# CHARLES M. SHELDON

# IN HIS STEPS

# Charles M. Sheldon
# In His Steps

*http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=38306881*
*In His Steps:*

# Содержание


| | |
|---|---|
| Chapter One | 4 |
| Chapter Two | 17 |
| Chapter Three | 28 |
| Chapter Four | 37 |
| Chapter Five | 47 |
| Chapter Six | 58 |
| Chapter Seven | 67 |
| Chapter Eight | 79 |
| Конец ознакомительного фрагмента. | 80 |

# Charles M. Sheldon
# In His Steps

## Chapter One

*"For hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow in his steps."*

It was Friday morning and the Rev. Henry Maxwell was trying to finish his Sunday morning sermon. He had been interrupted several times and was growing nervous as the morning wore away, and the sermon grew very slowly toward a satisfactory finish.

"Mary," he called to his wife, as he went upstairs after the last interruption, "if any one comes after this, I wish you would say I am very busy and cannot come down unless it is something very important."

"Yes, Henry. But I am going over to visit the kindergarten and you will have the house all to yourself."

The minister went up into his study and shut the door. In a few minutes he heard his wife go out, and then everything was quiet. He settled himself at his desk with a sigh of relief and began to write. His text was from 1 Peter 2:21: "For hereunto

were ye called; because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that ye should follow his steps."

He had emphasized in the first part of the sermon the Atonement as a personal sacrifice, calling attention to the fact of Jesus' suffering in various ways, in His life as well as in His death. He had then gone on to emphasize the Atonement from the side of example, giving illustrations from the life and teachings of Jesus to show how faith in the Christ helped to save men because of the pattern or character He displayed for their imitation. He was now on the third and last point, the necessity of following Jesus in His sacrifice and example.

He had put down "Three Steps. What are they?" and was about to enumerate them in logical order when the bell rang sharply. It was one of those clock-work bells, and always went off as a clock might go if it tried to strike twelve all at once.

Henry Maxwell sat at his desk and frowned a little. He made no movement to answer the bell. Very soon it rang again; then he rose and walked over to one of his windows which commanded the view of the front door. A man was standing on the steps. He was a young man, very shabbily dressed.

"Looks like a tramp," said the minister. "I suppose I'll have to go down and—"

He did not finish his sentence but he went downstairs and opened the front door. There was a moment's pause as the two men stood facing each other, then the shabby-looking young man said:

"I'm out of a job, sir, and thought maybe you might put me in the way of getting something."

"I don't know of anything. Jobs are scarce—" replied the minister, beginning to shut the door slowly.

"I didn't know but you might perhaps be able to give me a line to the city railway or the superintendent of the shops, or something," continued the young man, shifting his faded hat from one hand to the other nervously.

"It would be of no use. You will have to excuse me. I am very busy this morning. I hope you will find something. Sorry I can't give you something to do here. But I keep only a horse and a cow and do the work myself."

The Rev. Henry Maxwell closed the door and heard the man walk down the steps. As he went up into his study he saw from his hall window that the man was going slowly down the street, still holding his hat between his hands. There was something in the figure so dejected, homeless and forsaken that the minister hesitated a moment as he stood looking at it. Then he turned to his desk and with a sigh began the writing where he had left off.

He had no more interruptions, and when his wife came in two hours later the sermon was finished, the loose leaves gathered up and neatly tied together, and laid on his Bible all ready for the Sunday morning service.

"A queer thing happened at the kindergarten this morning, Henry," said his wife while they were eating dinner. "You know I went over with Mrs. Brown to visit the school, and just after

the games, while the children were at the tables, the door opened and a young man came in holding a dirty hat in both hands. He sat down near the door and never said a word; only looked at the children. He was evidently a tramp, and Miss Wren and her assistant Miss Kyle were a little frightened at first, but he sat there very quietly and after a few minutes he went out."

"Perhaps he was tired and wanted to rest somewhere. The same man called here, I think. Did you say he looked like a tramp?"

"Yes, very dusty, shabby and generally tramp-like. Not more than thirty or thirty-three years old, I should say."

"The same man," said the Rev. Henry Maxwell thoughtfully.

"Did you finish your sermon, Henry?" his wife asked after a pause.

"Yes, all done. It has been a very busy week with me. The two sermons have cost me a good deal of labor."

"They will be appreciated by a large audience, Sunday, I hope," replied his wife smiling. "What are you going to preach about in the morning?"

"Following Christ. I take up the Atonement under the head of sacrifice and example, and then show the steps needed to follow His sacrifice and example."

"I am sure it is a good sermon. I hope it won't rain Sunday. We have had so many stormy Sundays lately."

"Yes, the audiences have been quite small for some time. People will not come out to church in a storm." The Rev. Henry

Maxwell sighed as he said it. He was thinking of the careful, laborious effort he had made in preparing sermons for large audiences that failed to appear.

But Sunday morning dawned on the town of Raymond one of the perfect days that sometimes come after long periods of wind and mud and rain. The air was clear and bracing, the sky was free from all threatening signs, and every one in Mr. Maxwell's parish prepared to go to church. When the service opened at eleven o'clock the large building was filled with an audience of the best-dressed, most comfortable looking people of Raymond.

The First Church of Raymond believed in having the best music that money could buy, and its quartet choir this morning was a source of great pleasure to the congregation. The anthem was inspiring. All the music was in keeping with the subject of the sermon. And the anthem was an elaborate adaptation to the most modern music of the hymn,

> "Jesus, I my cross have taken,
> All to leave and follow Thee."

Just before the sermon, the soprano sang a solo, the well-known hymn,

> "Where He leads me I will follow,
> I'll go with Him, with Him, all the way."

Rachel Winslow looked very beautiful that morning as she

stood up behind the screen of carved oak which was significantly marked with the emblems of the cross and the crown. Her voice was even more beautiful than her face, and that meant a great deal. There was a general rustle of expectation over the audience as she rose. Mr. Maxwell settled himself contentedly behind the pulpit. Rachel Winslow's singing always helped him. He generally arranged for a song before the sermon. It made possible a certain inspiration of feeling that made his delivery more impressive.

People said to themselves they had never heard such singing even in the First Church. It is certain that if it had not been a church service, her solo would have been vigorously applauded. It even seemed to the minister when she sat down that something like an attempted clapping of hands or a striking of feet on the floor swept through the church. He was startled by it. As he rose, however, and laid his sermon on the Bible, he said to himself he had been deceived. Of course it could not occur. In a few moments he was absorbed in his sermon and everything else was forgotten in the pleasure of his delivery.

No one had ever accused Henry Maxwell of being a dull preacher. On the contrary, he had often been charged with being sensational; not in what he had said so much as in his way of saying it. But the First Church people liked that. It gave their preacher and their parish a pleasant distinction that was agreeable.

It was also true that the pastor of the First Church loved to

preach. He seldom exchanged. He was eager to be in his own pulpit when Sunday came. There was an exhilarating half hour for him as he faced a church full of people and know that he had a hearing. He was peculiarly sensitive to variations in the attendance. He never preached well before a small audience. The weather also affected him decidedly. He was at his best before just such an audience as faced him now, on just such a morning. He felt a glow of satisfaction as he went on. The church was the first in the city. It had the best choir. It had a membership composed of the leading people, representatives of the wealth, society and intelligence of Raymond. He was going abroad on a three months vacation in the summer, and the circumstances of his pastorate, his influence and his position as pastor of the First Church in the city—

It is not certain that the Rev. Henry Maxwell knew just how he could carry on that thought in connection with his sermon, but as he drew near the end of it he knew that he had at some point in his delivery had all those feelings. They had entered into the very substance of his thought; it might have been all in a few seconds of time, but he had been conscious of defining his position and his emotions as well as if he had held a soliloquy, and his delivery partook of the thrill of deep personal satisfaction.

The sermon was interesting. It was full of striking sentences. They would have commanded attention printed. Spoken with the passion of a dramatic utterance that had the good taste never to offend with a suspicion of ranting or declamation, they were

very effective. If the Rev. Henry Maxwell that morning felt satisfied with the conditions of his pastorate, the First Church also had a similar feeling as it congratulated itself on the presence in the pulpit of this scholarly, refined, somewhat striking face and figure, preaching with such animation and freedom from all vulgar, noisy or disagreeable mannerism.

Suddenly, into the midst of this perfect accord and concord between preacher and audience, there came a very remarkable interruption. It would be difficult to indicate the extent of the shock which this interruption measured. It was so unexpected, so entirely contrary to any thought of any person present that it offered no room for argument or, for the time being, of resistance.

The sermon had come to a close. Mr. Maxwell had just turned the half of the big Bible over upon his manuscript and was about to sit down as the quartet prepared to arise to sing the closing selection,

> "All for Jesus, all for Jesus,
> All my being's ransomed powers…"

when the entire congregation was startled by the sound of a man's voice. It came from the rear of the church, from one of the seats under the gallery. The next moment the figure of a man came out of the shadow there and walked down the middle aisle.

Before the startled congregation fairly realized what was going

on the man had reached the open space in front of the pulpit and had turned about facing the people.

"I've been wondering since I came in here"—they were the words he used under the gallery, and he repeated them—"if it would be just the thing to say a word at the close of the service. I'm not drunk and I'm not crazy, and I am perfectly harmless, but if I die, as there is every likelihood I shall in a few days, I want the satisfaction of thinking that I said my say in a place like this, and before this sort of a crowd."

Henry Maxwell had not taken his seat, and he now remained standing, leaning on his pulpit, looking down at the stranger. It was the man who had come to his house the Friday before, the same dusty, worn, shabby-looking young man. He held his faded hat in his two hands. It seemed to be a favorite gesture. He had not been shaved and his hair was rough and tangled. It is doubtful if any one like this had ever confronted the First Church within the sanctuary. It was tolerably familiar with this sort of humanity out on the street, around the railroad shops, wandering up and down the avenue, but it had never dreamed of such an incident as this so near.

There was nothing offensive in the man's manner or tone. He was not excited and he spoke in a low but distinct voice. Mr. Maxwell was conscious, even as he stood there smitten into dumb astonishment at the event, that somehow the man's action reminded him of a person he had once seen walking and talking in his sleep.

