TO FIND OUR TRUE SELVES

We Should Think of Our Responsibilities as Our Opportunities.

"For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." James iv. 14.

This is an apt metaphor with which to represent the brevity and evanescence of life, but it does not tell the whole story. The cloud which the text speaks of as floating idly in the sky we have imprisoned in our machinery and compelled to do mighty things. This capacity of fleeting vapor for energy and work well represents the capacity of the human spirits for aspiration and service. This constitutes man's greatest endowment and is the life of every faculty and attainment.

Scripture continually speaks of man as a "vessel" or utensil which depends for its usefulness and worth upon the value of its contents. When noble ideals perish our life descends toward

THE LEVEL OF THE BRUTE,

just as vapor, bereft of its heat turns again to its original liquid form comparatively without value. Life and action carried on in accordance with true ideals will result unfailingly in progress. Too often the monotony of life consumes the energy which should go toward the realization of our ideals, and when we stand before the doors of large opportunities we are overcome with fear and hesitation.

Man, like the vapor, will never do his best work except under pressure. A brook will babble until it meets the dam, when it begins to turn the gristmill. Without a sense of responsibility a man will develop no force of character. Life is most truly described in the broad sense as a great opportunity. That is the way Jesus looked at it. "Treasure hid in a field," "A pearl of great price," "Talents intrusted to servants"; these are the similes he used. They all emphasize the

ELEMENT OF OPPORTUNITY.

Life is, in short, the opportunity to find our true self, and until we have done that we can never hope to find the true God. If a man gain the whole world and lose himself it profiteth nothing. For a man can actually and permanently possess nothing except himself. Is a man entitled to say "I live" simply because he eats and sleeps and is physically well? A human life is far more complex. The first reed pipe gave forth music, but its descendant, the great organ, gives forth melody. The complete life is one in which the religious or spiritual note gathers into harmony the moral, bringing them also into harmony with God, the source and fountain of fire.

ADAM MACDONALD RECCH.

THE S. S. LESSON

INTERNATIONAL LESSON,
April 11.

Lesson II. Peter Delivered From Prison. Golden Text, Psalm 34: 7.

Introduction.—Between our last lesson and this from four to six years have elapsed. What occurred during that time? The founding of the great Gentile church at Antioch, and the calling thither of Barnabas from Jerusalem and Paul from Tarsus. The famine, and the famine relief sent to Jerusalem from Antioch. Why do we omit those events for the present? In order to follow more closely the history of Peter.

I. Days of Death and Danger.—Verses 1-3. What was that time, when our lesson begins? The spring of A. D. 44, while the events described in chapter 11 were occurring at Antioch. Who was ruler then? Herod Agrippa I., grandson of Herod the Great, who murdered the innocents at Bethlehem, and nephew of Herod Antipas (son of Herod the Great), who murdered John the Baptist. It was his son, Herod Agrippa II., before whom Paul made his famous defense (Acts 26: 28).

What was the history of Herod Agrippa I.? He was born B.C. 10 and educated in Rome. Amid a rash and adventurous career, he rose through the favor of the Emperor Caligula. He helped to set the weak Claudius Caesar on the throne of Rome (A. D. 41), and in return was made king of all Palestine, where he reigned only about three years before he came to a horrible end, as related at the close of this chapter.

What was the policy of this Herod toward the Jews? He tried to do whatever pleased the Jews (v. 3). He lived in Jerusalem. He took pains to observe the minutiae of Jewish ceremonials. He hung up in the temple the gold chain which Caligula had given him. He was only part Jew, and part Edomite, and greatly feared the people would hate him as they had hated Herod the Great. At the feast of tabernacles in A. D. 41 he had read to the people the whole of Deuteronomy, bursting into theatrical tears when he came to the words, "Thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, who is not thy brother." Thereupon the obsequious populace had cried, "Don't weep, Agrippa! You are our brother."

The Blessings of Persecution. The early church had many opportunities of realizing the blessings of persecution promised by Christ. That is the last of the Beautitudes, as if the climax of those heavenly paradoxes; and it is three times as long as any of the others, as if our Lord knew that it needed the strongest emphasis. When men reproached them, reviled them, persecuted them, deprived them of all joy on earth, they were still to have the kingdom of heaven, and great was to be their reward there.

What would be that reward? Fellowship in Christ's sufferings. Fellowship in one another's affliction. The purification of character. The strengthening and beautifying of character. Consciences at peace. The knowledge of the coming triumph of their cause. Christ's "Well done!" An eternity of bliss unimaginable.

