

Colonel TODHUNTER of Missouri

By RIPLEY D. SAUNDERS

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Lottie-May stood summoned. "Why, granddaddy," she replied nervously, "I just stayed to the political meeting, that's all. There was to be a brass band there and speakin' and all that, and I just couldn't come away till it was over."

The old man kept his accusing eyes on the girl's face for a moment. They were turned and looked searchingly first at Stam Tucker and then at Tom Strickland. Tom felt a sudden and overwhelming sense of shame and self reproach and pity for the good old man whose dread, hurried eyes were so somberly bent on him.

There was a moment of silence. "Well, seein' all there was to see," old Rufe Doggett resumed then, "what did you do after that, girl? How comes it that you're here on the road with Stam Tucker, facin' Tom Strickland like there'd been a quarrel? Tell me the truth."

Lottie-May Doggett flushed a quick appeal of her eyes at Tom Strickland. It was plainly a mute and desperate entreaty for his forbearance with what ever she was about to say.

Then, "Why, granddaddy," she made an attempt to begin a lecture as long as my arm, but it just wasn't in me to do it under the circumstances. And that's wrong, because the only good excuse an old man's got for livin' is to sorter act as a guidepost to keep young men from followin' the roads that lead to trouble. Bein' mighty little good in that line myself, I'm a-goin' to unload my responsibility on old Bill Strickland and let him straighten Tom out his own way, sub. And then I'll ask the Old Marster up above to make me better fit'n a boy for my duty than I seem to be at this precise moment, sub. Judgin' from the way I weakened on Tom."

Suddenly one day during the campaign the Hon. William J. Strickland returned from St. Louis. An expression of acute worryment so contrary to its customary cheerfulness rested on his face that Colonel Todhunter, entering the candidate's Nineveh law office, could not but remark the change.

"What on earth's the matter, Bill?" he asked. "You look like the last rose o' summer."

Colonel Strickland attempted a smile. "Oh, nothing particular, Thurs," he replied. "I reckon I was just meditating on the vanity of human life."

"Well, it must have been 'Hark from the tombs a doleful sound,' all right," laughed Colonel Todhunter. Then he took a second look at his friend.

"You're lyin' to me, Bill Strickland," he said. "There's somethin' gone wrong and it's on your mind. What is it?"

"Thurs," responded the other, "it ain't anything you can help. There's no good in my unbindin' my troubles on you just because you've got broad shoulders."

"Unbind 'em anyhow," returned Colonel Todhunter. "You ought to know folks can shed other folks' troubles off'n their shoulders like water from a duck's back."

But Colonel Strickland shook his head. "There's been a backset some where along the line," announced Colonel Todhunter stubbornly. "And you've got to tell me what it is. Quit settin' there lookin' like a poor man at a cash sale, Bill Strickland, dumb, 'cause money's all that talks."

"At this Colonel Strickland laughed drearily. "That's where you hit the nail on the head," he said. "Money, the mean and dirty thing that can whip the best man in the world—that's the trouble, Thurs."

"It's generally the other man's money that looks dirty, Bill," Colonel Todhunter commented, chuckling. "I got to acknowledge the corn myself. I never had a dollar of my own that didn't look mighty clean and good to me. But what's this particular money trouble?"

"Well, if you will have it, Thurs, it's this," replied Colonel Strickland. "I'm up a tree in the matter of campaign expenses. Old Governor Leslie was sure he could raise a Strickland campaign fund by asking the right men and telling them what he proposed to do with it, they knowing that Steve Yancey ain't fit to be governor of Missouri. But so far he's met with mighty poor success. He told me all about it in St. Louis yesterday. I ain't got a dollar in the world, and we've established headquarters in St. Louis and Kansas City, that's got to be kept up. How we're going to do it is what I can't figure out."

The two old friends faced each other silently.

"That certainly is a serious situation, Bill," spoke Colonel Todhunter at last. "It's so almighty serious, Thurs," returned the other, "that I can't see my way out of it."

But at this Colonel Todhunter snorted. "That's where you're wrong, Bill Strickland," he exclaimed. "I've been

spreed with hot coppers in trades, and I'll be jim swizzled if I ever got into one I couldn't get out of. And we ain't in that kind of a one now. How much money do you need?"

