Never that. If you will, of your own glad accord, freely, winsomely take the yoke upon you--that is what He asks. In military usage surrender is forced. Here it must be free. Nothing else would be acceptable to Jesus.

When our commissioners went a few years ago to Paris to treat with the Spaniards, the latter are said to have desired certain changes in the language of the protocol. With the polished suavity for which they are noted the Spaniards urged that there be made slight changes in the words: no real change in the meaning, they said, simply in the verbiage. And our Judge Day at the head of the American Commissioners, listened politely and patiently until the plea was presented. And then he quietly said, "The article will be signed as it reads." And the Spaniards protested, with much courtesy. The change asked for was trivial, merely in the language, not in the force of the words. And our men listened patiently and courteously. Then Mr. Day is said to have locked his little square jaw and replied very quietly, "The article will be signed as it reads." And the article was so signed. That is military usage. The surrender was forced. The strength of the American fleets, the prestige of great victory were back of the quiet man's demand.

But that is not the law here. Jesus asks for only what we give freely and spontaneously. He does not want anything except what is given with a free, glad heart. This is to be a voluntary surrender. Jesus is a voluntary Saviour. He wants only voluntary followers. He would have us be as Himself. The oneness of spirit leads the way into the intimacy of closest friendship. And that is His thought for us.

Do you remember those fine lines, "The quality of mercy is not strained"--if the thing be forced through a strainer, there is no mercy there--"it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath." Only what the warm current of His love draws out does Jesus desire from us. It is to be a free surrender.

"Him."

And if you still knit your mental brows, and shrug your shoulder. The thing hasn't yet shaken off the harshness you have been clothing it with. Please notice the second word of that sentence--"My." "Take My Yoke." May I say gently but frankly that I would not surrender the control of my life to any of you who are listening so kindly. And I surely would not ask that I should be the autocrat of any of your lives. But--when--Jesus comes along. The Man with the marvelous face all torn and scarred, but with that great, soft, shining light. I do not know just how all of you feel. I can guess how some of you feel. But I know one man who cannot respond too quickly and eagerly. The only thing to do is to make the will as strong as it can be made, and then to use all of its strength in surrendering eagerly to this matchless Man Jesus. Doubtless many of you know fully that same eagerness, and maybe more.

I remember a simple story that twined its clinging tendril lingers about my heart. It was of a woman whose long years had ripened her hair, and sapped her strength. She was a true saint in her long life of devotion to God. She knew the Bible by heart, and would repeat long passages from memory. But as the years came the strength went, and with it the memory gradually went too, to her grief. She seemed to have lost almost wholly the power to recall at will what had been stored away.

But one precious bit still stayed. She would sit by the big sunny window of the sitting room in her home, repeating over that one bit, as though chewing a delicious titbit, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." By and by part of that seemed to slip its hold, and she would quietly be repeating, "that which I have committed to Him."

The last few weeks as the ripened old saint hovered about the border land between this and the spirit world her feebleness increased. Her loved ones would notice her lips moving. And thinking she might be needing some creature comfort they would go over and bend down to listen for her request. And time and again they found the old saint repeating over to herself one word, over and over again, the same one word, "Him--Him--Him." She had list the whole Bible but one word. But she had the whole Bible in that one word. Did she not? This is a surrender to Him, the Man of the Book. The Man of all life.

Yoked Service.

They tell me that on a farm the yoke means service. Cattle are yoked to serve, and to serve better, and to serve more easily. This is a surrender for service, not for idleness. In military usage surrender often means being kept in enforced idleness and under close guard. But this is not like that. It is all up on a much higher plane. Jesus has every man's life planned. It always awes me to recall that simple tremendous fact. With loving strong thoughtfulness He has thought into each of our lives, and planned it out, in whole, and in detail. He comes to a man and says, "I know you. I have been thinking about you." Then very softly--"I--love--you. I need you, for a plan of Mine. Please let Me have the control of your life and all your power, for My plan." It is a surrender for service.

It is yoked service. There are two bows or loops to a yoke. A yoke in action has both sides occupied, and as surely as I bow down My head and slip it into the bow on one side--I know there is Somebody else on the other side. It is yoked living now, yoked fellowship, yoked service. It is not working for God now. It is working with Him. Jesus never sends anybody ahead alone. He treads down the pathway through every thicket, pushes aside the thorn-bushes, and clears the way, and then says with that taking way of His, "Come along with Me. Let's go together, you and I."

A man got up in a meeting to speak. It was down in Rhode Island, out a bit from Providence. He was a farmer, an old man. He had become a Christian late in life, and this evening was telling about his start. He had been a rough, bad man. He said that when he became a Christian even the cat knew that some change had taken place. That caught my ear. It had a genuine ring. It seemed prophetic of the better day coming for all the lower animal creation. So I listened.

He said that the next morning after the change of purpose he was going down to the village a little distance from his farm. He swung along the road, happy in heart, singing softly to himself, and thinking about the Saviour. All at once he could feel the fumes coming out of a saloon ahead. He couldn't see the place yet, but his keen trained nose felt it. The odors came out strong, and gripped him.

He said he was frightened, and wondered how he would get by. He had never gone by before, he said; always gone in; but he couldn't go in now. But what to do, that was the rub. Then he smiled, and said, "I remembered, and I said, 'Jesus, you'll have to come along and help me get by, I never can by myself.'" And then in his simple, illiterate way he said, "and He come--and we went by, and we've been going by ever since."

Ah, the old Rhode Island farmer had found the whole simple philosophy of the true life. Our Yokefellow is always there alongside. Every temptation that comes to us He has felt the sharp edge of, and can overcome. Every problem, every difficulty, every opportunity He knows, and is right there, swinging in rhythmic step alongside. It's yoked living and yoked service.

In Step with Jesus.

Then please mark keenly that this surrender is for surrendered service. No free-lancing here. No guerrilla warfare, no bushwhacking. There seems to be quite a lot of that, in this army. Some earnest folks are very busy "helping God out," regardless of the general movement of the whole army. And a great help they are too--they think. It would be difficult to see how God would ever get along without them--they seem to think. Poor folks, they have gotten so covered with the dust made by their own feet that they've completely lost track of things. There is a Lord to this harvest. There is a great Commander-in-chief to this campaign. He has the whole campaign for a world carefully planned out. And each man's part in it is planned too. He knows best what needs to be done. He sees keenly the strategic points, and the emergencies. If only He could but depend on our ears being trained to know His voice, and our wills trained to simple, full obedience, how much difference it would make to Him. Simple, full strong obedience seems to take the keenest intelligence, the strongest will, and the most thorough discipline.

"Just to ask Him what to do,
All the day.
And to make you quick and true
To obey."[3]

This surrender is for glad, obedient surrendered service.

And note too that it is for training in service. They tell me that where cattle are yoked for work it is usual to put a young restive beast with an old, steady-going animal. The old worker sets the pace, and pulls evenly, steadily ahead, and by and by the young undisciplined beast gradually comes to learn the pace. That seems to fit in here with graphic realness. So many of us seem to be full of an undisciplined unseasoned strength. There are apt to be some hard drives ahead, and then pulling back with a sudden jerk, and side lunges this way and that. There is splendid strength, and eager willingness, but not much is accomplished for lack of the steady, steady going regardless of rocks or ruts.

Jesus says, "Yoke up with Me. Let's pull together, you and I." And if we will pull steadily along, content to be by His side, and to be hearing His quiet voice, and always to keep His pace, step by step with Him, without regard to seeing results, all will be well, and by and by the best results and the largest will be found to have come. And remember that as on the farm, so here, the yoke is always carefully adjusted so that the young learner may have the easier pulling.

But it is well to put in this bit of a caution. If a man put his head into the yoke, and then pull back--well, there'll be a man with a badly chafed, sore neck in that neighborhood, and oil will be in demand. The one safe rule is swinging straight ahead, steady, steady, without even stopping to decide if the plow has cut properly, or if it is worth while.

The Scar-marks of Surrender.

Then Jesus adds this: "Learn of Me." I used to wonder just what that means. But I think I know a part of its meaning now. You remember the Hebrews had a scheme of qualified slavery.[4] A man might sell his service for six years but at the end of that time he was scot-free. On the New Year's morning of the seventh year he was given his full liberty, and given some grain and oil to begin life with anew.

But if on that morning he found himself reluctant to leave, all his ties binding him to his master's home, this was the custom among them. He would say to his master, "I don't want to leave you. This is home to me. I love you and the mistress. I love the place. All my ties and affections are here. I want to stay with you always." His master would say, "Do you mean this?" "Yes," the man would reply, "I want to belong to you forever."

Then his master would call in the leading men of the village or neighborhood to witness the occurrence. And he would take his servant out to the door of the home, and standing him up against the door-jamb would pierce the lobe of his ear through with an awl. I suppose like a shoemaker's awl. Then the man became not his slave, but his bond-slave, forever. It was a personal surrender of himself to his master; it was voluntary; it was for love's sake; it was for service; it was after a trial; it was for life.

Now that was what Jesus did. If you will turn to that Fortieth Psalm,[5] from which we read, you will find words that are plainly prophetic of Jesus, and afterwards quoted as referring to Him. "Mine ears hast Thou opened, or digged or pierced for me." And in the fiftieth chapter of Isaiah,[6] revised version, are these words likewise prophetic of Jesus. "The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away backward. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting."

And the truth is this. May the Spirit of God burn it deep into our hearts. Jesus was a surrendered Man. Stop a bit and think into what that means. Jesus is the giant Man of the human race, thought of just now as a man, though He was so much more, too. In His wisdom as a teacher, His calm poised judgment, the purity of His life, the tremendous power of His personality in swaying man, He clear overtops the whole race of men. Now that Master Man, that giant of the race, was a surrendered Man. For instance run through John's Gospel, and pick out the negatives on His lips, the "nots." Not His own will, nor His own words, nor His own teaching, nor His own works.[7] Jesus came to earth to do Somebody's else will. With all His giant powers He was utterly absorbed in doing what some One else wished done. And now this giant Man, this surrendered Man, says, "You do as I have done. Learn of Me: I am wholly given up to doing My Father's will. You be wholly surrendered to Me, and so together we will carry out the Father's will."

Some one of a practical turn says, "That sounds very nice, but is it not a bit fanciful? The lobe of Jesus' ear was not pierced through, was it?" No. You are right. The scar-mark of Jesus' surrender was not in His ear, as with the old Hebrew slave. You are quite right. It was in His cheek, and brow, on His back, in His side and hands and feet. The scar-marks of His surrender were--are--all over His face and form. Everybody who surrenders bears some scar of it because of sin, his own or somebody's else. Referring to the suffering endured in service Paul tenderly reckons it as a mark of Jesus' ownership--"I bear the scars, the stigmata, of the Lord Jesus." Even of the Master Himself is this so.

And that scarred Jesus whose body told and tells of His surrender to His Father comes to us. And with those hands eagerly outstretched, and eyes beaming with the earnestness of His great passion for men, He says, "Yoke up with Me, please. Let Me have the control of all your splendid powers, in carrying out our Father's will for a world."

Full Power through Rhythm.

Then Jesus, with a sweep, gathers up all the results in a single sentence, "Ye shall find rest unto your souls." Some one may be thinking, "I do not feel the need of rest or peace so much. I am hungry for power." Will you please notice that Jesus is going to the very root of the thing here. There must be peace before there can be power. You shall find peace. Others shall find power. You will be conscious of the sweet sense of peace within. Others will be conscious of the fragrant power breathing out of your life, and service, and your very person.

These things, peace and power, are the same. They are different movements of the same river of God. The presence of God in fine harmony with you, that it is that brings the sweet peace. And that too it is that brings the gracious power into the life. The inward flow of the river is peace. The outward flow of the same stream is power. There cannot be power save as there is peace. There is nothing that hinders and holds back power as does friction. That is true in mechanics: a bit of friction grit between the wheels will check the full working of the machinery. A small nut fallen down out of place will completely stop the machine and bring all of its power to a standstill.

This is heart rest. The heart is the center, the citadel of the life. When the heart rests all is at rest. If the citadel can be captured the outworks are included. It is a found rest. It comes quietly stealing its soft way in as you go about your regular round of life. Just where you are, in the thick of the old circumstances and conditions, there comes breathing gently into your very being the great fragrant peace of God. You find it coming in. There is all the zest of finding.

It is rest in service. To many folks those two words "yoke" and "rest" have seemed to jar, as though they did not get along well together. But they do. The jarring is not in them but in our misunderstanding of them. A yoke, we have thought, means work. Rest means quitting work; no more need of work. But that is a bit of the hurt of sin that gets so many things wrong end to.

"Rest is not quitting
The busy career;
Rest is the fitting
Of self to its sphere."[8]

True rest is in the unhurried rhythm of action. Have you thought of when your heart rests? It does not stop, of course, while life lasts. But it rests. It rests between beats. A beat and a rest. A throb of power and a moment of perfect rest. A mighty motion that sends the warm red life through all the intricate machinery of the body; then quiet composed rest. The secret of the immeasurable power of this organ we call the heart lies just here. There is enough power in a normal human heart to batter down Bunker Hill Monument if it could be centered upon it. The secret of that power is in the rhythm of action that combines motion with rest. We call rhythm of color, beauty. Rhythm of sound is music. Rhythm of action is power.

I have often stood as a boy on the streets of old Philadelphia, and watched a gang of foreign laborers at work. As a rule they could speak only the language of their own fatherland. There would be a gang-boss to direct their movements. Perhaps it was a huge stone to be moved, or a piece of structural iron, or a heavy rail to be torn up. The ends of their crowbars were fitted under the thing to be moved. Then they waited a moment for the gang-boss to give the word. He would say, "heave ho!"

Then all together they would sing "heave ho," and push. And a "heave ho," and push; a "heave ho," and a push. They made perfect music. There was always a small crowd gathered, watching and enjoying the simple music. Their work was easier because done rhythmically. This, of course, is the simple philosophy that provides music for soldiers on march. The men can walk much longer, and farther, with less fatigue if they go to the sound of music.

The story is told of the contracts for some bridge-building in the Soudan being carried off by American bidders. Their competitors in the bidding specified a year's time or so, for the work. The Americans agreed to do it in three months. They were awarded the contract, and to the others' surprise had the work completed within the specified time.

One of the contractors who had bid for the job on the basis of a year's time said afterwards to the successful contractor, "I wish, if you wouldn't mind doing so, you would tell me how you ever got that work done in so short a time with those undisciplined Soudanese natives for workmen. I have had them on other contracts and I know I couldn't have done it. How did you ever do it?"

And the American, whose blood was British a generation or two back, and farther back yet Teutonic, smiled as he quietly said, "We had a band of native musicians playing the liveliest music they knew within earshot of every gang of laborers, while our gang-bosses kept them steadily at work."

Rhythm is the secret of power. Full rhythm is possible only where there is full obedience to nature. The man in full sweet harmony with God in all of his life knows the stilling ecstasy of peace, and the marvelous outgoings of real power. You shall find within your heart the great stilling calm of God, as steadying as the rock of ages, as exhilarating as the subtle fragrance of flowers, and as restful as a mother's bosom to her babe.

He is Our Peace.

But there is something here finer yet by far than this. Everything God provides for us is personal. There is always the personal touch and presence. Do you remember that during the earlier days of the recent war with Spain this occurrence frequently took place? In the Caribbean waters a Spanish merchantman would be overtaken by an American warship. A few shots were sent over the bows of the merchantman with a demand for surrender. And then the Spanish flag was seen to drop from the merchantman's masthead in token of surrender.

Then this was the method of procedure. A prize crew, consisting of an officer with a few ensigns, was lowered from the American boat, pulled across, and taken aboard the captured boat. The moment the prize crew stepped aboard they were masters of the boat in their government's name. Their presence signified the surrender of the foreigner, and the forced peace now between the two boats.

On a much higher plane this is what takes place with us. There has been flying at my masthead a flag with a big I upon it. As quickly as I drop it in token of my surrender to Somebody else, a prize crew is sent aboard to take possession, and assume control. Who is the prize crew? The Holy Spirit, whom Jesus the Master sends to represent Himself. He steps aboard at once.

He paces the deck as the ship's Master. His presence is peace. "He is our peace." "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace." And while He occupies the captain's quarters, with full cheery obedience on board, there is ever the fine aroma of peace everywhere, and the fullness of power.

The Master's Touch.