II. Prison and Prayer.—Verses 4, 5. What is implied by the clause, when he had apprehended him? That there had been some delay and difficulty in arresting Peter.

Where was Peter confined? In the famous prison in Herod's residence, the fortress or castle of Antonia. It was there that some think Christ was arraigned before Pilate, and there Paul was taken when mobbed in Jerusalem. It immediately adjoined the temple, on the northwest.

How was Peter guarded? By four quaternions (bands of four) of soldiers, each quaternion being on guard through a three-hour watch. Two of the soldiers were chained to Peter's arms, one on either side; a third was outside the door, and the fourth in the passage leading to the strong outer gate. Doubtless Herod knew how the apostles had escaped from the prison of the Sanhedrim (Acts 5: 19), and meant to keep Peter securely this time.

Why was Peter imprisoned, and not executed at once? Because it would have offended the Jews whom he was trying to please, if he executed Peter during the Passover (that is Easter).

Peter in Prison. Remember the free outdoor life of a fisherman that Peter had always enjoyed, his impetuous character that would not brook restraint, and the probability that he was the oldest of the apostles. Imprisonment is bitter to any man; it must have been doubly grievous to him. And yet, doubtless he rejoiced in this opportunity to prove his loyalty to the Lord whom he had denied.

What is it to "pray without ceasing" (1. Thes. 5: 17)? We are told that we are not heard for our much speaking (Matt. 6: 7); but that is simply a warning against long prayers for show. Christ's parable of the importunate widow (Luke 18: 1-8) shows his approval of impassioned, determined prayer, that will not let the angel go without a blessing (Gen. 32: 26). Christ's own example in Gethsemane shows how inevitable are repeated prayers when the heart is strongly stirred.

III. The Chains Fall and the Iron Gate Opens.—Verses 6-10. How long was Peter in prison? Till near the close of the Passover, when Herod would have brought him forth.

Why was not Peter released earlier by the angel? For the same reason that often causes a delay in the answer to our prayers—to test our faith and strengthen our characters by the endurance of affliction. This waiting and the bearing of trouble, teach us patience, courage, hopefulness, cheerfulness, and faith. What school has a nobler curriculum?

In what way was Peter delivered? He was sleeping quietly, like David (Psa. 3: 5) when Absalom and all his foes pursued him. "For so he giveth his beloved sleep," or "in their sleep" (Psa. 127: 2). It was in the last watch of the night, between three and six o'clock, for Peter was not missed at three, when the guards were changed, nor until sunrise (v. 18), when the guards were changed again. In this "darkest hour which is just before dawn" an angel of the Lord came upon him (stood by him),—a brilliant presence radiating light which filled the cell. Peter was sleeping so soundly that the light did not wake him, and the angel smote Peter on the side.

IV. "The Lord Hath Delivered."—Verses 11-19. What did Peter perceive, when the angel disappeared thus suddenly? He came to himself, waking from his half-dazed condition, and knew that he had really been released, by an angel sent from the Lord. And let us keep in mind the fact that back of the angel was that prayer meeting.

Where did Peter naturally turn? To the house of Mary, evidently a rendezvous for the Christians. The apostle knocked at the door of the gate, the outer door of the entrance passage leading to the inner court. This was kept fastened, and just inside was a small room for the maid who tended the door. The description, according to Tristram, shows that it was a house of the better class.

Who answered the knock? A damsel named Rhoda (meaning Rose). With youthful impetuosity, she was so glad to hear the beloved tones that she forgot to unbar the door, and left Peter knocking there while she rushed into the prayer meeting to tell the good news!

Why were the disciples astonished at this answer to their prayers? Because they had not expected the answer so soon, or in such a wonderful manner. Some of them, perhaps, had been praying with little real faith.

V. The Open Door of Easter. "The angel left Peter, having accomplished his appointment. But there was to be another time when Peter would want the visit of such a messenger! And there will be a time when we also shall want it, when we shall have to go out from the prison-house of mortality, and from the world itself."

SMALL HENS LAY LARGE EGGS

Great Success of Danish Breeders' Methods.

One of the most scientific attempts yet made to get at the laying value of certain breeds of hens has just been completed at Reading, England. The breeds experimented with in this year's trial were five varieties of Leghorns, one of the two most popular sorts in the world. The following is the estimated profit and loss account:

Breed	Hatched	Value of Eggs s	Value of Eggs d	Profit per bird s	Profit per bird d
Danish Brown Leghorns	1907	12	9	7	9
Danish White Leghorns	1907	12	1	7	1
Danish White Leghorns	1906	11	8	6	8
American White Leghorns	1906	11	10	6	10
British (Exhibition) White Leghorns	1906	6	4	1	4

Two striking results emerge. It is found once again that the heavier the bird the less the egg production. The British birds in this case were more than a pound heavier than any others. Of the first four varieties on the above list, the lowest average for a pen was 142 eggs a year per bird, while the 5 pound English birds averaged only 76 eggs each.