No one in the house made any motion to stop the stranger or in any way interrupt him. Perhaps the first shock of his sudden appearance deepened into a genuine perplexity concerning what was best to do. However that may be, he went on as if he had no thought of interruption and no thought of the unusual element which he had introduced into the decorum of the First Church service. And all the while he was speaking, the minister leaded over the pulpit, his face growing more white and sad every moment. But he made no movement to stop him, and the people sat smitten into breathless silence. One other face, that of Rachel Winslow from the choir, stared white and intent down at the shabby figure with the faded hat. Her face was striking at any time. Under the pressure of the present unheard-of incident it was as personally distinct as if it had been framed in fire.

"I'm not an ordinary tramp, though I don't know of any teaching of Jesus that makes one kind of a tramp less worth saving than another. Do you?" He put the question as naturally as if the whole congregation had been a small Bible class. He paused just a moment and coughed painfully. Then he went on.

"I lost my job ten months ago. I am a printer by trade. The new linotype machines are beautiful specimens of invention, but I know six men who have killed themselves inside of the year just on account of those machines. Of course I don't blame the newspapers for getting the machines. Meanwhile, what can a man do? I know I never learned but the one trade, and that's all I can do. I've tramped all over the country trying to find something.

There are a good many others like me. I'm not complaining, am I? Just stating facts. But I was wondering as I sat there under the gallery, if what you call following Jesus is the same thing as what He taught. What did He mean when He said: 'Follow Me!'? The minister said,"—here he turned about and looked up at the pulpit—"that it is necessary for the disciple of Jesus to follow His steps, and he said the steps are 'obedience, faith, love and imitation.' But I did not hear him tell you just what he meant that to mean, especially the last step. What do you Christians mean by following the steps of Jesus?

"I've tramped through this city for three days trying to find a job; and in all that time I've not had a word of sympathy or comfort except from your minister here, who said he was sorry for me and hoped I would find a job somewhere. I suppose it is because you get so imposed on by the professional tramp that you have lost your interest in any other sort. I'm not blaming anybody, am I? Just stating facts. Of course, I understand you can't all go out of your way to hunt up jobs for other people like me. I'm not asking you to; but what I feel puzzled about is, what is meant by following Jesus. What do you mean when you sing 'I'll go with Him, with Him, all the way?' Do you mean that you are suffering and denying yourselves and trying to save lost, suffering humanity just as I understand Jesus did? What do you mean by it? I see the ragged edge of things a good deal. I understand there are more than five hundred men in this city in my case. Most of them have families. My wife died four months

ago. I'm glad she is out of trouble. My little girl is staying with a printer's family until I find a job. Somehow I get puzzled when I see so many Christians living in luxury and singing 'Jesus, I my cross have taken, all to leave and follow Thee,' and remember how my wife died in a tenement in New York City, gasping for air and asking God to take the little girl too. Of course I don't expect you people can prevent every one from dying of starvation, lack of proper nourishment and tenement air, but what does following Jesus mean? I understand that Christian people own a good many of the tenements. A member of a church was the owner of the one where my wife died, and I have wondered if following Jesus all the way was true in his case. I heard some people singing at a church prayer meeting the other night,

> 'All for Jesus, all for Jesus,
> All my being's ransomed powers,
> All my thoughts, and all my doings,
> All my days, and all my hours.'

and I kept wondering as I sat on the steps outside just what they meant by it. It seems to me there's an awful lot of trouble in the world that somehow wouldn't exist if all the people who sing such songs went and lived them out. I suppose I don't understand. But what would Jesus do? Is that what you mean by following His steps? It seems to me sometimes as if the people in the big churches had good clothes and nice houses to live in, and money to spend for luxuries, and could go away on summer vacations

and all that, while the people outside the churches, thousands of them, I mean, die in tenements, and walk the streets for jobs, and never have a piano or a picture in the house, and grow up in misery and drunkenness and sin."

The man suddenly gave a queer lurch over in the direction of the communion table and laid one grimy hand on it. His hat fell upon the carpet at his feet. A stir went through the congregation. Dr. West half rose from his pew, but as yet the silence was unbroken by any voice or movement worth mentioning in the audience. The man passed his other hand across his eyes, and then, without any warning, fell heavily forward on his face, full length up the aisle. Henry Maxwell spoke:

"We will consider the service closed."

# Chapter Two

Henry Maxwell and a group of his church members remained some time in the study. The man lay on the couch there and breathed heavily. When the question of what to do with him came up, the minister insisted on taking the man to his own house; he lived near by and had an extra room. Rachel Winslow said:

"Mother has no company at present. I am sure we would be glad to give him a place with us."

She looked strongly agitated. No one noticed it particularly. They were all excited over the strange event, the strangest that First Church people could remember. But the minister insisted on taking charge of the man, and when a carriage came the unconscious but living form was carried to his house; and with the entrance of that humanity into the minister's spare room a new chapter in Henry Maxwell's life began, and yet no one, himself least of all, dreamed of the remarkable change it was destined to make in all his after definition of the Christian discipleship.

The event created a great sensation in the First Church parish. People talked of nothing else for a week. It was the general impression that the man had wandered into the church in a condition of mental disturbance caused by his troubles, and that all the time he was talking he was in a strange delirium

of fever and really ignorant of his surroundings. That was the most charitable construction to put upon his action. It was the general agreement also that there was a singular absence of anything bitter or complaining in what the man had said. He had, throughout, spoken in a mild, apologetic tone, almost as if he were one of the congregation seeking for light on a very difficult subject.

The third day after his removal to the minister's house there was a marked change in his condition. The doctor spoke of it but offered no hope. Saturday morning he still lingered, although he had rapidly failed as the week drew near its close. Sunday morning, just before the clock struck one, he rallied and asked if his child had come. The minister had sent for her at once as soon as he had been able to secure her address from some letters found in the man's pocket. He had been conscious and able to talk coherently only a few moments since his attack.

"The child is coming. She will be here," Mr. Maxwell said as he sat there, his face showing marks of the strain of the week's vigil; for he had insisted on sitting up nearly every night.

"I shall never see her in this world," the man whispered. Then he uttered with great difficulty the words, "You have been good to me. Somehow I feel as if it was what Jesus would do."

After a few minutes he turned his head slightly, and before Mr. Maxwell could realize the fact, the doctor said quietly, "He is gone."

The Sunday morning that dawned on the city of Raymond was

exactly like the Sunday of a week before. Mr. Maxwell entered his pulpit to face one of the largest congregations that had ever crowded the First Church. He was haggard and looked as if he had just risen from a long illness. His wife was at home with the little girl, who had come on the morning train an hour after her father had died. He lay in that spare room, his troubles over, and the minister could see the face as he opened the Bible and arranged his different notices on the side of the desk as he had been in the habit of doing for ten years.

The service that morning contained a new element. No one could remember when Henry Maxwell had preached in the morning without notes. As a matter of fact he had done so occasionally when he first entered the ministry, but for a long time he had carefully written every word of his morning sermon, and nearly always his evening discourses as well. It cannot be said that his sermon this morning was striking or impressive. He talked with considerable hesitation. It was evident that some great idea struggled in his thought for utterance, but it was not expressed in the theme he had chosen for his preaching. It was near the close of his sermon that he began to gather a certain strength that had been painfully lacking at the beginning.

He closed the Bible and, stepping out at the side of the desk, faced his people and began to talk to them about the remarkable scene of the week before.

"Our brother," somehow the words sounded a little strange coming from his lips, "passed away this morning. I have not

yet had time to learn all his history. He had one sister living in Chicago. I have written her and have not yet received an answer. His little girl is with us and will remain for the time."

He paused and looked over the house. He thought he had never seen so many earnest faces during his entire pastorate. He was not able yet to tell his people his experiences, the crisis through which he was even now moving. But something of his feeling passed from him to them, and it did not seem to him that he was acting under a careless impulse at all to go on and break to them this morning something of the message he bore in his heart.

So he went on: "The appearance and words of this stranger in the church last Sunday made a very powerful impression on me. I am not able to conceal from you or myself the fact that what he said, followed as it has been by his death in my house, has compelled me to ask as I never asked before 'What does following Jesus mean?' I am not in a position yet to utter any condemnation of this people or, to a certain extent, of myself, either in our Christ-like relations to this man or the numbers that he represents in the world. But all that does not prevent me from feeling that much that the man said was so vitally true that we must face it in an attempt to answer it or else stand condemned as Christian disciples. A good deal that was said here last Sunday was in the nature of a challenge to Christianity as it is seen and felt in our churches. I have felt this with increasing emphasis every day since.

"And I do not know that any time is more appropriate than the

present for me to propose a plan, or a purpose, which has been forming in my mind as a satisfactory reply to much that was said here last Sunday."

Again Henry Maxwell paused and looked into the faces of his people. There were some strong, earnest men and women in the First Church.

He could see Edward Norman, editor of the Raymond DAILY NEWS. He had been a member of the First Church for ten years.

No man was more honored in the community. There was Alexander Powers, superintendent of the great railroad shops in Raymond, a typical railroad man, one who had been born into the business. There sat Donald Marsh, president of Lincoln College, situated in the suburbs of Raymond. There was Milton Wright, one of the great merchants of Raymond, having in his employ at least one hundred men in various shops. There was Dr. West who, although still comparatively young, was quoted as authority in special surgical cases. There was young Jasper Chase the author, who had written one successful book and was said to be at work on a new novel. There was Miss Virginia Page the heiress, who through the recent death of her father had inherited a million at least, and was gifted with unusual attractions of person and intellect. And not least of all, Rachel Winslow, from her seat in the choir, glowed with her peculiar beauty of light this morning because she was so intensely interested in the whole scene.

There was some reason, perhaps, in view of such material in the First Church, for Henry Maxwell's feeling of satisfaction

whenever he considered his parish as he had the previous Sunday. There was an unusually large number of strong, individual characters who claimed membership there. But as he noted their faces this morning he was simply wondering how many of them would respond to the strange proposition he was about to make. He continued slowly, taking time to choose his words carefully, and giving the people an impression they had never felt before, even when he was at his best with his most dramatic delivery.