One morning a number of years ago in London a group of people had gathered in a small auction shop for an advertised sale of fine old antiques and curios. The auctioneer brought out an old blackened, dirty-looking violin. He said, "Ladies and gentlemen, here is a remarkable old instrument I have the great privilege of offering to you. It is a genuine Cremona, made by the famous Antonius Stradivarius himself. It is very rare, and worth its weight in gold. What am I bid?" The people present looked at it critically. And some doubted the accuracy of the auctioneer's statements. They saw that it did not have the Stradivarius name cut in. And he explained that some of the earliest ones made did not have the name. And that some that had the name cut in were not genuine. But he could assure them that this was genuine. Still the buyers doubted and criticised, as buyers have always done. Five guineas in gold were bid, but no more. The auctioneer perspired and pleaded. "It was ridiculous to think of selling such a rare violin for such a small sum," he said. But the bidding seemed hopelessly stuck there.

Meanwhile a man had entered the shop from the street. He was very tall and very slender, with very black hair, middle-aged, wearing a velvet coat. He walked up to the counter with a peculiar side-wise step, and without noticing anybody in the shop picked up the violin, and was at once absorbed in it. He dusted it tenderly with his handkerchief, changed the tension of the strings, and held it up to his ear lingeringly as though hearing something. Then putting the end of it up in position he reached for the bow, while the murmur ran through the little audience, "Paganini."

The bow seemed hardly to have touched the strings when such a soft exquisite note came out filling the shop, and holding the people spellbound. And as he played the listeners laughed for very delight, and then wept for the fullness of their emotion. The men's hats were off, and they all stood in rapt reverence, as though in a place of worship. He played upon their emotions as he played upon the old soil-begrimed violin.

By and by he stopped. And as they were released from the spell of the music the people began clamoring for the violin. "Fifty guineas," "sixty," "seventy," "eighty," they bid in hot haste. And at last it was knocked down to the famous player himself for one hundred guineas in gold, and that evening he held a vast audience of thousands breathless under the spell of the music he drew from the old, dirty, blackened, despised violin.

It was despised till the master-player took possession. Its worth was not known. The master's touch revealed the rare value, and brought out the hidden harmonies. He gave the doubted little instrument its true place of high honor before the multitude. May I say softly, some of us have been despising the worth of the man within. We have been bidding five guineas when the real value is immeasurably above that because of the Maker. Do not let us be underbidding God's workmanship.

The violin needed dusting, and readjustment of its strings before the music came. Shall we not each of us yield this rarest instrument, his own personality, to the Master's hand? There will be some changes needed, no doubt, as the Master-player takes hold. And then will go singing out of our persons and our lives, the rarest music of God, that shall enthrall and bring all within earshot to the Master-musician.

÷04 - A Passion for Winning Men: The Motive-power

4 - A Passion for Winning Men: The Motive-power of Service.
By S.D. Gordon

(Mark vi:30-34.)

A Day off.

One morning toward the end, in the midst of His busiest campaigning, Jesus was very tired. It is one of the touches of His humanness. So He said to His disciples, "Let us take a day off." And they could see the sense of it. They were tired too. So they got a boat, and boarded her, and set sail, and headed out across the lake. And meanwhile a crowd of people had come down to the beach to be talked to, and healed, and helped in various ways.

And you can just see the look of disappointment in their faces as they say, "Why, He's going away." And for a few moments they stand there utterly dejected. Then somebody--for a long while I have thought it was a woman--somebody with eyes keenly watching the direction of the boat, said, "I believe He's going so and so"--naming a place across the lake--"let's run around the head of the lake, and meet Him when He gets out."

And the crowd was taken with that. And they ran--literally ran--around the head of the lake. And as they went they spread the word, "The Master's going so and so. Come along with us." And the people came eagerly out of the villages and cross-roads. And the crowd thickened and the longer way around in distance proved the shorter way there in time. For by and by when Peter ran the nose of the boat into the sand on the other side, and the Master got out for a day off, there were five thousand men, maybe ten thousand people waiting to receive Him.

Do you think that Peter scrooged down his eyebrows, and in a jerky voice said, "They might have given Him one day to Himself. Can't they see He's tired?" Do you think that likely John chimed in, with that fire in his voice which the after years mellowed and sweetened but never lost,--"Yes, how inconsiderate a crowd is!" Do you think so? I do. Because they were so much like us. But He--the most tired of them all--"was moved with compassion," and spent the whole day in teaching, and talking personally, and healing. And then when they had gone He went off to the mountain for the quiet time at night He could not get in the daytime.

Moved with Compassion.

There is a great word used of Jesus, and by Him, nine times[9] in these brief records, the word compassion. The sight of a leprous man, or of a demon-distressed man, moved Him. The great multitudes huddling together after Him, so pathetically, like leaderless sheep, eager, hungry, tired, always stirred Him to the depths. The lone woman, bleeding her heart out through her eyes, as she followed the body of her boy out--He couldn't stand that at all.

And when He was so moved, He always did something. He clean forgot His own bodily needs so absorbed did He become in the folks around Him. The healing touch was quickly given, the demonized man released from his sore bonds, the disciples organized for a wider movement to help, the bread multiplied so the crowds could find something comforting between their hunger-cleaned teeth.

The sight of suffering always stirred Him. The presence of a crowd seemed always to touch and arouse Him peculiarly. He never learned that sort of city culture that can look unmoved upon suffering or upon a leaderless, helpless crowd. That word compassion, used of Him, is both deep and tender in its meaning. The word, actually used under our English means to have the bowels or heart, the seat of emotion, greatly stirred.

The kindred word, sympathy, means to have the heart yearning, literally to be suffering the same distress, to be so moved by somebody's pain or suffering that you are suffering within yourself the same pain too. Our plain English word, fellow-feeling, is the same in its force. Seeing the suffering of some one else so moves you that the same suffering is going on inside you as you see in them. This is the great word used so often of Jesus, and by Him.

There never lived a man who had such a passion for men as Jesus. He lived to win them out of their distressed, sinful, needy lives up to a new level. He died to win them. His last act was dying to win men. His last word was, "Go ye and win men." And His first act when He got back home, all scarred and marred by His contact with earth, was to send down the same Spirit as swayed Him those human years to live in us that we might have the same passion for winning men as He. Aye, and the same exquisite tact in doing it as He had.

I said the last act was dying to win men. And you remember that even in the act of dying, He forgot the keen pain of body, and the far keener pain of spirit, to turn His head as far as He could turn it, and speak the word to the fellow by His side that meant the difference of a world to him. Surely it was the ruling passion with Him to win men, strong in death, aye, strongest in death, and finding its strongest expression in His death.

Counting on Us.

Somebody has supposed the scene that he thinks may have taken place after Jesus went back. The last the earth sees of Him is the cloud--not a rain cloud, a glory cloud--that sweeps down and conceals Him from view. And the earth has not seen Him since. Though the old Book does say that some day He's coming back in just the same way as He went away, and some of us are strongly inclined to think it will be as the Book says in that regard.

But--have you ever tried to think of what took place on the other side of that cloud? He has been gone down there on the earth thirty-odd years. It's a long time. And they're fairly hungry in their eyes for a look again at that blessed old face. And I have imagined them crowding down to where they may get the first glimpse of His face again. And, do you know, lately I have been wondering, with the softening of awe creeping into the thought, whether--the Father--did not come the very first of them all and--touch His lips up to where--the scars were in Jesus' brow and cheeks--yes, His hands--and His feet, too. Tell me, you fathers here listening, would you not have done something like that with your boy, under such circumstances?

You mothers, wouldn't you have been doing something like that with your boy? And all the fatherhood of earth is named after the fatherhood of heaven, we're told. And with God fatherhood means motherhood too, you know. I do not know if it were so. But I think it's likely. It would be just like God.

But this friend I speak of has supposed that, after the first flush of feeling has spent itself--the way we speak of such things done here, the Master is walking down the golden street one day, arm in arm with Gabriel, talking intently, earnestly. Gabriel is saying,

"Master, you died for the whole world down there, did you not?"

"Yes."

"You must have suffered much," with an earnest look into that great face with its unremovable marks.

"Yes," again comes the answer in a wondrous voice, very quiet, but strangely full of deepest feeling.

"And do they all know about it?"

"Oh, no! Only a few in Palestine know about it so far."

"Well, Master, what's your plan? What have you done about telling the world that you died for, that you have died for them? What's your plan?"

"Well," the Master is supposed to answer, "I asked Peter, and James and John, and little Scotch Andrew, and some more of them down there just to make it the business of their lives to tell others, and the others are to tell others, and the others others, and yet others, and still others, until the last man in the farthest circle has heard the story and has felt the thrilling and the thralling power of it."

And Gabriel knows us folk down here pretty well. He has had more than one contact with the earth. He knows the kind of stuff in us. And he is supposed to answer, with a sort of hesitating reluctance, as though he could see difficulties in the working of the plan, "Yes--but--suppose Peter fails. Suppose after a while John simply does not tell others. Suppose their descendants, their successors away off in the first edge of the twentieth century, get so busy about things--some of them proper enough, some may be not quite so proper--that they do not tell others--what then?"

And his eyes are big with the intenseness of his thought, for he is thinking of--the suffering, and he is thinking too of the difference to the man who hasn't been told--"what then?"

And back comes that quiet wondrous voice of Jesus, "Gabriel, I haven't made any other plans--I'm counting on them."

The Secret of Winsomeness.

That's a bit of this friend's imagination, it's true. But--it's the whole Gospel story, through and through. Jesus has made that plan. He has not made any other plan. He's counting on us, each of us, each in his own circle, in his own way, as comes best, most natural to him tactfully, quietly, earnestly--simply that, but all of that. And--if--we fail--Him--let me be saying it very softly so the seriousness of it may get into the inner cockles of our hearts--if we fail Him, just that far we make Jesus' dying a failure so far as concerns those whom we touch.

Yes, I know that sounds very serious. I'd rather not be saying it. I'm sure, by the Book, it is so. And so, do you see the genius--may I use that word very reverently of Him who was a man and far more than man--the genius of His plan? He sent down the same Spirit that swayed Him those human years to live in us, and control us, that we might have the same fine passion for men as He, and the same exquisite tact in winning them as He had.

It must be a passion; a fire burning with the steady flame of anthracite fed by a constant stream of oil. If it be less we will be swept off our feet by the tides all around, or sucked under by their swift current. And many a splendid man to-day is being swept off his feet and sucked under by the tides and currents of life because no such passion as this is mooring and steadying and driving his whole life.

It must be a passion for winning men; not driving nor dragging, drawing. Not argument nor coercion but warm, winsome wooing. Today the sun up yonder is drawing up toward itself thousands of tons' weight of water. Nobody sees it going, except perhaps in very small part. There's no noise or dust. But the water rises up irresistibly toward the sun because of the winning power in the sun for the water. It must be something like that in this higher sphere. A winsomeness in us that will win men to us and through us to the Master.

"Oh! well," some one says, "if you put the thing that way you'll have to count me out. I'm not winsome that way." Well, maybe you need not have bothered to say it. We could easily know that without your saying it. We are not winsome this way, any of us, of ourselves. But when we allow this Jesus Spirit to take possession of us He imparts His winsomeness. For the real secret of a transfigured life is a transmitted life. Somebody else living in us, with a capital S for that Somebody, looking out of our eyes, giving His beauty to our faces, and His winningness to our personality.

"As the Stars."

The language used in the Scriptures for this sort of thing is full of intense interest. Some time ago I was reading in the old prophecy of Daniel. I was not thinking of this matter of winning men but simply trying to get a fresh grasp of that wonderfully fascinating old bit of prophecy. And all at once I came across that gem in the last chapter. I knew it was there. You know it is there. Yet it came to me with all the freshness of a new delightful surprise. "They that are wise shall shine with the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."[10]

Four times in those last two chapters of Daniel it refers to those that are "wise"; literally, those that are teachers. Those who have themselves learned the truth and are patiently, faithfully, winsomely telling and teaching others. The word used for influencing the others is full of practical picturesque meaning. "They that turn many." As if a man were going the wrong way on a dangerous road. And I know it's the wrong way. There's a sharp precipice ahead. But he is going steadily on, head down, all absorbed, not noticing where the road leads.

I might go up to him, and strike him sharply on the shoulder to get his attention, and say, "See here, you're going the wrong way; can't you see the danger ahead there? Come this way," with a vigorous pull. I have sometimes seen that done, in just that way. And if the man is an American, or an Englishman, or a German,--we're all very much alike,--he will say coldly, "Excuse me. I think I can take care of myself. Thank you. I'll look out for this individual."

Or, I might slip gently up to the man, and get my arm in his, and begin to turn, very gently at first, and turn, and turn, and then turn some more, and then farther around still, and walk him off the other way. You will have to get close to a man to do that. Some folks never do. And you'll have to be at least half-way decent in your life to get close. Some folks never can. And you will need to be warm enough all the time inside, to melt through the icy cloak of indifference beneath which his heart may be wrapped up. But I can tell you this: the old world where you and I live is fairly hungry at its heart, with an eating hunger for turners of that sort.

And the promise of that old prophetic bit is this: "They shall shine." You know everybody wants to shine. It is right to be ambitious, with a right ambition. But if any of you are ambitious to shine in some other sky than this, in your profession, in social life or in some firmament lower than this, may I gently make this suggestion to you? Do your best shining now. Get on the brightest shining surface possible now. For this is your shining time. This is the sky-time for that sort of thing. It won't last long, I must tell you frankly. And at the end a bitter biting at your heart.

I am fond of watching a display of fireworks on a Fourth of July night. Perhaps the night is clear, the sky full of stars, bright and sparkling. A sky rocket is sent off. It goes up with a rush and a noise. There is a dash of many colored beautiful fire-stars. And a murmur of admiration from the crowd. For a few moments you can see nothing as you look up but this handful of fire-stars. The clear quiet stars beyond are eclipsed for a narrow circle of space, and for a few moments of time.

It doesn't last long. A small fraction of a minute at the most. Then it's all over. And all that is left is a charred stick that sticks in the mud, nobody knows where, nor cares. But look up yonder, the stars you could not see a moment ago for these momentary ones are shining more brightly than ever by contrast,

"... And singing as they shine.
The hand that made us is divine."

You shine in the lower skies if you will. And of course you will if you will. You will do as you will to do. But, at the end--a charred stick, a bad taste in your mouth, a sharp tugging at your heart. And the story's told. The last chapter's ended. The book is shut. But they whose one absorbing ambition it is to turn others to righteousness may not shine much here in earth's skies. And they may a bit, and it recks precious little either way. But they shall shine as the stars, as bright and as long.

It does not mean Atlantic coast stars. It means desert stars, Babylonian stars, where one can see so many more than here. They shake their wondrous fire-light down into your face, and fairly dazzle your eyes. You "shall shine as the stars," as bright and as long.

The Finest Wisdom.

James, the head of the Jerusalem Church, closes up his letter to the dispersed Jews with this same word as Daniel uses. He would have all to whom he is writing understand that he that turns another from the wrong way will save a soul from death and hide away out of sight and reach a mass of sin.[11] The old world needs more saving societies and saving individuals of this sort.

We have gotten great skill in saving dollars. Men give their whole strength and time to that. There is something much higher, infinitely higher, saving souls, rescuing lives, treasuring up precious men and women. These people, James says, are famous for their use of the fine cloak of charity. They make the best use of it in hiding away beyond any chance of being found a great mass of ugly, crooked, poisonous sins.

The man with the reputation of being the wisest man gives a special definition of wisdom. The old version runs, "he that winneth souls is wise."[12] This is a great statement from Solomon's pen. He had searched into all the avenues of men's pursuits. He was a great experimenter. Everything was put to a personal test. He amassed wealth beyond all others. He delved into the fascinations of intellectual delights, of deep intricate philosophies and problems.

He knew the subtle appeal to strong men that there is in deftly handling and controlling men, personally and in large numbers. He had tasted the rich wines of pleasure as had few. This is his conclusion: the wise man is he that gives his strength with all of its fine-grained cunning to wooing men back, through the old Eden gate, up to the tree of life.

This is the finest fruitage any life can yield. This will be to the bearer of it a tree of life giving twelve crops of fruits, a crop of every month, a perennial, alike in heat and frost, in storm and drought, and with a peculiar healing quality in its green leaves for all men.

