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IN HIS STEPS.

"What Would Jesus Do?"

By CHARLES M. SHELDON.

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The bishop rose from the table the very figure of divine wrath. He had opened his lips to say what seldom came from him in the way of denunciation when the bell rang and one of the residents went to the door.

"Tell Dr. Bruce and the bishop I want to see them. Penrose is the name—Clarence Penrose. Dr. Bruce knows me."

The family at the breakfast table heard every word. The bishop exchanged a significant look with Dr. Bruce, and the two men instantly left the table and went out into the hall.

"Come in here, Penrose," said Dr. Bruce, and he and the bishop ushered the visitor into the reception room. They closed the door and were alone.

Clarence Penrose was one of the most elegant looking men in Chicago. He came from an aristocratic family of great wealth and social distinction. He was exceedingly wealthy and had large property holdings in different parts of the city. He had been a member of Dr. Bruce's church all his life.

This man faced the bishop and his former pastor with a look of agitation on his countenance that showed plainly the mark of some unusual experience. He was very pale, and his lip trembled as he spoke. When had Clarence Penrose ever before yielded to such a strange emotion of feeling?

"This affair of the shooting—you understand. You have read it. The family lived in one of my houses. It is a terrible event. But that is not the primary cause of my visit." He stammered and looked anxiously into the faces of the other two men. The bishop still looked stern. He could not help feeling that this elegant man of leisure could have done a great deal to alleviate the horrors in his tenements, possibly have prevented this tragedy, if he had sacrificed some of his personal ease and luxury to better the condition of the people in his district.

Penrose turned to Dr. Bruce.

"Doctor," he exclaimed, and there was almost a child's terror in his voice, "I came to say that I have had an experience so unusual that nothing but the supernatural can explain it. You remember I was one of those who took the pledge to do as Jesus would do. I thought at the time, poor fool that I was, that I had all along been doing the Christian thing. I gave liberally out of my abundance to the church and charity. I never gave myself to cost me any suffering. I have been living in a perfect hell of contradictions ever since I took the pledge. My little girl, Diana, you remember, also took the pledge with me. She has been asking me a great many questions lately about the poor people and where they lived. I was obliged to answer her. Two of her questions last night touched my soul. Did I own any houses where those people lived? Were they nice and warm like ours? You know how a child will ask questions like these. I went to bed tormented with what I now know to be the divine arrows of conscience. I could not sleep. I seemed to see the judgment day. I was placed before the Judge. I was asked to give account of my deeds done in the body. How many sinful souls had I visited in prison? What had I done with my stewardship? How about those tenements where people froze in winter and stifled in summer? Did I give any thought to them, except to receive the rentals from them? Where did my suffering come in? Would Jesus have done as I had done and was doing? Had I broken my pledge? How had I used the money and the culture and the social influence I possessed? Had I used them to bless humanity, to relieve the suffering, to bring joy to the distressed and hope to the desponding? I had received much. How much had I given?"

"All this came to me in a waking vision as distinctly as I see you two men and myself now. I was unable to see the end of the vision. I had a confused picture in my mind of the suffering Christ pointing a condemning finger at me and darkness. I have not had sleep for 24 hours. The first thing I saw this morning was the account of the shooting at the coalyards. I read the account with a feeling of horror I have not been able to shake off. I am a guilty creature before God."

Penrose paused suddenly. The two men looked at him solemnly. What power of the Holy Spirit moved the soul of this hitherto self-satisfied, elegant, cultured man who belonged to the social life that was accustomed to go its way, placidly unmindful of the great sorrows of a great city and practically ignorant of what it means to suffer for Jesus' sake?

Into that room came a breath such as before swept over Henry Maxwell's church and through Nazareth Avenue, and the bishop laid his hand on the shoulder of Penrose and said: "My brother, God has been very near to you. Let us thank him."

"Yes, yes," sobbed Penrose. He sat down on a chair and covered his face. The bishop prayed. Then Penrose quietly said, "Will you go with me to that house?"

