

raised in the court of Pharaoh and was prepared by the oppressor of his race for the task of securing their release. Those who believe in providential care find much encouragement in Joseph, Moses and Joash.

THE HOUR AND THE MAN MEET

Every great life that fits into and molds a period is made up of a multitude of circumstances, the absence of any one of which would have changed the result. In many of these cases the individual is ignorant of the work for which his life is being shaped. His preparation has no seeming connection with a life plan or with the needs of some great emergency. But the hour and the man meet.

When some Goliath appears, David appears also, with just the skill that the occasion requires. When a new nation is to be launched in a new world, a Jefferson appears to write the Declaration of Independence and a Washington is at hand with the military skill necessary for a commander, with the executive ability necessary for a first president, and with the poise and discretion necessary to bring the antagonistic elements of his day into harmonious co-operation.

When the Union was threatened there was one man (he seemed to be the only one) whose life was a mixture of the North and South, whose sympathies were broad enough to include the whole country, and whose calmness and serenity enabled him to look beyond the conflict to a nation preserved.

If we can see the hand of Providence shaping history through lives that are unconscious of the part for which they are being prepared, how much easier it is to understand the currents that are set in operation by prayer.

If every human being is a part of God's plan, as he must be if there be a God, it is not unreasonable to believe that the Heavenly Father is willing to direct those who seek to know His will in order that they may obey. It is impossible that a Heavenly Father such as the Bible describes should be deaf to the entreaties of His children. And of all the gifts which we may assume Him willing to give, what would He give more gladly than guidance to those whose hearts are open to divine suggestion?

WHEN HEARTS APPEAL TO GOD

If we cannot doubt God's willingness to answer prayer, we need only be sure that there are means of communication to be certain that the means will be employed. Without attempting to enumerate these means or to show preference between possible means, attention can be called to one very obvious avenue for communication between the human and the divine.

Every human act is the result of a decision and the decision though instantaneous, exercise a vital influence, the temptation comes to steal, the decision determines whether one will remain honest or become a thief; and so with the temptation to kill or to commit any other sin. The power that restrains one at this critical moment may be an emanation from God. Is it unreasonable to believe that this power will respond to an appeal from the heart? And so with the decision as to whether a good act shall be performed or aid extended.

There was a moment when Reuben decided to plead for the life of Joseph and a moment when the others yielded to the plea. There was a moment when the Ishmaelitic merchants decided to come that way and a moment when the plans of Joseph's brothers were changed. There was a moment when Joseph decided to risk imprisonment rather than yield to sin, and there was a dream that flitted through the mind of the butler, the dream that brought Joseph to the attention of Pharaoh.

There was a moment when a suggestion came to the mother of Moses—a suggestion that did not seem to come to any other of the afflicted mothers of that day. And these suggestions continued to come at each turning point in the life of the great law-giver.

GOD STILL LOVES AND GUIDES

There was a moment in the life of Jehosheba when she decided to rescue the threatened child Joash. During the six years that followed there may have been moments when a similar decision was made in regard to him. It is not unreasonable to believe that the God who needed Joash could and did turn the purpose of the aunt in favor of the welfare of His ward.

Is it unreasonable to believe that God still lives, still loves and still guides? God needs servants to do His work today as in the days gone by, and servants need direction as much as they ever did in the past.

The child whom we can succor or save may be as important a part of God's plan as Joseph, or Moses, or Joash. As we

ourselves have been the recipients of a care as affectionate and as tender as that which Jehosheba lavished upon her nephew, so our devoted interest may be as necessary to some of God's little ones as the care of others has been necessary to us.

We see but a small part of God's plan, but we have faith in the power and wisdom and love of the Heavenly Father who fits events together in the mosaic of life.

AN EASTERTIDE MESSAGE By WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

BIBLE TEXT—LESSON FOR APRIL 16

(See John 20: 19-31)

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither my 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 thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

My Talk today is based on two passages from the Scriptures—one from the Old Testament, the other containing one of the New Testament's most beautiful Easter lessons.

The Old Testament passage, from the 12th chapter of Second Kings deals with the love manifested by Judah's King Joash for the house of Jehovah.

It is not unnatural that he should have been attached to the once splendid temple that Solomon had built. It had been his hiding place in his childhood when his idolatrous grandmother Athaliah reigned a usurper in Jerusalem after having slaughtered all the seed royal but him. His aunt, at risk of her own life, had saved him from the fate of his brothers and smuggled him, a babe in arms, into the sacred place and given him into the protection of his uncle, the high priest, who doubtless lost no opportunity to cultivate in the heart of his royal charge a love for God's house. And in the temple, at the tender age of 7, with the support of the high priest and the army, he had been brought before the people, crowned, and accepted by them as their rightful king.