A yet more striking result comes out in the consideration of the weight of the eggs laid. The Danish brown pullets yielded nearly six times their body weight in eggs during the twelve months, and each egg was up to the standard weight of 2 ounces. The British birds did not lay twice their own body weight and a third of the eggs were under the 2 ounce standard.

The Danes have arrived at this result simply and solely by breeding especially for this purpose. The ideal they have reached is the little hen—which implies the small feeder—and the big egg.

MR. PORTLINGTON'S DISMAY.

Admonished by a Discovery, He Forms a High Resolve.

"Within the last year or two," said Mr. Portlington, "I've noted a growing snugness in the fit of my garments. I go always to the same tailor and have my clothes made from the same measure, and so I came to recognize finally that I was growing stouter. Certainly my clothes couldn't be growing any smaller, made always from the same patterns, but I filled them out more. I was certainly growing plumper.

"'My good boy,' I said to myself, 'that's your good living, and grateful you ought to be with health and happi—— and some slight portliness.' I smiled when I thought of my having some plumpness of figure.

"This morning to my dismay I discovered that I cannot cross my legs over quite as far as I used to. Yes, sir; that's what I mean, I found that I couldn't cross my legs over as far as I used to; the leg that I used to be able to throw clean over I now find stops of naturally on the other knee! In other words, without my having realized it. I have come to have more than some slight portliness of figure; I am getting fat!

"This may not seem a matter of grave importance to you, but it is to me. The snugness that before had made me smile now strikes me as a warning, and from now on there's a little more of labor and less of good living for your Uncle Portlington."

For many years no one has been married in Madrid on a Tuesday, it being considered an unlucky day there.

STORED WITH TREASURES

THROUGH THE ARCHIVES BUILDING, OTTAWA.

An Immensely Valuable Collection —Old Records — Indian Relics.

The Archives building, which stands hard by the mint on Sussex street in Ottawa, is already stored with treasures of greatest literary and historical interest. The old records, carelessly stored in the top flat of the Langevin block, or hidden away in the tower of the East block, formed the nucleus of what is to-day an immensely valuable collection, arranged and indexed under a system so perfect that the archivist is able to place his hand upon a given document, map or engraving at a moment's notice. This miracle has been wrought by Dr. A. G. Doughty, Dominion archivist.

OF AGE GONE BY.

Dr. Doughty is adding constantly to his records. He has drawn largely upon the British War Office, and has transformed torn and dust-covered maps of old Canada, found in the cellars of Downing street, into plans that to-day are almost as perfect as when they first left the ink-pots of the draughtsmen-explorers of an age gone by. Within the last five years Dr. Doughty has added to his store no less than five thousand original manuscript plans of Canada. He has upon his shelves four thousand volumes of original military papers.

The Archives collection is as varied almost as it is rich. Here you see under a glass case a tiny silver box filled with little paper disks. On each scrap there is a picture and a story, and the contents of the little pillbox contain together a complete history of the seven years' war. There you see the real wampum and the quill seals of the aborigines, there the written records of Canada's first settlers, the original document of the Company of One Hundred Associates. Here is a paper telling of a St. Malo venture twenty-five years before Champlain's first voyage.

UNDER QUEBEC BRIDGE.

On one of Dr. Doughty's tables rests a grim relic of the early wars, a cannon shot lately dug up from its long resting place twenty feet below the bed of the St. Lawrence. It was found by workmen excavating for the piers of the Quebec bridge, and was presented to the government by the contractor, M. P. Davis.

The Archives building has become the Mecca of the historians and the story-writer. The old books of the Archives library contain material for romances innumerable, and, moreover, the atmosphere is there. Public reading rooms are provided.

PICTURES AND FLAGS.

A valuable collection of pictures and flags has recently been given to the Archives by Lady Caron, widow of the late Sir Adolphe Caron. One of these flags is that of the "Quebec Militia" of 1775. Another is the flag of the 1st Canadian Regiment, which went through the Red River Rebellion.

