

**WILLIAM
WESLEY
WALKER**

ALTER EGO: A TALE

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The author is indebted to the great national newspapers of Canada and the United States, the Toronto Globe and Collier's Weekly, for some facts from the former and some figures from the latter in rounding up the historical part of the story as relating to the conflict in the Far East.

PREFACE

To men who teach and write the oft-recurring question comes, How can we so influence others in heart and intellect as to help them reach a loftier plane of thought and action? As every life has its Gethsemane of sorrow and tragedy, so every life has its morning star of hope and its mainspring of faith.

Our salvation, then, and the lifting up and saving of others is the exercise of that vital principle which has its incarnation in hope. The use of this still further causes the mountains of difficulty that loom portentous in our pathway and tower to the heavens to crumble into mole-hills.

The soul is made optimistic and the life beautified by its possession, while the ear is brought, spiritually speaking, within range of the victorious shout, "More than conquerors!" and the new song, the song of Moses and the Lamb.

CHAPTER I

THE APPOINTMENT

In the uplands of Canada was an attractive church with a spire that pointed longing souls to the skies, and the pastor of which had finished his course with joy and was now joining in the hallelujah choruses of the upper sanctuary. The authorities of the denomination to which the church belonged appointed a man to its pulpit who was progressive and independent, as well as being very broad-minded. The necessity for this lay in the fact that the population of the place represented nearly all the languages and creeds to be found in the Dominion, and consequently if a man of narrow views were appointed he would soon make shipwreck of everything.

The new minister, as well as being broad and advanced, was very honorable, and would not in any way infringe upon the rights of others; but as Mount Zion was the only church in the place, he was perfectly safe from any charge of meanness, in the form of coaxing sheep away from a brother's fold. The first Sunday came upon which the Rev. Thomas Melvin was to occupy his new pulpit, and an immense congregation filled every part of the edifice. The text was from the Saviour's words, "Feed my sheep," and the preacher had not gone far when his attentive hearers discovered that he was a man of great intellect and unusual power as a speaker, and they were swayed as corn-stalks in a tempest as he reasoned of the Saviour's place in the world, and of His work, and also of man's obligations to Him, as well as to his fellows.

All through the week this first fearless and powerful sermon was the talk of all who had heard it. Some, however, did not like it, as telling them of their duty caused indigestion, while others were delighted, as they loved a man who shunned not to declare all counsel, whether pleasing or displeasing. The next Sabbath disclosed the fact that Mr. Melvin was no plug either, as he said things outside the scope of the Bible and over the boundary line of prescribed theology. One old gentleman who occupied a front seat in the church, and who was of portly mould and genial disposition, and whose dinners were really of more account in his estimation than anything else, forgot said feasts for a period sufficiently long to say: "My songs! I wonder what that new preacher means, anyway!"

Next day our friend, who was dean of the dinner-table faculty, called on his new pastor and said, after being asked how he liked the sermon on Sunday: "My songs! You said things that my bloomin' brain could 'ardly hunderstand." To tell the truth, Mr. Melvin was something of a statesman as well as a preacher, and with narrow bigots soon became as much hated as he was beloved by the broad and liberal minded. The bigots, however, soon ceased to be. Although those classing themselves as belonging to other denominations were in no case strong enough to form societies, yet they remained loyal to what they claimed allegiance to, but this did not hinder them from frequently hearing Mr. Melvin, who was delighted to see his countrymen, who in some cases spoke the mellow, musical tongue of France, that land of art, science, and literature, and military power. As his congregation was so cosmopolitan and contained representatives of every leading denomination, the pastor of Mount Zion preached the doctrines of the Bible in their broadest sense, and showed their most comprehensive meaning.

Everyone who heard Mount Zion's rector, or pastor, noticed that he was perfectly fearless in depicting the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and having found out that a certain prominent man in the place was very vile in his morals, and had ruined many young lives, and was in the habit of running the rig on good people, and who also was most un-Canadian in his ways, he openly rebuked him for his evil deeds and for not restraining his family. Of course, this exasperated the man, and for a long time he was a persistent enemy of Mount Zion's pastor, but he was yet to find out that the servant of

the Galilean would conquer. His sympathies were all of the Mother Goose type, as is the case with most evil men, whose stamina is so exhausted in sinning that they lack the courage to stand alone, and never dare to be Daniels, above everything heeding God's command.

As Rev. Mr. Melvin was the only resident ordained man in the place, he had a great many marriages. Indeed, all the marriages—or rather, marriage ceremonies—were performed by himself and the Rev. Father Trenton, of the Catholic Church, who came occasionally from a neighboring parish to minister to people of his own faith.

Mr. Melvin, after meeting Father Trenton two or three times, decided that he was a man of fine principle and real moral worth, also a strong advocate for total abstinence from cigarettes and strong drink, believing, as a man of culture and science, that the effect of both was pernicious and poisonous, and that on that ground they were to be avoided. The reverend father was a most companionable man, and, as Mr. Melvin said, was a jolly good fellow. he was soon invited to the manse for tea, where a most enjoyable time was spent, and where many a good story was told. There soon came an invitation to Mr. Melvin from Father Trenton to visit him at his home in the next town. The invitation was promptly accepted, and another happy evening whiled away. It was inspiring to all languages and creeds to see the warm and hearty cordiality of feeling that existed between these two broad and liberal-minded men, which taught the world that the elevation of the human race lay not in such senseless antagonisms as existed among our bigoted and foolish ancestors, but in the exercise of a spirit not only of toleration, but of good-fellowship and love.