Colonel Strickland shook his head. "There's no good you and me figuring along that line, old fellow. We need at least \$2,000, and while it's pretty certain old Leslie will raise that amount eventually that doesn't cut any ice now. We need the money right here at the start."

"And you can't raise it?" asked Colonel Todhunter.

"No, I can't," answered Colonel Strickland. "And I get what a man deserves for thinkin' he knows how to save the country when he don't even know how to take care of himself."

"That ain't so, Bill," answered Colonel Todhunter sturdily. "And anybody that thinks they can keep you from bein' governor of Missouri simply because you're a poor man has got an other think comin', sub. You draw your personal note for \$2,000 in my favor. I'll endorse it right here, and if I don't get that money it's because the Niveveh National bank don't know a good thing when it sees it."

"What do you mean, Todhunter?" asked Colonel Strickland, instant protest in his eyes.

"I mean this, Bill Strickland," replied Colonel Todhunter. "In the first place, old Governor Leslie is dead sure to raise that three campaign fund. In the second place, all heaven and hell hates a quitter, and you ain't a-goin' to be one. In the third place, the Todhunter farm is as pretty a piece of collateral for a \$2,000 loan as old Shyllock himself would have the heart to ask."

"That's exactly what I thought you were going to say," quietly commented Colonel Strickland. "But it don't go for a minute. I ain't going to tie you up on this proposition."

"It ain't nobody's goin' to tie me up, and I ain't goin' to tie myself up, either. I'm goin' to tie the other fellow up. I'll tie up them tricksters in St. Louis that's queerin' old Governor Leslie's game. They're the ones that's puttin' a frost on the Strickland campaign fund. If they can do that successfully they've got you whipped right here and now. But I'm a-goin' to fool 'em."

"No, Thurs, I don't do it," protested Colonel Strickland. "Puttin' up a good fight is one thing, but ruinin' your friends is something entirely different. I haven't fallen that low yet."

"You haven't fallen anywhere," said Colonel Todhunter, "but you've got my fightin' blood up, and by the Lord Harry, if you ain't man enough to fight alongside o' me, I'll fight by myself!"

"Todhunter," said Colonel Strickland, "it's all wrong. You haven't got any call to do a thing like that for me."

"The man that ain't got no call to help a friend that needs help," replied Colonel Todhunter, "ain't got no call to keep on livin'. You set down there and make out that there note."

Reluctantly Colonel Strickland obeyed. But he smiled cynically as he passed the paper to Colonel Todhunter. "You forget, Thurs," he said, "that old Eph Tucker is president of the Niveveh National bank. Is he likely to finance our campaign against Steve Yancey?"

Colonel Todhunter laughed. "I ain't forgettin' nothin'," he responded. "And don't you forget that old Eph Tucker was a note-shaver long before he was a politician, and he's got note shavin' in his blood bigger'n a mule. He couldn't no more let a good piece of paper get away from his bank than he could fly, and angels'll have to be mighty scarce before old Eph Tucker does any flyin'."

Nevertheless when Colonel Todhunter presented the Strickland note, indorsed by him and with his unnumbered farm as collateral, for discount he found old Eph Tucker solicitously inquisitive.

"What's it all about, Colonel Todhunter?" the banker asked. "You and Bill Strickland going in together on some business deal? What's the consideration for the note?"

Colonel Todhunter looked old Tucker square in the eyes. "Eph," he replied, "I'm goin' to play my cards face up on the table. Bill Strickland needs money to pay his campaign expenses. That's why I'm indorsin' his note and askin' this bank to discount it."

Old Tucker's little eyes narrowed. "And you're gettin' no good out of it yourself?" he asked, studying Colonel Todhunter curiously. "You're lendin'



your credit and riskin' your farm just to help Bill Strickland along in politics?"

"That's what I'm doin', Eph," replied Colonel Todhunter.

"Then," said the banker, "you're a bigger fool than I took you for. Bill Strickland ain't good for \$100 with this bank."

"He's good for any amount with me, Eph," returned Colonel Todhunter, a sudden menace in his tone. "But that ain't the question. Is this note good as it stands now?"

"Bill Strickland don't stand no more show for the nomination than a rabbit," spoke old Tucker. "He'll never get his hands on the governor's salary if that's what you're countin' on, Colonel Todhunter."

