

God's Way Out

"For Us and For Our Little Ones"

"Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance."

Ezra 8:21.

Lesson 22. God's Way for Our Own Lives

If you are wondering what your life-work shall be, or how you can best help others to choose aright, this chapter may give especially helpful suggestions.

THE Lord Jesus had gone up to heaven to prepare a place for them. He was going to come again to earth. What tumultuous thoughts of joy and wonder filled the disciples' hearts! Heaven--ah, now that far-away place of glory seemed very near, so different. They had a friend there. By the throne of the eternal Father in those glorious courts above, they had a Friend, the Lord Jesus. Yes, Jesus, our Friend and Elder Brother, stands by the eternal throne. He loves us still, He loves our children. He brought heaven to human hearts on earth. He has taken earth in His loving heart to heaven. Our names are graven on His hand in those nail-scars. He ever lives to make intercession for us. Soon He will come again for us.

As the disciples watched Jesus ascend, suddenly they noticed two white-clad strangers were with them--heavenly visitants, who said: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

[1]

He will come again. They must hasten and tell the story of His love to the world. "Preach the good news make disciples," Jesus had said. "Teach them." Such are the words which set forth our hopes and our work, "till He come." What a challenge is this for every disciple of Christ in these days! Many a bold Christian young man, many a noble-spirited girl and woman is inquiring, "What shall my life-work be? How can I best serve God and my fellow men 'till Jesus come'?"

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" [2] is the natural question that arises to their lips. "What is God's life-work for me?" Christ's last words on earth gave direction in regard to this very subject, so important in the eyes of every young Christian man and woman. As the disciples gathered around Him on the green slopes of Mount Olivet that last day, He gave them counsel and instruction which will guide us to make the right choice in these times. "Go you into all the world," He said, "and declare the good news to every creature," [3] "Make disciples of all

nations teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” [4] This, then, is our life-work.

“The Master Calls for Thee”

To many will come the direct call to preach the gospel across the seas to those who have never known its sweetness. What a noble work this can be! And if this foreign mission work is accompanied by medical work, healing of the body, gladness and song will be heard from many a land now oppressed with pain and disease. The lepers will be cleansed; the sick will be healed; the poor will have the gospel preached to them. The nightmare of life will become a vision of heaven. “Doctor, you save my people!” cried an old African chief after the missionary doctor had removed a tumor weighing fifty-one pounds from a native patient. “You save my people.”

“Doctor, my people will not know me now that I am well and have within me the joy and peace of the gospel,” rejoiced another native. “I have killed six men during my life, and had even planned to kill the mission school teacher, confessed a transformed Amazon Indian. “But now I rejoice in the light of the gospel.”

“On this trip we have treated 5,280 sufferers,” writes L. B. Halliwell, a missionary who ran a river launch on the Amazon and its tributaries. “We admitted 1,152 in-patients,” writes the doctor in charge of a mission hospital in East Africa, “and there were about 27,000; attendances at the out-patient department and the two dispensaries. Two hundred operations were performed. A hundred and seventy babies were born in the maternity ward.” Out in an African village the native drums began beating out a message that stirred the people with incredulous excitement: “Dr-r-r-um, dr-r-r-um, dr-r-r-um! “The chief’s uncle is returning, a well man! The chief’s uncle is no more a leper!”

Yes, it was true. “His face, look at his face,” the natives whisper. “Where are the leprous spots?” “Where is the rough, scaly skin now?” “Where are the ulcers? His skin is the skin of a healthy man. Look at his eyes! They smile again!” [5] Yes, smiles are coming to faces where smiles have long been foreigners. The lepers are being cured. Clean bodies and clean hearts are appearing where filth and sin were only too manifest. This is the work which God is accomplishing through men and women who have given their lives to preach the gospel in all the world.

The Doctor in the Homeland

Many young men have seen the opportunity for Christian service in the work of the physician in the homeland. What an influence he has! What pain and suffering he can banish! One Christian doctor lightly sums up his record thus:-

“In thirty years I have felt over one million pulses, looked at a similar number of tongues, and prescribed treatment for over one million persons. During the same time I introduced about two thousand new arrivals into the world and attended the departing of about six hundred. I have signed about one hundred and fifty thousand medical certificates of various kinds, examined one hundred thousand children under sixteen for work in factories, conducted two nursing homes, helped support a church school, acted on a church board, preached hundreds of sermons, given hundreds of temperance and health addresses, and taught over one thousand times in Sabbath-school classes.

“In my spare time I do carpentry and decorating, and have assisted several lads to obtain a working knowledge of these trades.” Those who know this good doctor realize that beside all this he has a record of practical sympathetic helpfulness which has brought happiness and inspiration to many a struggling man and woman. Yes, the work of the physician offers wide opportunity to “declare the good news,” till Christ shall come.

The Gospel Colporteur

Other consecrated young men have given their lives to the work of gospel colporteur, selling Bibles and other books which teach the principles of the Christian life. Through this quiet door-to-door work, thousands of men, women, and children have come to know the Lord Jesus and have reached up to higher heights of happy Christian living.