Some very amusing incidents occurred during the performance of the marriage ceremony. One man, who had previously been received into the Church, and who was asked the question, "Will you renounce the world, the flesh and the evil one?" the answer of which was, "I renounce them all," was asked, "Will you have this woman to be your wedded wife, for better, for worse, in sickness and health, till death you do part?" and in his excitement, having the membership reception in mind, he said, "I renounce them all." On another occasion, while a couple were being yoked together, the groomsman suddenly leaned over and saluted the bride instead of the groom, to the infinite amusement of all present, and causing the face of the latter to take on a crimson hue.

CHAPTER II

MR. MELVIN'S MARRIAGE AND TEACHINGS

It was rumored for some time that the minister of Mount Zion, or the incumbent, or pastor, or whatever you desire to call him, was in the habit of visiting a certain young lady in a distant town. Now there were many fine young ladies belonging to the tabernacle, but as distance seemed to lend merit and attractiveness, its spiritual head found his choice elsewhere. Although not a graduate, Miss Spencer was a well-read young lady of refined instincts and excellent character; she had taught school for some time, and was of French ancestry. In commenting afterward upon his choice, Mr. Melvin said that as a Canadian he saw that one of the most important steps in nation building was to unify, as far as possible, the different races and creeds in this country, and he was one of those who were setting the pace.

When Mrs. Melvin was brought home, after a very interesting ceremony at the Spencer homestead, the people were charmed with her and the tabernacle congregation gave her a splendid reception.

The minister's wife in every way justified the good opinion formed of her at first sight. She was a quiet, unobtrusive Christian, with a sympathetic nature, which soon brought her in touch with the poor and afflicted in the community. Many a basket prepared by her own hand found its way into the homes of want, and many a visit was made which comforted and cheered the anguished sufferer, and which tended to turn the hour of sorrow into one of joy. Mrs. Melvin proved herself an angel of mercy in Carsville, and frequently relieved her husband by taking charge of a service of praise, or by preaching a sermon in connection with the Sabbath service. Her work as a teacher had made her a fluent, impressive and logical speaker, who was always acceptable to the people.

Mr. Melvin now saw that the time was ripe for moulding public opinion along not only spiritual but national lines, and he did not even consult the politicians concerning the matter, but as a teacher applied himself resolutely to the task.

The very first Sunday after bringing his bride from her somewhat distant home the pastor of Mount Zion Tabernacle preached on sin, and said the individual must come out from among his sinful associates in renunciation thereof, and dare to be singular, or there is little hope. As it is with individuals, so with nations. The people who in a national sense, associate with a country, to the extent of forming a part of it, that reeks with drunkenness and licentiousness will assuredly, if they do not come out from it, share its ruin, which is sure and certain as the fact that God rules and reigns.

The following Sunday Mr. Melvin preached on the character and attributes of Christ, saying that, He did not rule or reign among men in an imperial sense, seated upon a kingly throne in such splendor that only a chosen few could approach Him, but in a thoroughly democratic manner, to whom the rich and poor, the learned and unlearned, all alike could come, to find in Him a Saviour, Brother, Friend and merciful High Priest, one who was touched with a feeling of human infirmity, and who always entered into sympathy with humankind.

The third Sunday the subject was religion, the preacher asking if it was a creed, or a bundle of doctrinal standards, if it was Calvinism or Arminianism, Brahminism or Buddhism, Confucianism or Zoroastrianism, or the cheering of narrow-minded bigots for sixteenth century ideas.

The man who with Pauline fearlessness asked these questions also himself answered them, saying it is none of these, but it is to be so filled with the loving Christ spirit as to visit the sick and fatherless in their affliction, and keep unspotted from the world, to manifest the Christ spirit in all life's relationships, which spirit was one of broadest charity and love.

After those three momentous sermons the minister, to stimulate his young people in a way that would lead to energetic action along the line of acquiring knowledge, preached a sermon on the subject of education. He told his hearers not to be afraid to read scientific and philosophical as well as historical literature, and do not become nervous, he said, if many of your old cherished ideas are proven to have had for their foundation the ever-shifting sand.

If research proves that man has been on this earth 2,000,000 of years instead of 6,000, as formerly taught, do not be afraid to accept it, for it is in perfect harmony with the teachings of God's own revelation, and infinitely more correct than the antiquated teaching of the past, according to the most eminent authority in the world. If in former times it was taught that the atmosphere was forty-five miles high, who now would continue to adhere to such a belief, when with their own' eyes they can see meteoric stones burst into flame one hundred miles from the earth, thus proving the atmosphere to be considerably more than that height, as in order to become so heated as to glow it must collide with atmospheric particles for many miles. The same may be said of history, study it in every phase, turn on the side lights, and you will find that in many cases it is very different to what you have always been taught. The immense congregation which thronged the tabernacle were now beginning to find out that their former teachers were of the antediluvian school, but that a man with enlightened mind and scholarship so acute that it could not be measured by academic degrees had come among them. This progressive and advanced teacher, however, warned them that in the midst of all their advancement they would find that Israel's God was their God, and that they would have to obey Him, and live clean, faithful, fruitful lives, so as to one day hear the "Well done," and enter into the Master's joy.

CHAPTER III

SECRETARY-TREASURER THOMPSON'S DEATH—A

SURPRISE FROM THE FAR-OFF EAST

The most pious and trusted of all the tabernacle officials was John Thompson, who, though not handsome in the outer man, was in soul beautiful. Indeed, his homeliness was at one time the subject of a good joke, when an old friend of Mr. Melvin's, who was a noted scientist, in visiting him, attended a Sabbath service, and seeing him (that is, Mr. Thompson), said to a bystander: "I have long sought for the missing link to establish the development theory, but the last place I ever expected to find it was in Mount Zion Tabernacle, and yet there it is!"

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