"What I am going to propose now is something which ought not to appear unusual or at all impossible of execution. Yet I am aware that it will be so regarded by a large number, perhaps, of the members of this church. But in order that we may have a thorough understanding of what we are considering, I will put my proposition very plainly, perhaps bluntly. I want volunteers from the First Church who will pledge themselves, earnestly and honestly for an entire year, not to do anything without first asking the question, 'What would Jesus do?' And after asking that question, each one will follow Jesus as exactly as he knows how, no matter what the result may be. I will of course include myself in this company of volunteers, and shall take for granted that my church here will not be surprised at my future conduct, as based upon this standard of action, and will not oppose whatever is done if they think Christ would do it. Have I made my meaning clear? At the close of the service I want all those members who are willing to join such a company to remain and we will talk over the details of the plan. Our motto will be, 'What would Jesus do?'

Our aim will be to act just as He would if He was in our places, regardless of immediate results. In other words, we propose to follow Jesus' steps as closely and as literally as we believe He taught His disciples to do. And those who volunteer to do this will pledge themselves for an entire year, beginning with today, so to act."

Henry Maxwell paused again and looked out over his people. It is not easy to describe the sensation that such a simple proposition apparently made. Men glanced at one another in astonishment. It was not like Henry Maxwell to define Christian discipleship in this way. There was evident confusion of thought over his proposition. It was understood well enough, but there was, apparently, a great difference of opinion as to the application of Jesus' teaching and example.

He calmly closed the service with a brief prayer. The organist began his postlude immediately after the benediction and the people began to go out. There was a great deal of conversation. Animated groups stood all over the church discussing the minister's proposition. It was evidently provoking great discussion. After several minutes he asked all who expected to remain to pass into the lecture-room which joined the large room on the side. He was himself detained at the front of the church talking with several persons there, and when he finally turned around, the church was empty. He walked over to the lecture-room entrance and went in. He was almost startled to see the people who were there. He had not made up his mind

about any of his members, but he had hardly expected that so many were ready to enter into such a literal testing of their Christian discipleship as now awaited him. There were perhaps fifty present, among them Rachel Winslow and Virginia Page, Mr. Norman, President Marsh, Alexander Powers the railroad superintendent, Milton Wright, Dr. West and Jasper Chase.

He closed the door of the lecture-room and went and stood before the little group. His face was pale and his lips trembled with genuine emotion. It was to him a genuine crisis in his own life and that of his parish. No man can tell until he is moved by the Divine Spirit what he may do, or how he may change the current of a lifetime of fixed habits of thought and speech and action. Henry Maxwell did not, as we have said, yet know himself all that he was passing through, but he was conscious of a great upheaval in his definition of Christian discipleship, and he was moved with a depth of feeling he could not measure as he looked into the faces of those men and women on this occasion.

It seemed to him that the most fitting word to be spoken first was that of prayer. He asked them all to pray with him. And almost with the first syllable he uttered there was a distinct presence of the Spirit felt by them all. As the prayer went on, this presence grew in power. They all felt it. The room was filled with it as plainly as if it had been visible. When the prayer closed there was a silence that lasted several moments. All the heads were bowed. Henry Maxwell's face was wet with tears. If an audible voice from heaven had sanctioned their pledge to follow

the Master's steps, not one person present could have felt more certain of the divine blessing. And so the most serious movement ever started in the First Church of Raymond was begun.

"We all understand," said he, speaking very quietly, "what we have undertaken to do. We pledge ourselves to do everything in our daily lives after asking the question, 'What would Jesus do?' regardless of what may be the result to us. Some time I shall be able to tell you what a marvelous change has come over my life within a week's time. I cannot now. But the experience I have been through since last Sunday has left me so dissatisfied with my previous definition of Christian discipleship that I have been compelled to take this action. I did not dare begin it alone. I know that I am being led by the hand of divine love in all this. The same divine impulse must have led you also.

"Do we understand fully what we have undertaken?"

"I want to ask a question," said Rachel Winslow. Every one turned towards her. Her face glowed with a beauty that no physical loveliness could ever create.

"I am a little in doubt as to the source of our knowledge concerning what Jesus would do. Who is to decide for me just what He would do in my case? It is a different age. There are many perplexing questions in our civilization that are not mentioned in the teachings of Jesus. How am I going to tell what He would do?"

"There is no way that I know of," replied the pastor, "except as we study Jesus through the medium of the Holy Spirit. You

remember what Christ said speaking to His disciples about the Holy Spirit: 'Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh of mine, and shall declare it unto you.' There is no other test that I know of. We shall all have to decide what Jesus would do after going to that source of knowledge."

"What if others say of us, when we do certain things, that Jesus would not do so?" asked the superintendent of railroads.

"We cannot prevent that. But we must be absolutely honest with ourselves. The standard of Christian action cannot vary in most of our acts."

"And yet what one church member thinks Jesus would do, another refuses to accept as His probable course of action. What is to render our conduct uniformly Christ-like? Will it be possible to reach the same conclusions always in all cases?" asked President Marsh.

Mr. Maxwell was silent some time. Then he answered, "No; I don't know that we can expect that. But when it comes to a genuine, honest, enlightened following of Jesus' steps, I cannot believe there will be any confusion either in our own minds or in the judgment of others. We must be free from fanaticism on one hand and too much caution on the other. If Jesus' example is the

example for the world to follow, it certainly must be feasible to follow it. But we need to remember this great fact. After we have asked the Spirit to tell us what Jesus would do and have received an answer to it, we are to act regardless of the results to ourselves. Is that understood?"

All the faces in the room were raised towards the minister in solemn assent. There was no misunderstanding that proposition. Henry Maxwell's face quivered again as he noted the president of the Endeavor Society with several members seated back of the older men and women.

# Chapter Three

*"He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk even as He walked."*

EDWARD NORMAN, editor of the Raymond DAILY NEWS, sat in his office room Monday morning and faced a new world of action. He had made his pledge in good faith to do everything after asking "What would Jesus do?" and, as he supposed, with his eyes open to all the possible results. But as the regular life of the paper started on another week's rush and whirl of activity, he confronted it with a degree of hesitation and a feeling nearly akin to fear.

He had come down to the office very early, and for a few minutes was by himself. He sat at his desk in a growing thoughtfulness that finally became a desire which he knew was as great as it was unusual. He had yet to learn, with all the others in that little company pledged to do the Christlike thing, that the Spirit of Life was moving in power through his own life as never before. He rose and shut his door, and then did what he had not done for years. He kneeled down by his desk and prayed for the Divine Presence and wisdom to direct him.

He rose with the day before him, and his promise distinct and clear in his mind. "Now for action," he seemed to say. But he would be led by events as fast as they came on.

He opened his door and began the routine of the office work. The managing editor had just come in and was at his desk in the adjoining room. One of the reporters there was pounding out something on a typewriter. Edward Norman began to write an editorial. The DAILY NEWS was an evening paper, and Norman usually completed his leading editorial before nine o'clock.

He had been writing for fifteen minutes when the managing editor called out: "Here's this press report of yesterday's prize fight at the Resort. It will make up three columns and a half. I suppose it all goes in?"

Norman was one of those newspaper men who keep an eye on every detail of the paper. The managing editor always consulted his chief in matters of both small and large importance. Sometimes, as in this case, it was merely a nominal inquiry.

"Yes—No. Let me see it."

He took the type-written matter just as it came from the telegraph editor and ran over it carefully. Then he laid the sheets down on his desk and did some very hard thinking.

"We won't run this today," he said finally.

The managing editor was standing in the doorway between the two rooms. He was astounded at his chief's remark, and thought he had perhaps misunderstood him.

"What did you say?"

"Leave it out. We won't use it."

"But—" The managing editor was simply dumbfounded. He stared at Norman as if the man was out of his mind.

"I don't think, Clark, that it ought to be printed, and that's the end of it," said Norman, looking up from his desk.

Clark seldom had any words with the chief. His word had always been law in the office and he had seldom been known to change his mind. The circumstances now, however, seemed to be so extraordinary that Clark could not help expressing himself.

"Do you mean that the paper is to go to press without a word of the prize fight in it?"

"Yes. That's what I mean."

"But it's unheard of. All the other papers will print it. What will our subscribers say? Why, it is simply—" Clark paused, unable to find words to say what he thought.

Norman looked at Clark thoughtfully. The managing editor was a member of a church of a different denomination from that of Norman's. The two men had never talked together on religious matters although they had been associated on the paper for several years.

"Come in here a minute, Clark, and shut the door," said Norman.

Clark came in and the two men faced each other alone. Norman did not speak for a minute. Then he said abruptly: "Clark, if Christ was editor of a daily paper, do you honestly think He would print three columns and a half of prize fight in it?"

"No, I don't suppose He would."

"Well, that's my only reason for shutting this account out of

the NEWS. I have decided not to do a thing in connection with the paper for a whole year that I honestly believe Jesus would not do."

Clark could not have looked more amazed if the chief had suddenly gone crazy. In fact, he did think something was wrong, though Mr. Norman was one of the last men in the world, in his judgment, to lose his mind.

"What effect will that have on the paper?" he finally managed to ask in a faint voice.

"What do you think?" asked Norman with a keen glance.

"I think it will simply ruin the paper," replied Clark promptly. He was gathering up his bewildered senses, and began to remonstrate, "Why, it isn't feasible to run a paper nowadays on any such basis. It's too ideal. The world isn't ready for it. You can't make it pay. Just as sure as you live, if you shut out this prize fight report you will lose hundreds of subscribers. It doesn't take a prophet to see that. The very best people in town are eager to read it. They know it has taken place, and when they get the paper this evening they will expect half a page at least. Surely, you can't afford to disregard the wishes of the public to such an extent. It will be a great mistake if you do, in my opinion."

Norman sat silent a minute. Then he spoke gently but firmly.

"Clark, what in your honest opinion is the right standard for determining conduct? Is the only right standard for every one, the probable action of Jesus Christ? Would you say that the highest, best law for a man to live by was contained in asking the question,

What would Jesus do?' And then doing it regardless of results? In other words, do you think men everywhere ought to follow Jesus' example as closely as they can in their daily lives?" Clark turned red, and moved uneasily in his chair before he answered the editor's question.