One colporteur, George True, let us call him, has in ten years placed in the homes about 13,000 copies of a life of Christ. Thousands of boys and girls must have been influenced for good as a result. “I owe many of my highest ideals of Christian life to that book,” testified a reader.

Another colporteur, who might well be called Arthur Strong, has specialized in selling books of children's stories, full of practical gospel principles. In ten years he has placed one hundred thousand little books in the homes. Another colporteur has specialized in selling larger volumes of Christian teaching. Who can measure the result in the hearts of the parents, children, and youth?

Other young men have volunteered for colporteur work in the Far East and in other lands abroad. Mighty transformations have come about in human hearts as a result. The testimony of one active missionary society is: "Half our converts in these countries have come in as a result of the purchase of these Christian books and magazines." Many great foreign mission workers began their service as the result of the influence of a colporteur or the literature he sold.

F. A. Stahl, for instance was a great modern pioneer of Christian work among the Indians of Peru, Bolivia, and the Upper Amazon. Through the work of Stahl and his successors, thousands of Indians have been given a great hope which has brightened and transformed their once sordid lives. "Oh, my people," cried an Indian chief who had listened to Stahl's preaching: "This is heaven come down upon earth."

Stahl was a polisher and electroplater when, in his early twenties, a colporteur came to his home and sold him a book called "Patriarchs and Prophets." This was the book that changed his life plans, and sent him thousands of miles to the high Andes to carry the gospel to the Indians. You would almost expect the colporteur to celebrate the anniversary of that day, wouldn't you?

Then there was G. F. Jones, the little seafaring man with a big heart, who was used of God to do such a mighty work in the South Pacific islands. He began his course when he picked up a torn page of a Christian magazine. Multitudes of once vicious, cruel, degraded natives are now clean, sober, practical, diligent, and gentle in their lives, as a result of the work of Jones and his successors.

Ministers, teachers, college principals, doctors, how many of these date the beginnings of their Christian work from the day they purchased a book from a colporteur who knocked at the door! If you take up this work with holy energy, perhaps your knock may arouse many a one to give his life in loving service for the homeland, Africa, India, or other lands beyond the seas. What a life purpose that would be! "The Master is come, and calls for thee."

The School-Teacher's Work

What an influence for good a Christian school-teacher can exert on the impressionable minds of boys and girls, "till He come!" The teacher's words have great weight with children, and the whole life of over a thousand coming men and women may be affected by the words and example of the one who guides the class. Says one successful teacher: "The name of every child or youth I ever taught is here in this book which I call my 'Book of Remembrance.' It is greatly worn from

much use. There are 1,300 names in this book; yes, I have 1,300 children. They are all mine, mine now and mine for ever.”

And sometimes the teacher sees the result after many years. “There is a ring at the door, and there stands a man. It is one of your boys. “And he speaks: ‘Yes, I have returned from my mission field, where I labored long among the unfortunate who do not know Jesus, and I taught them the lessons you taught me.”

“Then you are lonely no longer, and you say life is sweet. You forget the heartaches, the disappointments, the trials, and tears. You remember only that the harvest is good from the seed sown so long ago.” [6]

Perhaps as a Nurse

A Christian girl may have hope of becoming a qualified doctor, but even if she becomes a nurse, she may ease ten thousand aching bodies in twenty years' service. She may restore many a sick child to its mother's arms, well and happy again. She may bring gratitude to a multitude of hearts.

The Dentist's Opportunities

A Christian dentist, what untold agony he can relieve! He may by his skill prevent or cure ten thousand excruciating toothaches. If he goes to the dark corners of the earth as a missionary, he will often receive for his work's sake a welcome so grateful that he will have ample opportunity to tell of the Great Healer of sinful men.

The Sabbath School May Call You

You may not be a preacher or a foreign missionary, but you can perhaps teach a class of children in a Sabbath school or a Sunday school. If you give one day a week to such Christian work, you will in twenty-five years have given three and a half years' service. That is as much time as the Lord Jesus Himself gave to His public ministry.

Or the Gospel Ministry

But there is a great call for strong, well-educated young men to give their whole lives to the gospel ministry. Among all the professions in the world the greatest need is for men who can persuade others to forsake sin and serve Christ as citizens of His kingdom.

Scientists may have their place, but Christless science may teach men how to make death-dealing, maiming bombs. It may show how to make blister-gas, flame-throwers, and torpedoes, to burn, crush, mangle, torture, drown, and suffocate others.

The minister, preaching the gospel of Christ and pointing others to Him, can make cruel men kind. He can make selfish men generous. He can make drunken men sober. He can bring happiness into sad eyes, and songs to the lips where sadness has been. Said Keir Hardie, the great Scottish Socialist, disappointed and crushed by the tragedy of the first Great War: "If I were to live my life again, I would devote it to the advocacy of the gospel of Christ."

Oh, yes! The work of the true gospel minister builds concrete like foundations for the home and society. If you are a young man, earnestly consider this. Write for counsel to the principal of some good training college. If you are a father or mother, encourage your Christian sons to think of the gospel ministry.