The revised version gives a fine turn to this old bit, exactly reversing the first statement. "He that is wise winneth souls." The old philosopher says that here is the real test of wisdom. He that is a wise man gives the cream of his thought and wisdom to personal influence with men. He thinks the thing best worth while is drawing a man through the inner reach upon his thinking and affections and will away from the impure and ignoble and deceptive up into touch with his first Friend.

And he finds too that nothing he has ever undertaken calls for a finer play of all his powers at their best. All the diplomacy and fineness and tact and keen management at his command will be called upon. He must be a wise man to do such work. It is no fool's errand this. It demands the best in the best.

There is no body of men more keen or skilled in the handling and influencing of men, than the politicians. And I use the word in its fine meaning, as well as in its cheaper meanings. As democracy has won its way increasingly among the governments of earth these politicians have increased in number and in influence. Great measures of government have depended on their skill in manipulating men. Rarest subtlety and adroitness and rugged honesty have blended in the strongest of these leaders.

The fishing simile so commonly used in the winning of men over to one's side is a peculiarly attractive, a matchless simile. And all of this handling of men has often been for personal ends, often for wholly selfish ends, often for strong national ends. Almost never has it been for the benefit of the man being won, save at times very remotely.

But Jesus would have us become skilled diplomats in winning men for their own sakes. Getting them to climb the hills for the sake of the air and view they will get, and enjoy. We are to win strong men full of life and vigor and manly force up into touch with their Friend, Himself.

There is too a most attractive winsome phrase on the Master's lips at the close of that fishing story in Luke's fifth chapter,[13] "From henceforth thou shall catch men" is the reading. But the revised margin gives this added bit of color: "Thou shalt take men alive." They should get, not dead fish, but living men. Men full of vigor and life--thou shalt have power to sway these and induce them up to the highlands of a new life.

Three Essentials.

There are three simple essentials here for the man who would be following his Master fully. The first is that a man shall surrender himself wholly to Jesus as a Master. That so Jesus may have the full control of all. Maybe some one thinks, "There is that strong word surrender again. Cannot I help a man be better without going so far as that word seems to imply?"

Will you kindly notice that the Spirit of Jesus fills the surrendered man? And it is only as that Spirit does fill and sway that there can be any such passion for men as Jesus had, and, too, the fine tact that He always used. This is the first simple indispensable essential.

The second is this: a bit of quiet time alone with Jesus daily over His Word. The door should be shut. Outside things shut outside. And one's self shut in alone with the Master. This is not a good thing--merely. I am not recommending it to you. I am saying very much more. It is an essential thing with every one who would follow the Master simply and fully. It is time spent in coaling up, taking out the dead ashes, and readjusting the drafts, so the fires will be kept burning steadily and clearly. This is the second great essential.

The third essential is this: a purpose, deep-seated, rock-rooted, underlying every other purpose, taking precedence of every other, of trying to win others, one by one, bit by bit, over to knowing Jesus personally. I say "trying." I like that word. There may be some blunders, some bad steps, some untactful work. But these will not turn one aside from this purpose but simply make him more determined to become skilled in this finest art.

I mean something like this. Here is a young woman moving in a social circle, just as bright and winsome as God meant every young woman to be. And as she moves about, she is thinking--no, it is thinking itself out, underneath in her subtle sub-consciousness,--"How can I drop the word here, and touch there, and leave the light impress here, that shall count with these lives for my Master?"

Here is a man transacting business with another. And even while he is dealing with figures, and contract terms, he is thinking,--no, again,--it is so deeply rooted in that the thought, like the fine trendils of a plant, is ever weaving itself intangibly but surely into the web of his passing mental operations, "How can I tactfully leave the impress here, perhaps speak the direct word, that shall be a doorway for Jesus into this life?"

A Blessed Library Corner.

I think I might tell you best just what I mean by a bit from a real life. The bit that has been such a real inspiration to myself. It is about a friend of mine, a business man, with large responsible interests, keen and shrewd in his business dealings, a very earnest Christian man, with a delightful, winning personality, and I am grateful to say who was a warm friend of mine. He is in the presence of his Master now. He was a man much my senior in years, who helped me very greatly. Whenever we chanced to meet in our travels I would drop my affairs as far as I could to spend all the time possible with him, both for the delight of his presence, and for the practical help he always was. The last time we were ever together was in Columbus, Ohio. We met there to attend an anniversary meeting of the Young Men's Christian Association, in Dr. Gladden's Church, on the Capitol Square. And Monday morning before taking our trains away in different directions we went for a drive, to get the air, and talk a bit. I made the suggestion of driving, for I knew I would get something from him. And I was right. I did get something that I never forgot, and never shall.

As we were driving, and talking, by and by, in a little lull of the talk, he said very quietly, "Gordon, do you know what I have been doing lately?" And I said, "No." "Well," he said, "it's been the delight of my life," and I could see the gleam of light in his eyes. And I said, "Tell me what it is that has been such a pleasure to you." And he said, "Well, I will." Then he went on in a very taking way he had to tell this simple story. And he was speaking as to a friend, for he was very modest, and would not have spoken of the thing; except to help; that would always bring anything he had.

He said when he was at home--he travelled much--he would think about the young men whom he knew who were not Christians. Splendid men, some of them; full of power; clubmen, some of them. But who did not know Jesus personally. And he would think, "Now there's such a man. I wonder what's his easy side of approach." And he would think about him, and pray some about him. And then make an opportunity to ask him up to his home for dinner some evening. His position in the city would make any young man feel honored with such an invitation.

He said to me, "We have a pleasant time at the dinner table with the family, and afterwards, a bit of music and so on. Then," with a quiet smile he said, "I ask him into my library corner, my little study den, and by and by we come to close quarters. I tell him what I'm thinking about. I tell him what a Friend Jesus is. And how it helps to have Him in all of one's life as a Friend and Master. Then I ask him softly if he won't let Jesus be his Friend."

He said, "I try to be as tactful as though I were selling a contract of cars. Though there's a fine reverence here that never gets into business talk. And then if it seems good, without causing him any embarrassment, we have a bit of prayer together. Not always, but often." And he said to me, with a tender eagerness in his voice, "Gordon, it's been the delight of my life to have man after man accept Jesus in my library corner."

And I looked at him. We were driving along the busiest block of the busiest street in Columbus. The Capitol building on this side. And the old Neil Hotel on this. And all around us were the electrics, and wagons and carriages; so much noise and dust. And there that man sat by my side so quiet, with his eyes dancing as they looked off at something I could not see. And if ever Moses' face shined or Stephen's, his did that morning.

I was caught as I looked. That was the delight of his life. Not his money, nor his business, nor his social relations, though he took keen interest in all of these, but this. And the sound of his voice, and the sight of his face that morning, seemed to kindle the fires in my heart that I might, in my own way, as came best to me, be doing something of that same sort. That is what I mean by a deep-seated purpose, under every other, to try to win men.

I was telling this story one night to some people in his state, not thinking that I was within maybe two hundred miles of his home. And as the audience was dismissed I saw a man coming up the aisle toward the pulpit, apparently to meet me. So I went down his way. He looked like a business fellow, with a clean-cut way about him, and a strong manly face. Before we met I noticed something glistening in his eye, and yet a smile across his lips.

And he gripped my hand. I can feel that grip now. And he half-blurted out, "I'm one of those fellows! And there are a lot of us that are thanking God with full hearts for that man's library room." And the grip of that hand seemed to make the fires within burn just a bit stiffer.

In an after conversation this friend told me how he had wanted to be a Christian, but didn't seem to know just how. And nobody had ever spoken to him about it, he said, though so often he had wished somebody would. There are a great many just like him in that.

"Two Missing"--"Go Ye."

Same years ago I was a guest at a small wedding dinner party in New York City. A Scotch-Irish gentleman, well known in that city, an old friend, spoke across the table to me. He said he had heard recently a story of the Scottish hills that he wanted to tell. And we all listened as he told this simple tale. I have heard it since from other lips, variously told. But good gold shines better by the friction of use. And I want to tell it to you as my old friend from the Scotch end of Ireland told it that evening.

It was of a shepherd in the Scottish hills who had brought his sheep back to the fold for the night, and as he was arranging matters for the night he was surprised to find that two of the sheep were missing. He looked again. Yes, two were missing. And he knew which two. These shepherds are keen to know their sheep. He was much surprised, and went to the out-house of his dwelling to call his collie.

There she lay after the day's work suckling her own little ones. He called her. She looked up at him. He said, "Two are missing"--holding up two fingers--"Away by, Collie, and get them." Without moving she looked up into his face, as though she would say, "You wouldn't send me out again to-night?--it's been a long day--I'm so tired--not again to-night." So her eyes seemed to say. And again as many a time doubtless, "Away by, and get the sheep," he said. And out she went.

About midnight a scratching at the door aroused him. He found one of the sheep back. He cared for it. A bit of warm food, and the like. Then out again to the out-house. There the dog lay with her little ones. Again he called her. She looked up. "Get the other sheep," he said. I do not know if you men listening are as fond of a good collie as I am. Their eyes seem human to me, almost, sometimes. And hers seemed so as she looked up and seemed to be saying out of their great depths--"Not again--to-night?--haven't I been faithful?--I'm so tired--not again!"

And again as I suppose many a time before, "Away by, and get the sheep." And out she went. About two or three, again the scratching. And he found the last sheep back; badly torn; been down some ravine or gully. And the dog was plainly played. And yet she seemed to give a bit of a wag to her tired tail as though she would say, "There it is--I've done as you bade me--it's back."

And he cared for its needs, and then before lying down again to his own rest, thought he would go and praise the dog for her faithful work. You know how sensitive collies are to praise or criticism. He went out and stooped over with a pat and a kindly word, and was startled to find that the life-tether had slipped its hold. She lay there lifeless, with her little ones tugging at her body.

That was only a dog. We are men. Shall I apologize for using a dog for an illustration? No. I will not. One of God's creatures, having a part in His redemption. That was to save sheep. You and I are sent, not to save sheep, but to save men. And how much then is a man better than a sheep, or anything else!

And our Master stands here to-day. Would that you and I might see His face with the thorn marks of His trip to this earth. He points out with His hand. And you can't miss a peculiar hole in its palm. He says, "There are two missing--aye, more than two--that you know--that you touch--that you can touch--that I died for--go ye."

Shall we go? For Jesus' sake? Yes, for men's sake; splendid men, befooled about Jesus, who can get Him only through us in touch with Him--for men's sake, in Jesus' great Name.

05 - Deep-Sea Fishing: The Ambition of Service.

5 - Deep-Sea Fishing: The Ambition of Service.

By S.D. Gordon

(Luke v:1-11.)

A Water Haul.

Jesus was very fond of the outdoors. The Gospels have a woodsy smell. He taught in the synagogues, but He seemed to prefer the open air. He would go out on a country road, or down by the beach of the Galilean lake, and the people would eagerly gather around Him, and He would talk to them. One morning He had gone down to the lake shore. The people crowded in about Him and He commenced as usual to talk to them.

But so eager were they not to miss a word that they pressed in about Him very close. He was standing with His back to the water likely, and the people seemed likely to crowd Him over into the water. So He looked around for something to do. He was ever practical to the point of being matter-of-fact. A practical idealist was Jesus, the practical Idealist. Peter was down there, just a short distance off, with his partners and crew in their fishing boats, cleaning up after the night's haul. Lifting His voice a little, Jesus called out, "Peter, will you pull around here, please."

And Peter did. And Jesus, stepping into the boat, sat down, and went on talking to the people. Interruptions never seemed to disturb Him. He seemed to regard them in the light of possible index fingers pointing out the next thing to be done. Every missionary, foreign and home, has to get practised in just that, while holding steady to his underlying purpose.

When He had finished talking, He turned to Peter and said quietly, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." And Peter smiled at the very idea, as he said, "Master, we've been out the whole night, and haven't caught a thing, nothing but a water haul, but"--with a thoughtful earnestness taking the place of the critical smile--"if you say so, of course we will." And the Master said so. And now they can't handle the haul.

I want to bring to you anew this old word of command from Jesus' lips: "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." These men in the story had failed. They had gone out the evening before intending and expecting to bring home a fine haul of fish for the Capernaum or the Bethsaida market. They came back with nothing for the night's work but tired muscles and torn nets. This message is for men who have failed, or who have seemed to fail. There is no failure to an earnest man. A man cannot fail without his own consent. Every seeming failure is the seed of a coming success to earnest men.

If any of us have seemed to fail, our boots have lead in them, and our hearts are heavy too, for lack of success--this message is for us, "Launch out, and let down." Failure is very apt to breed discouragement. Your clothing seems damp and heavy with the dew of a fruitless night. Oftentimes the best thing for that is action. Mix yourself with the action of boats and nets and men. That's the Master's word here.

Living up in the Spirit Realm.

There are three facts that group about the message of Jesus in this story. And those same three facts need to group themselves in bold outline about our using of it, too. The first is this: there was contact with Jesus as a Master. That must come in, and come in strong, before there can be any right using of this word of command.

There needs to be the first contact when a man turns over the control of his life to Jesus as Master. There needs to be close contact that the Master's plan of service may be clearly seen and faithfully started upon. There must be continual contact that so His mastery may control and guide at every step.

The second fact is this: obedience to the Master's word. Obedience, mind you, whether the thing you are told to do seems a likely thing to do or not. Here with the fishermen there were some things that pulled the other way. They had been out all night and failed. The very sense of failure strong within them was against obedience. Discouraged men seldom succeed at anything. And there was a very unlikely chance ahead. The time for fishing with them was in the night. Failure behind, and a poor chance ahead! Yet they obeyed.

If Peter had acted the way some modern folks do he would have said something like this: "You'll excuse me, Master, for saying it; but--this is no time to fish in these waters. Pardon me, sir, I have no doubt you know about carpentering. But I'm a fisherman. When it comes to yokes and plows I'll gladly yield to you. But fishing--you see, I've been fishing ever since I was a boy. Maybe up around Nazareth, in the brooks and ponds up there, you can catch something in daylight, but not down here."

I have heard many people talking that way. But Peter didn't. Aren't you glad he didn't? He stumbled often. He talked foolishly to Jesus more than once, but not this time. He obeyed. It was against his habit, against his ideas of what was best, but the message was clear and he obeyed it. Happy is the man who listens to the inner Voice, learns keenly how to hear distinctly and accurately, and obeys. Faith is never contrary to reason, but it is frequently higher up. The spirit realm is the highest.

A man should reach up through his bodily life, through a keen, strong intellectual perception and grasp, up into the spirit realm and abide there. Many a man of splendid ability and earnestness never shakes off his intellectual scaffolding in the upward building. It remains to hamper and mar. Through a mastered body, and a disciplined mind, up to the spirit level is the full swing. Obedience to the clearly discerned voice of command from the Master is the one pathway of full power.

The third fact was sure to follow these two. It came last. There were unexpectedly large results. There always will be where the first two facts are faithfully gotten in.

Saved to Serve.

There is a growth in this message of Jesus. There are four steps up and out. First comes the plain call to service: "Launch out." This is the ringing service call. It is a familiar word to a follower of Jesus. He was always saying, "Go ye." To every man He said first of all, "Come." Then, as quickly as a man came, the word was changed to "go."

I like greatly the motto of the Salvation Army. It must have been born for those workers in the warm heart of the mother of the Army, Catharine Booth. That mother explains much of the marvelous power of that organization. Their motto is, "Saved to Serve." Some seem to put the period in after the first word. That's bad punctuation and worse Christianity. We are saved to be savers. There is needed the divine Savior and the human saver. Only he who has been saved can help save somebody else. The tingle of experience in the blood attracts men.

The Master says, "Launch out." Get down into the thick of the fight. One should not unwisely wear out his strength. But on the other hand, it's better to wear out than to rust out. You'll last longer, and any loss of strength is to be preferred to the loss through yellow, eating rust. A minister noted for his striking way of putting truth was preaching upon the words that were spoken of Paul and his companions: "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also."[14] He said there were three points to his sermon: first, the world was wrong side up; second, it had to be gotten right side up; third, we're the fellows to do it. That is the first note of this message, we are the fellows to do it.

Ambition in Service.

The second step in this ringing call to service is this: ambition in service. "Launch out into the deep." The shore waters are largely over-fished. Out in the deeps are fish that have never had smell or sight of bait or net. Here, near shore, the lines get badly tangled sometimes, and committees have to be appointed to try to untangle the lines and sweeten up the fishermen.

