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Boston and Chicago.



CHRIST AND THE RICH YOUNG RULER.

(From a painting by H. Hofmann.)

Little Sermons for One

By

W. M. M. M.
Amos R. Wells

*Managing Editor of
The Christian Endeavor World*



United Society of Christian Endeavor
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LITTLE SERMONS FOR ONE.

A REVELATION OF CHRIST.

F you should look up from this book and see before you, standing by that table, or sitting in that chair, a plain man in plain clothes, his features also plain, perchance, except that from his eyes shone a light that never was on sea or land, and if this man should tell you he was Jesus, the Christ of God; if this plain man should at once prove by marvellous deeds and no less marvellous words that the thing was true; if this experience should befall you this minute, would you have a more real sense of Christ's presence than you have now?

And if this man should go out with you to your work, consult with you about your business, tug with you at something hard to lift, verify a column of figures for you, passing through your day with you as a visible, audible helper, would you take home with you at night a more vivid sense than usual of your great Elder Brother?

Then Christ is not yet as real to you as he should be; then you need a revelation of him.

This revelation should be so distinct, so impressive, so indubitable, as forevermore to dissipate your loneliness, forevermore to resolve your doubts, once for all to ally you to the spiritual life, parting you from the love of the flesh.

And this revelation you may have through the Holy Spirit, whom the Father delights to send to those that ask him, and who, when he comes, delights to take of the things of Christ, yea, to take Christ himself, and show him to us.

We cannot foretell what way may seem best to him. To some he reveals Christ by clear visions, to some through books, or through the lives of Christ's saints. To some the revelation is sudden; to others it is the blessed unfolding of years. But all these things, whatever they are, worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit.

What do we need more than this revelation, that shall remove Christ from our mythology and put him into our lives; bring him from heaven, where our faithless, sense-bound minds have placed him, down to our daily tasks and most intimate living? Blessed Spirit, who in thy supreme self-abnegation and self-forgetfulness dost hide thyself, that thou mayst the better show us the Man of Galilee, disclose him to us, we pray thee with longing hearts.

Startle us with a presentation of him that shall burn his face upon our memory, even with the flame of Pentecost. And may the sight so ransom us from the pettiness of our lives, so lift us into the large things, the enduring things, that ever afterwards we shall walk with God. Amen.

THE MANUFACTURE OF MEMORIES.

WHAT possession so strange as your memories? You cannot help owning them. Whatever you make, you are making them. When you do nothing you are manufacturing them as vigorously as when you are at work. You cannot buy what memories you have not, and you cannot sell what you have. Yes, and not all your wealth will rid you of those you dislike.

Other possessions you can lock up and leave, but this possession follows you around. Indeed, your memories may rather be said to possess you than be possessed by you. You are compelled to spend a large part of your time in their company. Whenever you awake in the night, they are there. At any idle moment they obtrude themselves. They always have time to talk with you, and when you are most anxious to get rid of them they are the most persistent in their approaches.

Forced to such close companionship with them,


if they are vile, your life must be a hog-pen, though it seem to the eye a cathedral. If they are sad, if they are harsh, your life is a grievous one. If they are noble, cheery memories, although you are poor, despised, neglected, you cannot help living like a king.

And inevitable though your companionship with them must be, yet you can make them what you please. Difficult as it is to get rid of them when made, it is the easiest thing in the world to make them. Consider what you remember with the greatest satisfaction. Is it not the little, thoughtful word you dropped with so slight effort, yet it set a sad heart to singing, and you yourself have been singing over it ever since? Is it not some hour passed unselfishly, some letter written to a troubled friend, some aid given to poverty or despair, aid which cost you nothing but is of priceless value to you even still? Your grand achievements, the speeches you have made, the books you have written, the fortune you have built up, the houses you have erected, the offices you have held, the praise you have won, not those have brought you the sweetest memories, but these deeds that were so easily done when once the heart was in the way of them.

Ah, what a garden grows from a little seed! Ah, what an interest returns from the slightest loan to the Lord! And how sad it is and unutterably foolish

that, while the most glorious memories are to be manufactured with so small an outfit, at so little cost of time or trouble, we should spend our lives rearing great mills that turn out only trifling memories, or memories that poison and slay!

THE STRENGTH OF WAITING.

OU have caught the impatient step of the times. To-morrow is too late for you; it must be to-day. Preparation is scouted; deeds must spring, like Minerva, full formed from the head. The intricate intertwinings of providence are quite forgotten. Results must leap to your thought, though they tear a dozen threads on the way. In the enthusiasm of achievement you have lost the enthusiasm of a steady purpose; your journeys have become a roar and a goal.

But learn to rest in God, and wait patiently for him! No moment of his seasons lacks beauty, and the dormant winter is as lovely as the bourgeoning spring. You cannot get in touch with God by parts; you must live through his whole year. You must know his waiting, or you will never know his activities. You must find out how to rest in him, or you can never find out how to work for him. He will not give his Spirit by measure, least of all by

the measure you choose, and in the portions you choose.

You have thought to win God easily by working, whereas he is to be won with difficulty by waiting also. It needs a stronger man to wait than to work. It needs more patience to wait than to work; it needs more courage, more faith, more zeal, more perseverance, more joy in service, more confidence in one's self and in God. You have stopped with the lowest step when you content yourself with working and will not go on to waiting.

But you do not see the need of waiting? Ah, how poorly then you must have worked! For no one works long to any high purpose without coming to a point where he cannot work. It may be some human obstacle which years alone can overthrow. It may be some divine providence, inscrutable, inevitable. You have labored only on the surface, indeed, if you have not come against those adamantine walls.

And they are not to be mourned over, but to rejoice over, as everything in God's ordering is to be rejoiced over. For the strength that is in them, their age-long, stern endurance, is to be transferred to you. They make up the earth giant, with which whoso struggles, the gigantic powers of the earth come to him. The man who could work all day would faint if he had to stand still all day.

Power is needed for waiting, and grows from waiting. Those whom God withholds from action are not withheld from progress. They go from strength to strength, every one that stands before God in Zion.

THE BALANCE OF PRAISE.



YOU are of those, friend, that prefer the sin of censoriousness to the fault of flattery. You pride yourself on your frankness, and quite forget that frank praise is more useful than frank reproof. Habit, through long years, has made condemnation easy for you, and commendation difficult. Indeed, you have come to think praise a weakness, and dispraise a token of power. So it is that, for every opportunity of approval, you find scores of occasions for censure. And in this way, while you gain a mocking enjoyment of a false shrewdness, you are sadly darkening the world for yourself, making it appear an evil world, whereas it is a very good one.

We'll readily grant that you have chosen the easiest manner of living. No thoughtfulness is required to discover meannesses and sins. No skill is needed to point out faults. It is of their nature that they point themselves out, and hideously compel notice. But excellencies, though as many and as real, are more retiring. They must be inquired of with love,

and sought out with sympathy. Nor is it easy to praise with discrimination, so that it will not seem flattery, with heartiness, so that it will not seem envy, and with sweetness, so that it will not beget pride. Mightily to criticize requires no training, but wisely to commend needs long apprenticeship, a clear head, and a kindly heart. Any clodhopper can find fault, but only a wise man can praise.

And praise, not faultfinding, is what the world needs. For every hundred faultfinders there is but one to praise; yet for every occasion when faultfinding would be wise, there are a hundred where appreciation is needed. Machines call seldom for the file, but often for the oil. If a man has only an ounce of good to a ton of evil, better a lift on the ounce than a blow on the ton. Where Blame goes a mile, Praise goes ten miles, and where Blame tears down a cobweb, Praise sweeps a room.

It is true that if from this instant every tongue that wags in the world should forget altogether how to find fault and know only how to commend, the wheels of progress would roll just as swiftly. Indeed, they would almost run away with themselves in that happy time. But since this miracle is not to be expected, human nature being what it has come to be, a course is possible which would at any rate reform you. It is simply this: Enter into solemn league and covenant with yourself and your

God, that, before you find fault with a person once, you will first praise him ten times. Surely this would be only an approach to the wise proportion, but it would better itself ; for by the time you had earned, through your ten commendations, the right to reprove him once, doubtless he would alike have withdrawn from the provocation, and you from the spirit of faultfinding.

MILDEWED TEMPLES.



OUR body is a temple of the Holy Ghost.

It is a church in which he is worshipped.

Indeed, your body, and such as yours, are the only churches in which God is

worshipped, in spite of those piles of brick and stone.

And yet, the outside churches that make meeting-houses for those real churches, our bodies, will give us a hint or two as to what our bodies should be, and what they should avoid.

Have you ever seen churches turned into theatres, with much of the ecclesiastical architecture retained, while within are heard lewd songs in place of pure anthems, and the buffoonery of painted men and women in place of the truth of God? Has such a fate befallen *your* temple, brother? Has it become a theatre of vulgarity, and beastliness, and frivolous unreality?

Then you have seen, too, have you not, those churches turned to stores, greedy bargaining, lying, and cheating in possession of the sacred place, as before Christ drove the money-changers from the temple? There, where self-sacrifice should be the regnant thought, the ruler has become selfishness, the ledger has driven out the Bible, and the generous collection-box has yielded to the safe. Has that church, your body, met with such a transformation?