For answer both Dr. Bruce and the bishop put on their overcoats and went out with him to the home of the dead man's family. This was the beginning of a new and strange life for Clarence Penrose. From the moment he stepped into that wretched hole of a home and faced for the first time in his life a despair and suffering such as he had read of, but did not know by personal contact, he dated a new life. It would be another long story to tell how, in obedience to his pledge, he began to do with his tenement property as he knew Jesus would do. What would Jesus do with tenement property if he owned it in Chicago or any other great city of the world? Any man who can imagine any true answer to this question can easily tell what Clarence Penrose began to do.

Now, before that winter resigned its bitter climax many things occurred in the city that concerned the lives of all the characters in this history of the disciples who promised to walk in his steps. It chanced, by one of those remarkable coincidences that seem to occur preternaturally, that one afternoon, just as Felicia came out of the settlement with a basket which she was going to leave as a sample with a baker in the Penrose district, Stephen Clyde opened the door of the carpenter shop in the basement and came out of the lower door in time to meet Felicia as she reached the sidewalk.

"Let me carry your basket, please," he said.

"Why do you say 'please'?" asked Felicia, handing over the basket.

"I would like to say something else," replied Stephen, glancing at her shyly and yet with a boldness that frightened him, for he had been loving Felicia more every day since he first saw her, and especially since she stepped into the shop that day with the bishop, and for weeks now they had been in many ways thrown into each other's company.

"What else?" asked Felicia innocently, falling into the trap.

"Why," said Stephen, turning his fair, noble face full toward her and eying her with the look of one who would have the best of all things in the universe, "I would like to say, 'Let me carry your basket, dear Felicia.'"

Felicia never looked so beautiful in her life. She walked on a little way without even turning her face toward him. It was no secret with her own heart that she had given it to Stephen some time ago. Finally she turned and said shyly, while her face grew rosy and her eyes tender, "Why don't you say it, then?"

"May I?" cried Stephen, and he was so careless for a minute of the way he held the basket that Felicia exclaimed: "Yes! But, oh, don't drop my goodies!"

"Why, I wouldn't drop anything so precious for all the world, 'dear Felicia,'" said Stephen, who now walked on air for several blocks, and what else was said during that walk is private correspondence that we have no right to read, only it is matter of history that day that the basket never reached its destination and that over in the other direction late in the afternoon the bishop, walking along quietly in a rather secluded spot near the outlying part of the settlement district, heard a familiar voice say, "But tell me, Felicia, when did you begin to love me?"

"I fell in love with a little pine shaving just above your ear that day I saw you in the shop," said the other voice, with a laugh so clear, so pure, so sweet, that it did one good to hear it.

The next moment the bishop turned the corner and came upon them.

"Where are you going with that basket?" he tried to say sternly.

"We're taking it to—where are we taking it to, Felicia?"

"Dear bishop, we are taking it home to begin."

"To begin housekeeping with," finished Stephen, coming to the rescue.

"Are you?" said the bishop. "I hope you will invite me in to share. I know what Felicia's cooking is."

"Bishop, dear bishop," said Felicia, and she did not pretend to hide her happiness. "indeed you shall always be the most honored guest. Are you?"

"Yes, I am," replied the bishop, interpreting Felicia's words as she wished. Then he paused a moment and said gently, "God bless you both!" and went his way, with a tear in his eye and a prayer in his heart, and left them to their joy.

Yes; shall not the same divine power of love that belongs to earth be lived and sung by the disciples of the man of sorrows and the burden bearer of sins? Yes, verily! And this man and woman shall walk hand in hand through this great desert of human woe in this city, strengthening each other, growing more loving with the experience of the world's sorrows, walking in his steps even closer yet because of this love, bringing added blessings to thousands of wretched creatures because they are to have a home of their own to share with the homeless. "For this cause," said our Lord Jesus Christ, "shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife," and Felicia and Stephen, following the Master, love him with deeper, truer service and devotion because of the earthly affection which heaven itself sanctions with its solemn blessing.

Now, it was a little after the love story of the settlement became a part of its glory that Henry Maxwell of Raymond came to Chicago with Rachel Winslow and Virginia Page and Rollin Marsh, and the occasion was a remarkable gathering at the hall of the settlement, arranged by the bishop and Dr. Bruce, who had finally persuaded Mr. Maxwell and his fellow disciples of Raymond to come on to be present at this meeting.