And the fish get very particular about the sort and shape of the bait. Some men have taken to fishing wholly with pickles, but with very unsatisfactory results. The fish nibble, but are seldom landed apparently. And just a little bit out are fish that never have gotten a suggestion of a good bite.

There are deeps all around. One might fairly give an inward personal turn to the word. There are personal deeps that have not yet been sounded. There are untouched deeps in prayer, in Bible study, and in the winning of others. There are deeps in acquaintance with Jesus, in purity of life, in sacrifice and in giving whose bottom no greasy lead has yet touched. "Out into the deep," comes that quiet intense inner voice of Jesus spoken into one's innermost heart.

There are the great deeps in service waiting our coming. Roundabout every church is a fringe of deep, sometimes a deep fringe and broad, of those practically untouched by the warm message of Jesus; and around every Christian Association of men and of women. In the heart and on the edges of every village and town and city unfathomed deeps lie; deeps in a man's own state, deeps in our land, great untouched deeps in the world.

Wherever there is a man who has not felt the warm side of the story of Jesus' dying there is a deep. Wherever a group of such can be found is a deep increased in depth by the number in the group. Wherever the great crowds are gathered together to whom no word at all has come, neither by personal touch nor printed page nor any other wise, there is the deepest deep. With a deep glow in His eyes as He speaks the word, and the tenderness and softness of deep emotion, and the earnestness of one who has Himself been in the deep Jesus says anew to us to-day, "out into the deep."

We are to be ambitious in service. Jesus was ambitious. He reached out for all, those nearest, those farthest. He talked of all nations, of a world. His follower must have a long reach to keep up. That word ambition has been much abused. It has been used much in connection with selfish self-seeking, until that meaning has become almost its whole meaning in the thinking of many people. But with the purpose dominant in Jesus we can properly use it in its old literal meaning. Originally it simply meant going around, being used in the sense of going out among people soliciting their favor or their votes.

It has the fine vitality of that word "go" in it. That for which a man is ambitious decides the quality of the word. A pure, holy purpose makes the intense reaching for it pure and holy too. An intense reaching out to the farthest reach of the Master's word, that finds expression in the dominant spirit of the life, in the service, in the giving, the sacrificing, the praying--this is the true ambition.

Paul uses three times a word that has the force of our word ambition.[15] The American Revision uses ambition in the margin for it. In advising the group of followers in Thessalonica he says, "Study to be quiet." The practical force of the phrase there is this: be ambitious to be unambitious in the world's abused meaning of ambitious. In writing the second time to the friends at Corinth where his motives had been much criticised he said, "I make it my aim (or ambition) to be well-pleasing unto Him."

And later, in writing to the Christians at Rome, whom he had never seen, he said that he had made it his aim or had been ambitious to preach the Gospel where nobody had yet gone. The literal meaning of the word he uses is something like this, striving from a love of honor. And we may find a fine meaning in that which was doubtless used otherwise.

It was a matter of honor with Paul to do as he was doing. And he would have the honor of having fully carried out his Master's wish. He coveted earnestly the honor of being always pleasing to his Master both in life and in the sort and reach of his service. Here are Paul's three ambitions: to be wholly free of the fires of worldly ambitions; to be well-pleasing to Jesus, his Lord; to reach out beyond, where nobody had yet gone with the story of Jesus' dying and living again.

Paul was obeying Jesus. Jesus said to those fishermen on Galilee's waters, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." Paul said, "I have steadily made it the one thing I drove hard at in service, to get out beyond all other lines and nets to where nobody has yet gone."

Use What You Have.

The third step in this service-call is this: practicality in service: "Let down your nets." I can imagine Peter saying, "Master, if we had known your plans for this morning, I would have sent up to Tyre for the newest patented nets, or down to Cairo. These nets of ours have been patched and patched. They are so old." The Master says, "Let down your nets."

There is a very common delusion that holds us back from doing something because we are not skilled in doing it. "Let the pastor speak to that young man; I can't do it very well." "I can't teach very well; let some one else take that class." The Master says, "Use what you have." Do your best. Your best may not be the best, but if it be your best, it will be God-blest, and always bring a harvest.

Use what you have. Do not despise the stuff God put into you. Train and discipline it the best you can, and use it. And in using it you will be training it. The best training is in use. Brains and pains and prayer are an irresistible trinity. When the gray matter and the finger tips and the knees get into a combination great results always come.

The old Hebrew farmer Shamgar had only a long ox-goad with which to prod his beasts in the field. The traditional enemy, the Philistine, comes up over the hill. Shamgar's neighbors have taken to their heels. But Shamgar is made of different stuff. He asks a man hurrying by, "How many do you think there are?" And the man calls out, "About six hundred, I should say."

Shamgar sets his jaws together hard, gets a fresh grip on his ox-goad, digs his heels into the ground for a good hold, and mutters to himself, "I guess they are about four hundred short." And he smites, left and right, up and down, hip and thigh, with his strange weapon. And a great victory comes to the nation under its new leader.

David had only a leather sling, home-made likely, and a few smooth stones out of the running brook. He had skill in slinging stones, a keen trained eye, a steady nerve, a practiced arm, and well-knit muscles. But what were these against a giant almost twice his height and years, and armed to the teeth? Yet the ruddy-faced stripling had something better yet along with his sling and stones and skill. He had a simple trust in God. He had a hot protest in his heart against the slandering of God's people by this heathen giant. He combined all he had, sling, stones, skill, and faith, and the laughing, sneering giant is soon under his feet, and feeling the edge of his own sword. "Let down your nets." Use what you have.

There was a woman living down by the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea a good while ago. Her heart had been touched by God, and ever after beat warm for others. But what could she do? She couldn't make speeches, nor write papers for the missionary society, nor preside over its meetings. She seemed to have one special gift. She could sew. She could do plain sewing and overcast, cross-stitch and hem-stitch. I suppose she knew the herring-bone-stitch and feather-stitch, and other sorts too.

And so she just busied herself finding out poor folks who needed clothing, some women too hard-worked to care for their children's clothing. And she sewed for them. She was a seamstress for Jesus' sake to all the needy folks she could find. I expect she stuck pretty closely to the plain stitching, though likely as not she would put in some of the fancy too to please the people she was winning to her Master.

And she sewed the story of Jesus, and the heart of Jesus, into coats and skirts and such. All through Joppa her message went into homes not otherwise open perhaps. And the women read the story of her heart in the stitches and they found Jesus through her needle. She used what she had. And the women of the church have rightly honored her name in their societies.

But mark keenly this: while using to the full, and faithfully, just what you have, there must needs be utter dependence upon God. Not what you have, nor what you can do, but Somebody in what you have, and through what you do. Notice, "Their nets were breaking." They were to use their nets, but the power was somewhere else. As we are made up, there frequently needs to be a breaking before the glory of God is revealed. It need not be so, necessarily.

Yet as a matter of fact most people have to stub their toes and then go stumbling down with a clash, measuring their length on the earth, and getting some scars that stay before they can be mightily used. So many strong wills are strong enough to be stubborn, but not strong enough to yield. Gideon's pitchers had to be broken before the lights flashed out and brought panic to the enemy.

It was when the alabaster box was broken that its fine fragrance filled the house, and spread out into all the world. Somebody prayed, "O Lord, take me, and break me, and make me." That is the usual order as a matter of fact. Yet if the strength of stubbornness that must be broken down to change its direction, were but swung God's way at once--But most folks that have been greatly used have some of this sort of scars. Utter dependence upon God's strength in doing God's service is the lesson of the breaking nets.

Expectancy in Service.

The climax of this message of Jesus is in its end: "Let down your nets for a draught." There is to be expectancy in service. Ideas of draughts changed that day. "Peter, what would you call a good draught?" "Well," the old fisherman says, as he sits stitching up the holes in his nets, "after last night I think if we got a boat half full it wouldn't be a bad haul." "Andrew, what's a draught?" And Andrew says, "I think after this water haul we've had, a haul of holes, Peter hits it pretty close."

"Master, how much is a draught?" And His answer comes back over the water, "Twice as much as you are able to take care of, and then more." They filled that boat, sent for another, filled that, and then didn't land all they had caught.

How much do you reckon a draught in your life, in your church, in your mission, your field, how much are you saying?--"Master, what is your reckoning of a draught here in this man's life, out here in this field of service?" And from this Galilean story there comes back anew to our hearts the Master's reply, "Twice as much as you have planned for, and then more."

Expectancy is the eye of faith. Faith always has a watch-tower. When Elijah went to the tiptop of Carmel to pray, he was careful to send his servant to watch the sea. Prayer is faith looking up. Expectancy is faith looking out.

Jesus Went into the Deeps.

And so to every one of us to-day comes afresh that ringing command, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught."

"'Launch out into the deep;'
The awful depth of a world's despair;
Hearts that are breaking and eyes that weep;
Sorrow and ruin and death are there.
And the sea is wide;
And its pitiless tide
Bears on its bosom away.
Beauty and youth,
In relentless ruth,
To its dark abyss for aye.
But the Master's voice comes over the sea,
'Let down your nets for a draught for Me.'
And He stands in our midst,
On our wreck-strewn strand.
And sweet and loving is His command.
His loving word is to each, to all.
And wherever that loving word is heard,
There hang the nets of the royal Word.
Trust to the nets, and not to your skill;
Trust to the royal Master's will.
Let down the nets this day, this hour;
For the word of a king is a word of power,
And the King's own word comes over the sea,
Let down your nets for a draught for Me.'"

There is a last word that comes up insisting to be said. It is this: Jesus went down into the deeps for us. Deeper deeps than we know or ever shall He sounded with the line of His own life on our behalf. He got badly scarred that night of darkness. It is this scarred Jesus who earnestly asks us to come along after Him so far as we can. His voice with a tenderness of love wrought into it on the cross says to us, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught."

06 - Money: The Golden Channel of Service.

6 - Money: The Golden Channel of Service.

By S.D. Gordon

(Luke xvi:1-18.) [16]

Touching a Limitless Circle.

There is an inky shadow over the home of God. There is a sharp pain tugging at the heart of God. It's a family matter; a family disgrace. One of God's family has gone off from the home circle and made a bad mess of things. Such an affair is always a source of great grief, especially where the family is an old one, with fine blood. And here the family is of the oldest, and the blood the best. The Father feels the sharp edge of the knife of disgrace very keenly. The hearth fire of God is lonely for the one gone away.

All of that Father's great love and rare wisdom have centered and blended on a plan for winning the estranged member of His family back home, of his own free glad accord. The other members of His family have gazed with awe-touched faces upon the marvels of that plan. Its tenderness, its depth, its wondrous love-wisdom have excited their deepest admiration while they watch breathlessly to see the outcome.

That prodigal is our own splendid planet. Some of us down here have gladly welcomed the Father's plan and the Father's Son. His Son is His plan. But most of us don't seem to understand the Father. And that is hard on Him. And the greater number of us, by far the greater number, haven't even heard of the Father's plan or of His Son, and have lost the memory of His loving voice calling. He is always calling. And everyone hears that calling voice. But very many do not recognize it as the Father's.

In great tenderness the Father's plan for winning all includes the help of those already won. Through His Son first, and then through His sons, newborn, reborn, He is reaching out His warm, eager hand to all. He breathed His own Spirit upon His Son. He breathes that same Spirit upon each of us who will, that so we may, each of us, touch all the others with the touch of God.

Five great touches of God there are, each charged with a mighty current of power. The fragrant life-touch, the musical voice-touch, the warm service-touch, the potent golden-touch, the secret, subtle prayer-touch. The first three of these are limited to a narrow circle, the circle of the immediate personality. The last two are limitless. They are like our own spirits. They reach directly, resistlessly, clear out through the personal circle as far as the spirit reaches, even around the whole circle of the planet.

Just now for a little while we want to talk together about one of these, the potent yellow golden-touch. The word service has been thought of quite commonly as referring to certain restricted things that one may do for another. It has a broader meaning too. Whatever we do to help another is service. Not merely the direct activities, but praying and giving are service of most potent influence. Money supplies a channel through which one may reach most intimately to others, near by and around the world. It is the golden channel of service.

Peculiar Effects of Money.

Money is queer stuff. The opposites meet in it so strikingly. It may be the most cruel, exacting tyrant. It may be the most faithful, intelligent servant. If it come into a man's life unaccompanied by a high, controlling motive power, it has most peculiar effects upon him. It often wrinkles up his face, and ties hard knots in the wrinkled lines. It can dwarf a warm hand into a cold, hard, muscle-bound fist. It drains the warm blood from the heart, and dries all the sweet, fragrant dew out of the spirit. The hand suffers much. It is often stricken with a sort of palsy while in the pocket, and cannot be withdrawn. Sometimes there is a violent cramp, or a sort of pen paralysis that prevents the signing of the name--to certain sorts of checks.

But if, on the other hand, it come into a man's possession accompanied by a pure unselfish motive that controls, it comes the nearest to omnipotence of anything we handle. Gold of itself seems to have the puckering quality of a green persimmon. The green fruit will contract the mouth to its smallest proportions. And unmellowed gold acts in the same way upon the mouth of the pocket.

This is true of all gold and of all pockets. There are no exceptions. The only possible way of effecting a change is to let a stronger power come in and counteract the contracting power. Gold has the greatest contracting power of any earthly substance. Its only sufficient counteractant is God. God has the greatest expanding power known to angels or men. Gold contracts. God expands. If God be the dominating motive power in a man's life, then does gold come the nearest to omnipotence of any tangible thing. It takes on the quality of Him who breathes upon it.

Jesus' Law for the Use of Money.

Jesus gives us the simple law for the right use of money. It is in that sixteenth chapter of Luke. He is talking about the dishonest overseer of a wealthy man's estate. His dishonest practices have been discovered, and he is required to make a final settlement preliminary to his being discharged. He has evidently been living extravagantly, for the loss of position threatens him with beggary. Distressed to know what to do he hits upon a farther extension of his dishonest practices, and uses the position he is about to lose to buy up friends for his coming days of want.

As he tells the story Jesus adds this comment: "for the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of light." Practically they go on the supposition that the present generation is the only one. For the short space of years making up their own generation they are wiser than the sons of light. But for the long space of all coming generations they are the rankest fools. That is included by contrast in Jesus' words. The man who in his use of money thinks only or chiefly of the years making up his own present life is--a fool. The man who takes into his reckoning not only the present generation, but all coming generations, in disposing of his money is the shrewd financier.

Then occurs the sentence[17] that contains a wonderfully simple statement for the keen, wise use of gold. The old version runs like this: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations." The revised version, both English and American, reads this way: "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness that when it shall fail they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles."

I have ventured to make a rather free translation that I feel sure is true to the words here in their connection and that gives in simple English just what Jesus means. "Make to yourselves friends by means of money, which the unrighteous world reckons riches, that when it fails they may receive you," and so on. Money is not riches. The world commonly has been befooled into thinking that it is. Perhaps we have not all quite escaped that delusion. And money is not unrighteous. It is neither righteous, nor unrighteous. It gets its moral quality from the man owning it for the time being. It is as he is. It takes on the color of its ownership.

Make to yourselves friends by means of the money that comes into your control that when it fails they may receive you. That is to say, exchange your money into the kind of coin that is current in the kingdom of God. Exchange your gold into lives. That is the sort of coin current in the homeland. This yellow stuff we call riches they use for paving stones up in the homeland. Would that we might get it under our feet down here, instead of being ruled by it.

The current coin of heaven is lives of men. And that too will be reckoned the precious metal when the Kingdom of God comes to the earth. Exchange your money into men; purified, uplifted, redeemed men. Buy letters of credit that will be good in the homeland, and in the coming Kingdom days on the earth, if you would be wealthy.

"That when it fails," Jesus says with fine discernment. Money will fail. There is an end to the power of gold in itself. Money will be bankrupt some day. It has enormous buying power now. Some day its buying power will be all gone. Then it will take the place of cobble-stones. Yet it would seem to be a failure there unless some new hardening process had been found for it. Better use it while it has power of purchase. Better not be caught with much of the yellow stuff sticking to you when the true values are being settled. It'll all be dead loss then; dead stock, not worth the space it occupies.

