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## WILLIAM THE SILENT.\*

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The sixteenth century was one of the most important epochs in the history of mankind. It was the age of Queen Elizabeth and Lord Bacon and William Shakespeare. It was the age of Martin Luther and John Calvin and John Knox. It broke the shackles of ignorance and superstition and tyranny which for centuries had bound down the human race. It introduced a new era in religious freedom and intellectual freedom and political freedom. The most powerful monarch in the world in the sixteenth century was Charles the Fifth. He had a vast empire. It included Germany, Austria and Lombardy, that is, the northern part of Italy. It included in the south also the kingdom of Naples, the kingdom of Sicily and the kingdom of Sardinia. It included the whole of Spain, at that time the richest and strongest country on the globe. It included Burgundy, that is, the eastern part of France. And it included the Netherlands, or what we now know as Belgium and Holland. It comprised, therefore, a very large part of the continent of Europe. Then, too, in the new world, it included the West Indies and Florida and Mexico, and also Peru in South America. The sun never set on his dominions. He was the autocrat of half the world.

\* A Reformation Day Address to Young People, based chiefly on "The Rise of the Dutch Republic," by J. L. Motley.

## CHRISTIAN MOTIVE.

BY REV. JNO. I. ARMSTRONG,

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Criticism of the Church is common. Criticism of Christian people is equally common. Some criticism is sharp and bitter and tears down, some is meant to be kind and to build up. Some is direct and openly expressed, some is indirect and expressed by insinuation. Some comes from outside the Church and the circle of Christian people, some comes from inside.

Whether the criticism is correct or incorrect is not the most important matter to determine. The lesson of criticism is a hard lesson, but it needs to be learned, and the training power of the lesson is great. When this lesson is learned it will be possible to do with criticism as Samson did with the lion—kill it and find later in the carcass sweetness and strength.

Under the spur of criticism the Church has tried the stimulus of all kinds of systems and organizations and plans and machinery. Education has been appealed to, and some have hoped to find a way to perfection by turning on the light and letting the people see what needs to be done and the varied plans by which the attempt is made to meet the needs. Floods of printed matter have poured over the land and the deaths from drowning have not yet been counted. New agents have been set to work to carry out old plans and to devise and carry out new plans. But the magic word of to-day is co-operation. What education does not do, co-operation is expected to accomplish. So insistent is the call to co-operate and so unceasingly is it made that many are in danger of laying aside the work God has given them in order that they may co-operate. Some co-operate and co-operate and co-operate and realize by and by that the plow stands rusting in the furrow and the land is over-

grown with weeds instead of crops, weeds already gone to seed that will multiply and multiply and must be fought for years to come.

Education is a good thing and necessary, and co-operation is good and necessary also; and plans and system and organization and machinery—all are good and all are necessary. But too often in the dust raised about these things the real trouble is obscured or lost to sight altogether. This real trouble is a lack of life, or a lack of power or motive.

Not long ago the suburban trolley car that runs every hour between Nashville and Franklin, Tennessee, stood still on the track for half an hour. It then ran a short distance slowly and weakly and again came to a stop. The schedule was good and there was no danger of running into another car. The track was all right. The current was on in the wire overhead. The trolley was on the wire. The motorman was in his place, and the conductor also, and the car was full of passengers very eager to reach their homes in Franklin. All was as it should have been but one thing, there was no power in the car. Some defective part had broken the connection between the car and the power above, and the car could not run at all or could run but feebly. Everybody knows a car needs a track to run on, and machinery, and a schedule, and a load and men to run it, and everybody knows that all these are not only important but necessary; and yet what are these worth where the car has no motive power?

Take another illustration. At the business man's elbow by his desk stands a small machine. Into it he speaks the words that answer his letters and give instructions to his helpers. An electric current records these words on a wax cylinder from which they may be read by an operator at the typewriter in another room. In the midst of a busy morning the machine stops short. The lever is moved back and forth. The electric current is turned on and off. Oil is applied to the bearings. The machine is thoroughly cleaned. All to no purpose, it will not go. The agent in a distant city is appealed to by letter and he writes at length with full advice gladly and freely given.

but still the machine stands motionless. Work is accumulating and someone says, "Throw the thing away and get a new machine." Then comes a skilled electrician and looks about a few minutes. A small screw is loosened and a slight readjustment is made, and all goes easily and smoothly and efficiently. Everything was there but the motive power, and however important and necessary all the rest was, it was of no use so long as the power that moved the machine was absent.