"I'll look out for that end of the business. All I want you to do is to pass on this here note."

"Colonel Todhunter," replied the banker, "the indorsement and the collateral make this note good, and it's a banker's business to buy good paper. We'll discount the note. It's your funeral, not ours."

"That finishes the business then," said Colonel Todhunter. "I ain't worryin' about my funeral. But if you're a countin' on either Bill Strickland or me furnishin' the corpse, Eph, you're goin' to see one of the liveliest corpses you ever seen in all your born days, sub."

The old banker made no reply. Colonel Todhunter was chuckling when he reported to Colonel Strickland. "It's all right, Bill, and you can get back to St. Louis right away," he said. "I got the money from old Eph Tucker. But great Scott and Maria, it was worse'n pullin' teeth!" All the time we got it, and now we've perced to lick old Eph with his own money."

But Colonel Todhunter would not have spoken so confidently if he had heard the gloating speech of President Tucker of the Niveveh National bank a moment or two after his own departure from that institution.

"The two helpless fools!" muttered old Eph Tucker to himself. "I've got 'em both where I want 'em now. We'll ruin Bill Strickland for good and all this time. We'll wipe him off the political map of Missouri. And as for old Thurston Todhunter, I'll make such a lame duck out of him yet that the only Todhunter who can ever live on that farm of his again will have to marry a Tucker to do it—like I'll make Mary Todhunter marry my son Stam before I'm through with her."

CHAPTER VII.

Colonel Todhunter Cuts a Wide Swath in Missouri's Metropolis.

TO Colonel Todhunter, a countryman born and bred and of an innate rusticity of soul that was an essential part of his being, contact with the throbbing life of a big city was so rare and foreign picturesque unlikeness to the urban that it never failed to emphasize his type. He stalked into the busy St. Louis headquarters of the Hon. William J. Strickland on the prior floor of the Laclede hotel, the living embodiment of that political figure dear to the amused metropolitan imagination, "the delegate from the rural districts."

It was a brave and honest face that shined itself in Colonel Bill Strickland's private office, but somewhat dimmed at thought of an impending ordeal.

"I'll just be eternally whipsawed if you ain't a tryin' to make a round peg fit into a square hole, Bill," he protested earnestly, something like awe of his surroundings stamped upon his sunburned features. "I'm willin' to do most anything in the world for you, and you know it. But when you turn me loose in a big town like this and expect me to behave like anything more'n a wall-eyed plow horse with his tail full o' cockleburrs I'll be everlastin'ly condemn'd if you ain't makin' a mighty serious mistake, sub."

"Nonsense, Thurs," laughed Colonel Strickland. "I'm counting on you for some St. Louis speeches that'll be worth their weight in gold, my friend. We need you here, sir—a man that talks old-fashioned American Democracy straight from the shoulder. City politicians have forgotten what the real Democratic doctrine is, Thurs, and we've got to revive it in the people's hearts if we expect 'em to vote right. That's why I want you to help me open my St. Louis campaign. You've got to do it, Thurs."

Colonel Todhunter gazed at his friend pensively. "Bill," he said, "I'm a-goin' to do it, as you well know. I'd strip the shirt off'n my back and head a persecution wavin' it for a Strickland banner if you asked me to, whether I thought it was the best thing to do under the circumstances or not. But I bid you remember, Bill, that I warned you in time. It'll be your fault if you have occasion to regret havin' brought me in from the pasture and stacked me up against these here bang tailed city thoroughbreds, sub."

"I'll take the chances, old fellow," said the candidate, his eyes twinkling. "You just oblige me now for old friendship's sake and I'll be responsible for everything that happens after ward. I ain't the least bit afraid."

"I'll eat my hat if I don't wish I could say the same, sub," ejaculated Colonel Todhunter, a vehement panic in his tone. "I'm skeered to the marrow, sub, because I'm out o' my ball-wick and up against a proposition that I don't know any more about 'n a bog knows about a holiday, sub. And you're a-goin' to discover, sub, before we get through with this piece of foolishness that I had mighty good reasons for bein' skeered too."

"Shucks, son o' old warhorse!" laughed Colonel Strickland. "Once you

a two-year-old and show these St. Louis folks what a real Missouri Democrat is. You're going to make the hit of your life, sir!"