You remember the very old story of the wealthy man who died. And in a group of people talking together somebody asked the usual question, "How much did he leave?" And a wise man in the company replied tersely, "Every cent; didn't take a copper along." That story is apt to provoke a smile. But, do you know, it is sadder than it is witty. The man had gained great wealth. He must have been endowed with some force and talent to do that. His whole life and strength and talent had been devoted to making money and hoarding it. That money was the whole output of the man's life. Then he died and the whole output of his life was left behind. He passed out of this life stripped to the skin. Into the other world, where wealth is reckoned otherwise than in gold, he entered a sheer pauper. The purchasing power of his wealth stopped at the line of departure out of this world. It failed.

Foreign Exchange.

Exchange your gold into men. Buy up some of the kind of coin they use in the homeland, so that you may have some wealth when you get there. Suppose you should be over on the continent of Europe, shopping in Berlin. You buy some goods in a store and lay down upon the counter a twenty-dollar gold piece in payment. The salesman would say, "What sort of money is this?" and you would likely say, "That is good American gold, sir." And he would probably reply, "I have no doubt that is true, and that it is good money. But it is not the sort we receive here. You will have to go to the bankers and get it changed into German marks and then I'll be pleased to complete this sale." And so you would be obliged to do if you had not thought to provide yourself with German money.

There are some people that will have an experience like that after a while, I'm thinking. Some one thinks that that is not a very likely illustration. A man going to Europe would provide himself with proper money to use. Maybe it is not a very good illustration for Europe. But how about some other strange lands to which folks go? There seem to be several people who expect to go to a strange country, and yet do not provide any of its recognized coinage before going.

Here is a man who gets through his life down on the earth, and goes out into the other life. Judging by the whole tenor of his life he will attempt to take some of his belongings with him. Indeed so much are these belongings a part of his very life that they seem inseparable from him. Here he comes up to the gateway of the upper world. He is lugging along a farm or two, some town lots, and houses, and a lot of beautifully engraved paper, bank stock and railroad bonds and other bonds. They are absorbing him completely as he puffs slowly along.

And as he gets up to the gateway, the gateman will say, "What's all that stuff?" "Stuff!" he will say, astonished; "this is the most precious wealth of earth, sir. I have spent my whole life, the cream of my strength in accumulating this." "Oh, well," the reply will be, "I have no doubt that is so. I am not disputing your word at all. But that sort of thing does not pass current up in this land. That has to be exchanged at the bankers' offices for the sort of coinage we use here."

The man looks a little relieved at this last remark. The other talk has sounded strange, and given him a queer misgiving in his heart, as he listened. But "banker" and "exchange"--that sounds familiar. The ground feels a bit steadier. He picks up new spirit. "Where are the bankers' offices, please?" he asks eagerly. "They are all down on the earth," comes the quiet answer. "You must do your exchanging before you get as far up as this. That stuff is all dead loss now. You can't take it back to the bankers' now, and it is of no value here. Just leave it over on that dump heap there outside the gate, and come in yourself." And the man comes in with a strangely stripped and bare feeling.

What we get and keep for the sake of having, we lose, for we leave it behind. What we give away freely for Jesus' sake, for men's sake, we will find by and by we have kept, for we have sent it ahead in a changed form.

There will be a strange readjustment of values on the other side. Some men of splendid strength have spent it in accumulating earth's wealth. They give, even freely it seems to be, in very large amounts. Yet be it keenly marked the sum given by these men always bears a small proportion to what is kept.

Others there are of equally splendid strength, and fine powers, who have been spending that strength in influencing men. Their passion seems to have been for men, for men's selves, for men's lives. The great bulk of their strength and time has been deliberately given to this. And some that have not understood have thought such conduct strange, a sort of fad with these men. But when values are readjusted by the standards of the final clearing house, some who have been very wealthy down here will be reckoned among the very poor. And some who have been reckoned poor will be found to be the shrewdest of investors. They will be the millionaires of the Kingdom time and in the homeland. I do not mean dollar-millionaires, but life-millionaires. The standard of wealth in the homeland is lives, not dollars.

And some too there will be, and not few in numbers, who have given of their strength in business pursuits to the making of money, as the Spirit has guided them, or to whom it has been left in trust by others, and who have been steadily investing the wealth that has come in the lives of men. Some folks ought to be getting better acquainted at the foreign exchange desk in the banks where this sort of business is done.

There are a good many banks that make a specialty of this sort of foreign exchange. The great Church Boards, the International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Associations, the American Committee of the Young Women's Christian Associations, the individual churches and associations, and the Bible Societies are a few of the better known of the banks having a large exchange business of this sort.

Their methods of business have been very thoroughly systematized for the convenience of investors. In almost every pew of a church may be found little deposit envelopes, mediums of exchange. There are weekly opportunities for making deposits. And the handling of the money has been so thoroughly systematized, too, that, as a rule, a very small proportion is taken up in keeping the banks running, the great bulk passing directly out to the designated place of use.

Gold-Exchanged Lives.

Jesus says that our money in its new form will be waiting our arrival on the other side. The men and women into whose lives we have been exchanging it will be eagerly looking for us as the ship pulls into port. When you get through with your life down here--it will be a long life, I hope--you will go up and into the homeland. And--I suppose--at the first you will have eyes and heart for nobody but Jesus. My mother used to say to me, "I have thought that I would like to have a talk with Moses, and with Elijah, and with John and Paul, but"--with the quick tears of deepest emotion filling her dark eyes--"I have never been able in my thinking of it, to get past Jesus yet." Even so it will be, no doubt, with all of us.

But this word of Jesus' own suggests that as you go in you will find some one coming eagerly up with outstretched hands and such a glad face to meet you. And he will say, "Oh! I have been looking forward so eagerly to meeting you; welcome." And you will say, "Well, this is very kind of you. But, pardon me, I can't just recall your face. Where was it I knew you? in New York?"

And he will say, with a flush of earnest feeling, "Oh, no! I never saw New York. And I never saw you before. My home was over in the heart of China. Our lives were very miserable there. There was a great tugging at my heart that nothing seemed ever to ease. But one day a stranger came into our village, with some little books, and as we gathered about him he talked to us about Jesus, and you can never know how that story of Jesus came to me, and how much it meant. My whole life was changed, and my home and our village were changed. And since coming up here I have learned that it was through you that that man came, and I want to thank you. Next to Jesus I think you're the best friend I have."

And you will be thinking, "I'm so glad I gave that money. I had to pinch quite a bit, but that's nothing compared to the joy of this." And as that is flashing swiftly through your thought, here is somebody else eagerly pressing up, with the same word of welcome, and a face with such a glad light the sight of which is alone quite enough to even up any sacrifice. And you will say maybe, "And where did I meet you? are you from China, too?"

No, this one is from a western frontier settlement where the home missionary had gone, and now this one elbowing by her with the same lightened face is from the mountain section of the South. And so they come eagerly up from many places where you have never been in person but where you have gone potentially through your money. That is what Jesus means. Make to yourselves friends by means of money which the unrighteous world reckons riches, that when it fails they may welcome you eagerly into the homeland. Exchange your gold into lives.

Spirit Alchemy.

There is a divine alchemy whereby money may be transmuted into redeemed, purified, uplifted lives. There is another alchemy whereby men, made of finest gold in the image of God, may be transmuted into the basest metals. When Moses coming down from the presence of God saw the shocking sight of the people worshiping a calf made of gold, he reproached Aaron for permitting it. Do you remember Aaron's answer? He had the gift of speech, you remember, an easy, smooth way of explaining things. Yet in the light of the recited facts the answer seems rather lame. It needs a crutch to steady it up. He said, that he had put in the gold and--"there came out this calf."

A great many men might fairly make use of Aaron's explanation. They have put into the crucible of life their gold, themselves, God's finest gold intrusted to their hands. And under their manipulation what has come out is as a vealy, callow calf, a bull calf at that too, scrub stock, fit only for the ax.

There is the other, the divine alchemy whereby a man may put in the gold intrusted to his handling and there shall come out lives, sweet, strong, fragrant lives, made anew in the image of their Maker.

The Fragrance of the Life in the Gift.

It is a part of the peculiar potent value of money that there can be a practical transfer of personality through its use. For instance I have a friend whose heart burned to go to a foreign mission field for service there. But the physician said it would not be wise for her to go. Yielding to his expert judgment, she still yearned to be of service there. In the providence of God she became intrusted with large wealth. And so she arranged to have a man go in her stead to China, she caring for all the expense involved, while he was so left wholly free for the service.

Tell me, was that not a practical transfer of her personality to the point of service where he is engaged? Then she arranged for another, and another, and yet others. It is not only a transfer of personality in practical results, but a duplication of personality, and a triplication, and more. For she is busy in her home circle, while her representatives are busy elsewhere through the influence of her action.

A young woman, graduate of a western college, developed much talent in speaking to other young women of the Christian life. Her public service was much blessed in the lives of large numbers of women. She had no wealth, but was dependent upon her efforts for a livelihood. Another young woman, in the East, came under the warm spell of her personality and speech. And her life was blessedly revolutionized by that spell. Her own heart burned to be doing something of the sort for her sisters out over the land.

But she seemed not to have gifts of that kind. Yet she had been intrusted with large means. And so she said to her new friend whom God had so graciously blessed to her own life, "Let us be partners together. I will so gladly give what I have, that you may be wholly free to give to others what you have brought to me." And so it was arranged. And the one woman gives of the gold of her inheritance while the other gives her life and her special gift. The one in her home pays and prays. The other goes constantly here and there, and lives are ever transformed through the Spirit of God resting upon her.

Is not that a practical transfer of personality? and duplication of personality, too? Is not this young woman whose own actual personality remains, in the gracious providence of God, in her home, is she not going potentially about from place to place winning her sisters up to the highlands of the best living? It surely is so.

And these two are but illustrations of the many who have come to understand Jesus' law for the right use of money. And there are to be many more as the days go by, doing just that sort of thing. And let those of us who have not been intrusted either with the large amount of money, or with the large power to earn, remember that the amount involved does not affect the law of results. All who have felt the blessed contagion of the Master's example will give freely of what is in store, whether much or little.

Those whose giving is in smaller amounts by our bulky way of reckoning values, may still be making that same blessed transfer and doubling their own capacity for service through the agency of their gold. For the gold given represents the life that gives. And the gift takes on the quality and power and fragrance of the life that gives it. I have sometimes thought that there seems to be a peculiar potency in the smaller gifts, that represent as they so often do the greatest, most devoted sacrifice. Could we trace the intricate crossings of the lines of influence in the web of life, we would be awed many times at the potency of the giving that is small in amount but tinted red with the life-blood of sacrifice.

It should be remembered that through this strange stuff called money there is a double transfer of personality going on all the time. Men are constantly transferring themselves into gold, in a perfectly proper way. A man gives his labor, and at the end of a specified period he gets a certain amount of money. That money represents himself. It is himself for that length of time. That is the first transfer of manhood in money. It is going on all the time. It is necessarily so, for so we get our food, and clothing, and home.

Then there is the re-transfer of this money into some other form. As we choose to use this money, so we are re-transferring ourselves into what forms we will. The money is the transition state of ourselves. We pass through it out into the exchange of life. We reveal ourselves in the way we pass it out. In no way does a man reveal the true inner self more. And if perchance we let it, or some of it, lie and gather rust, there we are, some part of us being covered with rust.

Sacrifice Hallows and Increases the Gift.

But there is more yet to be said here. The great blending of the spirit forces with gold comes out wondrously in this: that sacrifice hallows what it touches. And under its hallowing touch values increase by long leaps and big bounds. Here is a fine opportunity for those who would increase the value of gifts that seem small in amount. Without stopping now for the philosophy of it, this is the tremendous fact.

Perhaps the annual foreign missionary offering is being taken up in your church. The pastor has preached a special sermon, and it has caught fire within you. You find yourself thinking as he preaches, and during the prayer following, "I believe I can easily make it fifty dollars this year. I gave thirty-five last time." You want to be careful not to make it fifty dollars, because you can do that easily. If you are shrewd to have your money count the most, you will pinch a bit somewhere and make it sixty-two fifty. For the extra amount that you pinch to give will hallow the original sum and increase its practical value enormously. Sacrifice hallows what it touches, and the hallowing touch acts in geometrical proportion upon the value of the gift.

Better turn your gown, and readjust your hat, for the sacrifice involved will give a new beauty to the spirit looking out through your face. And real folks will not be able to get past the beauty of face to the incidentals of your apparel. Wear your derby another season, and get your shoes half-soled, and some deft mending done. Let that extra horse go to other buyers, and the automobile be picked up by somebody who has not yet mined any of the fine gold of sacrifice. The coming rainy day will never be able to use up all that some folks are salting down for it.

And yet some folks, many folks, should be spending more on their bodies and giving less. The giving should never intrench upon the strength of one's personality. That is a treasure to be sacredly guarded. All the power of one's life, in serving, in giving, in praying, in speaking, and in personal contact, the power of all roots down in the personality. The safe rule, and the only safe rule, is to decide such questions with the knee-joint bent, and the door shut, and the spirit willing. A strong will played upon by the Holy Spirit, mellowed by emotions that have been moved by the need, and held steady by a disciplined judgment must attend to loosening the purse-strings.

But the one fact being emphasized here just now is that the element of sacrifice must be in the giving if it is to be effective. Sacrifice was the dominant factor in God's giving of His Son, real sacrifice. It was dominant in Jesus' giving of His own self and His life, keen cutting sacrifice. Who will follow in their train? Whoever will, will be getting a post-graduate course in financiering and in multiplying of values. He will be astonished at the results working out, and most astonished at the final disclosures.

Keeping out of circulation more than one's wants, properly adjusted, call for is poor financiering. For that which is held back is not earning anything. All beyond one's needs should be out in circulation for the Master in His campaign for a world. Yet nowhere is there finer chance or greater need for the play of keen judgment than in deciding that question of need. Mistakes are made on both sides. It looks very much as though the most serious mistakes are being made on the side of too little sacrifice or none. Yet clearly some serious mistakes are made on the other side too. But no one may criticise another. Each must decide for himself. In the judgment of charity we are to presume that each is doing what he thinks right and best. We are, none of us, the keeper of our brother's purse.

A Living Sacrifice.

There is a simple story told that contains its truth in its very naturalness and simplicity. It reveals a bit of the real life ever going on all around us unnoticed. A minister in a certain small town in an eastern state received from the home mission board of his church a letter asking for a special offering for a needy field in the West. With the letter was literature setting forth the need. The call appealed to him and with good heart he prepared a special sermon, calling the attention of his people to the great need.

Sabbath morning came and he preached the sermon. But somehow it did not just seem to hook in. That banker down there on the left looked listless, and yawned a couple of times behind his hand. And the merchant over on the right, who could give freely, examined his watch secretly more than once. And so it was with a little tinge of discouragement insistently creeping into his spirit that he finished, and sat down. And he remained with head bowed in prayer that the results might prove better than seemed likely, while the church officers passed down the aisles with the collection plates.

Meanwhile something unseen by human eye was going on in the very last pew. Back there, sitting alone, was a little girl of a poor family. She had met with a misfortune which left her crippled. And her whole life seemed so dark and hopeless. But some kind friends in the church, pitying her condition, had made up a small fund and bought her a pair of crutches. And these had seemed to transform her completely. She went about her rounds always as cheery and bright as a bit of sunshine.

She had listened to the sermon, and her heart had been strangely warmed by the preacher's story of need. And as he was finishing she was thinking, "How I wish I might give something. But I haven't anything to give, not even a copper left." And a very soft voice within seemed to say very softly, but very distinctly, "There are your crutches." "Oh," she gasped to herself as though it took away her very breath, "my crutches? I couldn't give my crutches; they're my life." And that strangely clear voice went on, so quietly, "Yes--you could--and then some one would know of Jesus--if you did--and that would mean so much to them--He's meant so much to you--give your crutches." And her breath seemed to fail her at the thought. And so the little woman had her fight all unseen and unknown by those in the church. And by and by the victory came. And she sat with a beautiful light in her tearful eyes, and a smile coming to her lips, waiting for the plate to get to her pew.

And the man with the plate came down the aisle to the end. It seemed hardly worth while reaching it into the last pew. Just little Maggie sitting there alone, with her one foot dangling above the floor. But with fine courtesy he stopped and passed the plate in. And Maggie in her childlike simplicity lifted her crutches, and tried rather awkwardly to put them on the collection plate. Quick as a flash the man caught her thought, and with a queer lump in his throat reached out and steadied her strange gift on the plate.

