

THE WATCHMAN-WARDER

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TURN ON THE LIGHT.

It may be that because the people have been long-suffering with regard to street lights, council has concluded that they can be left without them indefinitely. If so, that body has made a serious mistake. Because they realized the importance of the undertaking and the difficulties with which it was beset, the people did exercise forbearance and very willingly waited till council had taken time to thoroughly consider the whole matter. Even after they had so definitely expressed their preference for a municipal plant, they did not embarrass council by unduly clamoring for its installation, after they were informed that further information had been found necessary. In no other project have the people of Lindsay so promptly and sympathetically co-operated with their representatives, to solve a difficult problem, as in this question of street-lighting.

But there must come a limit to this waiting; a reflective attitude is very dignified up to a certain point, but beyond that, and when need for action presses, it becomes ridiculous. In the eyes of the public, council has well-nigh reached that point. There is a sentimental ballad which says:

"Patiently I wait for thee
And will to all eternity."

Because the average citizen has been willing to serenade council with the first line, it must not assume that he will also exercise his vocal powers on the second. Time enough has been consumed, the question has been amply discussed; it may be that we do not appreciate the merits of "masterly inactivity" when exhibited by a town council, but in our opinion the time for action has come; there has been darkness long enough; vox populi, vox dei, amid this darkness "Let there be light."

There are people who are willing to go without lights because to do so saves money. With such we have no sympathy. They think the town cannot afford to have lights; we think it cannot afford to do without them. Our streets are in bad condition. It requires an acrobat to escape disaster on them in daytime. To compel people to brave their perils in darkness is to put a premium on lost foot-wear, dislocated limbs, unlicensed gymnastics, limitless profanity and sudden death. Upon the council that is responsible for it rests the burden of these results. Less cause has goaded the people to violent measures. A town in darkness is at the mercy of burglars, and recent events

prove that that fact cannot be overlooked even in Lindsay. Summer is approaching. With it will come the army of tramp and it is not to be expected that the homes and business places of the town will be as secure as they have been during the winter months. The convenience, safety, and morals of the town demand that the streets shall be lit. Already our benighted condition has made us a by-word and a derision to the travelling public. The people of Lindsay cannot afford to permit a return to hamlet conditions on their streets any more than to primitive methods of living in their homes. By leaving the town in the dark any longer, aldermen will do it serious damage, give the citizens a grievance and brand themselves unequal to their duties. Already suggestions of the last are painfully common on the street.

There is no need for further hesitation. Three courses are open—any of them commendable from a business standpoint. A contract can be made with the company at \$45 per lamp. On the ground of price no great objection can be taken to that course. A complete town plant can be installed. Accurate figures seem to have been obtained as to the price of this and it is the citizen's choice. A third possibility is that suggested by us as a compromise. It is this: Put in our own street plant and get power from the company to furnish the light. We are satisfied that power can be got at a fair price. Without the engine and dynamo the cost of the plant would be greatly reduced and likely the town can get as cheap power from the company as it can produce itself. This course has the advantages of (1) Patronizing a home company, (2) Saving the cost of engines and dynamo, (3) Avoiding the obligation of buying the company's old plant, (4) Allowing the light to be turned on with little delay, and (5) Still giving the town its own plant. If reasonable terms can be made with the company, it is the plan we recommend. Let council find out at once what these terms are, and on this or some other system get the light turned on.

EDITORIAL NOTES

IT WAS a great task to which Rev. Mr. Macmillan called his hearers in his exhortation to constant cheerfulness the other Sunday night. To the whimpering, ill-tempered, and purposely sour-visaged, such a sermon is a merited chastisement; but to those who heroically strive against despondency it is a thrilling encouragement. Harder to fulfil than any precept of the moral law, is the injunction to banish care's clouds always from the countenance. To those alone, the pillars of whose souls are set up in massive strength and who seek the commanding self-mastery of spiritual giants, is this possible. To do it a man must sometimes make light of despair, conceal a breaking heart and smile in death's face. And yet, that it is a high calling, a noble endeavor and the sublimest soul culture, none will deny.

HONEST DOUBTERS AND THE RESURRECTION

Extracts from a Sermon by Prof. Steen who is Leaving a Good Position on Account of his Doctrine

Last week we published a letter from Mr. Geo. A. Powles of Chicago, that set forth some unusual views on religious questions. Among them was the doctrine of the resurrection. In this connection it may be of interest to read some extracts from a recent sermon by Prof. Steen pastor of Christ Church Cathedral Montreal. The professor has lately expressed certain beliefs that are obnoxious to the Anglican authorities. He has consequently been asked to resign his charge and the sermon from which the following extracts were taken was likely his last in that charge preached by the professor with that in mind:

Text: "Then said he to Thomas reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, my Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, yet have believed.—J. L. N. 20, 27-29."