On the walls of the Archives building hang rare pictures of old Canada. There is a colored engraving of Toronto in 1840, another of Toronto in 1854, by Kollner, a German. There is a picture of Quebec published within three months of the siege. The plan of the battle of the Plains of Abraham, handed Pitt by General Townsend, is in the possession of the Archivist.

The maps which Dr. Doughty procured from the War Office—in which work Lord Minto gave him valuable assistance—had been long neglected. The work of restoring these maps is still in progress. The torn scraps are pieced together, mounted and cleaned, and are then stored flat in fireproof steel drawers, and kept under lock and key.

BROCK'S SCARLET COAT.

One of Dr. Doughty's prizes consists of the scarlet coat worn by Sir Isaac Brock in his last victorious fight at Queenston Heights. The coat was obtained from the Tupper family, and although well preserved, bears upon it the evidences of the struggle which cost the gallant general his life and saved the country from invasion. Brock's military sash is also there.

Away back in 1790 a man named Du Berger began to build in miniature the city of Quebec. He toiled for months and probably years before he finally produced the old city and its surroundings in a model some 30 feet about, built to scale in every detail. This model was sent out of Canada by Col. By, he who began the city of Ottawa, and was for a succession of decades in the possession of the British military authorities. It stood in the rotunda of the Woolwich Arsenal. Dr. Doughty saw it, made up his mind to get it, and now he has it.

MINUTE EXACTNESS.

Du Berger perfected his model with minute exactness, even to the stubble in the fields and the furrows turned by the ploughs of the men who settled on the outskirts of Quebec. The fences are there around the fields; the heights are there, the river, the fortifications, the wharves, the houses and all the public buildings of the historic city. Tiny guns peep out of the embrasures, match-like bits of wood — miniature timbers—lie upon the quays, stacks of cordwood stand along the front of the lower town. You see the old Chateau Frontenac, the palace of that worthy gentleman, the Intendant Bigot, and you see Le Chien d'Or. It is Quebec as pictured in those two books, curiously similar in material, the Le Chien d'Or, by Kirby, and The Seats of the Mighty, by Gilbert Parker.

MONEY UNDER GLASS.

Those persons who are interested in money will find money at the Archives. It isn't money which a modern coal dealer would care to accept, but it was the everyday paper currency of long ago. It is kept under glass in the library, time-worn Niagara bills mostly, plain-looking probably, but serviceable enough in their day and generation. Their associates in Dr. Doughty's glass case are the wampum of the Indian and the letters of the men, English and French, who helped lay the Canadian foundation, letters upon which the ink has faded from black to yellow.

Not the author only, but the illustrator also, finds his raw material on the shelves and in the files of the Archives. Pictures of one sort or another, of most of the men and places of note in Canadian history are to be found there. The system inaugurated by Dr. Doughty works in such a way that additions are constantly being made to the Archives. In the search for historic data, the happenings of the present day are not lost sight of. They are recorded, and the records filed and indexed for the use of future generations.

LABRADOR MOSQUITOES.

Terrible Pest to Travellers and Natives in the Northland.

No account of travel in Labrador can be complete without some mention of the terrible pest of mosquitoes. These were always present in immense swarms from the beginning of our trip to the end, and sometimes they made life almost unbearable, writes a correspondent in Forest and Stream.

Nothing could be heard but their buzzing. Whenever we attempted to eat they were down our throats and in our eyes and faces and in spite of our head nets and fly dope we were always badly bitten. The natives seemed to mind them almost as much as we did, their remedy being rancid sea oil. I am satisfied that were one so unfortunate as to be caught out at night without protection he would be either crazy or dead by morning.

Our tents were provided with a fine mesh bobbinet inner tent, but some would always find their way inside or come up from the ground. At times our light so attracted them we went outside to see if it were not raining, for the constant tapping of the mosquitoes against the canvas sounded so exactly like rain that it was impossible to tell the difference.

On many nights I had to give up the observation of stars for latitude and longitude because a candle could not be kept lit long enough to adjust the artificial horizon. We unfortunately had no chimney and the mosquitoes swarmed so thickly that without this protection the flame was quickly smothered. There were but few nights cool enough to afford us any relief; we found that it required a temperature within a few degrees of actual freezing to subdue them.

SAILOR BROUGHT 'MUMS.

French Sailor First Brought Chrysanthemums to Paris.

It is more than 100 years ago that a French sailor living near Marseilles went up to Paris by diligence, guarding with the utmost care two precious little flower pots in which he had specimens of a strange plant. His name was Pierre Blancard, and on his arrival in Paris, in November, 1808, he obtained an interview with the Empress Josephine, who was devoted to flowers, among other things. Blancard had frequently sailed to China and Japan, and there had been struck by the beauty of the flower which was held in such high esteem in the Far East. He had the greatest difficulty in getting his specimens out of Japan and in bringing them home safely in the slow-sailing vessels of those days; but he succeeded and managed to grow the plant in his garden at Aubagne, a suburb of Marseilles.