THE FIRST CONTRIBUTION BOX

Now, in the 23d year of his reign, finding that the temple was not being put in repair, he directed that all the voluntary offerings of the people should be saved up for that purpose. So Jehoiada, the high priest, "took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into house of the Lord"—in all likelihood the original contribution box. And when the chest was filled with money it was counted into bags and paid out to them that wrought upon the house of the Lord.

The details of the collection and disbursement of this repair money are not the important lesson taught by this bit of Old Testament history, although there is one significant statement that should not be overlooked. In distributing the money for work done, no accounts were kept, which indicates a confidence in those who had charge of the expenditures. Indeed, the historian plainly states that the men who were given the money to pay the workmen "dealt faithfully."

It is not always wise, however, to ignore the matter of account, for even good men have sometimes been made careless by the suspension of the ordinary rules of business in handling church funds. Careful expenditure and accounting according to the rules of good business, often mean the difference between a successful and a struggling church.

REGARD FOR GOD'S HOUSE

But the main impression gained from Joash's repair of the temple is regard for the house of worship.

If one visits the great churches and cathedrals of Europe, he cannot fail to be impressed by the lofty conceptions that planned them and by the

deep consecration of those who supplied the money. God's temples lowered above the state-liest mansions of those who designed and erected the places of worship and used them for religious assembly. There was a striking contrast between the poverty of the people and the magnificence of these temples dedicated to Jehovah. When one thinks of the architects immortalized in the building and of the unrecorded multitude who joined their labor in erecting them, he is reminded of the words of John Boyle O'Reilly, "The dreamer lives forever, while the toiler dies in a day."

It does not speak well for the religious attitude of Christians of the present day when the interest is shifted from the temple of the Almighty to the dwelling place of the individual.

We have now magnificent estates and costly palaces in which the rich dwell, while places of worship are less pretentious. If the money were being spent in the extension of God's kingdom and in the carrying of His Gospel to those who know it not, no criticism could be offered, but in most cases that is not the reason for the relative difference in the amount expended on personal comfort and religious worship. It is too often a proof of selfish indulgence that not only bespeaks decreased reverence for God but produces demoralization in those reared in luxury.

Churches should not be so extravagantly built or so exquisitely adorned as to make the poor feel out of place in them, but the temple of worship should be proof of profound respect for God and of a deep interest in His house.

If the tithing system were employed by all Christians, there would be enough to keep all of God's temples in repair and to supply the funds necessary for the enlightenment of all who sit in darkness. Joash, King of Judah, sets the Christians of today an example of devotion to the house of God which may well be imitated.

THE ANGEL AT EVERY GRAVE

And to those today who are devoted to the house of the Lord, what comfort and joy the return of the Easter season brings!

Easter compels a spirit of optimism. The tomb is deserted; a risen Lord gives proof conclusive of a life beyond. Nature, with her myriad tongues, declares that man is immortal; each atom of matter, by its indestructibility, raises a presumption in favor of an inextinguishable soul. If matter cannot die, much less the spirit that molds matters according to its wish.

Christ has made death but a narrow, starlight strip between the companionship of yesterday and the reunion of tomorrow. Since Christ has put death, man's last enemy, under His feet, an angel can be seen at every grave, speaking comfort to those who mourn.

The Easter lesson for this year turns the light on the doubter Thomas, and we discover how great a service he rendered, even though we feel ashamed that one in the presence of the Master should have questioned His return to life. We learn, too, that there are two kinds of doubt, a doubt of the mind and a doubt of the heart.

On that first Easter, 1900 years ago, when Christ appeared to the disciples, they were "glad when they saw the Lord." But Thomas was not with them when He came, and when the other disciples reported to him, "We have seen the Lord," his mind answered: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."

THE POWER OF THE STEADFAST HEART

All of Thomas' doubts were mental. His heart was as trustful as the hearts of the other disciples, but his reason was not convinced. Christ deigned to furnish proof by appearing again before the disciples when Thomas was present, and then the doubter's heart brought his mind into harmony: "My Lord, and my God," Thomas' heart and mind cried out in unison when Christ showed him His wounded hands and side, and admonished him "Be not faithless, but believing."

The mind cannot wreck the life so long as the heart is steadfast, as was Thomas'. In this day when there is so much of mind-worship, it is necessary that the heart should assert and defend its right to the throne. An arrogant mind has made many a life barren of faith and of joy because the heart has abdicated in its favor.

It is the business of the church to assert the supremacy of the heart, out of which are the issues of life. The mind cannot find God, it has no spiritual vision. But the mind can approve of the heart's discoveries and can defend that which has brought light into the soul. "I believe," is the voice of the heart; "help thou mine unbelief" is the plea that the heart, filled with adoration, makes for the mind that doubts.

The world never needed Christ more than today; and it needs a full statured Christ. No mere