"Maybe I am and maybe I ain't," Bill Strickland, quoth Colonel Todhunter moodily. "But all I ask at the finish is that you'll remember it wasn't me that made the prediction, sub. I'm a natural born optimist, sub, but that don't necessarily mean that I'm a natural born jackass at all times and under all circumstances and on all subjects, as some folks seem to think, sub."

And in this frame of mind Colonel Todhunter returned into the general headquarters offices and was introduced to his Niveveh friend's St. Louis backers and campaign staff.

A quiet young newspaper man who happened to be drifting through the rooms seemed instantly impressed by Colonel Todhunter's picturesque personality. He studied the colonel intently, a growing appreciation in his thoughtful and latently humorous eyes.

After exchanging a few words with this new addition to the Strickland forces the journalist went into one of the private telephone booths at the end of the reception room and called up his paper. Then he came back to Colonel Todhunter, engaging him in conversation. A few minutes later a second man casually appeared and an observantly stationed himself where he had a good front view of the colonel, who was being deftly led into political dissertation by his new acquaintance.

Colonel Bill Strickland, passing through the main room at one moment, saw the two with their heads together. Something like a gleam of laughter leaped into his eyes, and he nodded, almost imperceptibly, an approving signal to Colonel Todhunter's companion. Then, for an hour or more, the two were left undisturbed.

They chatted pleasantly on many topics. The colonel himself was led to talk discursively on the political situation in Missouri, (the distinctive types of party leaders in the country districts, his own personal views and ample reminiscences of past campaigns in the state, his quaint valuation of Democracy's great historic figures. He was in reality being trapped into a self revelation. Behind his talk, animating it and shining through its unsuspecting frankness and utter naturalness, appeared the childlike and simple soul of the speaker, presented with absolute unreserve. The colonel's companion was the most appreciative of listeners, and as he listened a light of whimsical regard deepened in his eyes.

"But I'm a takin' up a heap of your time, sub," exclaimed the colonel finally. "I reckon you city newspaper men have to trot around after news till your tongue's a-hangin' out of your mouth a yard long. You mustn't let me keep you from other things, sub."

"Not at all, Colonel Todhunter," came the quick response. "It's been well worth while, sir. I intend using some of your talk, if you have no objection, so you're really helping me out, you know."

The colonel looked at his companion pityingly. "You're wastin' your powder, young man. I can talk by the hour, but what I say ain't got no more business bein' printed in a great city newspaper 'n a whiff o' wind a-rustin' the dry leaves in the woods, sub. You better be mighty careful, tryin' to make somethin' worth while out o' them there observations of mine. Your folks at the paper if they think you're worse'n a old huntin' dog that goes skyhoopin' off lickety-split after a rabbit when it's partridges they was a countin' on him to put, sub."

The newspaper man beamed back and laughed zestfully. "Colonel, I'm willing to take the chances on that if you are. And I'll leave it to you tomorrow afternoon if I don't know what's worth while when I see it, sir. You've given me a cracker-jack talk on Missouri politics, and I'm very much obliged to you, colonel."

"You're mighty welcome," replied Colonel Todhunter, genial but doubtful. "I'll be shot full o' holes if I see how you're a-goin' to write a piece from what I've been sayin', sub."

Then suddenly he nodded to his front. "What in blue blazes and Sam Hill is that man a doin' there?" he asked. "The one with that placard in his hand, squintin' at me every two seconds and then jabbin' down some thin' with his pencil? That's the confoundest most singular proceedin' I ever laid my two eyes on, sub."

The young newspaper man shook with laughter. "Colonel," he said, his humorous lips twitching, "don't worry about that man. He's perfectly harmless. I know him. He's got a bug on political celebrities, sir. It's a case of bats in his belfry on that one subject. He goes around recording his impressions at close range during every campaign just the way you see him now. Most remarkable character, colonel. I've known him for a long time."

"Well, sub," replied Colonel Todhunter, "I'll be eternally condemn'd if he mustn't ha' wrote a whole book about me, then. He's been jabbin' that there pencil o' his'n up and down for the last twenty minutes or so worse'n a little girl playin' tit-tat-to behind her joggaphy durin' schooltime, sub."