One church that you may see has become a law school, and the wisdom of this world, with its sinuous windings, as involved as the world's multiform sin, has displaced the simple learning of God's law, the ten commandments and the two. So it may be that in your body, your church, the books of men have thrust aside the Book of God, and the lore that passes away with this world has crowded out the wisdom that reaches up to the highest court and the last judgment.

And even when the church remains a church, sometimes the windows become dark with dirt, the walls mildewed, cracked, and crumbling, the bells discordant, the cushions moth-eaten, the books ragged, the roof leaking, the organ out of tune, the lamps smoky, the carpet faded and torn. So may the bells that sound from the belfry of your mouth, so may the wondrous organ of your voice, with all

its countless stops, become tuneless and harsh. So may those clear windows, your eyes, become darkened by preventable sickness, and the fair fresco of your skin grow foul and discolored by evil indulgences. So may the roof of your brain become leaky, that you cannot keep out the suggestions of vice, and all its beautiful furnishings eaten and torn by the rats and moths of licentious fancies. Laziness may spread its cobwebs in the corners, the rust of ignorance render its furnaces unsafe. Is your body becoming such a temple, friend?

Strong, rather, and pure, meet for the Lord and his angels! Quiet, that you may hear what he would say to you; crystal clear for the passage of his sunshine; clean for the treading of his feet! Within it shall be no disorder, for he is there, the Orderer of the universe. No harshness shall sound along those aisles, that he may live there who has fashioned harmony. No opening shall gap in its walls, no rent in its furnishings, since he, the perfect One, is to dwell therein. Far into the blue sky its towers shall rise, pure out of purity and into purity, and the birds shall sing among them, and the white clouds shall smile upon them, and the angels, as they float from heaven to earth, will make of them their chosen stairways. And so shall your body become in living truth a temple of the living God.

A GOOD CONSCIENCE.

HE costliest thing in the world is a good conscience. To buy it you may be obliged to sell everything you have. In seeking it you may need every hour of your days. You do not possess a talent it may not require of you, or a pleasure it may not ask you to give up. What is dearest to you may be the last farthing — nay, the very first farthing — needed for the purchase. Truly a good conscience is the most expensive of luxuries.

And yet there is nothing in all this world so cheap as a good conscience. No one is too poor to buy one. The price of one is never more than a man has. And after it is bought, though a man has given for it the wealth of a Rothschild, in comparison with the joy of it he has scarcely spent a penny. Though he has lavished a lifetime to gain it, he knows that he has but begun to live. Without it, all possessions are profitless and disappointing; with it, the joy of the greatest delight is doubled. Without it, a palace is a hovel; with it, a hovel is a palace.

Your reason assents to this, and your experience proves it. Why, then, do you permit yourself to live in forgetfulness of it? With a heedless word you wreck a day's chance of this vast good.

With the deed of an hour you drive it away for many a month. If your gaining of a million dollars depended on your thoughtfulness, your unselfishness, your fidelity, your holiness, would these for a moment be lacking? How then can you pretend to believe a good conscience better than a million dollars? Until you have spent upon your desire to stand well with your God one tithe of the time and pains you spend in seeking your employer's good graces, how dare you think yourself in earnest in seeking the kingdom of heaven?

If what is here said is true, then, until you have accepted it with the loyal allegiance of your entire life, it is for you the greatest truth in the world.

YOUR DAILY HELP.



GENERAL is of value, not only in a battle, but on the march, and in preparing for the battle; yet it is chiefly when the enemy press upon you that you be-think yourself of God. You need special strength to climb a hill, but only a little more strength than you need to walk along the valley road. If you do not get power for the daily walk, the common level, you cannot expect power for the occasional up grade. It is not the man who closes his eyes on the world that sees the heavens open. The angels come to

the shepherds as they are tending their flocks. The reason why you do not find God in the great emergencies of life is because you have not been finding him all the way.

And this daily communion is where the joy comes in, as well as the help. Soldiers do not become acquainted in the battle, but in the camp. Travellers talk on the level, and not while climbing mountains. It is not the flash of some miraculous lightning that will show you God, but the sun of every day. It is the daily food, and the quiet, thoughtful eating of it, that alone make it possible for God to add the strengthening portion for special trials.

And it is from this daily walk with God that ease of living comes. To be sure, we are helped by great deliverances, but, in the gross, not nearly so much as by the little, hourly sustainings. God knows well that the central test of life is set upon our common tasks, our petty worries, and therefore it is at the call of these he has placed his largest succors. Were you required to choose between God's help in the small affairs of life and his aid in the great ones, your life would be easiest if you won God for its trivialities.

But, praise the Lord! there is no such choice. When we have him for the little things, we have him for the great ones. If he walks along the level with us, we can count upon his help when we climb.

If he is with us in camp, he will be with us in the wildest battle. Do not save him for the emergencies, or you will lose him altogether. Pray with all your heart, "O Lord, give me day by day thy daily self!"

MAKING A BODY.



THE constant thumping of the car wheels over a steel rail will tire its particles and rearrange them, and change the rail's entire structure, and break it down at length, although its surface seem the same. If you play on a piano that is out of tune, the inharmonious strings will untune the others, until the whole piano is harsh and the very framework discordant. Yes, and if a skilful violinist has long usage of a violin, playing upon its well-adjusted strings, although at first the instrument may be inferior, it will gain voice and resonance under the loving touch, until at length it will sing like a child, and sob like a human soul.

Even so, literally and promptly, as you play over the fibres of your beautiful body, will you transform its every element, making it at your pleasure a violin or a piece of ash-heap rubbish. Not a deed of yours but leaves an impression upon it somewhere; not a word but still vibrates among its cords; not even a thought, however secret and scarce con-

fessed to yourself, but is written, black or golden, yet indelible, upon some tablet in that marvellous temple. So that, if our microscopes had eyes only a little keener, our chemistry an analysis only a little sharper, men could read upon your body alone a history of your inmost life in its most hidden sentences, from the cradle to the tomb.

That worry which you have allowed to press upon you, hammering with dull and maddening iteration upon your shrinking brain, may have so changed its substance by this time that you must keep on worrying. That licentious thought may have poisoned the root of your life, may have wrought itself so into the current of your blood that henceforth it can never run smoothly and pure. Or, just as a piano-player by long and arduous practice has made the music automatic for her fingers, so you may have incorporated helpfulness into your hands, and swift unselfishness into your feet, and kindness into your eyes, and sympathy into your ears, and nobility into the gray and white channels of your brain.

There is a carnal body and there is a spiritual body. As we are now clothed with this mortal, we are to be clothed with that spiritual. And the same daily living that fashions so mysteriously our mortal bodies, is, step by step, fashioning also those bodies of our eternal habitation. The impurity that

festers in your pulsing veins of earth is making bad blood for your spiritual body. Every victory over self, registered on earth in clearer brain and more jubilant muscles, is registered in heaven on the loom that is weaving your spiritual brain and muscles. For life is all one, whether here or there, seen or unseén, as the universe is one, and God is one.

O then, pray this prayer, and pray it often and earnestly: "Lord, thou my Creator, help me to create myself in thine image!"

BE BOLD.

HOW sturdy was our Lord! He does not appear to have minced matters. His meekness had backbone withal. What he had to say, he said, and what he had to do, he did, with no apologies or by-your-leaves. And this not merely by virtue of his divinity, but he taught his fishermen disciples with absolute dignity of confidence to do the same.

"Get thee hence, Satan," were his uncompromising words, to Diabolus and Peter alike. He preached repentance as fearlessly as the rough Baptist himself. He made the tramps, the drunkards, the convicts, the outcasts of the day,—for as these to us, so were the Publicans to the Jews,—he made them his close companions.

When others put on black, he put on white,—feasting, that is to say, while they fasted. “If they will not receive you,” said he to his disciples, “shake off the dust of your feet against them.” And “Woe! Woe! Woe!” he cried, to the cities that rejected his teaching.

When his manner of keeping the Sabbath was objected to, he replied that it was *his* Sabbath; and when they waited to see what he would do on the holy day with that withered hand, he promptly healed it. When even his disciples expected of him a splendid Messianic proclamation, he said, “Blessed are they that mourn, are meek, persecuted.”

Your Master was never afraid to shock people or startle them. That was one way in which he was all things to all men,—dynamite to the sluggish as well as peace to the storm-tossed. He could answer questions, but first he had to rouse men to ask them. He was a far keener dialectician than Socrates, because he was more fiery. Socrates wove a net for his antagonist, and trapped him. Christ melted, with a lightning flash, all the weapons of his foes.

Do not think too much of our Lord as the meek and lowly one. He was that, but he was also the sturdiest of fighters. When did he ever yield a point? When did he ever compromise? When

did he ever fail to assert himself—yes, even when he girt himself with the towel, and wiped his disciples' feet!

And Christ was thus bold in order that you might be as bold. He promised that you should do greater things than he; therefore be as intrepid. And do not dare assume his humility without adding also his holy boldness.

LED AND TEMPTED.