And then he turned back and walked slowly up the aisle toward the pulpit, carrying the plate in one hand and steadying the crutches on it with the other. And people commenced to look. And eyes quickly dimmed. Everybody knew the crutches. Maggie--giving her crutches! And the banker over here blew his nose suddenly and reached for his pencil, and the merchant reached out to stop the man returning up his aisle.

As the pastor stood with his eyesight not very clear to receive the morning's offering, he said, "Surely our little crippled friend is giving us a wonderful example." Then the plates were called back toward the pews. And somebody paid fifty dollars for the crutches, and sent them back to that end pew. When the offering was counted up it contained several hundred dollars. And the little girl, crippled in body but not in any other way, hobbled out of church the happiest little woman in the world.

She had recognized and obeyed the inner voice. That was the simple explanation of her giving. And her gift, small in itself, touched with sacrifice, became worth several hundred dollars in its earning power. And the original investment was returned for its usual service. And her gift has been increasing in its earning power as its recital has reached other hearts, and the end is not yet. I do not know just where Maggie is now. But I do know that she will be a greatly surprised woman some day when she finds out what God has done with her sacrifice-hallowed gift. She recognized and obeyed the inner Voice. That is the one law of giving, as of all living.

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07 - Worry: A Hindrance to Service.

7 - Worry: A Hindrance to Service.
By S.D. Gordon

(Psalm xxxvii:1-11; Matthew vi:19-34, Philippians iv:6-7. American Revision.)

Fear Not.

There is nothing commoner than worry. Everybody seems to worry. Men worry. Women worry. It is commonly supposed that women worry more than men. I doubt it. After watching both pretty closely under all sorts of circumstances I doubt it. Yet if it be true that woman does worry the more, I think it is because, being more sensitively organized, she is more keenly alive to the issues involved and to the responsibilities of life. Poor people worry. Those with enough money to be easy worry. And those with the largest wealth seem to worry too. Busy folks worry. And so do the idle. The cultured and scholarly touch elbows with the ignorant here.

Americans are supposed to be specialists in worrying. The name Americanitis has been given to a certain run-down condition of the nerves. Well, we may possibly have set the pace, and may be making new records. But certainly there are plenty of pushing followers. Our Canadian neighbors seem not to be wholly strangers to worry. Nor our British and Dutch forbears. The European continentals, and those of the East nearer and farther off seem to be good or bad at worrying. It is a characteristic of the race everywhere, the difference being merely in the degree. It seems inbred in man.

There are two "don't-worry" chapters in this old Bible, one in the Old Testament and one in the New. In the Old Testament is the Thirty-seventh Psalm with its oft-repeated "fret not." The word under that English phrase "fret not" is significant. It is so blunt as to sound almost like a bit of American slang. Literally it means "don't get hot." The New Testament has the sixth chapter of Matthew with Jesus' own words. One should be careful here to note the better reading of the revision. The old version says "take no thought," and that has been misunderstood by many who have not thought about its meaning. The newer translations are truer to the meaning on Jesus' lips. Do not take anxious thought, "be not anxious." But apart from these two chapters there is a phrase running through these pages clear through the whole Book, a phrase shot through, piercing everywhere, even as the glorious sunlight pierces through the thick cloud and fog. I mean the phrase "fear not." All worry roots down its tenacious tendrils in fear.

A Fence of Trust.

It will help to understand just what worry is. It is always an advantage to get an enemy clearly defined and keep it so, so you can hit it harder, and make every blow tell on a vital part of its anatomy.

Worry is not concern, but distress of mind. Some one said to me at the close of a talk on worry, "some folks ought to worry more." Of course he meant that some people should bear their share of the responsibilities of life, instead of selfishly and lazily shirking them. There is a proper concern about matters for which we are responsible. A man never makes a good speech unless there is a feeling of concern, of apprehension lest there be failure in that for which he is pleading. A strong sensitive spirit feels the responsibility and does the best to meet it. Worry is mental distress. It is sinking under the sense of responsibility. It is yielding to the fear that there may be failure, instead of gripping the lines and whip and determining to ride down the chance of its coming.

Sometimes worry is carrying to-morrow's load with to-day's strength; carrying two days in one. It is moving into to-morrow ahead of time. There is just one day in the calendar of action; that's to-day. Planning should include a wide swing of days; wise planning must. But action belongs to one day only, to-day.

"Build a little fence of trust
Around to-day;
Fill the space with living work
And therein stay;
Look not through the sheltering bars
Upon to-morrow;
God will help thee bear what comes
Of joy or sorrow."

"Live for to-day, to-morrow's sun
To-morrow's cares will bring to light,
Go like the infant to thy sleep
And heaven thy morn shall bless."

A Lord of the Harvest.

Sometimes worry is carrying a load that one should not carry at all. I think it was Lyman Beecher who said that he got along very comfortably after he gave up running the universe. Some good earnest people are greatly concerned about the way things in the world are going, I'm obliged to confess to some pretty serious blunders there. It seemed to me that there was so much to be done, so many people needing help, so much of wrong and sin to fight that I must be ever pushing and never sleeping. I had to sleep of course; but all my burden, which meant the burden of the world's need as I saw it, was lugged faithfully to bed every night. There was a lot of pillow-planning. But I found that the wrinkles grew thick, and the physical strength gave out, and yet at the end of vigorous campaigning there seemed about as much left to do as ever.

Then one day my tired eyes lit upon that wondrous phrase, "the lord of the harvest." It caught fire in my heart at once. "Oh! there is a Lord of the harvest," I said to myself. I had been forgetting that. He is a Lord, a masterful one. He has the whole campaign mapped out, and each one's part in helping mapped out too. And I let the responsibility of the campaign lie over where it belonged. When night time came I went to bed to sleep. My pillow was this, "There is a Lord of the harvest."

My keynote came to be obedience to Him. That meant keen ears to hear, keen judgment to understand, keeping quiet so the sound of His voice would always be distinctly heard. It meant trusting Him when things didn't seem to go with a swing. It meant sweet sleep at night, and new strength at the day's beginning. It did not mean any less work. It did seem to mean less friction, less dust. Aye, it meant better work, for there was a swing to it, and a joyous abandon in it, and a rhythm of music with it. And the undercurrent of thought came to be like this: There is a Lord to the harvest. He is taking care of things. My part is full, faithful, intelligent obedience to Him. He is a Master, a masterful One. He is organizing victory. And the fine tingle of victory was ever in the air.

Do Your Best--Leave the Rest.

I knew a mother one of whose sons was not a Christian man, and not of good habits. She was a devoted true Christian woman, bearing her part in life's service with fine faith and a keen sweet spirit. The children were all Christians but this one, her first-born, the beginning of her strength. The thought of him troubled her much. She prayed fervently, and used her best endeavor, and the years grew on without change. And her face showed the burden upon her fine spirit. We would talk together about her son, and pray together, but her brow remained clouded.

Then I marked a change. The lines of tension in her face relaxed. A new quiet light came into her eye. There seemed a gentle intangible, but very sure, peace breathing about her. And I knew there was no change in him. So one day in conversation I ventured to ask about the change. And I shall always remember the gentle voice and the quiet strength with which she said, "I have given him over to my Father. And I know He will not fail me. I am still praying, of course, as ever, and I am trusting for him." She had been carrying a load that she should not have been carrying. And now while the mother-heart was still concerned as much as ever, the sense of assured victory brought the change in her spirit.

Sometimes worry is fretting over past mistakes; it is chafing about what we do not understand, or about plans of ours that have failed. A good deal of worry comes from pride and over-sensitiveness. The roots here, it will be noticed, of all alike are down in our own failures, our own selves. And there would be cause for more worry if we had only ourselves. But we have a Father.

A very great deal of worry is wholly due to physical causes. Overworked nerves always see things distorted. Huge phantom shapes loom up before us. Overwork always makes a sensitive spirit worry, and worry usually makes us overwork until we drop from exhaustion. When the cause is here, there are some simple human helps. Some--a good bit--of God's fresh air will work wonders. Even good people seem unchangeably opposed to God's air, and insist on breathing old, worn-out, used-up second-hand air. God would be greatly glorified if housekeepers and church sextons were given a practical course in the use of fresh air, God's air. With that should be simple food, and simple dress, and abundant sleep, and simple standards of life.

Worry is utterly useless. It never serves a good purpose. It brings no good results. "Which of you can by being anxious add a single span to the measure of his life?" Jesus asks in that sixth of Matthew. But much more can be said. It brings bad results. The revision brings out the clear, simple meaning of the Thirty-seventh Psalm, eighth verse. The old version seems a bit puzzling, "Fret not thyself in anywise to do evil." The revision reads, "Fret not thyself, it tendeth only to evil doing." The results of worrying are always bad. The judgment is impaired. One cannot think so clearly nor see so clearly. The temper is ruffled. The door is quickly opened to worse things.

It is sinful to worry. For the Master repeatedly commands us, "Be not anxious." It helps to get a habit labeled correctly. Here to tack on "sinful" in block letters, black ink, white paper, so as to get greatest contrast is a decided help. And worrying is a reproach upon Jesus. Let the Gentiles, the outsiders, the people who have not taken Jesus into their lives, let them worry if they will. But we must not. For we have Jesus. Let these who leave Him out grow crow-toes, and deeply-bitten wrinkles, and turkey-foot markings. Without Him how can they help themselves? But we folk who have Jesus should have smoothly rounded faces, the lines all filled up and ironed out. It reproaches Jesus before folks for us to be as they are in this regard.

Out of the midst of a great pressure of work, with a body tired out, Dr. Charles F. Deems, the busy pastor of The Church of The Strangers in New York City, wrote these lines years ago:

"The world is wide,
In time and tide,
And God is quick;
Then do not hurry.

"That man is blest,
Who does his best,
And leaves the rest;
Then do not worry."

A man should do his best. There should be no shirking. Yet I need hardly say that here, because shirking people, lazy people do not worry. They haven't enough snap about them to worry. But it steadies one to put the thing just as Dr. Deems put it. "Do your best, and, then leave all the rest to God." And when sleep time comes, sleep.

Anxious for Nothing.

Likely as not some one will say, "We knew all that before. But how are we going to quit worrying? That's what we need to be told." Well, I can tell you. Sometimes a man speaks cautiously, but here one can speak with great positiveness. There are three simple rules how not to worry. They are infallible. I heard of a society whose purpose it was to cure worry. There were thirty-seven rules, I think. It would worry some of us a good bit to memorize any such length of instruction as that. The remedy seems to be on a high shelf. And in standing up on a chair and reaching there is some danger that the chair may tip over and the last state not be an improvement on the first.

But here are three very simple rules, easy to follow, and they will never fail. They are not my rules, that is, not of my making, or I might not be speaking so positively. They are given by the blessed Holy Spirit, through our dear old friend Paul. In Philippians, chapter four, verses six and seven, are the words that contain the rules: "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus."

The first rule is this, anxious for nothing. In other words, don't worry. Deliberately refuse to think about annoying things. Set yourself against being disturbed by disturbing things. Say to yourself, it is useless, it has bad results, it is sinful, it is reproaching my Master, I won't. That is the first simple rule.

Thankful for Anything.

The second helps to carry out the first. It is this, thankful for anything. Thanksgiving and praise are always associated with singing. When you feel the worry mood creeping on--it is a mood that attacks you--when it comes sing something, especially something with Jesus' name in it. These temptations to worry are from the Evil One. He can come in only through an open door. Remember that. Yet the open doors seem plenty. Even when we trustingly and resolutely keep every door of evil shut the circle in which we move will open doors upon us. Singing something with Jesus' name in it sends him or any of his brood off quickly. They hate that Name of their Conqueror. They get away from the sound of it as fast as they can.

A friend was calling upon another and began pouring out a stream of personal woes. This had gone wrong, and this, and this other would go wrong. Everything was wrong. And her friend, who knew her quite well, had her get a pencil and paper and asked her if possibly there was one thing for which she could be thankful. Reluctantly from her lips came the mention of some particular thing for which she felt indeed grateful. Then a second was gradually recalled, and then more. And as the train of thought grew on her she suddenly asked, "Why was I so despondent when I came in? Everything seems so changed."

It's a fine thing to go about one's work singing some hymn with praise in it, and with Jesus' name in it. And if singing may not always be allowable under all circumstances, you can hum a tune. And that brings up to the memory the words connected with it. I know of a woman who was much given to worrying. She made it a rule to sing the long-meter doxology whenever things seemed not right. Ofttimes she could hardly get her lips shaped up to begin the first words. But she would persist. And by the time the fourth line came it was ringing out and her atmosphere had changed without and within.

This was David's rule. He said: "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage."[18] He is not speaking of the time when he was acknowledged king over both Judah and all Israel, when the fortress of Jerusalem was his own capital. No, he is talking of the earlier days of his pilgrimage. When he was being hunted over the Judean fastnesses by King Saul. When with his band of faithful men he was ever fleeing for his life. He slept in caves and dens or out in the open, and always with one eye open. There he used to sing God's praises. A messenger would come breathlessly in some morning with the news that Saul was just over yonder ravine with a thousand men. And as David planned what best to do, and arranged his men, he would be singing.

Maybe he would sing that Twenty-third Psalm:

"For Thou art with me; and Thy rod
And staff me comfort still."

Or, maybe sometimes,

"To Thee I lift my soul;
O Lord, I trust in Thee:
My God, let me not be ashamed
Nor foes triumph o'er me."

Or, likely, he often sang:

"The Lord's my light and saving health;
Who shall make me dismayed?
My life's strength is the Lord; of whom
Then shall I be afraid?"

Or if perhaps Ezra wrote this psalm it takes one back to his weary, dangerous journey over from Babylon to Jerusalem and the very difficult work he was undertaking in Jerusalem in reorganizing the life of the people again. He used to sing on the way, and through all his difficulties.

It is a great rule.

"When the day is gloomy
Sing some happy song;
Meet the world's repining
With a courage strong."

Some one asked me if whistling would do. She was a busy housewife and said that was her rule. I have gone to singing myself. But maybe whistling is just as good. I'm inclined to favor giving it a place within the range of this rule.

There's a bit of deep, simple philosophy here. Music is divine. There is no music in the headquarters of the enemy. He has used it a great deal on the earth. That's a bit of his cunning. But he always has to steal it from God's sphere, and work it over to suit his own crafty purposes. Music, singing, is an open doorway for the Spirit of God to come in, and come in anew and move freely. Its sweet harmonies found their birth in the presence of God where sweetest harmonies reign. Lovers of music should be lovers of God, for He is the one great Master-musician.

When Elisha was asked to prophesy victory for Israel over the enemy at one time, he refused. He was not in harmony with this king nor his associates. His spirit refused to respond to their request. But at their urgent request he yielded, and called for a musician. And as the strains of music fell upon his ear and entered into his spirit he felt the divine presence and influence anew. We should use the musician more in our days of battle. And God has wonderfully provided every one of us with a music-box of sweet melodies. If we would only open the lid, and let frequent use wear off the rust, and sing His praise more. In music God speaks to us anew with great power. This is the second rule, thankful for anything.

Prayerful about Everything.

The third rule helps to make both first and second effective. These three are closely interwoven. They always work together. Each suggests the other two. They are an interwoven trinity. The third is this, prayerful about everything. There are some unusually fine bits from the old Book to help here. Referring to the discipline which God's love makes Him use, David says: "For His anger is but for a moment: His favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may come in to lodge at even, but joy cometh in the morning."[19] There may be weeping. There shall be joy. Weeping won't stay long.

There's a morning coming, always a morning coming, with the sunshine and the chorus of the birds. Love's discipling touch that seems at the moment like anger is only for a moment. (The printer wanted to change that word discipling to disciplining; but God's tenderness comes to us anew when we realize that disciplining with its sharp edge means the same as discipling with its softer warmer touch.) The loving favor is for always, a lifetime of eternal life.

Again David says, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee."[20] The margin explains that the thing that weighs as a burden is something God has given us. He has sent it or allowed it to come. He has strong purpose in all He does. Here the promise is not that the burden will be removed, but that He will pick up both you and your burden into His arms and carry both. Many a man has praised God for the burden that made him know the tender touch of strong arms.

The same thing is repeated in the Sixty-eighth Psalm[21] with tender variations. "Blessed be the Lord who day by day beareth our burden." Probably Peter knew a good bit about this subject. His temperament was of the impulsive sort that knows quick squalls at sea. But he had learned how to ride through them undisturbed to the calmer waters. He says, "Casting all your anxiety upon Him because He careth for you."[22] The force of the French version is said to be "unloading your anxiety upon Him." Back the cart up, tilt it over, let down the tail-board, let it all slip out over upon Him. The literal reading of that last half is, "He has you on His heart."