"Why—yes—I suppose if you put it on the ground of what men ought to do there is no other standard of conduct. But the question is, What is feasible? Is it possible to make it pay? To succeed in the newspaper business we have got to conform to custom and the recognized methods of society. We can't do as we would in an ideal world."

"Do you mean that we can't run the paper strictly on Christian principles and make it succeed?"

"Yes, that's just what I mean. It can't be done. We'll go bankrupt in thirty days."

Norman did not reply at once. He was very thoughtful.

"We shall have occasion to talk this over again, Clark. Meanwhile I think we ought to understand each other frankly. I have pledged myself for a year to do everything connected with the paper after answering the question, What would Jesus do?' as honestly as possible. I shall continue to do this in the belief that not only can we succeed but that we can succeed better than we ever did."

Clark rose. "The report does not go in?"

"It does not. There is plenty of good material to take its place, and you know what it is."

Clark hesitated. "Are you going to say anything about the absence of the report?"

"No, let the paper go to press as if there had been no such thing as a prize fight yesterday."

Clark walked out of the room to his own desk feeling as if the bottom had dropped out of everything. He was astonished, bewildered, excited and considerably angered. His great respect for Norman checked his rising indignation and disgust, but with it all was a feeling of growing wonder at the sudden change of motive which had entered the office of the DAILY NEWS and threatened, as he firmly believed, to destroy it.

Before noon every reporter, pressman and employee on the DAILY NEWS was informed of the remarkable fact that the paper was going to press without a word in it about the famous prize fight of Sunday. The reporters were simply astonished beyond measure at the announcement of the fact. Every one in the stereotyping and composing rooms had something to say about the unheard of omission. Two or three times during the day when Mr. Norman had occasion to visit the composing rooms the men stopped their work or glanced around their cases looking at him curiously. He knew that he was being observed, but said nothing and did not appear to note it.

There had been several minor changes in the paper, suggested by the editor, but nothing marked. He was waiting and thinking deeply.

He felt as if he needed time and considerable opportunity for

the exercise of his best judgment in several matters before he answered his ever present question in the right way. It was not because there were not a great many things in the life of the paper that were contrary to the spirit of Christ that he did not act at once, but because he was yet honestly in doubt concerning what action Jesus would take.

When the DAILY NEWS came out that evening it carried to its subscribers a distinct sensation.

The presence of the report of the prize fight could not have produced anything equal to the effect of its omission. Hundreds of men in the hotels and stores down town, as well as regular subscribers, eagerly opened the paper and searched it through for the account of the great fight; not finding it, they rushed to the NEWS stands and bought other papers. Even the newsboys had not a understood the fact of omission. One of them was calling out "DAILY NEWS! Full 'count great prize fight 't Resort. NEWS, sir?"

A man on the corner of the avenue close by the NEWS office bought the paper, looked over its front page hurriedly and then angrily called the boy back.

"Here, boy! What's the matter with your paper? There's no prize fight here! What do you mean by selling old papers?"

"Old papers nuthin'!" replied the boy indignantly. "Dat's today's paper. What's de matter wid you?"

"But there is no account of the prize fight here! Look!"

The man handed back the paper and the boy glanced at k

hurriedly. Then he whistled, while a bewildered look crept over his face. Seeing another boy running by with papers he called out "Say, Sam, le'me see your pile." A hasty examination revealed the remarkable fact that all the copies of the NEWS were silent on the subject of the prize fight.

"Here, give me another paper!" shouted the customer; "one with the prize fight account."

He received it and walked off, while the two boys remained comparing notes and lost in wonder at the result. "Sump'n slipped a cog in the Newsy, sure," said the first boy. But he couldn't tell why, and ran over to the NEWS office to find out.

There were several other boys at the delivery room and they were all excited and disgusted. The amount of slangy remonstrance hurled at the clerk back of the long counter would have driven any one else to despair.

He was used to more or less of it all the time, and consequently hardened to it. Mr. Norman was just coming downstairs on his way home, and he paused as he went by the door of the delivery room and looked in.

"What's the matter here, George?" he asked the clerk as he noted the unusual confusion.

"The boys say they can't sell any copies of the NEWS tonight because the prize fight isn't in it," replied George, looking curiously at the editor as so many of the employees had done during the day. Mr. Norman hesitated a moment, then walked into the room and confronted the boys.

"How many papers are there here? Boys, count them out, and I'll buy them tonight."

There was a combined stare and a wild counting of papers on the part of the boys.

"Give them their money, George, and if any of the other boys come in with the same complaint buy their unsold copies. Is that fair?" he asked the boys who were smitten into unusual silence by the unheard of action on the part of the editor.

"Fair! Well, I should—But will you keep this up? Will dis be a continual performance for the benefit of de fraternity?"

Mr. Norman smiled slightly but he did not think it was necessary to answer the question.

He walked out of the office and went home. On the way he could not avoid that constant query, "Would Jesus have done it?" It was not so much with reference to this last transaction as to the entire motive that had urged him on since he had made the promise.

The newsboys were necessarily sufferers through the action he had taken. Why should they lose money by it? They were not to blame. He was a rich man and could afford to put a little brightness into their lives if he chose to do it. He believed, as he went on his way home, that Jesus would have done either what he did or something similar in order to be free from any possible feeling of injustice.

# Chapter Four

DURING the week he was in receipt of numerous letters commenting on the absence from the News of the account of the prize fight. Two or three of these letters may be of interest.

> Editor of the News:
>
> Dear Sir—I have been thinking for some time of changing my paper. I want a journal that is up to the times, progressive and enterprising, supplying the public demand at all points. The recent freak of your paper in refusing to print the account of the famous contest at the Resort has decided me finally to change my paper.
>
> Please discontinue it.
>
> Very truly yours,–

Here followed the name of a business man who had been a subscriber for many years.

> Edward Norman,
>
> Editor of the Daily News, Raymond:
>
> Dear Ed.—What is this sensation you have given the people of your burg? What new policy have you taken up? Hope you don't intend to try the "Reform Business" through the avenue of the press. It's dangerous to experiment much along that line. Take my advice and stick to the enterprising modern methods you have made so successful for the News. The public wants prize fights and such. Give it what it wants, and let some one else do the reforming business.

Yours,–

Here followed the name of one of Norman's old friends, the editor of a daily in an adjoining town.

My Dear Mr. Norman:

I hasten to write you a note of appreciation for the evident carrying out of your promise. It is a splendid beginning and no one feels the value of it more than I do. I know something of what it will cost you, but not all. Your pastor,

HENRY MAXWELL.

One other letter which he opened immediately after reading this from Maxwell revealed to him something of the loss to his business that possibly awaited him.

Mr. Edward Norman,

Editor of the Daily News:

Dear Sir—At the expiration of my advertising limit, you will do me the favor not to continue it as you have done heretofore. I enclose check for payment in full and shall consider my account with your paper closed after date.

Very truly yours,–

Here followed the name of one of the largest dealers in tobacco in the city. He had been in the habit of inserting a column of conspicuous advertising and paying for it a very large price.

Norman laid this letter down thoughtfully, and then after a moment he took up a copy of his paper and looked through the advertising columns. There was no connection implied in the

tobacco merchant's letter between the omission of the prize fight and the withdrawal of the advertisement, but he could not avoid putting the two together. In point of fact, he afterward learned that the tobacco dealer withdrew his advertisement because he had heard that the editor of the NEWS was about to enter upon some queer reform policy that would be certain to reduce its subscription list.

But the letter directed Norman's attention to the advertising phase of his paper. He had not considered this before.

As he glanced over the columns he could not escape the conviction that his Master could not permit some of them in his paper.

What would He do with that other long advertisement of choice liquors and cigars? As a member of a church and a respected citizen, he had incurred no special censure because the saloon men advertised in his columns. No one thought anything about it. It was all legitimate business. Why not? Raymond enjoyed a system of high license, and the saloon and the billiard hall and the beer garden were a part of the city's Christian civilization. He was simply doing what every other business man in Raymond did. And it was one of the best paying sources of revenue. What would the paper do if it cut these out? Could it live? That was the question. But was that the question after all? "What would Jesus do?" That was the question he was answering, or trying to answer, this week. Would Jesus advertise whiskey and tobacco in his paper?

Edward Norman asked it honestly, and after a prayer for help and wisdom he asked Clark to come into the office.

Clark came in, feeling that the paper was at a crisis, and prepared for almost anything after his Monday morning experience. This was Thursday.

"Clark," said Norman, speaking slowly and carefully, "I have been looking at our advertising columns and have decided to dispense with some of the matter as soon as the contracts run out. I wish you would notify the advertising agent not to solicit or renew the ads that I have marked here."

He handed the paper with the marked places over to Clark, who took it and looked over the columns with a very serious air.

"This will mean a great loss to the NEWS. How long do you think you can keep this sort of thing up?" Clark was astounded at the editor's action and could not understand it.

"Clark, do you think if Jesus was the editor and proprietor of a daily paper in Raymond He would permit advertisements of whiskey and tobacco in it?"

"Well no—I—don't suppose He would. But what has that to do with us? We can't do as He would. Newspapers can't be run on any such basis."

"Why not?" asked Norman quietly.

"Why not? Because they will lose more money than they make, that's all!" Clark spoke out with an irritation that he really felt. "We shall certainly bankrupt the paper with this sort of business policy."

"Do you think so?" Norman asked the question not as if he expected an answer, but simply as if he were talking with himself. After a pause he said:

"You may direct Marks to do as I have said. I believe it is what Christ would do, and as I told you, Clark, that is what I have promised to try to do for a year, regardless of what the results may be to me. I cannot believe that by any kind of reasoning we could reach a conclusion justifying our Lord in the advertisement, in this age, of whiskey and tobacco in a newspaper. There are some other advertisements of a doubtful character I shall study into. Meanwhile, I feel a conviction in regard to these that cannot be silenced."