If You Are in Business

The Christian business man or manufacturer can bring the principles of true Christianity into his relations with his employees. Many are doing this with heart and soul. They make it their plan to have happy, well-fed, well-housed, well-paid people. Some have flower-boxes in the workrooms. They have courses of instruction for both factory workers and salesmen. They provide a concert hall, a playing-field, or a free library.

No wonder such factories are filled with kindly co-operation and friendship. The Christian business man, like John Wanamaker, will make all his advertising truthful. He will buy his goods without squeezing all the profit out of the producer. He will endeavor to serve his customers well at a fair profit to his business. As one of the world's greatest merchants, Wanamaker is said to have conducted the largest Sunday school in the world. "He played no tricks and sold no trash." He was like a father to his employees. His business was built up by truth and kindness as well as by enterprise and sagacity. [7]

Not every business man will be able, like the Cadbury brothers, to set up a great pipe-organ in the works dining-room, nor build 1,000 cottages for workers, nor pretty little homes for old workers who have no money for rent. But he will find many ways in which he can make life bright for the workers. He can give seeds and bulbs to his workers, and encourage them to plant flowers around the

factory. He can teach them to abhor laziness, unpunctuality; and selfish ambition, and encourage them to help one another.

The small tradesman can imitate George Blank, a Christian shoe-repairer who gathered his workers around him every morning, to sing a hymn, read a scripture, and offer a short prayer. He taught them efficient methods of work, instructed them how to obtain orders and please customers with good workmanship and prompt delivery.

If You Are an Employee

The Christian employee will do all he can to prosper the business of his employer. There will be cheerful diligence and contentment even when things go wrong. There will be watchfulness and inventive thought for improvement, together with kindly helpfulness toward fellow workers and beginners. The non-union man will not victimize the union worker, and the union member will give all respect to the non-union man.

If Your Title Is "Mother" the Master Calls for You

Christian mothers; what an influence they can wield! Though sometimes it is felt that the work of the mother in the home is commonplace and uninspiring, yet when the curtain is drawn it is seen that the hand that leads the child is the hand that leads the world and shapes its destiny. What a multitude of great men attribute their success to the mother in the home! "A kiss from my mother made me a great painter," said Benjamin West.

"My mother," said Edison, inventor of a thousand marvels, "if it had not been for her appreciation and her faith in me, I should very likely never have become an inventor. The good effects of her early training I can never lose. Her firmness, her sweetness, her goodness, were potent powers to keep me in the right path. The memory of her will always be a blessing to me." [8] Cyrus Hamlin's mother taught him to deny himself and place gifts in the missionary box for the sake of unfortunate people in heathen lands. What a reward she had when he grew up to become a devoted missionary to the Moslems of Turkey! "He always said it was through the influence of that missionary box that he decided to give his life to the service of Christ." [9]

"My mother; my mother," repeated Samuel Chadwick, president of the Wesleyan Conference, once a poor mill-boy of Burnley. "I never knew my mother send the poor empty away." "My mother was a queen in compassion." "She was regal in her works of mercy." "She was capable without fussiness, witty without venom,

merry without being frivolous." How glad she would have been had she known the power of her influence and lived to see the scores of broken men whom he led to a new life of goodness and happiness! [10]

At the age of fifteen, young Hudson Taylor began to drift, and was being influenced by skeptical companions. But through his loving mother's prayers he turned wholeheartedly to God and gave his life to help the Chinese to know Him. Scores of mission stations and thousands of happy converts resulted from his work.

And in all this mother-work, done with willing hands for the sake of Him who loved us, there often comes a joy that is like heaven upon earth. There are "more heavens than one." Heaven often comes through the laughing eyes of little three-year-old Joan. Heaven comes within the four walls of an ordinary home when the mother takes Joan and baby Betty as a precious gift from a loving Father in heaven, and seeks to train them up for Him.

The Father, Too

And for a father--what a heaven to feel soft arms around his neck, a small soft cheek pressed lovingly against his face, and warm moist lips against his. A soft hand trustfully clasping his. "Games with father" oh, yes! There are "more heavens than one" for the Christian father and mother. God does not reserve all the sweetness of heaven for the life to come. "For after all, there is no paradise like that made by loving hearts."

Not to the convent or the monastery does God call His sons and daughters to witness for Him, but in the common duties of the home, in helpful Christian contact with children, neighbors, and tradesmen. In the office, by the lathe, the bench or the machine, by the linotype or the loom, and in loyal participation in the services of His house, here is that God calls most of us to witness for-Him -- "till He come." Yes, this is God's way for His children to preach the gospel, "till He come."

REFERENCES:

1. Acts 1:10, 11
2. Acts 9:6.
3. Mark 16:15.
4. Matthew 28:19, 20.
5. Fighting Africa's Black Magic, by M. H. Morrill, Pages 56, 57.
6. 6. E. McKibbin in Review and Herald, March 18, 1943.

7. Story of My Life, by Herbert Casson, Page 99.
8. Thomas A. Edison, by F. J. Miller, Pages 53, 54.
9. Choppy Waters, by E. I. Edwards, Page 31.
10. Samuel Chadwick, by Norman G. Dunning, Page 25.