"Is not this enough alone
For the gladness of the day?"

But many of us have an inner feeling that some matters are too small, too trivial to take to God. We will take the great things, the serious things to Him and find the help needed. But it seems childish almost to be bothering the great God about trifling details, we are apt to think. We are even annoyed with ourselves to think that we have allowed such petty things to make us lose our balance and control. We want to underscore and italicize this fact: if a thing is big enough to concern you, it is not too small for Him "because He has you on His heart." For your sake He is eager to help in anything, however small in itself it may seem.

Indeed it is the little things that fret and tease and nag so. The big things are more easily handled. But the little insectivorous details that will not down! Have you ever had this experience? You have retired on a hot summer night, tired and heavy with sleep. You are almost off when a mosquito that in some inexplicable way has eluded all screens and nettings comes singing its way about your face. It is just one. It seems so small. If it were only big enough to hit, something worthy of one's strength. But the mean little nagging specimen seems to elude every effort of yours. Maybe you take calm, deliberate measures to end its existence, but meanwhile you are thoroughly aroused and lose quite a bit of the sleep you need.

Just such a mosquito warfare do the little cares make upon one's strength, frittering it away. It cannot be too insistently repeated that whatever is big enough to cause me any thought is not too small for my God. He is concerned because I am concerned.

A Steamer Chair for His Friend.

It helps immensely here to recall the necessary qualities of a great executive, one who is concerned about the conduct of large affairs. There are two great qualities absolutely needful in any one occupying such a position. There must be the ability to grasp the whole scheme involved, and to keep one's finger upon every detail, as well. God is a great executive, the great executive of the universe. He planned the vast scheme of worlds making up the universe, and every detail. The whole universe in its immensity, and the intricacy of its movements, is kept in motion by Him. And every detail down to the smallest, the falling of one of the smallest birds, is ever under His thoughtful eye and touch. And He is our God. He has each of us on His heart.

We may learn of God by looking at man, made in His image. A story is told of a merchant well known on both sides of the water, illustrating this. His business interests are very extensive, with great stores in three of the world's great cities. He has displayed great genius for controlling the details of his vast enterprise. It is said that at one time when his business was developing its greatness, this was his habit. He would come to a clerk's desk unexpectedly and, sitting down quietly, note the transactions that came along. Here was a sales slip; three yards of calico, seven cents per yard, twenty-one cents; a bolt of tape, three cents, total twenty-four cents; cash fifty cents, twenty-six cents change. He would very quietly note the calculations, and call attention to any inaccuracies.

He might stay there a half-hour. Then he was away again. It was never known when he might come, nor where. He was always marked for his genial courtesy toward all his employees. That was his habit for years, I am told. His talent for details amounts to positive genius. And with this goes the ability to originate and build up and keep ever growing his vast business operations. And this man is but one of a very large class in our day of specialized organization. This faculty of controlling both the whole, and each detail, is a bit of the image of God in these men. Only man is ever less than God. The best organization slips sometimes, somewhere. But God never fails. Each of us is personal to Him. He can think of each as though there were no other needing His thought, and He does.

A little incident is told of George M¸ller of Bristol, England. He is the man who taught the whole world anew how to trust God. Poor in his own holdings, he expended millions of dollars in caring for orphans, supporting missionaries, and distributing printed truth. He never asked any man for money nor made any needs known. He trusted God for all and for each. The two thousand and more orphans, and the cutting of his quill pen were alike subjects of prayer with him.

At one time, in the course of his missionary travels around the world, he was embarking on an ocean voyage. He was an old man at the time, and accompanied by a young man who attended to the details of travel. After they had boarded the steamer his companion came up hurriedly to say that the steamer chair for Mr. M¸ller's use was not on board and he could not get any trace of it. It would of course be a very necessary convenience for the steamer trip. Mr. M¸ller inquired if the proper notice had been sent to have it on board. Yes, all had been done that should have been done. And now the time was very short.

Mr. M¸ller breathed a quiet prayer, and then said to his companion not to be disturbed, that he felt sure it would be on hand in time. The attendant went off again to see what could be done, came back evidently annoyed at the possibility of his elder distinguished companion being inconvenienced. But Mr. M¸ller quieted him with the assurance that the chair would come. They stood at the side rail above, overlooking the dock.

At the very last moment, just as the hawsers were about to be thrown off, and the gang plank pulled away, a truck of luggage was hurriedly run on board, and on top of the pile the friends watching above could plainly see a steamer chair with G. M. marked on it. Mr. M¸ller, standing in his group of friends, looked up past them and quietly said, "Father, I thank Thee." Was God in that simple occurrence? He surely was. He was concerned that His faithful friend should have the chair for his bodily comfort. Man's arrangements seemed in danger of slipping. His overruling touch was put in for His friend's sake. A chair wasn't too small for God because it was for His friend, Mr. M¸ller.

He Has You on His Heart.

I got a similar story from Dr. James H. Brookes of St. Louis, a number of years ago while in his home over night. It was about J. Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, who had learned through many years of trusting how faithful God is. Mr. Taylor had been speaking in Dr. Brookes' church, and was to go to a town in southern Illinois to speak at the Sabbath services. Saturday morning they went down to the railroad station to get the train, and stepped into the station just as the train was pulling out at the other end. There was no possible chance of catching it. It seemed all the more exasperating that they could see the train moving away out of reach.

Dr. Brookes of course felt much chagrined. Mr. Taylor being a stranger in the country, and the guest of Dr. Brookes, had trusted his arrangements. Inquiries were quickly made about other trains. But there would not be another train out that way until night. And as they were questioning and talking the station-master said, "There's that train over there; it runs into Illinois and crosses another road down to where you want to go. They are supposed to make connections, but they never do." Dr. Brookes said he went off to make further inquiries, and coming back in a few moments was surprised to find Mr. Taylor standing on the rear platform of the train that never made the connection.

He said, "Why, Mr. Taylor, that won't make the connection." And Mr. Taylor smiled and in his very quiet way said, "Good-bye, Doctor, my Father runneth the trains." That seemed to sound well for a sermon. But to Dr. Brookes' misgivings there came again the quiet "Good-bye, Doctor, my Father runneth the trains." After starting Mr. Taylor explained the situation to the conductor, the importance of his engagement, and of making the desired connection, hoping the trainman might be of some service. The man hoped he would get the train, but said it was very doubtful as they rarely did. Mr. Taylor thanked him, and sat quietly praying.

Was the connection made? As Mr. Taylor's train pulled in the other was standing at the station. The conductor said, "Well, there it is, but I didn't expect it." There was quite enough time to get across the platform without hurrying and into the other train when it moved off. Was God in that? I have no difficulty at all in understanding that He was. What concerned His friend, in a strange land, on an errand for Himself surely concerned Him. What concerns any trusting child of His concerns Him, for He has us on His heart.

I recall a personal experience in Boston one summer day. It was a very hot day. I was to meet my mother and sister in the North Union station, where we were to take a train out. I had their tickets. I reached the station from my errands, hot and tired and with my head aching, ideal conditions for worry. As I stepped into the station I realized at once that our appointment to meet was not very definite. For the large station was crowded. There was not much time before our train would go. And I commenced to be agitated, which is a gentler way of saying worried. What would I do? It would be extremely inconvenient, especially for my mother, to miss the train. And the time was short, and--and--.

You see I was not a graduate in this don't-worry school. I'm not yet; still studying; expect to enter for post work when I do graduate. The school is still open; open to all; instruction given individually only; the Teacher has had long experience Himself on the earth, in the thick of things.

Well, I said as I stood a moment in the thick crowd, "Master, you know where they are. Please take me to them. Maybe I should have been more careful about the appointment, but I was tired at the start. Please--thank you." And in less time than it takes to tell you I met them right in the thick of the great crowd. And I felt sure that Peter got his putting of it straight when he said of the Master, "He has you on His heart."

Paul's Prison Psalm.

Did Paul follow his own rules? The best answer to that is this little four-chaptered epistle where the rules are found. Philippians is a prison psalm. The clanking of chains resounds throughout its brief pages. At one end is Philippi; at the other Rome. Here is the Philippian end. In the inner dungeon of a prison, dark, dirty, damp, is a man, Paul. His back is bleeding and sore from the whipping-post. His feet are fast in the stocks. His position is about as cramped and painful as it can be. It is midnight. Paul would be asleep for weariness and exhaustion, but the position and the pain hinder.

Does no temptation come to him? He had been following a vision in coming over to Philippi. This is a great ending to the vision he's been having. Did no such temptation come? Very likely it did. But Paul is an old campaigner. He knows best what to do. He begins singing. His music is pitched in the major too. Most likely he is singing one of the old Hebrew psalms that he knew by heart. It was a psalm of praise. That is one end of this epistle.

At the other end Paul is a prisoner at Rome. As he sits dictating his letter, if he gets tired and would swing one limb over the other for a change, a heavy chain at his ankle reminds him of his bonds. As he reaches for a quill to put a loving touch to the end of the parchment, again the forged steel pulls at his wrist. That is the setting of Philippians, the prison psalm. What is its key word? Is it patience? That would seem appropriate. Is it long-suffering? More appropriate yet. Some of us know about short-suffering, but we are apt to be a bit short on long-suffering. The keyword is joy, with its variations of rejoice, and rejoicing.

And notice what joy is. It is the cataract in the stream of life. Peace is the gentle even flowing of the river. Joy is where the waters go bubbling, leaping with ecstatic bound, and forever after, as they go on, making the channel deeper for the quiet flow of peace. Paul had put his no-worry rules through the crucible of experience. He follows the Master in that. These three rules really mean living ever in that Master's presence. When we realize that He is ever alongside then it will be easier to be

Anxious for nothing,
Thankful for anything,
Prayerful about everything.

He Touched Her Hand.

One morning on waking, a woman charged with the care of a home began thinking of the day's simple duties. And as she thought they seemed to magnify and pile up. There was her little daughter to get off to school with her luncheon. Some of the church ladies were coming that morning for a society meeting, and she had been planning a dainty luncheon for them. The maid in the kitchen was not exactly ideal--yet. And as she thought into the day her head began aching.

After breakfast, as her husband was leaving for the day's business, he took her hand and kissed her good-bye. "Why," he said, "my dear, your hand is feverish. I'm afraid you've been doing too much. Better just take a day off." And he was gone. And she said to herself, "A day off! The idea! Just like a man to think that I could take a day off." But she had been making a habit of getting a little time for reading and prayer after breakfast. Pity she had not put it in earlier, at the day's very start. Yet maybe she could not. Sometimes it is not possible. Yet most times it is possible, by planning.

Now she slipped to her room and, sitting down quietly, turned to the chapter in her regular place of reading. It was the eighth of Matthew. As she read she came to the words, "And He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she arose and ministered unto Him." And she knelt and breathed out the soft prayer for a touch of the Master's hand upon her own. And it came as she remained there a few moments. And then with much quieter spirit she went on into the day.

The luncheon for the church ladies was not quite so elaborate as she had planned. There came to her an impulse to tell her morning's experience. She shrank from doing it. It seemed a sacred thing. They might not understand. But the impulse remained and she obeyed it, and quietly told them. And as they listened there seemed to come a touch of the Spirit's presence upon them all. And so the day was a blessed one. Its close found her husband back again. And as he greeted her he said quietly, "My dear, you did as I said, didn't you? The fever's gone."

08 - Gideon's Band: Sifted for Service.

8 - Gideon's Band: Sifted for Service.

By S.D. Gordon

(1 Corinthians i:18-31; Judges vi and vii.)

God Wants the Best.

Salvation is for all. Service is for those chosen for it. All may serve. That all do not is simply because service requires qualities which all do not have. Yet, again, all may have them who will, for the required qualities are heart qualities. And every one of us can cultivate the heart qualities. There is special service, chiefly of leadership, requiring brain qualities as well as heart. But the Master attends to the choosing of men for such service.

And where His spirit has touched human hearts there will be a glad doing of just what service He appoints. It will be an honor to do just what He asks because He asks. What it may happen to be will be a small matter in itself. It is for Him, at His desire, and that is full enough to bring out the best we have.

Our old Tarsus and Antioch friend and leader has written a special word about this matter of being chosen for service. It is in his first letter to the recently organized church at Corinth. It is really his second letter, for he seems to have written one before it that has not been preserved.[23] There were some very serious matters in this new church requiring strong treatment by its much-loved founder. Among them was one about service.

There were some who had gifts in service that seemed more attractive and desirable than others had, it might be said more showy. And their brethren, not free from the old worldly spirit, were envious and jealous. And these who had such gifts were not free from a boasting spirit. Factions or parties had arisen as a result. It was the bad world spirit of competition and rivalry in among Christ's followers where it should never come, yet where it still does come. In writing this letter Paul throughout blends great plainness and common sense with great tenderness.

In the beginning of his letter he calls attention to the fact that there are not many among them of those who were reckoned by the world's standards as wise or mighty or noble. On the contrary, in choosing His leaders God had purposely chosen those reckoned by the world's standards foolish that He might show plainly the shallowness of what they deem wise. And so things reckoned weak had been chosen to give the conception of what true strength is. And things even base, and despised, and not counted at all had been used that so men might learn the God-standards of wisdom and strength and honor and of what is worth while. The purpose being that men should quit glorying in themselves and glorify Him from whom everything had come, and was ever coming.

The passage has oftentimes been quoted as though God prefers weakness; never put so bluntly as that perhaps, but plainly meaning that. That of course is not true. God wants the best we have. He needs the best. And for leadership often His plans must wait till a man of the sort needed can be gotten. And gotten frequently means broken, shattered, and then made over wholly new, that the native strength may be used according to true standards.

Jacob was chosen rather than his elder brother Esau, not because of Jacob's goodness but because of Esau's weakness. God was narrowed to these two grandsons in carrying out the promise to Abraham. Jacob was contemptible in his moral dealings, but he had qualities of leadership wholly lacking in his brother. His moral character was a serious hindrance. God had to handle him heroically before He could get the use of his stronger mental equipment. Jacob had to get a bad throw-down before he would be willing to let God have His way. His body must be weakened before his mental power would yield. That was the weakness of his stubbornness. Stubbornness is strength not strong enough to yield.

God's Use of Weak Things.

It is true that over and over again God has used men utterly weak and foolish and despised in the light of life's common standards. He wants men of the best mental strength, of the finest mental training, and He uses such when they are willing to be used, and governed by the true God-standards of life. But talent seems specially beset with temptation. The very power to do great things seems often to bewilder the man possessing it. Wrong ambition gets the saddle and the reins and whip too, and rides hard.

Frequently some man who had not guessed he had talent, born in some lonely walk of life, without the training of the schools, is used for special leadership. It takes longer time always. Early mental training is an enormous advantage. Carey the cobbler had mental talents to grace a Cambridge chair. It took a little longer time to get him into shape for the pioneer work he did in India. Duff's training gave him a great advantage.

But God is never in a hurry. He can wait. What He asks is that we shall bring the best we have natively, with the best possible training, and let Him use us absolutely as He may wish. And always remember that every mental power is a gift from Him; that actual power in life must be through Him only; and that mental gifts are not serviceable save as they are ever inbreathed by His own Spirit.

This word of Paul's finds most graphic illustration in the book of Judges. Judges should be put alongside of the first chapter of First Corinthians. It is a series of pictorial illustrations of what Paul is saying there. These two books, Joshua and Judges, side by side in the Old Testament stand in sharpest contrast. The keynote of Joshua is victory; of Judges defeat. There's music in both, but contrasted music. Joshua rings with songs in the major key, triumphant, militant, joyous, victorious.

The music of Judges is in the minor, sad and weeping, with the harps hanging on the willows. Joshua is upon the mountain top with sun shining and air bracing and outlook inspiring. Judges is down in the valley bottoms, dark and gloomy, and depressing. Yet Judges has bright spots, and has spurts of good music interspersed. It is a study in lights and shadows, bright lights, and dark shadowings, but with the blacker tints intensifying and overcoming the others.