“**LEAD** us not into temptation,” you pray; and do you feel, as you pray, that it is God who is responsible for your temptations when they come? Nay, brother, but it is you who daily and hourly transform God’s beautiful leadings into temptations. And no small part of your sin is this, that you yourself make not only the sin, but the occasion for it.

Here is God’s noble highway of health, firm to the feet, gladsome to the sight. He is leading you in it so that you may work his will. But you have transformed that highway into a byway of license. You abuse your body with too much toil or too much play, with sloth or intemperance. Along this fair highway of health you are doing, with fancied impunity, what you would not dare to do if God led you through the valley of pain. And

thus you are changing God's leading into your temptation.

God has given you a splendid brain. All the paths of intellect he has laid open before you. You can follow close upon the steps of the wisest men, the greatest philosophers, poets, scientists. God has started to lead you along the very road of his own mind. But you have seen branch roads to this side and to that. One led to selfish power among men. One led to wealth, and another to human applause, and another to the gratification of idle curiosity. And so, as God would lead you along the path of holy thoughtfulness up to the very home and heart of thought itself, you have strayed aside to these follies, and have mocked at his leading with your self-made temptation.


And so, through all the fair aisles of this cathedral world, their beauty and their power and God's dear hand of guidance have not availed to bring you to the cathedral's altar, but you have turned to the money-changers of the temple, and to the soft cushions of the pews.

And because God would not hold your hand with the grasp that would have made a baby of you, you have used his respect for your manhood as a license to make of yourself a beast. Because he chose not to force you to his leading, but wished you to follow of your own choice, you have chosen only so

much of the highway as brought you to the byway of the swamp.

O brother, pray with all your heart: "Lead me not into temptation! Forbid, O God, that I should turn thy blessed leading to my own undoing! Amen."

YOUR SPIRIT IN YOUR WORK.

OU are groaning because you accomplish so little, forgetting that God's rewards for industry come not in proportion to what a man does, but in proportion to what he honestly tries to do. You are worried because your task seems hard, unmindful that the only difficult thing in the task is to keep a courageous temper. You are in despair over what you call a failure, and you do not remember that that dread word may be pronounced by God alone, and until you have heard it from his lips you have no right to take it on your own, or the thought of it into your soul.

It is so easy to do work, and so hard to be a worker. A machine, or a machine man, may accomplish things, and is known and valued by the amount and accuracy of the product. But a worker is often known in spite of the product, or through its very meagreness. The essence of work is the

spirit of work, and the spirit of work is the spirit of the primal Worker; it is joy, and serenity, and determination, and patience. Whoso has these is a worker, although his hands and his barns remain empty; and whoso lacks these is no worker, although his granaries burst with new grain.

And any one can rejoice in his task. You can; though it is the last task in the world your own choice would have selected, you can rejoice in it. Indeed, you cannot help rejoicing in it, if you rejoice in God; for, if you have any right to be doing it, it is because God chose it for you. That is proof that you will find God in it, and whoever finds God finds delight. Joy in one's work is one of the first and surest tests of a Christian.

And if you have found God in your work, you cannot help being serene in it. "Ah, but," you say, "the very joy I feel in it renders me anxious when it fails, and worried when it halts." If you are worried or anxious, the answer must be, it is because you have not found God in your work; for you cannot think that God will fail; you know that God never halts.

You will be determined in your tasks, when you find God in them, as a soldier is zealous under the eye of his captain; and you will be patient in delays and foils, as a soldier is patient in camp or on retreat, because he trusts his leader.

Whatever work you cannot do under these conditions and in this spirit, you undertake at your great peril; yes, though the purpose of the task be most noble. Dare not, even in work, to go ahead of God. Enter upon no task until he enters it with you; never leave it until he leaves it; and while you are in it, because he is in it, know that doubt is doubt of him, and worry is distrust of him, and faultfinding with the progress of your honest labors is treason to him whose co-worker you have blessedly become.

SELF AND SERVICE.

WHEN we would serve Christ, we are constantly held back by one enemy, — self. Christ pleads, “Tell your friends about me.” Self answers, “My friend will think me a prig, or a hypocrite, or a fanatic.” Christ urges us to give more liberally of the goods he has given us. Self craftily reminds us of our pleasures. Christ commands, “Testify of me boldly in the gatherings of my followers.” Self replies, “Nay; for others are more eloquent than I.” Self teaches the Sunday-school teacher to seek to please his scholars rather than his Master. Self drives away thoughts of heaven with the flourish of a bank-book. Self tires us so with our work that we sleep at our

prayers, and smothers three verses of the Bible with twelve pages of the newspaper. Self drives away the peace of God with worries, and with the world's clamor deafens our ears against the still, small voice.

And our very struggles with self seem to tighten his hold upon us, while for every deed of self-denial we recompense ourselves with deeper wallowings in self-indulgence.

Is this your experience, as it is mine, my friend? Have you longed for the right hand of God? Longed to grasp his tools, and be fervent in his business? Sunk back, time and again, faint-hearted and ashamed, to the padded prison-pen of self? And are you about to give up the struggle altogether?

Then give it up. It is unequal. You never can lift yourself. Be lifted. You never can press into God's service. Be drafted. You never can conquer yourself. Get another self.

You have heard of the mystery of the Holy Spirit. O, solve the mystery. He is your better self, reaching out eager arms to you. He is your waiting power, and peace, and joy. In his hands are your tools, your plans, your calendar, your life. He alone can ransom you from yourself, take away your timidity, and give you a holy boldness; take away your self-consciousness and make you forget yourself

in your mission ; take away your base passion for money, and ease, and clapping hands, and give you a passion for God.

And he will come for the asking. O, make all your soul and life one burning petition !

YOUR KING.



CHRIST seemed, during his earthly ministry, entirely conscious of his supremacy ; he knew he was the Lord of heaven and earth. How otherwise could he calmly, and with results so surprising, call the six from their fishing, and Matthew from his money-getting ? How otherwise could he be so confident that the faithless towns in which his mighty works had been done would perish ? How otherwise could he promise rest to all that would come to him ? declare the coming fate of the good and the evil ? set himself above the two most sacred objects of Jewish reverence, — “greater than the Temple,” “Lord of the Sabbath” ? How otherwise, to be sure, could he assert that all things had been delivered to him of the Father, and that he alone revealed the Father to men ?

Well indeed will it be for you if you get into your mind something of Christ’s clear conviction of his character, his purpose, his supremacy ; if you get to

know, as Christ knew, that he is Lord of all ; if you get a full comprehension, as he had, of his absolute right to rule.

There is far too much parleying with the Master. You talk too much of reason. There is one place where you cannot afford to debate ; that is at the feet of Christ. There is one time when you dare not argue ; that is when Christ says, " Do it." His is the right to rule. He knows it well. With all his humility, love, and sympathy, he knows it now as sturdily, as sternly, as aggressively, as he knew it in Galilee and Judea. Your only safety, as I pray it may be your only wish and joy, is instant and complete obedience.

TO A LONELY WORKER.



YOU have come to Solitary Road, in Despondency Valley. You and your task are alone ; all the more alone because of the crowd around you. People tell you not to work too hard, but they do not help you work. People let you lift their burdens, but have no eyes for yours. People claim your interest and sympathy, but themselves take no interest in your labors, which are your life. You toil and plan and toil again, with little heart for it all, because you are alone.

And so you pity yourself, and I pity you.

But by what right do you ask companionship in work and fellowship in interest? Who so lonely as Christ? And the disciple is not above his Lord. Who so lonely as the world's great workers? And you are a little worker.


There are tasks where one can work best alone. To have a true comrade, you must give as well as get. For the time and thought he spends on you, you must withdraw from your work time and thought to spend on him. Are you willing for that? Would it be best?

Be sure that the great Worker will send you a co-worker, if it is best for your work, and if you are ready for one. Are you ready? Have you made room in your life for other lives, that you expect them to make room for you? Can you subordinate yourself and your plans? Have you learned not to be ministered unto, but to minister? Have you lost your life, that you would find it in other lives? If God gave you comradeship, would you not long for solitude?

Indeed, this very discontent of yours shows how far you are from the Friend of friends. To know him, is to want no one beyond; to have him is to be unconscious of other wealth or poverty. O, get the blessed experience of some of old, and "see no man, save Jesus only"! Do not seek help from

him ; seek him. Do not seek friends from him ; seek him. Do not seek to get rid of your loneliness ; seek to get rid of yourself, and to put in its place the Spirit, the Comforter. And may he guide you into all truth. Amen.

WHAT KIND OF OBEDIENCE?

 YOU have seen trained lions, how they obey, showing all their teeth in rage, growling in unsubdued fierceness, and whining in angry despair. Is your obedience like that? an obedience of the lash and the pistol-shot? an obedience of the flames of hell, the whip of the conscience? If there were no God, if there were no heaven or hell, would there be any conscience for you? Would you bound back to the jungle?

You have seen how the dog obeys, dumbly and unreasoningly, bent through long custom to a certain act. A gesture, a word, and he does this or that, not knowing why the gesture or what the word, or heeding much the act, but intent upon his master's face. Is such a routine fidelity yours? Do you obey God because obedience has become a habit, a rut, a course of life into which you have stumbled you scarce know how, to which you confine yourself you scarce know why?