On the resurrection day alone five appearances of Jesus to different persons are recorded, the last being the memorable one in the evening when the disciples were assembled, as now, behind closed doors for fear of the Jews, and Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst with his word: "Peace be unto you." Thomas, therefore, though not personally present at any of these appearances, had already heard much of the resurrection of Jesus. He had conversed with those who had seen him, and together with this he had antecedent probability arising from the teaching of Jesus, and his own predictions of the death and resurrection.

But yet Thomas remained an obstinate doubter. The testimony of his own confederates availing nothing. He would not be convinced, even by a similar appearance to himself. Nothing but the completest demonstration to all his senses would convince him. "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." On these conditions he insisted.

No Moral Defect

We are not to infer any moral inferiority in Thomas. He had not fallen from grace. He may have differed from the others in temperament, and in intellectual characteristics. He reminds us of what confronts us every day—the extraordinary differences in people of equal worth. The intellectual difficulties to one are transparencies to another; one man is sanguine, hopeful and trusting, another cautious, reserved, non-committal; one believes so read-

ily, another is hard to convince. Every group of men, I suppose, has its sceptic, incredulous, slow to believe, and Thomas was the sceptic of the apostolic band.

Christ's Reply

But what I would draw your attention to is the treatment Thomas received at the hands of the risen Jesus. Here are the disciples gathered together again, Thomas now among the number. Jesus suddenly appears with the same words of greeting, "Peace be unto you." He knew the whole story of Thomas, and he addressed himself at once to him. But there is not a single question, not a word of rebuke. Not even so much as "Don't you believe it is I now, Thomas?" As a man of honesty and sincerity Thomas has a difficulty. He says he can only believe on certain conditions that can be easily complied with, and Jesus proceeds at once to satisfy him. He shall have the ocular demonstration he demanded. The only words of Jesus are: "Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, etc. Jesus has every respect and consideration for his difficulties, and Thomas proves himself worthy of the sympathy Jesus had for him by his ready belief when the conditions were fulfilled, and we learn from his honest words of conviction, amazement and adoration, "My Lord and My God."

An Important Doctrine

Much of the edifice of Christianity for instance, rests upon this very fact that Jesus, who was crucified, rose from the dead on the third day. Through it, in great measure I believe in the divinity of Christ and his extraordinary claims. Through it I believe in a revelation from God, and in the inspiration of the scriptures. Through it I know of a redemption from sin; through it I have an eternal hope.

I therefore put a heavy weight upon it and I must feel that I can bear it; and I have every right to make sure of it. And just as the risen Jesus, when for the first time in the presence of the doubting Thomas bade him feel for the nail prints and the spear thrust that he might satisfy himself, so must his church at all times do all in its power to meet the honest difficulties that may lie in the way of accepting what it teaches, and sympathize with every man in his struggles to reach the light.

A Sweet Message

The Christian faith comes to you with the sweetest message that was ever poured into human ears, and with a healing and strengthening power before which all the powers of earth are as nothing. But it comes with far more—the confidence and the serenity that nineteen centuries of victorious conflict with unbelief inspire. It has never received a fatal thrust, and the advance of knowledge, though it has promoted many an attack, has only strengthened its position and shown it to be inviolable.

Sympathy for Doubters

The action of Jesus indicated sympathy for honest doubt but coupled with this we must take the remaining words to Thomas. It is a very low mind that regards belief as purely an intellectual matter. My beliefs are regulated by my whole spiritual and moral life. Much of the strongest evidence for the truth of Christ can only be appreciated by certain conditions of the heart. A man's nature is not built in water-tight compartments. The head effects the heart, and the heart the head. And the clever head often fails through moral deficiencies to grasp what is clear as the noon-day sun to the pure in heart even as Christ said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Prejudice, malice, spite, hatred, dishonesty, all blunt and darken and distort the understanding. Before the very eyes of the Pharisees the Son of Man performed his greatest works of mercy, and as the good shepherd healed all that were diseased. There was no mistaking his spirit. Yet a hardened and perverted heart made the Pharisee so blind that he could say: "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, prince of the devils."

And Jesus said in effect to Thomas: "I was quite willing to satisfy your demand. You saw and believed. But millions after you will believe in my resurrection for whom there will be no possibility of seeing my hands and feet and side. Blessed are they." The evidence will be complete enough, but it will be of a different kind for them. It will appeal quite as much to the heart and the whole moral and spiritual man as to the senses, and they will show that they are not spiritually dead, but have still that sense for the eternal verities and eternal needs that transcends all mere logical acumen.

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