There are here seven striking illustrations of God's use of strange unusual means, such as are reckoned weak and trivial. A left-handed man uses that peculiarity to get a great victory and eighteen years of freedom for the nation.[24] A farmer with as homely a weapon as an ox-goad delivers his people from oppression.[25] Men came to be so scarce, that is men that were men enough to take their true place as leaders, that a woman had to step into the breach, and assume leadership. But the student of history and of modern times is used to that. The result was great victory, and a forty years' rest from the nation's enemies.[26]

A nail or tent-pin, only a wooden peg, in the hands of a woman with a hammer helps to make the enemy's defeat more decisive.[27] Three hundred young men with pitchers and trumpets completely rout the three armies of three nations, and bring another deliverance.[28] Another time a piece of a millstone shoved over the wall by a woman turns the tide of battle favorably.[29] And as contemptible a thing as the jawbone of an ass in the hands of one strong man is used to slay a thousand men.[30]

Call for Volunteers.

It is of one of these, one of the most striking of these, that we are to talk together awhile; the graphic story of Gideon and his band of three hundred young fellows. Things were in bad shape in the nation; about as bad in every way as they could be. This time it was the Midianites who overran the land, and held the leaderless people in most abject slavery. With them were joined two other nations, the Amalekites and the Children of the East. When the crops were almost ready to harvest, these raiders swooped in in great numbers and destroyed all the crops and drove away all the stock.

They harried the Israelites so that life was made very miserable for them. They were forced to flee from their farms and take refuge in caves and dens and the fastnesses among the hills. Then, as usual, when they got into bad shape the people remembered God, and cried for help, and, as usual with Him, He at once forgave them and planned another great deliverance.

First of all Gideon the leader is chosen out, and put through a bit of schooling. That is a fascinating story of great helpfulness. Then this trained young leader gathers his band of helpers. And we want to mark keenly how these three hundred men were sifted out of the thousands for service. They were sifted out. They sifted themselves out. In that army of thousands were just three hundred who had the needed qualifications for the bit of service God wanted done.

Look over the gathered thousands: which are the chosen three hundred? No man knew. They didn't know themselves until the tests came. They chose themselves out by the way they stood the three tests applied. Even so is God ever sifting out men for service. The more difficult the service, the higher the grade of leadership needed, the severer the test. The testing both reveals the qualities, and in part makes them.

The first quality these men had was willingness. They were all volunteers. When the call came they rallied to the leader's side. Gideon sent runners, criers, out throughout that whole section. They went first to his own family clan, then to his tribe, then to three neighboring tribes. They said that God had called upon Gideon to lead a movement against the Midianites and their allies and he wanted every man to come and help. The messengers went swiftly through the whole territory of these neighboring tribes, arousing the men to action and calling for volunteers.

A good many did not respond to the summons. Some were simply indifferent. They could not help hearing the call, but there was no response without or within. No change of expression in the eye or face. They went right on in their heavy, dull way as though they hadn't heard. They were utterly indifferent to the call. Some were reluctant. They stopped and listened, but with a heavy slant backwards to their bodies. Their heels bore most of their weight. It was a good idea to get up such a movement, the enemy ought to be driven back and out, but--but--and their eyes are half shut already.

Some criticised. Who was Gideon? A young upstart! trying to push himself forward as a leader. He had no skill or experience. And the people had no weapons. The enemy had stolen everything of the sort away. And they were clear outnumbered. There wasn't a ghost of a show. It would only make bad matters worse. This young upstart Gideon would soon be sorry enough when he butted his head against the experienced Midianite leaders. And--and--and--there they are talking, criticising, but not responding to the call. Such critics seldom respond, and helpers criticise in a very different way. It takes less brain to criticise unwisely, captiously, far less than to help. Almost any hare-brain can tear a thing to pieces. And nothing is commoner than just such criticism.

Some ridiculed. "Ha! ha! ha! Gideon going to be national leader; ha! ha! ha! And whip the enemy. Ridiculous! Absurd!" And some were outrightly opposed. They objected. The people would be aroused, their hopes awakened only to be dashed. The whole thing was wrong, for it was impossible. And these men tried to keep others from going.

A Willing People.

But many came. A crowd of volunteers came hurrying from farms and caves, bringing such weapons probably as they had been able to keep in hiding. They were willing to respond. It was a motley crowd, no doubt. There were thirty-two thousand of them. These four tribes had once numbered as many as one hundred and eighty-four thousand five hundred fighting men. And at another, later, enumeration they had two hundred and twelve thousand men of war age. Their numbers may be smaller now, though possibly not. It looks as though only a small minority of all had responded, maybe one in six or so.

These men had the first great qualification for service, they were willing. They were actively willing. They willed to come down to the front and help fight the enemy, and deliver their nation. It is a great quality this of being willing. That prophetic One Hundred and Tenth Psalm mentions this as the great characteristic of those who shall rally about God's King in a coming day of power. God reckons our service not by our ability but by our willingness.[31]

Whatever is given out of a warm, willing heart is eagerly accepted by Him. The Hebrew tabernacle was constructed of free-will offerings. The people came willingly with their offerings and left them for Moses' use. Some brought gold and silver, some finely woven tapestries and silks. Here was one poor woman who wanted to give but had very little. So she went out to her little flock of goats whereby her living came to her, and cut off a big bunch of goat's hair, and then with much pains dyed it red.

And then one day she went up to where they were presenting their gifts and timidly laid her bunch of goat's hair on the pile of offerings, and quietly, quickly slipped away. It seemed very small on that pile of gold and silver and richly-colored weavings. But it was the gift of her heart. They had to have goat's hair as well as gold. And her offering was acceptable because it came from a willing heart. Willingness is a heart quality. It is the heart volunteering.

"Our wills are ours to make them Thine."

This was the first test. Thirty-two thousand out of four tribes stood this test. Gideon's army had one great qualification at the start.

Courageous Volunteers.

Now these men are put to a second test. The next morning God surprised Gideon by telling him that he had too many men. If a victory was given them with so many men they would feel that they had done the thing themselves. They would grow so large as to shut God out of their landscape. There would be no getting along with them. Each man would feel that he was the essential factor. They would go back to the homefolks to tell of themselves. God seems to know us folk down on the earth fairly well.

Now He would lessen their numbers, but in doing it He will pick out the best. The men are encamped on the hillsides overlooking a valley. Across the valley to the north lay the encamped armies of three nations. They were a vast host. They were spread out as thick as the grasshoppers of Egypt had been years before. Everywhere you looked there they were swarming.

Gideon spoke to his men. He said, "Gentlemen, Fellow-Israelites, there is the enemy. Take a good look at them." And his followers looked, and as they looked some of them began to get scared. They had not realized just what was involved. Their footwear seemed to grow too large. They were shaking in their boots. And their eyes grew big and their faces white under the tan.

Then Gideon said, "Now, every man of you that thinks it can't be done--I wish you would get right out of this, and go back home." And he watched. And I imagine even Gideon shook a bit inside as he watched. They commenced to move away in squads, in scores, in fifties. Great gaps were left in the mob of men. Here is a fellow standing, looking. He thinks, "It looks pretty bad, sure enough; but then, I suppose, if God is planning--" hello, the fellow by his side has gone, and on this other side too--"I guess I'd better go too." And off he goes. Fear is very contagious. There is great power in feeling a man by your side. And two-thirds of them disappear over the hills.

The motto of these disappearing men was this: "It can't be done." They must have organized themselves into a society to perpetuate their own idea. If so the society has shown great vitality. Many of its members abide with us until this day. No, probably they didn't organize. They didn't have enough gumption to. And such a sentiment grows like a weed without any cultivation.

I recall a certain town in Ohio where I had gone to talk about an enlargement and re-vitalizing of the Young Men's Christian Association. Thousands of young men in the place needed just such help as that organization is supposed to provide. I outlined the plan to a clergyman. He said it was a good plan, there was great need, the thing should be done, "but," he said, with an air of settling the thing, "it can't be done in this town."

Among others I talked with a business man. He listened attentively, approved the plans, agreed upon the great need, and then settling back in his chair with the same air of finality, used exactly the same words, with the same emphasis, "It can't be done in this town." I got that same reply from several men that day. And I said to myself, "They are right; it can't be done with them; but it can be done without them." And it was.

Irresistible Logic.

But there remained ten thousand. These men by their staying said, "It ought to be done. What ought to be done can be done. What can be done we can do. What we can do we will do." Here is another man standing looking at that vast host across the valley. He is thinking that it is a desperate case, but he thinks of God's call through Gideon. Just then he notices that his neighbor on the left has taken to his heels, and on his right also. That shakes him for a moment. His heels say, "You go too." His heart said, "No, stay." He obeyed his heart. He said, "I'll stay if I stay alone."

That was the stuff in these remaining ten thousand. They stood a double test in remaining, the desperate situation seen in the presence of such an enormous army, and the desertion of their fellows. They had courage; not only willingness but courage. Courage is a heart quality. Courage is the heart fighting. It faces fearful odds and keeps right straight ahead regardless.

A prize was offered once for the best definition of "pluck." The definition that won the prize said, "Pluck is fighting with the scabbard after the sword is broken." What a picture in a single sentence! The man is fighting with might and main in the thick of the enemy, up and down, parry and thrust, and just about holding his own, when suddenly, without a moment's warning, the blade snaps close up to the hilt. The game's up now surely. This accident decides the day. Maybe--for some men. But not for this fellow. He simply sets his jaws a bit firmer as, quick as lightning, he grabs the scabbard by his side and fights with it.

Such a man can't be whipped. He doesn't know when he is whipped. And the man who doesn't know when he is whipped, never is whipped. No man can be whipped without his own consent. I said courage is a heart quality. These ten thousand were not chicken-hearted nor downhearted. They were lion-hearted, stout-hearted. They had hearts of oak.

It was a keen stroke of generalship on Gideon's part that sent the timid, discouraged ones back home. Nothing is more demoralizing than the presence of such people. And there was no discipline much finer for those who remained than to feel their fellows leaving them. It's hard to be left by those who have been in touch. It is hard to stand alone.

There is no harder test of character than that. And too there is no finer thing to make character. Think how the fiber of those ten thousand toughened and strengthened as they stood there, with men on every side hurrying away. This was the second test. But the men who can stand testing are growing fewer. Thirty-two thousand men were willing. Only a third of them are both willing and courageous. These men are more than volunteers. They have seen the foe. Their fiber has stood the test, and toughened in the test. They are courageous volunteers.

Hot Hearts.

But there is a third test. God comes to Gideon and says, "You have too many men yet, Gideon." And Gideon's eyes bulge out a bit. Too many! Yes, this is to be a quality fight. No common fighting here. God works best with the men who come nearest to having His own thought of things. Numbers don't count. You can't count men for service. You must weigh them, and feel the firmness of their fiber.

There is a little running brook down the valley. Gideon gives an order to his men to advance a bit. And he watches them. Most of them as they come to the water stretch out leisurely on the ground and putting their mouths to the water take a good long drink, and another, and again. They seem to say by their action, "Well, there's some tough work ahead, but we must take care of ourselves. A man must look out for number one. We must not get unduly stirred up over the thing. We're not fighting yet."

But one fellow comes along with a quick, nervous step, and his eye still on the enemy. He is all on tenter-hooks. His eye flashes fire. He reaches down with a quick movement and gathers up some water in his hand, up to his mouth, and hurries on. Then a second fellow, and a third, and more. Gideon is watching. As each of these comes along he calls him off to one side. When the whole number of men have passed the brook there are just three hundred of the hot-hearted, intense-spirited fellows.

God said, "Gideon, keep these men; send the others back." These thousands sent back were sturdy men. They would make good fighters in many a campaign, but they would not do for this higher kind of campaigning planned for that day. The little band remaining had stood a third test, they were willing, and courageous, and enthusiastic.

Enthusiasm is the heart burning. These fellows had spring and snap to them. Yet it was a tempered spring and snap, the sort that would last. By their action at the brook they said, "If there's fighting to be done, let's do it quickly; let's go at the enemy with a vim and a rush. Oh! let us at them."

God Still Sifting.

Yet, mark you, their enthusiasm was seasoned. It grew under fire, or practically so, in the presence of the danger. There is always an abundance of the green article of enthusiasm, but it's not worth much for steady ditch-work. There is a sort of wood enthusiasm, apple-wood. You know how apple-wood burns in a fire. It catches quickly, throws out a good many sparks, makes a loud crackling noise, but doesn't last long.

There is another sort, a soft-coal enthusiasm. It's better than wood. But it needs a lot of attention continually to keep a steady fire. Then there's the hard-coal enthusiasm that will burn steadily and faithfully by the hour. Yet no kind, mark you, will run long without fresh fuel. We need in our service more of the seasoned enthusiasm.

It has been said of General Grant that one great reason for his success as a soldier was in his coolness. While the fighting and firing were hottest he sat on his horse quietly, coolly watching, listening, and giving his orders. And much of his power has been attributed to that quality. Well, if coolness is a qualification for success in Christian service there seems to be a large number of persons splendidly qualified. They are cool all the time; cool as icebergs at the North Pole; cool from the topmost layer of hair to the bottommost cuticle--about certain things.

We want coolness of head such as General Grant had and hotness of heart such as he had, too. The ideal combination is a cool head and a hot heart. The head should resemble a refrigerator, and the heart a flaming furnace. There is one bother, however, among many people. Either the coolness of the head works down too much and affects the heart, and that is bad, or, else the heat of the heart gets up into the head, and a hot head is always bad.

Yet there is a sure key to preserving the poise between the two. It is in the quiet time daily with Jesus, over the Book, with the knee bent, and the ear keen, and the spirit quiet. In that time there comes, and comes ever more, the calmness for the brain, and the fresh fuel for the heart, and new steadiness for the will that holds all under its strong hand.

Many difficulties will yield only to fire. When you cannot reason your way through a problem, or a difficulty, or into a man's heart, burn your way through. Nothing can withstand fire. It is very remarkable that the symbol used most for God in the Bible is fire. A man never amounts to anything until he catches fire.

The proportions are worth noticing here. Thirty-two thousand were volunteers. A third of that number are courageous volunteers. About a thirty-third of these, less than a hundredth of the original, are hot-hearted, courageous volunteers.

This is Gideon's Band; three hundred young men fresh from the farm, who were willing, and courageous, and hot-hearted, all heart qualities. They stood every test. They had faced a foe that humanly they had no chance to overcome, and because of God's call they were not only willing, and stout-hearted, but intense in their desire to get at the fighting.

Then under Gideon's leadership they were well fed, and organized; they proved individually faithful in the thick of the fight, and they pushed persistently on even when bodily tired out. And the nation knew a great victory over its enemies, and a time of prosperity for years after.

God is still sifting men for service. He will use gladly every man who is willing to be used. When a man stands the first test well, there comes a second. That, stood well, means others. These are our promotion tests. He lets those who stand all testings into the thickest of the fight and up to the highest heights of victory.

Master, help us to endure every test as seeing Him who is invisible.

09 - Footnotes

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By S.D. Gordon

[1] 1 John i:1.

[2] 2 Corinthians iii:18.

[3] Frances Ridley Havergal.

[4] Exodus xxi:2-6, Leviticus xxv:39-43; Deuteronomy xv:12-18.

[5] Psalm xi:6-8; Hebrews x:5-7.

[6] Isa_1:4-6.

[7] John v:19, 30; vi:38, 57; vii:16-17, 28; viii:28, 29.

[8] John Sullivan Dwight.

[9] Mark i:41; Matthew ix:36; Mark vi:34 (with Matthew xiv:14); Matthew xx:34; xv:32; Mark v:19; Luke vii:13; x:33; xv:20

[10] Daniel xii:3.

[11] James v:19.

[12] Proverbs xi:30.

[13] Luke v:10.

[14] Acts xvii:6.

[15] 1 Thessalonians iv:11; 2 Corinthians v. 9, Romans xv:20.

[16] Attention is directed to a strong helpful address on "Money," by Rev. A. F. Schauffler, D.D., in "The Student Missionary Appeal," published by the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions.

[17] Luke xvi:9.

[18] Psalm cxix:54.

[19] Psalm xxx:5.

[20] Psa_55:22.

[21] Psalm lxviii:19.

[22] I Peter v:7.

[23] 1 Corinthians v:9-12.

[24] Judges iii:15-30.

[25] Judges iii:31.

[26] Judges iv:4-16; v:1.

[27] Judges iv:17-24.

[28] Judges vi and vii.

[29] Judges ix:50-57.

[30] Judges xv:15-20.

[31] 2 Corinthians viii:12.