The newspaper man wiped tears of laughter from his eyes. "I'll take him away now, colonel," he said at last, rising. "I've got to go back to the office, and it always tickles him to talk to somebody about his impressions. I expect he'll have a lot to say about you, sir."

"Well, you keep it dark, sub, if he does," replied Colonel Todhunter, but not enough to stand St. Louis without

ly exploded. He was still shaking with laughter when he joined the mysterious stranger. The latter promptly pocketed his pencil, struck his bit of cardboard under his arm, and then together they departed.

"It's this here crazy-like city life that makes such wrecks as that poor simple Simon," mused the colonel. "I gad, it beats me why any human bein' is willin' to live it, let alone pay such a price as that for it. But it takes all sorts of people to make a world. I'll just be jim swizzled if it don't, sub."

The next afternoon when Colonel Todhunter's eyes fell on the front page of the leading independent Democratic paper of St. Louis he fairly gasped with horror. Then followed an almost tragic pause as he absorbed the full meaning of what had so suddenly stricken him with dismay. The next moment he handed the newspaper to Colonel Strickland.

"What did I tell you, Bill?" he groaned. "I'm a-goin' back to Niveveh just as fast as the good Lord'll let me, sub!"

Colonel Strickland's gaze rested upon the newspaper page. He saw Colonel Todhunter's name boldly typed in the glaring headline that extended across three columns. A full length "character cartoon" of the colonel surrounded by "flaming mail" impressions of his face and bodily pose at various interesting moments of his talk of the preceding day surrounded the larger portrait.

Colonel Strickland began a reading of the article. A smile crept upon his face. Slowly his eyes went down the printed page. The smile broadened. Soon it became a chuckle. Later, absorbed in the reading, the candidate's shoulders shook as he read. Finally, upon one big fist pinning the newspaper to the table in front of him, Colonel Bill Strickland leaned back in his chair and roared with laughter.

"Lord have mercy on us, Thurs!" he gasped. "It's the best and truest thing I ever saw in my life. They've got you finished off to the queen's taste."

"I don't know nothin' about the queen's taste, sub," spoke Colonel Todhunter grimly, "but I know one thing almighty well. I'm a-goin' to dust that newspaper man's jacket for him the next time he comes in reach o' me. Great name above, sub, th' ain't no man can handle Colonel Thurs T. Todhunter like that and not get it well taken out of his hide, sub."

Again Colonel Strickland shouted with laughter. "You old fool!" he sputtered. "That newspaper man knows you better than you know yourself. It's wonderful, Thurs! He's made a character study of you that's nothing more or less than a miracle, my friend."

It was the truth. Colonel Todhunter had come under the vision of a masterfully gifted newspaper expert in "character values." The young fellow with whom he had chatted so freely and at such ease on the preceding afternoon had temperamentally "absorbed" him body and soul. Then he had gone to his newspaper desk and written a descriptive interview that was sheerly the colonel himself in the flesh. It was a feat of psychological wizardry. The man believing it seemed to have put aside his own being for the moment and taken on that of Colonel Todhunter instead. As a result of this exercise of the strongest of literary powers Colonel Todhunter himself, the typical figure of a Missouri Democrat of the old school, faded in his proper person, a living, breathing, almost palpable entity, from the printed page.

And the keenly humorous, appreciative and well rich loving quality that dignified the writer's performance of his task was fully reinforced by the work of the cartoonist. The sketches themselves were life-like, bringing out the colonel's every salient characteristic in his facial expression, bodily pose and gesture.

But this amazing projection of himself in printer's ink on the publicity "screen" of a newspaper's front page appalled Colonel Todhunter. He shrank from it, shocked, with all a country man's disarray at sudden prominence before the world.

"It's all right for you, Bill, you can afford to laugh," he said indignantly. "But I'm the one that's holdin' the bag, sub! It's me that's put on that there infernal circus poster like the wild man o' Borneo, not you. And I'll be shot full o' holes if it ain't me that's a-goin' to hold them there two young rascals to an accountin' for it, you mark my words, sub."

Colonel Strickland wiped the tears from his eyes. "You're all wrong, Thurs—honest, you are!" he protested. "There ain't a line in that story that don't speak good of you, and what you say there is as sound as a dollar. It's you talkin' to the life, old fellow, and you're talkin' for me, and every word you say helps us more than a column of ordinary newspaper stuff. I wouldn't take \$1,000 for it, right now?"