And then there is the obedience of the soldier, who of his own will and reason yields his will and sets aside his reason, for higher ends or lower, to become for a season a cog in a great machine, making obedience his first virtue, — obedience instant and unthinking as a bar of steel's. Thus has the church become your colonel and the Bible your general, and thus are you bound by the letter of the law, missing its spirit?

Among friends, too, there is obedience. Have you risen to that with God? Obedience that has eyes and ears, counsel and understanding, that links hand with hand, that places back to back, that forms partnerships rather than commanderies, and societies rather than brigades? Do you obey God with the thoughtful, manly, individual, persuaded obedience of a friend?

Highest of all there is the obedience of love, the way a son obeys his father or a wife her husband. He protects me, cares for me, loves me, and therefore I obey him. He is flesh of my flesh, life of my life, and therefore I obey him. Not that I yield my will to his, for my will *is* his. Not that I respond to his commands, but that he expresses my desires. Not that I do my duty, because love knows no duty, — all is of delight. You are of the church, the bride of Christ. Is your obedience the wife's obedience?

Now, to yield any obedience less than the highest possible for you is your disgrace, your ruin. The dog is an outcast that obeys with snarls like a lion; the soldier is put in prison that obeys like a dog. He is no friend whose obedience is only a soldier's; and better a woman unwed, than a wife that is only a friend.

It is easy for the dog to obey like the lion, but let him not pride himself on it. It is easy for the soldier to obey like the dog, or the wife like the friend; but obedience is never easy. Obedience reaches to the highest and descends to the lowest; is of everything or of nothing. To stop before the best obedience is not to obey at all.

REJOICING IN FAILURE.



It is hard indeed to accept failure, tenfold harder to rejoice in it.

And yet, if we have been doing our best, the failure of our work is the success of God's work in us. If we have done our full duty as prayer discloses it to us, then failure was part of our duty. God sometimes sets tasks in order that they may not be done, for the lessons of failure are far more precious than the teachings of success, and far more difficult to learn.

What are those lessons?

Humility, that opens our eyes to our own absolute nothingness, and to the glorious truth that God is all in all.

Kinship with eternity, whose long riches we should forget, if everything came at our desire in this present time.

Patience. The willingness to wait that is divine, because no one in all the universe waits so long or so patiently as the Creator of the universe.

Determination. The steel must go even to the fire, before it is tempered to pass through iron.

Love for the work itself, apart from the results of the work; since the task, — that God has given to us, but the results are not within our control.

Trust. God is love, and his will is all for our joy. God is power, and his will accomplishes itself. There is no failure, however our dull eyes may see, if we are God's.

Now these are the lessons of failure; and having learned them, we shall rejoice in failure.

But we have not learned them if we simply endure failure, shrinking from it and wishing it otherwise; if we doubt God's kindness in it, and pity ourselves, or accept the pity of others. Whenever we have done our best — nay, have humbly permitted God to do his best in us — the only right feeling toward failure is that of joy.

Praise the Lord that he is breaking down your

pride! Praise the Lord that he trusts you in the dark! Praise the Lord that he has made you a partner in his long plans, that can pierce through failure on failure, and reach their goal at last! Praise God for the immortality of endeavor!

O our Master, we trust in thee. Fulfil thy desire in us. Amen.

GETTING POWER IN PRAYER.

POWER in prayer is more than the ability to get through prayer the thing that you wish. It is the ability to rejoice in God when you do not get it.

The prayer that is powerful moves not God alone; it moves ourselves. Its power is shown sometimes in the number of needs it grasps and lays before the throne; more often in bearing but a single burden and leaving it there; more often still in bringing to God no burden at all, but in running to him with our joy, that he may share it.

If you have power in prayer, you are not lonely, for the universe has become one omnipresent friend and lover. You are not weak, for you have gained the key to the storehouse of omnipotence. You are not sad, for God has taught your eyes to see the world's joy even as he sees it. Things of time have become dignified with the glory of the endless

years, you walk the earth as a prince of the kingdom, fear is no more for you, nor envy, nor tears, if you have power in prayer.

You cannot get this power by praying every day, or thrice a day, though that will help you get it. Rather, when you have got it, you will pray thrice a day, and far oftener. You cannot get it by deeds of love and obedience. Rather, when you have got it, your life will be filled with such deeds. You cannot get it through the pathway of duty, though it will beautify that pathway after it is gained.

If you want power in prayer, you must stop thinking of the rewards of prayer. You must be entirely willing that there should be no reward, beyond the prayer. Indeed, you must take no thought of the prayer at all, but only of God. When we talk to our dear ones on the earth, we do not remember that we are talking; we are heedless of our words; we are almost careless about the theme of our converse; we are seeking them.

Thus address yourself to Christ, not because prayer is your duty, but because Christ is Christ. Not because prayer means gifts, strength, peace, joy, but because Christ is Christ. Learn to love him, rather than anything that proceeds from him. Seek not to receive from him, but to be with him. See no man, no thing, save Jesus only. That is to pray.

When you forget that there is power in prayer, then you get power in prayer; when you are heedless of everything else that is in it, heedless also of yourself that is praying, your whole spirit bent solely upon the dear Object of its love and adoration, then you get power in prayer.

O blessed Master, for what thou art, we worship thee; because we love thee, we pray to thee. And when our love falls short, come to meet it, we beseech thee, with thine outstretched arms. Amen.

BE AMBITIOUS.

NO man that ever lived on this earth was more rightfully and regally ambitious than Jesus Christ. Refusing from the hand of Satan the kingdoms of this world and the glory thereof, he claimed them in his own right, and up to the final day of judgment.

In proportion as we are at one with Christ, we are at one with his ambition.

An unambitious man or woman cannot make a very strong Christian. As to possessions, we should learn that all things are ours, and be satisfied with nothing less. As to power, all power is given to our Elder Brother, and we can do all things through him that strengtheneth us. As to attainment, he

has commanded, "Be ye perfect"; and all his commandments are enablements.

Christian humility shows itself in acknowledging the Source of these marvellous endowments of ours; it does not consist in dispensing with them. Acquiescence in weakness, complacency toward sloth, willingness to be inefficient,—this is far enough from Christian humility. Christ said that of himself he could do nothing, yet he spoke with such authority that even the winds and the seas obeyed him. He washed the disciples' feet, but he yielded not a jot to Herod or Pontius Pilate. The most humble child of God dare not stop short of Christ's ambition.

And the trouble with all ambitious men is that they are not ambitious enough. They seek money, but not the riches that cannot perish. They seek fame, but not the eternal applause of the uncounted myriads of heaven. They seek beautiful homes, but not the supernal delights of the many mansions. They seek ease and luxury, but not the peace that the world cannot give or take away.

Now ambition is like a leap over a chasm. Our direction may be all right, but it is fatal not to go far enough. To halt with these earthly ambitions means death as surely as to go on to their spiritual analogies means everlasting life. Nor is there any compromise between the height and the depth.

In the fear of that awful depth, in the hope of that noble height,—nay, because it is the will of the Lord whom we love,—let us press forward to the mark of our high calling in him. Amen.

THE FORWARD LOOK.



CHRIST always looked ahead. From the first, when he preached a coming kingdom of heaven, he was a seer of the future. His beatitudes declared good men blessed because of joys to come, “for great is their reward in heaven.” His model prayer opens with longing for the coming of the kingdom. That kingdom we are to seek first, sure that everything else we need will be added unto us. The wine of this kingdom needs new wine-skins; away with cracked and dried-up forms! Twelve apostles of the kingdom are anointed, and sent forth to proclaim, “It is at hand.” The harvest is soon to come; so soon that the tares may grow on with the wheat. But in the end of the world, ah, then the fire!

Christ was not of A. D. 30; no more should you, Christ’s follower, be of A. D. 1898. Christ’s foundations have stood because they were pushed upward and not sunk downward. He refused at any point to anchor himself to the world he had made. While helping it most, he was most divorced from

it. While looking with most loving, practical sympathy upon the sore bodies and sorer hearts of mortal men, there shone clearest in his eyes the far-away look, the look John followed when he saw that there is to be no more pain.

For though a kingdom on the earth, it is to be a new earth and a new heaven, and we are to bring it in by living for *it*, and not for the old earth where the Klondikes are, and the stock exchanges, and the latest fashions from Paris. If you wish to see plainly in the present, look beyond the present. If you wish to win the world, win the next world. If you wish to help men here, help them toward the hereafter. In shooting, men do not look at the musket, but at the mark; in living, the wise man will look less at the earth than at heaven.

HOW SIMPLE IS LIFE!



OUR brow is furrowed and your mouth is set. Your brain is awlirl with a multitude of tasks; tasks that clash against one another; tasks for which there is no time; tasks for which scant appreciation waits you when with torn heart and sinking spirits they are at last accomplished. It seems a hard world, an unjust world, a world of weariness and confusion and despair.

Now I will utter a hard saying, but a true one : no man has a right to live aught but an easy life.