The bishop invited into the settlement hall meeting for that night men out of work, wretched creatures who had lost faith in God and man, anarchists and infidels, freethinkers and no thinkers. The representatives of all the city's worst, most hopeless, most dangerous, depraved elements faced Henry Maxwell and the other disciples when the meeting began, and still the Holy Spirit moved over the great, heaving, selfish, pleasure loving, sin stained city, and it lay in God's hand, not knowing all that awaited it. Every man and woman at the meeting that night had seen the settlement motto over the door, blazing through the transparency set

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up by the divinity student. "What Would Jesus Do?"

And Henry Maxwell, as for the first time he stepped under the doorway, was touched by a deeper emotion than he had felt in a long time as he thought of the first time that question had come to him in the piteous appeal of the shabby young man who had appeared in the First church of Raymond at the morning service.

Was his great desire for Christian fellowship going to be granted? Would the movement begun in Raymond actually spread over the country? He had come to Chicago with his friends partly to see if the answer to that question would be found in the heart of the great city life. In a few minutes he would face the people. He had grown very strong and calm since he first spoke with trembling to that company of workmen in the railroad shops, but how, as then, he breathed a deeper prayer for help. Then he went in, and with the bishop and the rest of the disciples he experienced one of the great and important events of the earthly life. Somehow he felt as if this meeting would indicate something of an answer to his constant query, "What would Jesus do?" and tonight as he looked into the faces of men and women who had for years been strangers and enemies to the church his heart cried out, "O my Master, teach thy church how to follow thy steps better!" Is that prayer of Henry Maxwell's to be answered? Will the church in the city respond to the call to follow him? Will it choose to walk in his steps of pain and suffering? And still over all the city broods the Spirit. Grieve him not, O city, for he was never more ready to revolutionize this world than now!

CHAPTER XII

Yet lackest thou one thing. Sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. And, come; follow me.

When Henry Maxwell began to speak to the souls crowded into the settlement hall that night, it is doubtful if he had ever before faced such an audience in his life. It is quite certain that the city of Raymond did not contain such a variety of humanity. Not even the Rectangle at its worst could furnish so many men and women who had fallen entirely out of the reach of the church and all religious and even Christian influences.

What did he talk about? He had already decided that point. He told in the simplest language he could command some of the results of obedience to the pledge as it had been taken in Raymond. Every man and woman in that audience knew something about Jesus Christ. They all had some idea of his character, and however much they had grown bitter toward the forms of Christian ecclesiasticism or the social system, they preserved some standard of right and truth, and what little some of them still retained was taken from the person of the peasant of Galilee.

So they were interested in what Maxwell said. "What would Jesus do?" He began to apply the question to the social problem in general after finishing the story of Raymond. The audience was respectfully attentive. It was more than that. It was genuinely interested. As Mr. Maxwell went on faces all over the hall leaned forward in a way very seldom seen in church audiences or anywhere else, except among workmen or the people of the street when once they are thoroughly aroused. "What would Jesus do?" Suppose that were the motto not only of the churches, but of the business men, the politicians, the newspapers, the workmen, the society people. How long would it take, under such a standard of conduct, to revolutionize the world? What was the trouble with the world? It was suffering from selfishness. No one ever lived who had succeeded in overcoming selfishness like Jesus. If men followed him, regardless of results, the world would at once begin to enjoy a new life.

Henry Maxwell never knew how much it meant to hold the respectful attention of that hall full of diseased and sinful humanity. The bishop and Dr. Bruce, sitting there, looking on,

Continued on page 6.

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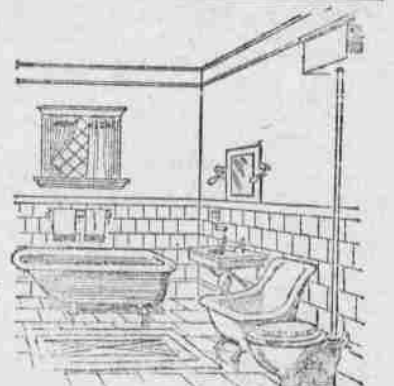
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