

YEAR 85. NO. 20

KINGSTON, ONTARIO, THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, 1918

SECOND SECTION

QUIBLERS IN A CRISIS

The International Sunday School Lesson For January 27th—"Jesus Forgiving Sin."—Mark 2:1-12.

By William T. Ellis.

War is running a sharp line between the big and the little, the doers and the critics, the conventional and the daring. Some persons—even generals and diplomats and other government officials among them—have proved too small to rise to the heights of this new day. They are the slaves of precedent and conventionality. There is more red tape than red blood about them. Even when the world is at war, they have eyes for the proprieties and usages of another day. These quibbling minds have cost the world dear.

It is an old principle by which they stand condemned. Jesus himself dealt sharply with this sort of two-by-four attitude when they began to raise their quibbling shop talk in a great human crisis. A man was seeking life, and getting it; but the scribes objected to both the manner of receiving and bestowing it. Doubtless if those scribes were alive to-day they would want to utilize the army camps for the preservation of their denominational peccadilloes among the troops. They still would insist upon all the rules of the book of church discipline being applied; and they would continue to judge a man's religion by his conformity to the rules of the village church.

Two great principles stand out in this Sunday school lesson story. The first is that supreme goal may be gained, in spite of all handicaps, by those determined to attain them. Nothing can balk a resolute man. The second is that there are times when everyday usages, and the manner of conventions of life, must give way before a great necessity. Smash roofs and break up meetings, if need be, but win to life. As for the petty objectors and fault-finders, they must be disregarded.

The Hope of Man.

The story is laid in old Capernaum. It was a great day in the life of Jesus. He made His headquarters in a private house, perhaps in the home of Peter. The crowds thronged Him. Not only was the city at His door, but the whole countryside from as far away as Jerusalem had been drawn by the lure of His wondrous words and works. Inside the small house, the people were jammed hanging on His words. Among them were many sick and crippled, eager for a single touch that would mean healing. Calm, compassionate, helpful, Jesus was the centre of a needy multitude, then, as now, the hope of man.

The figure has never lost its charm for mankind. Jesus, the healer and the helper, is the fairest picture that the imagination of mortals conceives. Always He was helping, always He was teaching. The hurried, hurried, heavy, hungry hearts of to-day find satisfaction in Him.

The Man Shut Out.

All over the world a chorus of "ifs" are arising. "If I could only be of some real help in the war," sighs the person who is non-available for military duty. "If I could only go to the hospital," says the poor sick man in the remote rural parts. "If I could only go to Colorado," says the mechanic threatened with tuberculosis. "If I could only have a little capital," says the ambitious young man, eager to start into business. And in the Aramic speech that day at Capernaum, many were saying, "If I could only get in and He could but look on me." The crowd was so great that many were shut out. Such a slight distance, such a small barrier, separated between the man in need and the Man with health to give.

It is a proposition generally sound that if one wants anything in this world badly enough, whether it be an education, or a business, or a quality of character, he gets it if his wishes have will behind them. One of the sick men shut out from the Capernaum house that day was a poor paralytic who saw the numbers of people intervening between himself and his dreams of deliverance from bondage. How he won is a meaningful story.

Four Unconventional Friends. The average woman, finding her home inadvertently locked, will sit on the doorstep for a night, risking pneumonia rather than break a pane of glass and unlock a window. Conventionality has all of us so thoroughly in its grip that we hesitate to do the unusual, the audacious thing. The paralytic and his friends faced a situation calling for unconventional measures. What should they do to reach Jesus? They could not elbow their way through the crowd, and they had equal eagerness, and readiness to them would merit sure rebuke from the fearless Teacher.

As the old proverb says, "Love will find a way." These loyal friends were not daunted by conventionalities. The house was of the kind still typical in Palestine; its flat mud roof could easily be broken into, and the space between the supporting beams was wide enough to let the figure of the sick man through. Without hesitation they deliberately tore up the carefully laid, watered and rolled mud roof. What is a roof when a life is at stake. The great are usually unconventional, and these four friends showed evidence of greatness in their conduct.

The Sick Man's Riches.