Clark went back to his desk feeling as if he had been in the presence of a very peculiar person. He could not grasp the meaning of it all. He felt enraged and alarmed. He was sure any such policy would ruin the paper as soon as it became generally known that the editor was trying to do everything by such an absurd moral standard. What would become of business if this standard was adopted? It would upset every custom and introduce endless confusion. It was simply foolishness. It was downright idiocy. So Clark said to himself, and when Marks was informed of the action he seconded the managing editor with some very forcible ejaculations. What was the matter with the chief? Was he insane? Was he going to bankrupt the whole business?

But Edward Norman had not yet faced his most serious

problem. When he came down to the office Friday morning he was confronted with the usual program for the Sunday morning edition. The NEWS was one one of the few evening papers in Raymond to issue a Sunday edition, and it had always been remarkably successful financially. There was an average of one page of literary and religious items to thirty or forty pages of sport, theatre, gossip, fashion, society and political material. This made a very interesting magazine of all sorts of reading matter, and had always been welcomed by all the subscribers, church members and all, as a Sunday morning necessity. Edward Norman now faced this fact and put to himself the question: "What would Jesus do?" If He was editor of a paper, would he deliberately plan to put into the homes of all the church people and Christians of Raymond such a collection of reading matter on the one day in the week which ought to be given up to something better holier? He was of course familiar with the regular arguments of the Sunday paper, that the public needed something of the sort; and the working man especially, who would not go to church any way, ought to have something entertaining and instructive on Sunday, his only day of rest. But suppose the Sunday morning paper did not pay? Suppose there was no money in it? How eager would the editor or publisher be then to supply this crying need of the poor workman? Edward Norman communed honestly with himself over the subject.

Taking everything into account, would Jesus probably edit a Sunday morning paper? No matter whether it paid. That was

not the question. As a matter of fact, the Sunday NEWS paid so well that it would be a direct loss of thousands of dollars to discontinue it. Besides, the regular subscribers had paid for a seven-day paper. Had he any right now to give them less than they supposed they had paid for?

He was honestly perplexed by the question. So much was involved in the discontinuance of the Sunday edition that for the first time he almost decided to refuse to be guided by the standard of Jesus' probable action. He was sole proprietor of the paper; it was his to shape as he chose. He had no board of directors to consult as to policy. But as he sat there surrounded by the usual quantity of material for the Sunday edition he reached some definite conclusions. And among them was a determination to call in the force of the paper and frankly state his motive and purpose. He sent word for Clark and the other men it the office, including the few reporters who were in the building and the foreman, with what men were in the composing room (it was early in the morning and they were not all in) to come into the mailing room. This was a large room, and the men came in curiously and perched around on the tables and counters. It was a very unusual proceeding, but they all agreed that the paper was being run on new principles anyhow, and they all watched Mr. Norman carefully as he spoke.

"I called you in here to let you know my further plans for the NEWS. I propose certain changes which I believe are necessary. I understand very well that some things I have already done are

regarded by the men as very strange. I wish to state my motive in doing what I have done."

Here he told the men what he had already told Clark, and they stared as Clark had done, and looked as painfully conscious.

"Now, in acting on this standard of conduct I have reached a conclusion which will, no doubt, cause some surprise.

"I have decided that the Sunday morning edition of the NEWS shall be discontinued after next Sunday's issue. I shall state in that issue my reasons for discontinuing. In order to make up to the subscribers the amount of reading matter they may suppose themselves entitled to, we can issue a double number on Saturday, as is done by many evening papers that make no attempt at a Sunday edition. I am convinced that from a Christian point of view more harm than good has been done by our Sunday morning paper. I do not believe that Jesus would be responsible for it if He were in my place today. It will occasion some trouble to arrange the details caused by this change with the advertisers and subscribers. That is for me to look after. The change itself is one that will take place. So far as I can see, the loss will fall on myself. Neither the reporters nor the pressmen need make any particular changes in their plans."

He looked around the room and no one spoke. He was struck for the first time in his life with the fact that in all the years of his newspaper life he had never had the force of the paper together in this way. Would Jesus do that? That is, would He probably run a newspaper on some loving family plan, where editors, reporters,

pressmen and all meet to discuss and devise and plan for the making of a paper that should have in view—

He caught himself drawing almost away from the facts of typographical unions and office rules and reporters' enterprise and all the cold, businesslike methods that make a great daily successful. But still the vague picture that came up in the mailing room would not fade away when he had gone into his office and the men had gone back to their places with wonder in their looks and questions of all sorts on their tongues as they talked over the editor's remarkable actions.

Clark came in and had a long, serious talk with his chief. He was thoroughly roused, and his protest almost reached the point of resigning his place. Norman guarded himself carefully. Every minute of the interview was painful to him, but he felt more than ever the necessity of doing the Christ-like thing. Clark was a very valuable man. It would be difficult to fill his place. But he was not able to give any reasons for continuing the Sunday paper that answered the question, "What would Jesus do?" by letting Jesus print that edition.

"It comes to this, then," said Clark frankly, "you will bankrupt the paper in thirty days. We might as well face that future fact."

"I don't think we shall. Will you stay by the NEWS until it is bankrupt?" asked Norman with a strange smile.

"Mr. Norman, I don't understand you. You are not the same man this week that I always knew before."

"I don't know myself either, Clark. Something remarkable has

caught me up and borne me on. But I was never more convinced of final success and power for the paper. You have not answered my question. Will you stay with me?"

# Chapter Five

SUNDAY morning dawned again on Raymond, and Henry Maxwell's church was again crowded. Before the service began Edward Norman attracted great attention. He sat quietly in his usual place about three seats from the pulpit. The Sunday morning issue of the NEWS containing the statement of its discontinuance had been expressed in such remarkable language that every reader was struck by it. No such series of distinct sensations had ever disturbed the usual business custom of Raymond. The events connected with the NEWS were not all. People were eagerly talking about strange things done during the week by Alexander Powers at the railroad shops, and Milton Wright in his stores on the avenue. The service progressed upon a distinct wave of excitement in the pews. Henry Maxwell faced it all with a calmness which indicated a strength and purpose more than usual. His prayers were very helpful. His sermon was not so easy to describe. How would a minister be apt to preach to his people if he came before them after an entire week of eager asking, "How would Jesus preach? What would He probably say?" It is very certain that he did not preach as he had done two Sundays before. Tuesday of the past week he had stood by the grave of the dead stranger and said the words, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," and still he was moved by the spirit of a deeper impulse than he could measure as he thought of his

people and yearned for the Christ message when he should be in his pulpit again.

Now that Sunday had come and the people were there to hear, what would the Master tell them? He agonized over his preparation for them, and yet he knew he had not been able to fit his message into his ideal of the Christ. Nevertheless no one in the First Church could remember ever hearing such a sermon before. There was in it rebuke for sin, especially hypocrisy, there was definite rebuke of the greed of wealth and the selfishness of fashion, two things that First Church never heard rebuked this way before, and there was a love of his people that gathered new force as the sermon went on. When it was finished there were those who were saying in their hearts, "The Spirit moved that sermon." And they were right.

Then Rachel Winslow rose to sing, this time after the sermon, by Mr. Maxwell's request. Rachel's singing did not provoke applause this time. What deeper feeling carried the people's hearts into a reverent silence and tenderness of thought? Rachel was beautiful. But her consciousness of her remarkable loveliness had always marred her singing with those who had the deepest spiritual feeling. It had also marred her rendering of certain kinds of music with herself. Today this was all gone. There was no lack of power in her grand voice. But there was an actual added element of humility and purity which the audience distinctly felt and bowed to.

Before service closed Mr. Maxwell asked those who had

remained the week before to stay again for a few moments of consultation, and any others who were willing to make the pledge taken at that time. When he was at liberty he went into the lecture-room. To his astonishment it was almost filled. This time a large proportion of young people had come, but among them were a few business men and officers of the church.

As before, he, Maxwell, asked them to pray with him. And, as before, a distinct answer came from the presence of the divine Spirit. There was no doubt in the minds of any present that what they purposed to do was so clearly in line with the divine will, that a blessing rested upon it in a very special manner.

They remained some time to ask questions and consult together. There was a feeling of fellowship such as they had never known in their church membership. Mr. Norman's action was well understood by them all, and he answered several questions.

"What will be the probable result of your discontinuance of the Sunday paper?" asked Alexander Powers, who sat next to him.

"I don't know yet. I presume it will result in the falling off of subscriptions and advertisements. I anticipate that."

"Do you have any doubts about your action. I mean, do you regret it, or fear it is not what Jesus would do?" asked Mr. Maxwell.

"Not in the least. But I would like to ask, for my own satisfaction, if any of you here think Jesus would issue a Sunday morning paper?"

No one spoke for a minute. Then Jasper Chase said, "We seem to think alike on that, but I have been puzzled several times during the week to know just what He would do. It is not always an easy question to answer."

"I find that trouble," said Virginia Page. She sat by Rachel Winslow. Every one who knew Virginia Page was wondering how she would succeed in keeping her promise. "I think perhaps I find it specially difficult to answer that question on account of my money. Our Lord never owned any property, and there is nothing in His example to guide me in the use of mine. I am studying and praying. I think I see clearly a part of what He would do, but not all. What would He do with a million dollars? is my question really. I confess I am not yet able to answer it to my satisfaction.

"I could tell you what you could do with a part of it," said Rachel, turning her face toward Virginia. "That does not trouble me," replied Virginia with a slight smile. "What I am trying to discover is a principle that will enable me to come to the nearest possible to His action as it ought to influence the entire course of my life so far as my wealth and its use are concerned."

"That will take time," said the minister slowly. All the rest of the room were thinking hard of the same thing. Milton Wright told something of his experience. He was gradually working out a plan for his business relations with his employees, and it was opening up a new world to him and to them. A few of the young men told of special attempts to answer the question. There was almost general consent over the fact that the application of the

Christ spirit and practice to the everyday life was the serious thing. It required a knowledge of Him and an insight into His motives that most of them did not yet possess.

When they finally adjourned after a silent prayer that marked with growing power the Divine Presence, they went away discussing earnestly their difficulties and seeking light from one another.