Ah, brother of the furrowed brow, you are trying to do many things, and you should do only one thing. You are trying to please many masters, and you should try to please only one master. You are baffled by many failures, but success has never been beyond an arm's reach. It is because you have preferred the countless pursuits of the world to the single pursuit of God ; the many minds of men to the one mind of the Master ; the tinsel rewards of earth to the lasting glories of heaven, — it is for this reason that life seems hard to you.

Every frown on a man's forehead, every furrow traced by fretfulness and worry, is a legible line condemning his Christianity. Christ has but one will for you at any time, and not ten thousand wills. You can, therefore, have but one task at any time. If you do that will as best you read it, there is no failure for you in earth or heaven. The complexity of life is born of its selfishness. If your eye is single, your life will be simple and easy.

Be determined, then, that you will not be distracted. Count peace a duty, until you can know it as a blessed privilege. As you deem it wrong not to come up to God's design for you, so deem it wrong to overstep it. And when your life begins to grow intricate and confused, quickly drop all its

lines into your Father's hands, saying to him: "Father, this is your life, and not mine. Show me how thou wouldst have me live it for thee."

THE GREAT SURRENDER.

WHAT is it to make the great surrender? It is to yield yourself completely to the eternal life. We are to exist forever. Give yourself up to that thought. Do nothing, say nothing, think nothing, that will not contribute toward your eternal happiness. Use the things that perish, only so far as they minister to the things that endure. Not merely accept the lot God metes out to you, but rejoice in it, and take no step and entertain no wish that would change it in the least. That is to make the great surrender.

It is a surrender to God, who alone is eternal life, and obeying whom alone we have it. It is a surrender to Christ, who alone discloses and interprets that eternal life to us. It is a surrender to peace, for in the eternal life, and there only, is time for all accomplishments, healing for all wounds, compensation for all lacks, and satisfying for all desires. It is a surrender to power, because no one can move this world whose feet rest upon it, but a foothold upon eternal realities gives all

needed leverage for courageous speech and strong action.

If you are wishing for an easier life, you have not made the great surrender. If you covet a larger salary, wider opportunities, and greater reputation, you have not made this surrender. You may well be dissatisfied with yourself; but if you are in any way dissatisfied with God, you have not made the great surrender.

If you have given up some things and hope God will not ask you to give up other things, you have not yielded yourself utterly to him. If you do the good deeds that come easy to you, and keep yourself away from chances to do good deeds that are difficult or unpleasant, you are not God's entirely. No; if you have thrust from you ten thousand sins, yet hold on to the very least of all, you belong to that sin and to the master of it, and not to God.

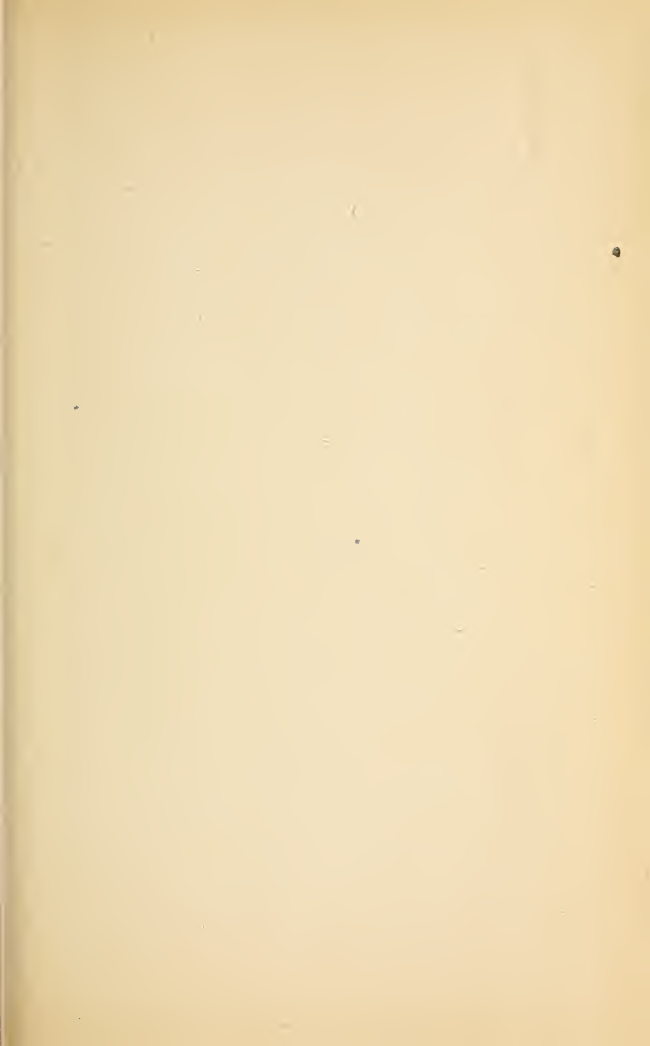
For our Master requires us to be perfect, perfect at least in our desires, that he may be enabled to perfect us in our lives. With the passing away of the last lingering fondness for the last sin, we attain to the great surrender; with the hearty choice of the last difficult task which our conscience has been pressing upon us, but from which we have been shrinking; with the abandonment of the last, the dearest, possession, yea, though it be some life that is dearer far than our own.

Dare we not do it? Dare we not trust our Creator? Dare we not give up all things to gain him, and in him and together with him to find all things?

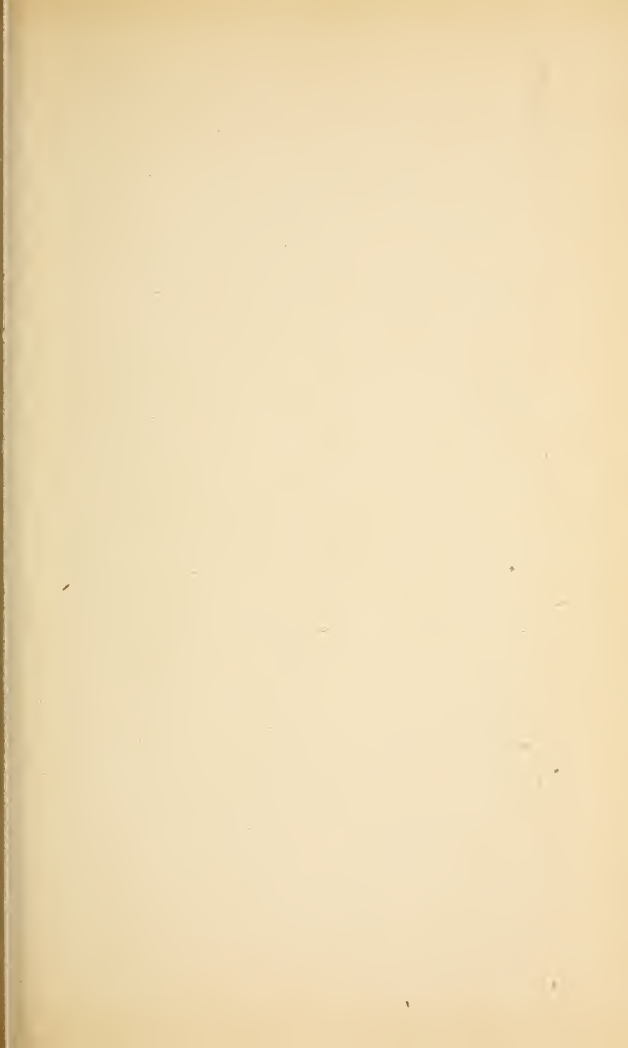
Ah, dare we do otherwise?

THE END.