We could wish to know more about this paralytic. He must have been a rare character. No whining, complaining, embittered chronic invalid he. Such friends as he possessed are won by another kind of character. In them the man was rich. He might have no goods but the pallet or quilt which constituted his bed, but he was rich in loyal love and devotion of at least four friends. Life has no greater prize than friendship. The man who has one true friend that will stand by him in adversity has made a high and deep success of life. He really worth while to undergo all the suffering which had been the lot of this poor paralytic, for the sake of knowing that he possessed such friends as these four.

And they, noble, loyal, resourceful, have won for themselves a place among the immortal characters of history. Their loyalty and faithfulness have spurred friends to greater devotion through all the centuries since.

The Will That Commands Success.

The scene is dramatic. Inside the house the Teacher is holding forth. The crowd in and around the building are so intent upon Him that they give no heed to this one particular group of which the paralytic is the centre. These make their way to the roof by the outside stair. The company in the house suddenly hears a scraping and a tearing about their heads. The discourse is interrupted, for probably even the Greatest of preachers could not hold the attention of His hearers in the face of a trivial interruption. Dust begins to fall over all the people. The conventional folk inside are horrified, and the crowd outside is stirred to their profound depths. Nothing moves Him more than faith and friendship. Little He cares for the conventionalities. He sees the great resolution to go in to himself, and His heart is made glad.

By any way, however rough it be. By any way, however rough it be. By any way, however steep it be. O Good Physician, if I get to Thee. —Amos R. Wells.

The Boon Grant.

Possibly uncertain of his welcome, the patient was tenderly laid on the floor at the Master's feet; the starting crowd by this time having caught some what of the Healer's interest in the incident. Possibly the man himself was doubtful as to the welcome he would receive. The first word that fell upon his ear reassured him, for it was the terse greeting, "Son." Now, the sick man wanted health, but he needed forgiveness, Jesus said, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." He got health—plus. God always gives more than we seek. No man asks Him for little without receiving much. Health for the body was what this man craved and received, but with it went the far richer prize of health for his spirit.

Of course the theological quibblers were present. They did not like this new idea of the new Rabbi undertaking to say that He could forgive sins. With quiet dignity Jesus met and silenced them by proving that He had power both to forgive sins and to heal bodies. He bade the man take up his bed and walk. He who had come in helpless supplication through a hole in the roof, went out in victory through the open door. The crowds marvelled at him and at the Master who had wrought the miracle. Then, as now, the tidings ran wildly that this Jesus had power to make men over into the new.

Pollava is Captured.

Petrograd, Jan. 24.—Detachments of workmen and soldiers' troops, who were sent from Khar'kov to Pollava, have met the troops of the Kiev Rada in battle and utterly defeated them. Pollava is now in the hands of the workmen's and soldiers' forces.

St. Louis Politician Shot.

St. Louis, Mo., Jan. 24.—Joseph Mount, for many years active in political circles here, was shot to death in a battle with gangsters, two of whom also were killed.

Vancouver may enter into world competition in steel shipbuilding on the basis of Belfast or Glasgow, the Government being in negotiation with western capitalists and metallurgical experts.

ITALIAN CITIZENS RETREATING FROM THEIR NATIVE LAND.



After Belgium, France, Serbia and Roumania it was Italy's turn. The soldiers who retreated across the Friulian plain, marching day and night, with little rest and less food, were accompanied by large numbers of civilians from the invaded districts. Aged men and women and children of all ages were in the throng that poured along the road to safety.

ODD FREAK OF BULLET

CUT SIGNATURE OFF WILL OF A SOLDIER.

Property of a Canadian at the Front Went Astray—Several Reasons Why Men Who Must Go to Fight Should Arrange Regarding the Distribution of Their Property in Case of Their Death.

THE name German bullet which killed a brave son of Canada caused in its passage a rather remarkable mistake in the settlement of the testamentary affairs of the slain soldier. This lethal missile from the Hun, penetrating the wallet of the breast pocket of the Canadian's tunic, actually cut off a corner of the will with the testator's signature. It also snipped the corners off a bunch of English bank notes in the same wallet.

After the fight, when the Canadian dead were buried, this wallet was collected along with others and the pay-book and the man's will taken out to be sent to England. The mutilated will, pay-book and notes in the wallet were abstracted and the apparently empty cover with one corner hanging loose thrown aside, though not thrown away.