Rachel Winslow and Virginia Page went out together. Edward Norman and Milton Wright became so interested in their mutual conference that they walked on past Norman's house and came back together. Jasper Chase and the president of the Endeavor Society stood talking earnestly in one corner of the room. Alexander Powers and Henry Maxwell remained, even after the others had gone.

"I want you to come down to the shops tomorrow and see my plan and talk to the men. Somehow I feel as if you could get nearer to them than any one else just now."

"I don't know about that, but I will come," replied Mr. Maxwell a little sadly. How was he fitted to stand before two or three hundred working men and give them a message? Yet in the moment of his weakness, as he asked the question, he rebuked himself for it. What would Jesus do? That was an end to the discussion.

He went down the next day and found Mr. Powers in his office. It lacked a few minutes of twelve and the superintendent said, "Come upstairs, and I'll show you what I've been trying to do."

They went through the machine shop, climbed a long flight of stairs and entered a very large, empty room. It had once been used by the company for a store room.

"Since making that promise a week ago I have had a good many things to think of," said the superintendent, "and among them is this: The company gives me the use of this room, and I am going to fit it up with tables and a coffee plant in the corner there where those steam pipes are. My plan is to provide a good place where the men can come up and eat their noon lunch, and give them, two or three times a week, the privilege of a fifteen minutes' talk on some subject that will be a real help to them in their lives."

Maxwell looked surprised and asked if the men would come for any such purpose.

"Yes, they'll come. After all, I know the men pretty well. They are among the most intelligent working men in the country today. But they are, as a whole, entirely removed from church influence. I asked, 'What would Jesus do?' and among other things it seemed to me He would begin to act in some way to add to the lives of these men more physical and spiritual comfort. It is a very little thing, this room and what it represents, but I acted on the first impulse, to do the first thing that appealed to my good sense, and I want to work out this idea. I want you to speak to the men when they come up at noon. I have asked them to come up and see the place and I'll tell them something about it."

Maxwell was ashamed to say how uneasy he felt at being asked

to speak a few words to a company of working men. How could he speak without notes, or to such a crowd? He was honestly in a condition of genuine fright over the prospect. He actually felt afraid of facing those men. He shrank from the ordeal of confronting such a crowd, so different from the Sunday audiences he was familiar with.

There were a dozen rude benches and tables in the room, and when the noon whistle sounded the men poured upstairs from the machine shops below and, seating themselves at the tables, began to cat their lunch. There were present about three hundred of them. They had read the superintendent's notice which he had posted up in various places, and came largely out of curiosity.

They were favorably impressed. The room was large and airy, free from smoke and dust, and well warmed from the steam pipes. At about twenty minutes to one Mr. Powers told the men what he had in mind. He spoke very simply, like one who understands thoroughly the character of his audience, and then introduced the Rev. Henry Maxwell of the First Church, his pastor, who had consented to speak a few minutes.

Maxwell will never forget the feeling with which for the first time he stood before the grimy-faced audience of working men. Like hundreds of other ministers, he had never spoken to any gatherings except those made up of people of his own class in the sense that they were familiar in their dress and education and habits. This was a new world to him, and nothing but his new rule of conduct could have made possible his message and its effect.

He spoke on the subject of satisfaction with life; what caused it, what its real sources were. He had the great good sense on this his first appearance not to recognize the men as a class distinct from himself. He did not use the term working man, and did not say a word to suggest any difference between their lives and his own.

The men were pleased. A good many of them shook hands with him before going down to their work, and the minister telling it all to his wife when he reached home, said that never in all his life had he known the delight he then felt in having the handshake from a man of physical labor. The day marked an important one in his Christian experience, more important than he knew. It was the beginning of a fellowship between him and the working world. It was the first plank laid down to help bridge the chasm between the church and labor in Raymond.

Alexander Powers went back to his desk that afternoon much pleased with his plan and seeing much help in it for the men. He knew where he could get some good tables from an abandoned eating house at one of the stations down the road, and he saw how the coffee arrangement could be made a very attractive feature. The men had responded even better than he anticipated, and the whole thing could not help being a great benefit to them.

He took up the routine of his work with a glow of satisfaction. After all, he wanted to do as Jesus would, he said to himself.

It was nearly four o'clock when he opened one of the company's long envelopes which he supposed contained orders for the purchasing of stores. He ran over the first page of

typewritten matter in his usual quick, business-like manner, before he saw that what he was reading was not intended for his office but for the superintendent of the freight department.

He turned over a page mechanically, not meaning to read what was not addressed to him, but before he knew it, he was in possession of evidence which conclusively proved that the company was engaged in a systematic violation of the Interstate Commerce Laws of the United States. It was as distinct and unequivocal a breaking of law as if a private citizen should enter a house and rob the inmates. The discrimination shown in rebates was in total contempt of all the statutes. Under the laws of the state it was also a distinct violation of certain provisions recently passed by the legislature to prevent railroad trusts. There was no question that he had in his hands evidence sufficient to convict the company of willful, intelligent violation of the law of the commission and the law of the state also.

He dropped the papers on his desk as if they were poison, and instantly the question flashed across his mind, "What would Jesus do?" He tried to shut the question out. He tried to reason with himself by saying it was none of his business. He had known in a more or less definite way, as did nearly all the officers of the company, that this had been going on right along on nearly all the roads. He was not in a position, owing to his place in the shops, to prove anything direct, and he had regarded it as a matter which did not concern him at all. The papers now before him revealed the entire affair. They had through some carelessness

been addressed to him. What business of his was it? If he saw a man entering his neighbor's house to steal, would it not be his duty to inform the officers of the law? Was a railroad company such a different thing? Was it under a different rule of conduct, so that it could rob the public and defy law and be undisturbed because it was such a great organization? What would Jesus do? Then there was his family. Of course, if he took any steps to inform the commission it would mean the loss of his position. His wife and daughter had always enjoyed luxury and a good place in society. If he came out against this lawlessness as a witness it would drag him into courts, his motives would be misunderstood, and the whole thing would end in his disgrace and the loss of his position. Surely it was none of his business. He could easily get the papers back to the freight department and no one be the wiser. Let the iniquity go on. Let the law be defied. What was it to him? He would work out his plans for bettering the condition just before him. What more could a man do in this railroad business when there was so much going on anyway that made it impossible to live by the Christian standard? But what would Jesus do if He knew the facts? That was the question that confronted Alexander Powers as the day wore into evening.

The lights in the office had been turned on. The whirr of the great engine and the clash of the planers in the big shop continued until six o'clock. Then the whistle blew, the engine slowed up, the men dropped their tools and ran for the block house.

Powers heard the familiar click, click, of the clocks as the

men filed past the window of the block house just outside. He said to his clerks, "I'm not going just yet. I have something extra tonight." He waited until he heard the last man deposit his block. The men behind the block case went out. The engineer and his assistants had work for half an hour but they went out by another door.

# Chapter Six

*"If any man cometh unto me and hateth not his own father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."*

*"And whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."*

WHEN Rachel Winslow and Virginia Page separated after the meeting at the First Church on Sunday they agreed to continue their conversation the next day. Virginia asked Rachel to come and lunch with her at noon, and Rachel accordingly rang the bell at the Page mansion about half-past eleven. Virginia herself met her and the two were soon talking earnestly.

"The fact is," Rachel was saying, after they had been talking a few moments, "I cannot reconcile it with my judgment of what Christ would do. I cannot tell another person what to do, but I feel that I ought not to accept this offer."

"What will you do then?" asked Virginia with great interest.

"I don't know yet, but I have decided to refuse this offer."

Rachel picked up a letter that had been lying in her lap and ran over its contents again. It was a letter from the manager of a comic opera offering her a place with a large traveling company of the season. The salary was a very large figure, and the prospect held out by the manager was flattering. He had heard Rachel

sing that Sunday morning when the stranger had interrupted the service. He had been much impressed. There was money in that voice and it ought to be used in comic opera, so said the letter, and the manager wanted a reply as soon as possible.

"There's no great virtue in saying 'No' to this offer when I have the other one," Rachel went on thoughtfully. "That's harder to decide. But I've about made up my mind. To tell the truth, Virginia, I'm completely convinced in the first case that Jesus would never use any talent like a good voice just to make money. But now, take this concert offer. Here is a reputable company, to travel with an impersonator and a violinist and a male quartet, all people of good reputation. I'm asked to go as one of the company and sing leading soprano. The salary—I mentioned it, didn't I?—is guaranteed to be $200 a month for the season. But I don't feel satisfied that Jesus would go. What do you think?"

"You mustn't ask me to decide for you," replied Virginia with a sad smile. "I believe Mr. Maxwell was right when he said we must each one of us decide according to the judgment we feel for ourselves to be Christ-like. I am having a harder time than you are, dear, to decide what He would do."

"Are you?" Rachel asked. She rose and walked over to the window and looked out. Virginia came and stood by her. The street was crowded with life and the two young women looked at it silently for a moment. Suddenly Virginia broke out as Rachel had never heard her before:

"Rachel, what does all this contrast in conditions mean to you

as you ask this question of what Jesus would do? It maddens me to think that the society in which I have been brought up, the same to which we are both said to belong, is satisfied year after year to go on dressing and eating and having a good time, giving and receiving entertainments, spending its money on houses and luxuries and, occasionally, to ease its conscience, donating, without any personal sacrifice, a little money to charity. I have been educated, as you have, in one of the most expensive schools in America; launched into society as an heiress; supposed to be in a very enviable position. I'm perfectly well; I can travel or stay at home. I can do as I please. I can gratify almost any want or desire; and yet when I honestly try to imagine Jesus living the life I have lived and am expected to live, and doing for the rest of my life what thousands of other rich people do, I am under condemnation for being one of the most wicked, selfish, useless creatures in all the world. I have not looked out of this window for weeks without a feeling of horror toward myself as I see the humanity that passes by this house."

Virginia turned away and walked up and down the room. Rachel watched her and could not repress the rising tide of her own growing definition of discipleship. Of what Christian use was her own talent of song? Was the best she could do to sell her talent for so much a month, go on a concert company's tour, dress beautifully, enjoy the excitement of public applause and gain a reputation as a great singer? Was that what Jesus would do?