The chrysanthemum has now spread over most of Europe, and is held in almost as great esteem as it is in the Far East, where it was known certainly as long ago as the ninth century before the Christian era. In Europe there are many societies which are devoted to the culture of the chrysanthemum, but probably the growers will never attain the splendid colors which distinguished the flower in China and Japan, and here in England the gardeners would hardly know what to do without it nowadays.—London Globe.

INDIAN WAS GRATEFUL

WHAT HE DID FOR WHITE MAN WHO SAVED HIS LIFE.

Travelled 400 Miles in the Wilderness to Bring Back Horns of a Moose.

Indian gratitude has probably never been more sincerely proved than in an incident which recently occurred to James Oliver Curwood, the novelist and writer of boys' books, who returned from the Hudson Bay wilds a few weeks ago. Mr. Curwood is the author of "The Wolf Hunters," an exciting tale of the wild northland, in which the author has spent so much of his time. It was while gathering material for this story that he by the merest chance saved one of his Indian guides, Mukoki, from severe injury—probably death.

FOUND SKELETON.

A few weeks after this, when Curwood and his two Indians were on their return to civilization, the bones of a huge bull moose were discovered, and near the bones of this moose was found the skeleton of a man. The story of the tragedy was plain. The unfortunate hunter had mortally wounded the moose, and had been killed by the animal. Naturally the writer wished to bring something of this wilderness tragedy home with him. The remains of the hunter were buried, but the old and rotting gun and the splendid horns of the moose were carried along. After toting the antlers for 25 miles it was realized that they were too great a burden to pack two hundred miles and consequently they were left behind.

INDIAN GOT HORNS.

"I come get heem weh nsnow fall," said the old Indian, whose life the author had saved.

Weeks and months passed, and back in civilization Mr. Curwood forgot all about the horns. One day recently he received notice from the Detroit customs officials that a package was being held in bond. Investigating, he found that they were the old horns. Mukoki, the uncivilized savage, had kept his word, and had travelled a full four hundred miles in the wilderness to do a kind act for the white man whom he loved. He sent no word, with the exception of four niches in one of the prongs, which was his "forest sign." Mr. Curwood has dedicated his stirring book to this faithful old Indian.

MOUNTAINS THAT SING.

Wind Blows Through Great Organ Pipes on Cliff.

Singing and speaking stones gratify man's love of the marvellous and mysterious. Two precipitious cliffs in the Pyrenees are called the "snorers," from the peculiar sounds which the south-west wind draws from them. The faces of these cliffs are marked by deep gullies which roughly resemble organ pipes open in front, and occasionally the front is practically closed by a stratum of air held motionless between the cliff and the trees which graze it while the wind blows freely through tht gullies, or organ pipes, behind.

On another mountain in the Pyrenees certain cliffs emit plaintive sounds which resemble those of a harp, and are known locally as "the matins of the damned."

The musical stones of the Orinoco interested Humboldt, and are granite cliffs situated at the confluence of the Orinoco with the Rio Meta, which occasionally emit at sunrise sounds which resemble the tones of an organ. The organ tones which are heard when the ear is laid on the rock were caused by the outrush of warm air through the narrow fissures which are partially obstructed by elastic layers of mica.

A sand bank about sixty feet high in Hawaii produces a tone like that of a melodeon when the hand is moved in a circle through the loose sand. If the observer stands with both hands in the sand and slides down the bank, the sound becomes louder and louder until it resembles thunder, and alarms horses tethered near by. Each grain of sand is perforated by a narrow canal, which, as a rule, is closed at one end. The sand is of volcanic origin.

WONDER OF THE WORLD.

To realize fully the wondrous beauty of the Zambesi Falls, Rhodesia, one must have time to linger and watch the ever-changing scene. The depths of the chasm below are veiled from sight by the rising columns of opalescent mist, and above the yawning abyss the sun glints and sparkles, weaving the drops into a magnificent rainbow. Three hundred feet below roars and boils the swirling flood, as it emerges from the Boiling Pot, rushing on down the zigzag gorge between towering cliffs of rock, narrow, fierce, and of unfathomable depth. One feels that Rhodesia is indeed thrice blessed to possess within her territories the Eighth Wonder of the World.—African World.