Though the pay-book reached its proper destination, for some reason this nameless will and the money with it, six cornerless ten-shilling notes and three similarly shorn one-pound notes, were sent on to England and credited to the heirs of another man who may be known as Jones, and who, a comrade of Smith, had come before emigration to Canada from the same little Devonshire village. Smith and Jones had died together.

On receipt of the information that her son's will was to hand made out in favour of a woman of another name, old Mrs. Jones declared there must be some mistake. Her son had had no such relative, besides she knew that she was his sole heir.

The Estates Department of the Canadian Overseas Forces in London promptly investigated and discovered the half bullet severed corner of the apparently empty wallet which had belonged to a man who may be known as "A." There, wedged into the leather, was a scrap of paper bearing the missing will signature, and the torn-off corners of the nine notes. Large and elaborate photographs were taken to compare the missing portions, and as proof that there had been no mistake. Then the estates were properly distributed.

All Canadian soldiers going overseas are urged to make wills. It saves much trouble, and ensures that their money goes just where they want it to go. Many a man who fully intends that his worldly goods shall be left to a certain person or persons, had neglected to say so in a will, and as a result those dearest to him have received only a fraction. If indeed, anything at all of the property. Failing a will the estate must be distributed by administration, which allows the nearest relatives specified proportionate shares.

Canadian soldiers have been pestering the wills in filling out the little printed will forms provided for them, though many persist in neglecting this precaution and go forth to battle having left no disposition of their effects. Many, too, carry their wills with them on the field, as did the man in the foregoing case, and if it happens, as it often does, that the soldier should be badly mutilated or disappear entirely, there is no will to go by. This great risk may be obviated by sending the will to the Estates Department, Canadian Overseas Forces, Oxford street, London, W., to be filed safely away in an alphabetical index.

By reason of lost or destroyed wills, many men's estates have finally to be distributed by administration. Not long ago the Australian offices sent the Canadian offices in London no less than thirty wallets of dead Canadians, many of which contained wills. Gathered by Aus-

FLOODS HAVE WRECKED FOE WAR PLANTS

Great Havoc Wrought in the Rhine District and in South Germany.

The Hague, Jan. 24.—Heavy floods are reported all over Germany, due to tremendous snowfalls, which are now melting. Dwellings, factories, munition works and bridges have been destroyed. They have been washed away in many places, and cattle, furniture and household goods are seen floating. Factory work has been stopped in many parts of Germany, and railroad traffic, post and telegraphic service has been seriously interfered with for several days, first by the heavy snows and now by the floods.

In the Rhine district it is stated that munition factories have been seriously damaged. The destruction has been particularly severe in Hanover, Jena, Karlsruhe, the Harz district and south Germany. Two thousand soldiers arrived yesterday in Berlin to help clear away the snow in order to enable a continuation of traffic.

The British Labor Convention unanimously adopted a resolution favoring the statements of Premier Lloyd George and President Wilson, and calling on the Allies to formulate their war aims at the earliest possible moment.

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PARIS PREPARED FOR AIR RAIDS

Recent Construction in Germany Leads to Belief That Capital Will be Attacked

Paris, Jan. 24.—Measures for the protection of the population of Paris from air raids are being taken by the Government. The recent construction in Germany of a great number of bombing aeroplanes, capable of high speed and carrying aerial torpedoes of considerable destructive power, suggest the possibility that Paris may soon be the object of aerial attacks. While the anti-aircraft defence of the capital has been strengthened all the way from the front, certain precautions in Paris itself are about to be taken. Orders have been issued that all industrial plants and factories in the city and suburbs, working at night, must have their windows and skylights painted blue, and on all residential apartments the outside shutters must be tightly closed to prevent any light reaching the streets. Stations and tunnels of the network to the subway system will be thrown open to the public when the warning of an aerial raid is received, the electric current being cut off at the same moment. The churches of the city will also be thrown open. Directions for the guidance of the public in case of a raid will be placarded throughout the city.

Few women are interested in the study of prehistoric man. There's a reason.

LIVER TROUBLE and HEARTBURN

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