She was not morbid. She was in sound health, was conscious

of her great powers as a singer, and knew that if she went out into public life she could make a great deal of money and become well known. It is doubtful if she overestimated her ability to accomplish all she thought herself capable of. And Virginia—what she had just said smote Rachel with great force because of the similar position in which the two friends found themselves.

Lunch was announced and they went out and were joined by Virginia's grandmother, Madam Page, a handsome, stately woman of sixty-five, and Virginia's brother Rollin, a young man who spent most of his time at one of the clubs and had no ambition for anything but a growing admiration for Rachel Winslow, and whenever she dined or lunched at the Page's, if he knew of it he always planned to be at home.

These three made up the Page family. Virginia's father had been a banker and grain speculator. Her mother had died ten years before, her father within the past year. The grandmother, a Southern woman in birth and training, had all the traditions and feelings that accompany the possession of wealth and social standing that have never been disturbed. She was a shrewd, careful business woman of more than average ability. The family property and wealth were invested, in large measure, under her personal care. Virginia's portion was, without any restriction, her own. She had been trained by her father to understand the ways of the business world, and even the grandmother had been compelled to acknowledge the girl's capacity for taking care of her own money.

Perhaps two persons could not be found anywhere less capable of understanding a girl like Virginia than Madam Page and Rollin. Rachel, who had known the family since she was a girl playmate of Virginia's, could not help thinking of what confronted Virginia in her own home when she once decided on the course which she honestly believed Jesus would take. Today at lunch, as she recalled Virginia's outbreak in the front room, she tried to picture the scene that would at some time occur between Madam Page and her granddaughter.

"I understand that you are going on the stage, Miss Winslow. We shall all be delighted, I'm sure," said Rollin during the conversation, which had not been very animated.

Rachel colored and felt annoyed. "Who told you?" she asked, while Virginia, who had been very silent and reserved, suddenly roused herself and appeared ready to join in the talk.

"Oh! we hear a thing or two on the street. Besides, every one saw Crandall the manager at church two weeks ago. He doesn't go to church to hear the preaching. In fact, I know other people who don't either, not when there's something better to hear."

Rachel did not color this time, but she answered quietly, "You're mistaken. I'm not going on the stage."

"It's a great pity. You'd make a hit. Everybody is talking about your singing."

This time Rachel flushed with genuine anger. Before she could say anything, Virginia broke in: "Whom do you mean by 'everybody?'"

"Whom? I mean all the people who hear Miss Winslow on Sundays. What other time do they hear her? It's a great pity, I say, that the general public outside of Raymond cannot hear her voice."

"Let us talk about something else," said Rachel a little sharply. Madam Page glanced at her and spoke with a gentle courtesy.

"My dear, Rollin never could pay an indirect compliment. He is like his father in that. But we are all curious to know something of your plans. We claim the right from old acquaintance, you know; and Virginia has already told us of your concert company offer."

"I supposed of course that was public property," said Virginia, smiling across the table. "I was in the NEWS office day before yesterday."

"Yes, yes," replied Rachel hastily. "I understand that, Madam Page. Well, Virginia and I have been talking about it. I have decided not to accept, and that is as far as I have gone at present."

Rachel was conscious of the fact that the conversation had, up to this point, been narrowing her hesitation concerning the concert company's offer down to a decision that would absolutely satisfy her own judgment of Jesus' probable action. It had been the last thing in the world, however, that she had desired, to have her decision made in any way so public as this. Somehow what Rollin Page had said and his manner in saying it had hastened her decision in the matter.

"Would you mind telling us, Rachel, your reasons for refusing

the offer? It looks like a great opportunity for a young girl like you. Don't you think the general public ought to hear you? I feel like Rollin about that. A voice like yours belongs to a larger audience than Raymond and the First Church."

Rachel Winslow was naturally a girl of great reserve. She shrank from making her plans or her thoughts public. But with all her repression there was possible in her an occasional sudden breaking out that was simply an impulsive, thoroughly frank, truthful expression of her most inner personal feeling. She spoke now in reply to Madam Page in one of those rare moments of unreserve that added to the attractiveness of her whole character.

"I have no other reason than a conviction that Jesus Christ would do the same thing," she said, looking into Madam Page's eyes with a clear, earnest gaze.

Madam Page turned red and Rollin stared. Before her grandmother could say anything, Virginia spoke. Her rising color showed how she was stirred. Virginia's pale, clear complexion was that of health, but it was generally in marked contrast with Rachel's tropical type of beauty.

"Grandmother, you know we promised to make that the standard of our conduct for a year. Mr. Maxwell's proposition was plain to all who heard it. We have not been able to arrive at our decisions very rapidly. The difficulty in knowing what Jesus would do has perplexed Rachel and me a good deal."

Madam Page looked sharply at Virginia before she said anything.

"Of course I understand Mr. Maxwell's statement. It is perfectly impracticable to put it into practice. I felt confident at the time that those who promised would find it out after a trial and abandon it as visionary and absurd. I have nothing to say about Miss Winslow's affairs, but," she paused and continued with a sharpness that was new to Rachel, "I hope you have no foolish notions in this matter, Virginia."

"I have a great many notions," replied Virginia quietly. "Whether they are foolish or not depends upon my right understanding of what He would do. As soon as I find out I shall do it."

"Excuse me, ladies," said Rollin, rising from the table. "The conversation is getting beyond my depth. I shall retire to the library for a cigar."

He went out of the dining-room and there was silence for a moment. Madam Page waited until the servant had brought in something and then asked her to go out. She was angry and her anger was formidable, although checked in some measure by the presence of Rachel.

"I am older by several years than you, young ladies," she said, and her traditional type of bearing seemed to Rachel to rise up like a great frozen wall between her and every conception of Jesus as a sacrifice. "What you have promised, in a spirit of false emotion I presume, is impossible of performance."

"Do you mean, grandmother, that we cannot possibly act as our Lord would? or do you mean that, if we try to, we shall offend

the customs and prejudices of society?" asked Virginia.

"It is not required! It is not necessary! Besides how can you act with any—" Madam Page paused, broke off her sentence, and then turned to Rachel. "What will your mother say to your decision? My dear, is it not foolish? What do you expect to do with your voice anyway?"

"I don't know what mother will say yet," Rachel answered, with a great shrinking from trying to give her mother's probable answer. If there was a woman in all Raymond with great ambitions for her daughter's success as a singer, Mrs. Winslow was that woman.

"Oh! you will see it in a different light after wiser thought of it. My dear," continued Madam Page rising from the table, "you will live to regret it if you do not accept the concert company's offer or something like it."

# Chapter Seven

RACHEL was glad to escape and be by herself. A plan was slowly forming in her mind, and she wanted to be alone and think it out carefully. But before she had walked two blocks she was annoyed to find Rollin Page walking beside her.

"Sorry to disturb your thoughts, Miss Winslow, but I happened to be going your way and had an idea you might not object. In fact, I've been walking here for a whole block and you haven't objected."

"I did not see you," said Rachel briefly.

"I wouldn't mind that if you only thought of me once in a while," said Rollin suddenly. He took one last nervous puff on his cigar, tossed it into the street and walked along with a pale look on his face.

Rachel was surprised, but not startled. She had known Rollin as a boy, and there had been a time when they had used each other's first name familiarly. Lately, however, something in Rachel's manner had put an end to that. She was used to his direct attempts at compliments and was sometimes amused by them. Today she honestly wished him anywhere else.

"Do you ever think of me, Miss Winslow?" asked Rollin after a pause.

"Oh, yes, quite often!" said Rachel with a smile.

"Are you thinking of me now?"

"Yes. That is—yes—I am."

"What?"

"Do you want me to be absolutely truthful?"

"Of course."

"Then I was thinking that I wished you were not here." Rollin bit his lip and looked gloomy.

"Now look here, Rachel—oh, I know that's forbidden, but I've got to speak some time!—you know how I feel. What makes you treat me so? You used to like me a little, you know."

"Did I? Of course we used to get on very well as boy and girl. But we are older now."

Rachel still spoke in the light, easy way she had used since her first annoyance at seeing him. She was still somewhat preoccupied with her plan which had been disturbed by Rollin's sudden appearance.

They walked along in silence a little way. The avenue was full of people. Among the persons passing was Jasper Chase. He saw Rachel and Rollin and bowed as they went by. Rollin was watching Rachel closely.

"I wish I was Jasper Chase. Maybe I would stand some chance then," he said moodily.

Rachel colored in spite of herself. She did not say anything and quickened her pace a little. Rollin seemed determined to say something, and Rachel seemed helpless to prevent him. After all, she thought, he might as well know the truth one time as another.

"You know well enough, Rachel, how I feel toward you. Isn't

there any hope? I could make you happy. I've loved you a good many years—"

"Why, how old do you think I am?" broke in Rachel with a nervous laugh. She was shaken out of her usual poise of manner.

"You know what I mean," went on Rollin doggedly. "And you have no right to laugh at me just because I want you to marry me."

"I'm not! But it is useless for you to speak, Rollin," said Rachel after a little hesitation, and then using his name in such a frank, simple way that he could attach no meaning to it beyond the familiarity of the old family acquaintance. "It is impossible." She was still a little agitated by the fact of receiving a proposal of marriage on the avenue. But the noise on the street and sidewalk made the conversation as private as if they were in the house.

"Would that is—do you think—if you gave me time I would."

"No!" said Rachel. She spoke firmly; perhaps, she thought afterward, although she did not mean to, she spoke harshly.

They walked on for some time without a word. They were nearing Rachel's home and she was anxious to end the scene.

As they turned off the avenue into one of the quieter streets Rollin spoke suddenly and with more manliness than he had yet shown. There was a distinct note of dignity in his voice that was new to Rachel.

"Miss Winslow, I ask you to be my wife. Is there any hope for me that you will ever consent?"

"None in the least." Rachel spoke decidedly.

"Will you tell me why?" He asked the question as if he had a right to a truthful answer.

"Because I do not feel toward you as a woman ought to feel toward the man she marries."

"In other words, you do not love me?"

"I do not and I cannot."

"Why?" That was another question, and Rachel was a little surprised that he should ask it.