"I'd sell it for a blamed sight less'n that, sub!" hotly replied Colonel Todhunter. "And didn't I warn you—didn't I tell you beforehand that they'd shorely size me up as a country Jake from the very beginnin' and that I'd bungle you all up here in St. Louis, sub? Didn't I say that as sure as I came to these here city headquarters o' your'n I'd play the very old blue blazes and Sam Hill 'fore I got through, sub? Yes, sub—and I'm a-headin' straight back for Niveveh this very day, sub!"

"(Continued)

"Well, you keep it dark, sub, if he does," replied Colonel Todhunter, but not enough to stand St. Louis without

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Director of Evening Department The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)

LESSON FOR MARCH 30

REVIEW.

READING LESSON—Hebrews 11:1-19. GOLDEN TEXT—"Our fathers trusted in Thee; They trusted, and Thou didst deliver them." Ps. 22:4.

The Scripture lesson before us is suggested for reading purposes only. In these verses we have rehearsed the principal events (saving Easter) of which we have been studying this past quarter, but presented from the view point of the values and victories of faith. The golden text suggests three things, first the God of the fathers; second, the trust of the fathers; and third, the deliverance of the fathers because of their trust in God. Therefore it seems to be logical for us to think of those lessons from the standpoint of faith.

The first lesson of this quarter is suggested in verse three of our reading lesson. God is the creator and works by his divine fiat, framing these visible things from those that are not; working or framing them by his "word." So God today through the "Living Word" makes himself known to all men. He is the God of all resource, and places those resources at the disposal of men, becoming to each under varied circumstances all that is needed. Verily "God is love."

Second Great Fact.

The second lesson presents to us the second great fact of the "beginnings," viz., that man is to have dominion over all of these created things, and that woman is to be his helpmeet. Again, there is set before us man's relation to the Creator, a relation of trust, and when that relation failed we have presented in this and the succeeding lesson, the disastrous effect of disobedience. Where trust is active there has always been deliverance. Where trust has failed, disaster has inevitably followed. The great central truth of these two lessons is the folly of doubting and disobeying God's Word.

Returning to verse four of the reading lesson attention is called to Abel (Lesson IV.) as an illustration of a man whose faith in God expressed itself in the sacrifice he offered unto God. Abel's gift was one of sacrifice and not that of the labor of his own hands.

The great fact of lesson five is that Noah obeyed God by preparing for the coming judgment long before there was any external evidence of the flood. He was "moved with godly fear," he saved his house, he "condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." Those who believe God's word live; those who disbelieve God's word, perish.—John 5:24.

The sixth lesson, which also considers the life of Noah, presents for our consideration God's everlasting covenant.

In verses eight to twelve, of the reading lesson, the writer's eyes upon three supreme events in the life of Abraham when faith was manifest.

If we properly present these three we shall summarize the remaining lessons of this quarter saving that of Easter, lessons seven to and including the eleventh. The first great event is of course God's call to Abram.—Heb. 11:8. He must leave kindred, native land, yea, even his father's house.

The second great illustration of faith was that Abraham should obtain God's promises.—Heb. 11:9-10. This he did by obeying the call to become a sojourner in a land not his own, looking for a city whose builder and maker is God.

Necessity of Faith.

The third illustration, Heb. 11:11,12, was Abraham's willingness to part with his son Isaac in obedience to God's command to offer him as a sacrifice. True faith holds back nothing from God. Notice in this illustration how Sarah's name is linked with that of Abraham. How it is declared that she received power to conceive through faith and because she counted him faithful who promised, there sprang of one "so many as the stars of heaven in multitude and the sands which is by the seashore innumerable."

Thus the message of the past quarter is the revelation of God and of the necessity of faith in him on man's part.

Some may have chosen to use the lesson of Isaac and Rebecca, rather than the suggested Easter lesson. We judged the Easter lesson of the greater value.

Therefore in the final lesson, that of Easter Sunday, we behold God's matchless grace and mercy in that he rolled away for those of loving, simple childlike faith, the stone of their difficulty.

"Cherish the hope that the world is traveling towards the dawn. Man's day begins with the morning and ends with the night, but the day of God begins with the night, and ends in the glorious dawn."—D. F. B. Meyer.

It will be well to require a