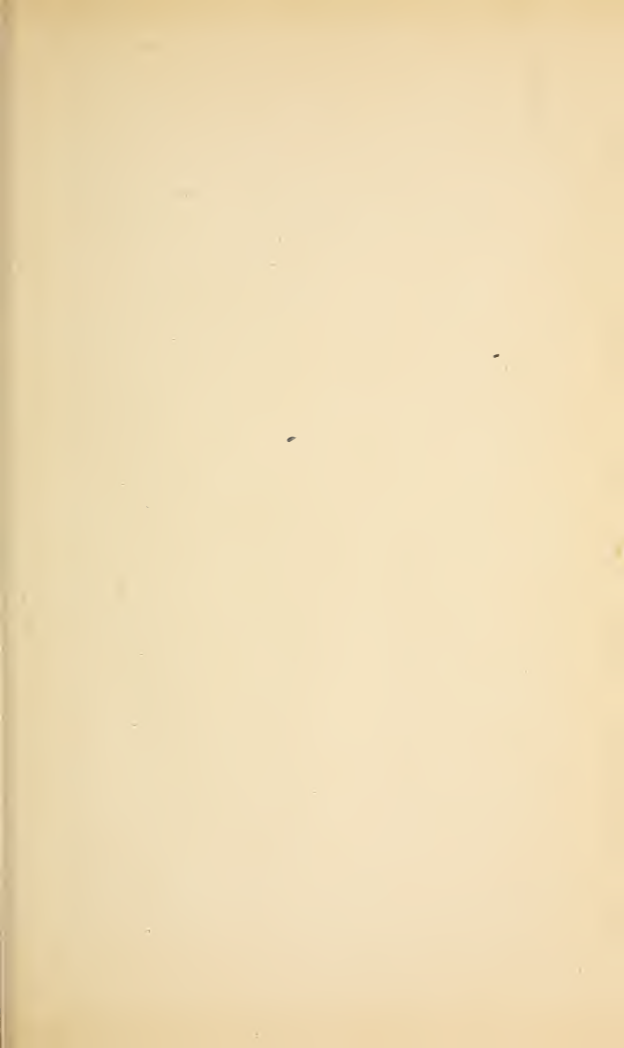


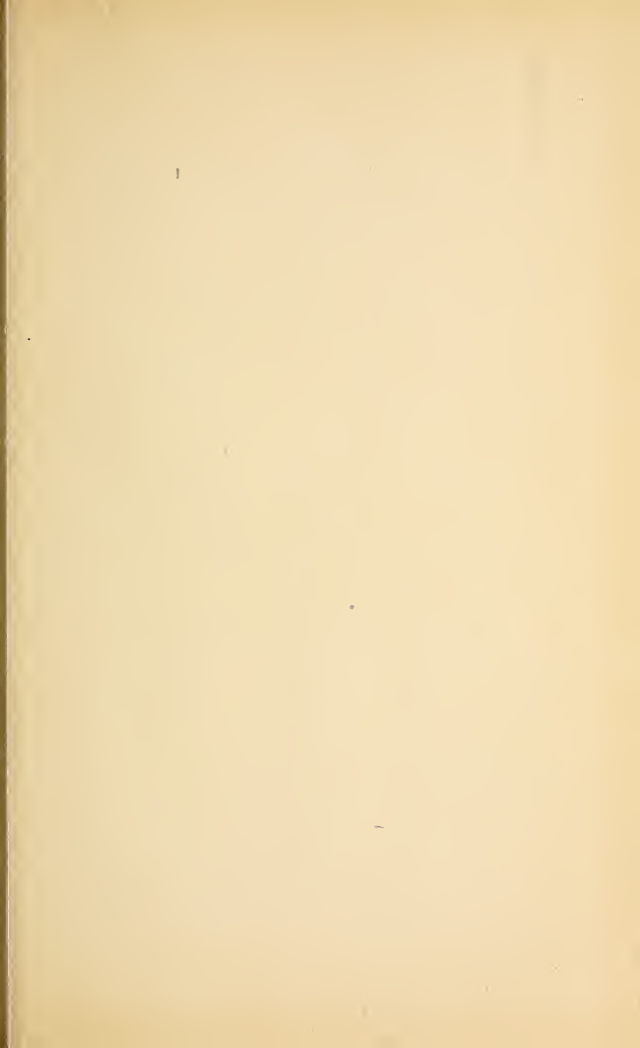


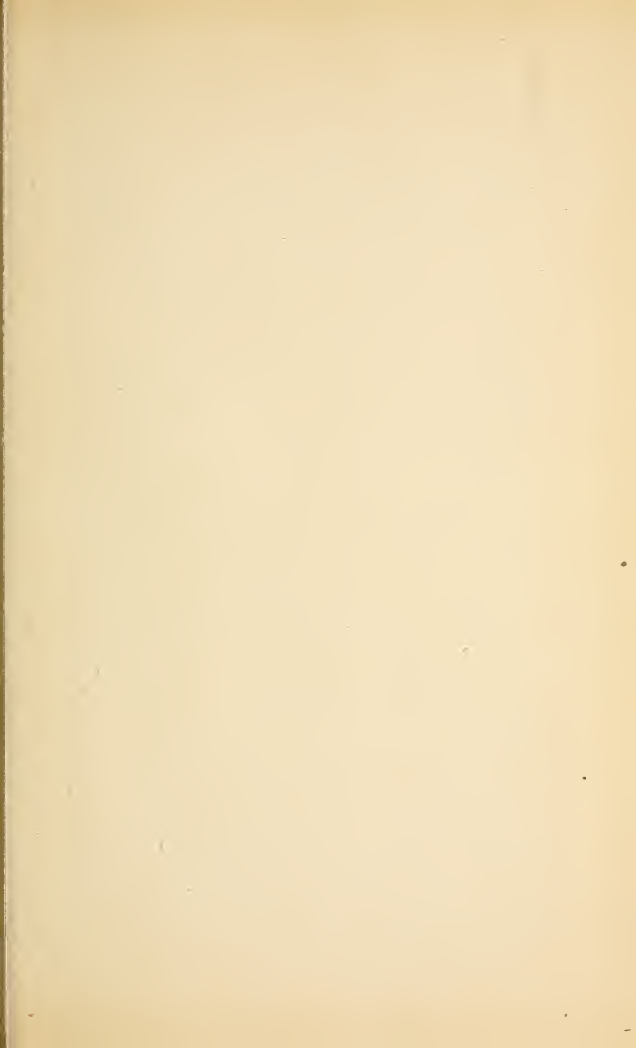


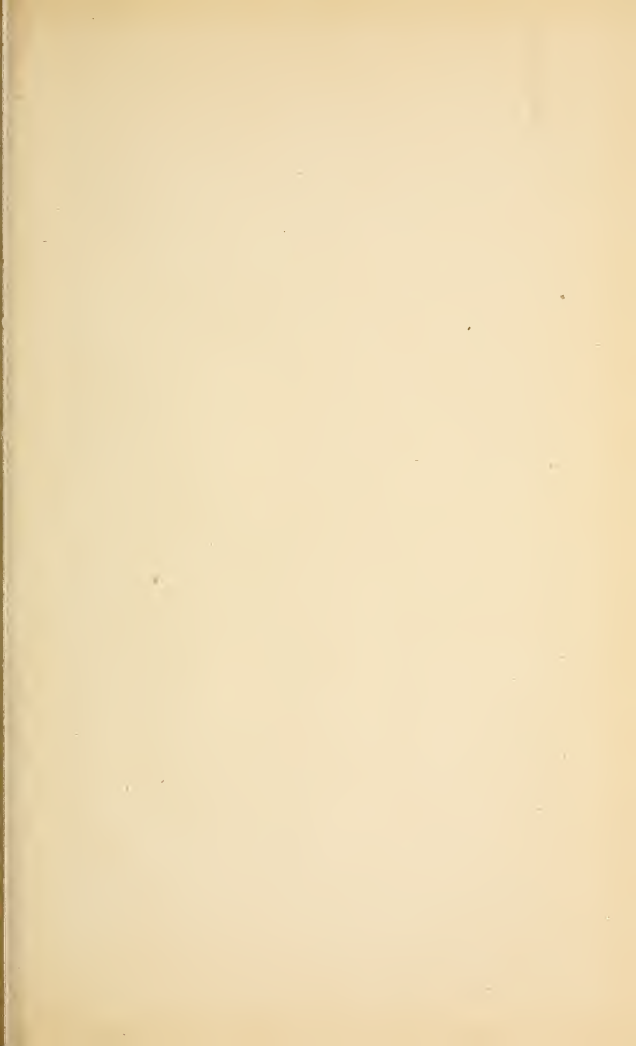


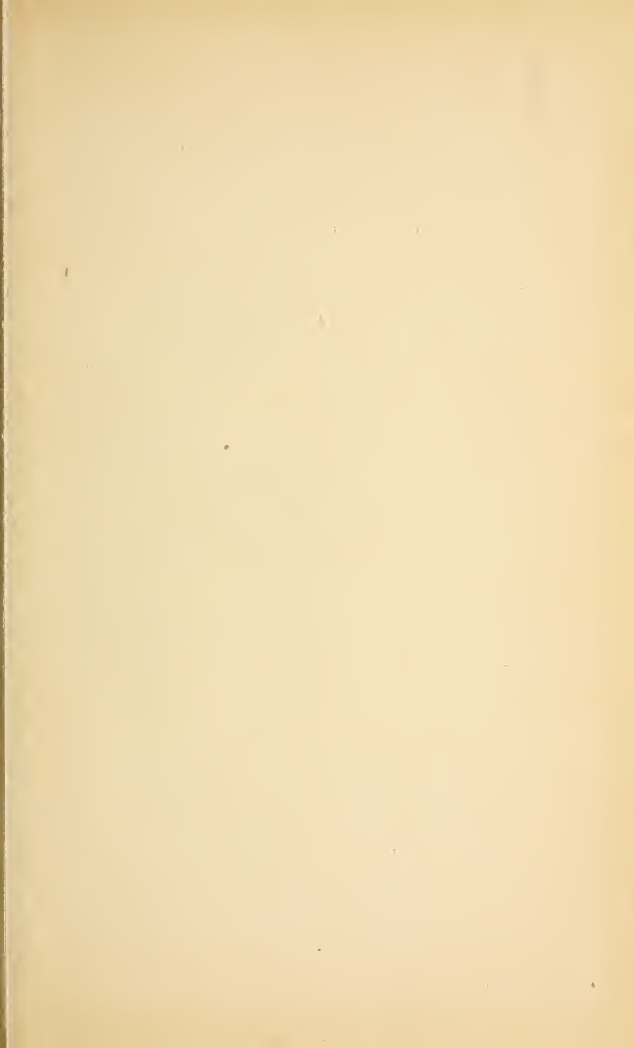