"Because—" she hesitated for fear she might say too much in an attempt to speak the exact truth.

"Tell me just why. You can't hurt me more than you have already."

"Well, I do not and I cannot love you because you have no purpose in life. What do you ever do to make the world better? You spend your time in club life, in amusements, in travel, in luxury. What is there in such a life to attract a woman?"

"Not much, I guess," said Rollin with a bitter laugh. "Still, I don't know that I'm any worse than the rest of the men around me. I'm not so bad as some. I'm glad to know your reasons."

He suddenly stopped, took off his hat, bowed gravely and turned back. Rachel went on home and hurried into her room, disturbed in many ways by the event which had so unexpectedly thrust itself into her experience.

When she had time to think it all over she found herself condemned by the very judgment she had passed on Rollin Page. What purpose had she in life? She had been abroad and studied

music with one of the famous teachers of Europe. She had come home to Raymond and had been singing in the First Church choir now for a year. She was well paid. Up to that Sunday two weeks ago she had been quite satisfied with herself and with her position. She had shared her mother's ambition, and anticipated growing triumphs in the musical world. What possible career was before her except the regular career of every singer?

She asked the question again and, in the light of her recent reply to Rollin, asked again, if she had any very great purpose in life herself. What would Jesus do? There was a fortune in her voice. She knew it, not necessarily as a matter of personal pride or professional egotism, but simply as a fact. And she was obliged to acknowledge that until two weeks ago she had purposed to use her voice to make money and win admiration and applause. Was that a much higher purpose, after all, than Rollin Page lived for?

She sat in her room a long time and finally went downstairs, resolved to have a frank talk with her mother about the concert company's offer and the new plan which was gradually shaping in her mind. She had already had one talk with her mother and knew that she expected Rachel to accept the offer and enter on a successful career as a public singer.

"Mother," Rachel said, coming at once to the point, much as she dreaded the interview, "I have decided not to go out with the company. I have a good reason for it."

Mrs. Winslow was a large, handsome woman, fond of much company, ambitious for distinction in society and devoted,

according to her definitions of success, to the success of her children. Her youngest boy, Louis, two years younger than Rachel, was ready to graduate from a military academy in the summer. Meanwhile she and Rachel were at home together. Rachel's father, like Virginia's, had died while the family was abroad. Like Virginia she found herself, under her present rule of conduct, in complete antagonism with her own immediate home circle. Mrs. Winslow waited for Rachel to go on.

"You know the promise I made two weeks ago, mother?"

"Mr. Maxwell's promise?"

"No, mine. You know what it was, do you not, mother?"

"I suppose I do. Of course all the church members mean to imitate Christ and follow Him, as far as is consistent with our present day surroundings. But what has that to do with your decision in the concert company matter?"

"It has everything to do with it. After asking, 'What would Jesus do?' and going to the source of authority for wisdom, I have been obliged to say that I do not believe He would, in my case, make that use of my voice."

"Why? Is there anything wrong about such a career?"

"No, I don't know that I can say there is."

"Do you presume to sit in judgment on other people who go out to sing in this way? Do you presume to say they are doing what Christ would not do?"

"Mother, I wish you to understand me. I judge no one else; I condemn no other professional singer. I simply decide my own

course. As I look at it, I have a conviction that Jesus would do something else."

"What else?" Mrs. Winslow had not yet lost her temper. She did not understand the situation nor Rachel in the midst of it, but she was anxious that her daughter's course should be as distinguished as her natural gifts promised. And she felt confident that when the present unusual religious excitement in the First Church had passed away Rachel would go on with her public life according to the wishes of the family. She was totally unprepared for Rachel's next remark.

"What? Something that will serve mankind where it most needs the service of song. Mother, I have made up my mind to use my voice in some way so as to satisfy my own soul that I am doing something better than pleasing fashionable audiences, or making money, or even gratifying my own love of singing. I am going to do something that will satisfy me when I ask: 'What would Jesus do?' I am not satisfied, and cannot be, when I think of myself as singing myself into the career of a concert company performer."

Rachel spoke with a vigor and earnestness that surprised her mother. But Mrs. Winslow was angry now; and she never tried to conceal her feelings.

"It is simply absurd! Rachel, you are a fanatic! What can you do?"

"The world has been served by men and women who have given it other things that were gifts. Why should I, because I am

blessed with a natural gift, at once proceed to put a market price on it and make all the money I can out of it? You know, mother, that you have taught me to think of a musical career always in the light of financial and social success. I have been unable, since I made my promise two weeks ago, to imagine Jesus joining a concert company to do what I should do and live the life I should have to live if I joined it."

Mrs. Winslow rose and then sat down again. With a great effort she composed herself.

"What do you intend to do then? You have not answered my question."

"I shall continue to sing for the time being in the church. I am pledged to sing there through the spring. During the week I am going to sing at the White Cross meetings, down in the Rectangle."

"What! Rachel Winslow! Do you know what you are saying? Do you know what sort of people those are down there?"

Rachel almost quailed before her mother. For a moment she shrank back and was silent. Then she spoke firmly: "I know very well. That is the reason I am going. Mr. and Mrs. Gray have been working there several weeks. I learned only this morning that they want singers from the churches to help them in their meetings. They use a tent. It is in a part of the city where Christian work is most needed. I shall offer them my help. Mother!" Rachel cried out with the first passionate utterance she had yet used, "I want to do something that will cost me something

in the way of sacrifice. I know you will not understand me. But I am hungry to suffer for something. What have we done all our lives for the suffering, sinning side of Raymond? How much have we denied ourselves or given of our personal ease and pleasure to bless the place in which we live or imitate the life of the Savior of the world? Are we always to go on doing as society selfishly dictates, moving on its little narrow round of pleasures and entertainments, and never knowing the pain of things that cost?"

"Are you preaching at me?" asked Mrs. Winslow slowly. Rachel rose, and understood her mother's words.

"No. I am preaching at myself," she replied gently. She paused a moment as if she thought her mother would say something more, and then went out of the room. When she reached her own room she felt that so far as her own mother was concerned she could expect no sympathy, nor even a fair understanding from her.

She kneeled. It is safe to say that within the two weeks since Henry Maxwell's church had faced that shabby figure with the faded hat more members of his parish had been driven to their knees in prayer than during all the previous term of his pastorate.

She rose, and her face was wet with tears. She sat thoughtfully a little while and then wrote a note to Virginia Page. She sent it to her by a messenger and then went downstairs and told her mother that she and Virginia were going down to the Rectangle that evening to see Mr. and Mrs. Gray, the evangelists.

"Virginia's uncle, Dr. West, will go with us, if she goes. I have asked her to call him up by telephone and go with us. The Doctor is a friend of the Grays, and attended some of their meetings last winter."

Mrs. Winslow did not say anything. Her manner showed her complete disapproval of Rachel's course, and Rachel felt her unspoken bitterness.

About seven o'clock the Doctor and Virginia appeared, and together the three started for the scene of the White Cross meetings.

The Rectangle was the most notorious district in Raymond. It was on the territory close by the railroad shops and the packing houses. The great slum and tenement district of Raymond congested its worst and most wretched elements about the Rectangle. This was a barren field used in the summer by circus companies and wandering showmen. It was shut in by rows of saloons, gambling hells and cheap, dirty boarding and lodging houses.

The First Church of Raymond had never touched the Rectangle problem. It was too dirty, too coarse, too sinful, too awful for close contact. Let us be honest. There had been an attempt to cleanse this sore spot by sending down an occasional committee of singers or Sunday-school teachers or gospel visitors from various churches. But the First Church of Raymond, as an institution, had never really done anything to make the Rectangle any less a stronghold of the devil as the years

went by.

Into this heart of the coarse part of the sin of Raymond the traveling evangelist and his brave little wife had pitched a good-sized tent and begun meetings. It was the spring of the year and the evenings were beginning to be pleasant. The evangelists had asked for the help of Christian people, and had received more than the usual amount of encouragement. But they felt a great need of more and better music. During the meetings on the Sunday just gone the assistant at the organ had been taken ill. The volunteers from the city were few and the voices were of ordinary quality.

"There will be a small meeting tonight, John," said his wife, as they entered the tent a little after seven o'clock and began to arrange the chairs and light up.

"Yes, I fear so." Mr. Gray was a small, energetic man, with a pleasant voice and the courage of a high-born fighter. He had already made friends in the neighborhood and one of his converts, a heavy-faced man who had just come in, began to help in the arranging of seats.

It was after eight o'clock when Alexander Powers opened the door of his office and started for home. He was going to take a car at the corner of the Rectangle. But he was roused by a voice coming from the tent.

It was the voice of Rachel Winslow. It struck through his consciousness of struggle over his own question that had sent him into the Divine Presence for an answer. He had not yet reached a

conclusion. He was tortured with uncertainty. His whole previous course of action as a railroad man was the poorest possible preparation for anything sacrificial. And he could not yet say what he would do in the matter.

Hark! What was she singing? How did Rachel Winslow happen to be down here? Several windows near by went up. Some men quarreling near a saloon stopped and listened. Other figures were walking rapidly in the direction of the Rectangle and the tent. Surely Rachel Winslow had never sung like that in the First Church. It was a marvelous voice. What was it she was singing? Again Alexander Powers, Superintendent of the machine shops, paused and listened,

> "Where He leads me I will follow,
> Where He leads me I will follow,
> Where He leads me I will follow,
> I'll go with Him, with Him.
> All the way!"

The brutal, coarse, impure life of the Rectangle stirred itself into new life as the song, as pure as the surroundings were vile, floated out and into saloon and den and foul lodging. Some one stumbled hastily by Alexander Powers and said in answer to a question: "De tent's beginning to run over tonight. That's what the talent calls music, eh?"

# Chapter Eight

*"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."*

HENRY MAXWELL paced his study back and forth. It was Wednesday and he had started to think out the subject of his evening service which fell upon that night. Out of one of his study windows he could see the tall chimney of the railroad shops. The top of the evangelist's tent just showed over the buildings around the Rectangle. He looked out of his window every time he turned in his walk. After a while he sat down at his desk and drew a large piece of paper toward him. After thinking several moments he wrote in large letters the following:

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.