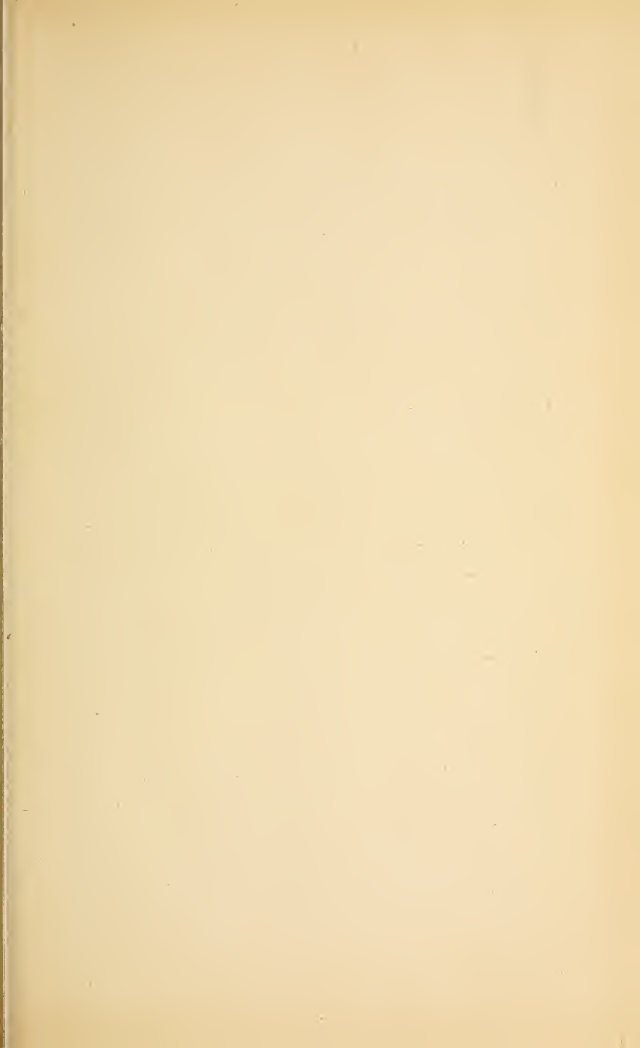




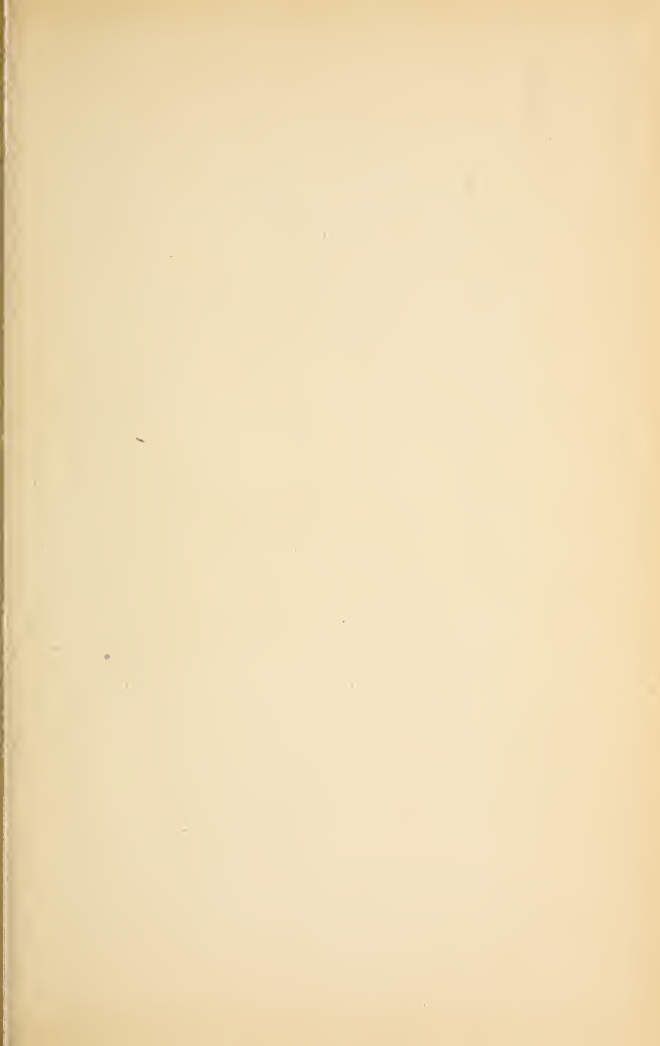




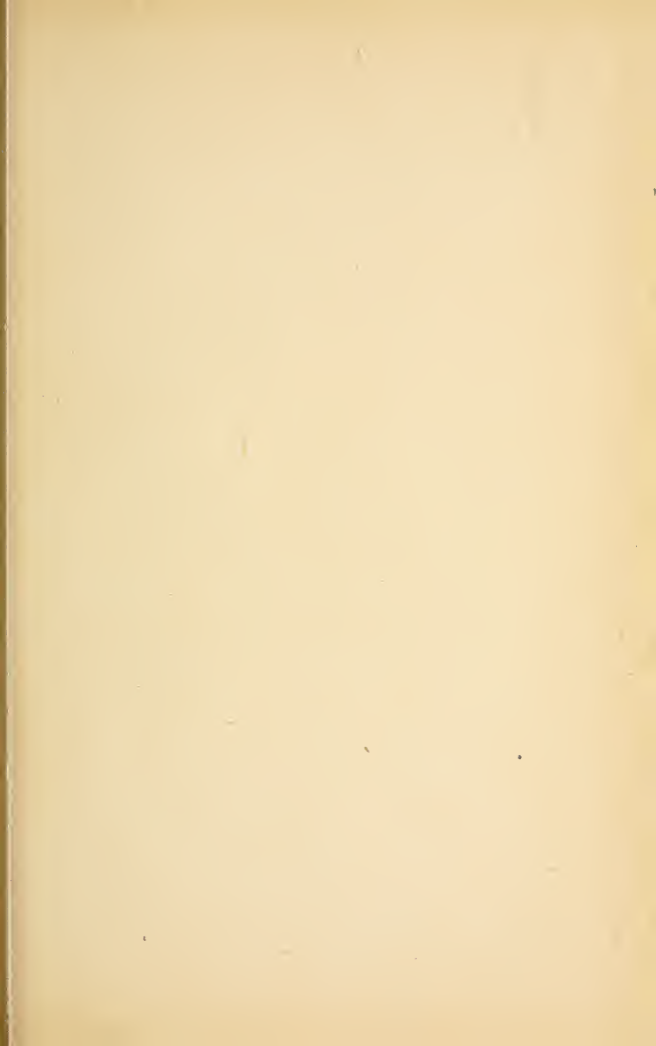


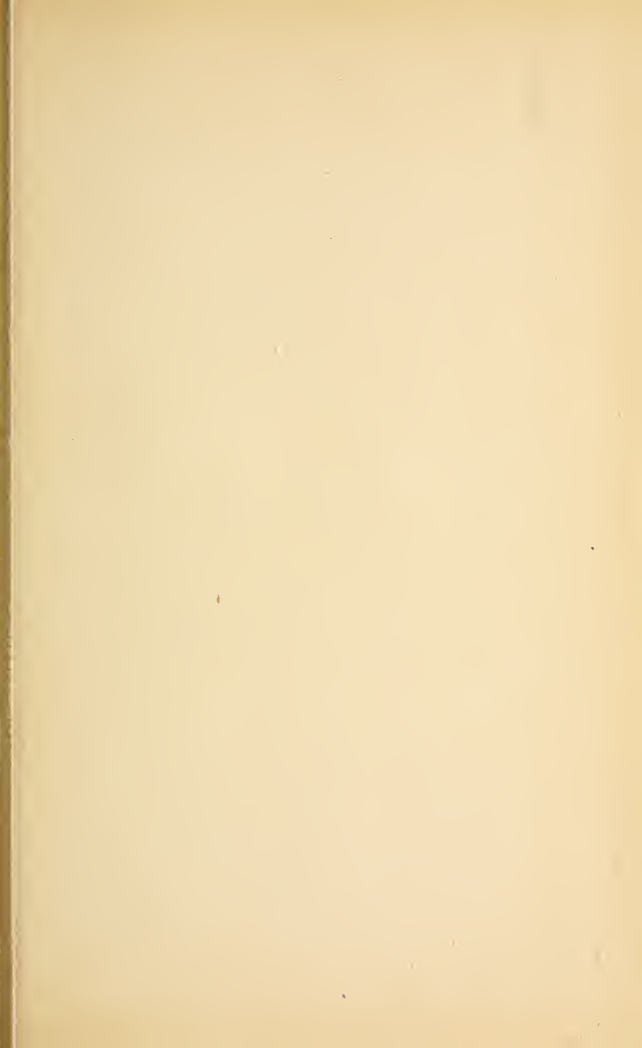




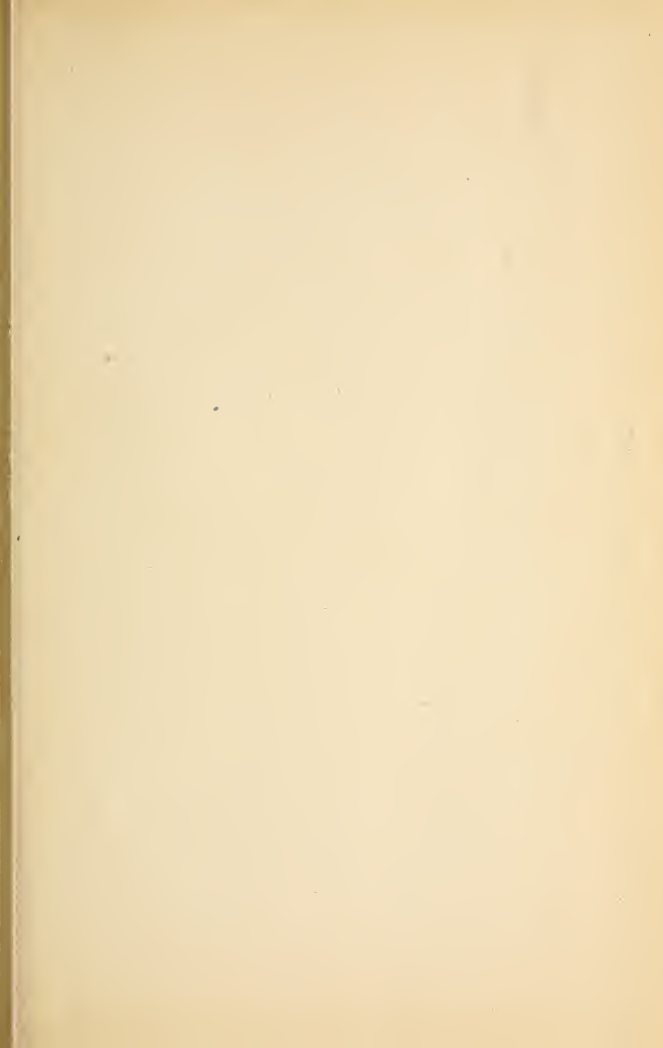


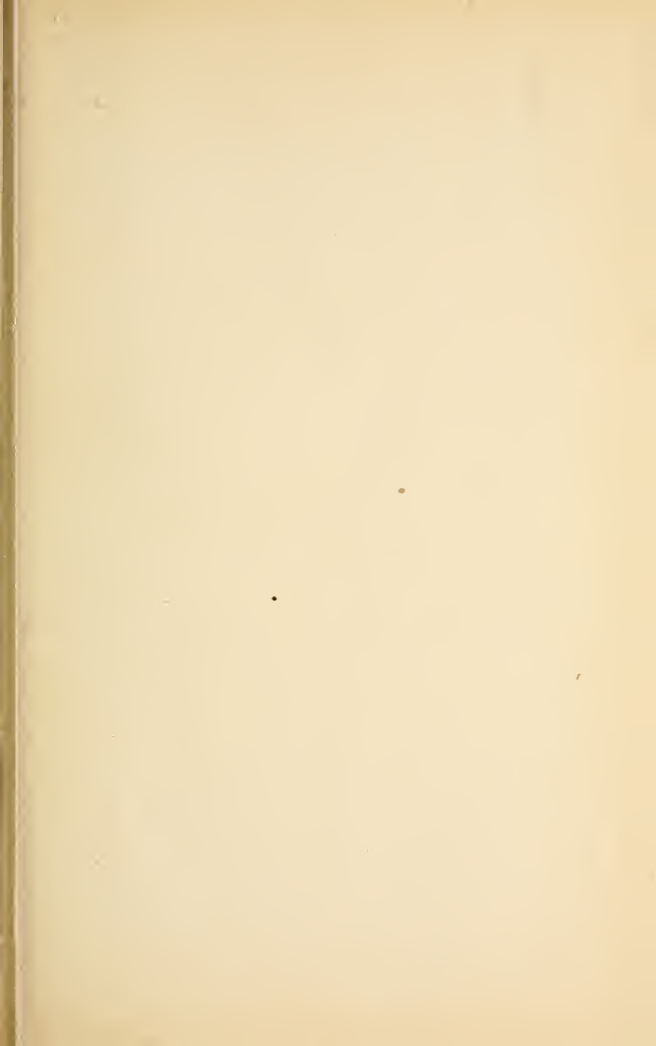


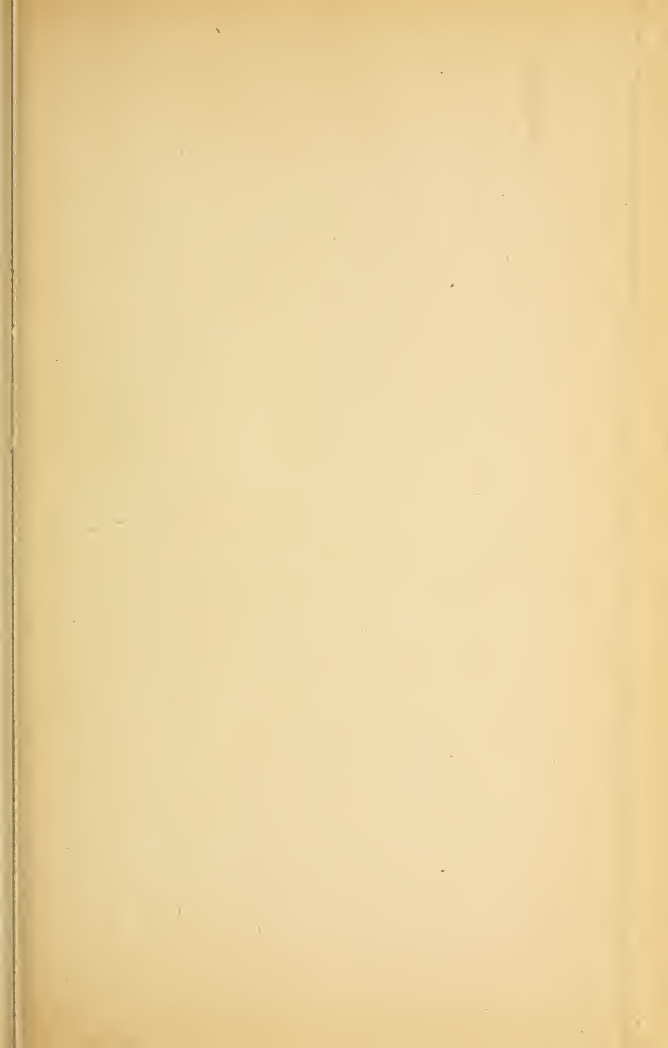




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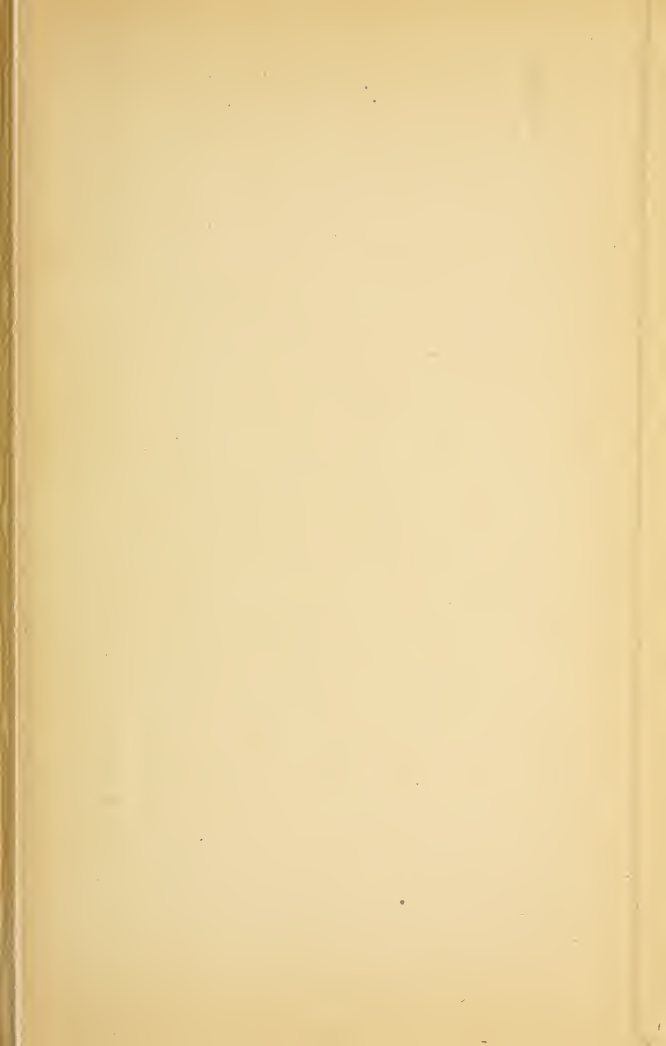




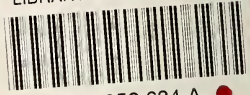
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