Wherever there is a stopping or a weakening of Christian life and work, either in the individual Christian or in the Church, the trouble is nearly always with the power, or to use the term of the title of this article, the motive. Co-operation and organization are splendid aids in applying and directing Christian motive power, but they are useless rubbish when that motive power is absent.

There is steam motive power, and electric motive power, and water motive power, and various other forms and it is not hard to understand what is meant by these expressions. It ought not to be hard to understand what is meant by Christian motive power, and it isn't. This power is love. It sometimes seems to be divided into love to Jesus Christ and love to men. This seeming division has even caused some to think they could have one side without the other. Some have charged certain Christians with loving Christ and being indifferent to men. Perhaps this has seemed to be true. On the other hand some people who are burning with love to their fellow men seem to be indifferent to Christ. It may be fairly questioned whether there is any real division. It is expressly stated on the highest authority that, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar," and that a man who does not love his brother man *cannot* love God. Thus there cannot be love to Christ in a man's heart without there being love to men there also. Can there be love to man without there being love to Christ? The burden of proof may fairly be left to rest on any who make the claim, but it is well to remind ourselves of a great fundamental truth that has a bearing here. "We love, because He first loved us." This truth has been belittled and

obscured through the form in which most people have learned it. They will say, "We love Him, because He first loved us." That is true and it is a great truth and fundamental, but it isn't the whole truth by any means, and there are many who can recall the thrill experienced when the truth was stated in its full and comprehensive form, and they began to realize that every stream however small of human love begins in the fountain of divine love. The very power to love is derived from the love of God for men. It may seem to come from far. The stream may flow underground and appear on the other side of some mountain that shuts out the view of the vast lake that feeds the stream, but an unknown or an unseen source is none the less a source, and some day the unknown and the unseen will become the known and the seen and we shall all understand that "love is of God."

We shall never love our fellow men with the right sort of love till we begin to see the possibilities of what they may be, by realizing what Christ is and what all men may become in him; till we begin to see them with the eyes of Christ himself. Henry Sydnor Harrison published a striking book called "V. V.'s Eyes." No doubt many people who saw the title expected something sentimental to the point of disgust. But not so is the real nature of the book. There is an analysis of character so fine that the reader is lost in wonder and admiration. The growth of soul that takes place in one of the characters comes from learning to see life through another's eyes. It is thus that growth of soul will come to all of us as we learn to see people through the only eyes that see with perfect vision, because he who looks through them knows what is in man.

But love comes not at the bidding of the soul. How then shall it be obtained? Where shall it be sought, and with what preparation must we make ready as we set out to find it? There is a place where it can be found, and where all who seek may find it. Come away to a very old and distant city. It is nine o'clock on an April morning. A stream of people pours through the northern gate. On the rounded top of a hill outside the city walls three crosses are being set up. Come to the

foot of the cross between the other two. The suffering of iron nails driven through human flesh wrings a cry from the one on that cross, but, wonder of wonders, the cry is a prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He has thought for his mother standing over against his cross to provide her a home in the house of his best friend, and he has salvation for one of the criminals dying at his side. It is midday now, and the sun refuses to shine; and after three hours of darkness and silence there comes another cry which freezes the blood, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In his burning thirst the sufferer appeals to one of the soldiers who had sat below the cross in stolid indifference gambling for his clothes, and the appeal is not in vain. "It is finished" now. The work and the suffering are over, and the spirit is commended into the Father's hands. And as you stand there on the reeling and tottering earth amid the crash of rending rocks you say, "Truly this man was the Son of God." But if so how comes he here? Why is he going through these awful experiences? Why? Yes, why indeed? There is one answer and but one—love. He is giving his life for me because he loved me. And in the presence of that love my own heart begins to stir with an answering love to which it has heretofore been a stranger, a love for him that will give me power to live for him and to serve him, and also a love for all for whom he died that will give me power to live for them and to serve them too for his sake and also for theirs. Henceforth the love of Christ constraineth me to serve him and them, and if I feel my love grow weak and cold and the power to live leaves me stumbling on the road, I look back to the Cross, and lo! there comes again the power I need to move in the service of my Saviour and King with the vigor and swiftness of eternal youth, and no service is now too hard because he loved and loves, and because I too love. There may be siren voices calling me aside from his way, but I can put wax in my ears and still go on, and the day will come when I can realize that the way is being shortened and the load lightened and the service sweetened because the Great Companion is by my side.

All truth is practical, and has a bearing on the everyday life of man. The greatest truth is most practical of all and has the most direct relation to everyday life.

Among the many practical applications that might be made of the truth about Christian Motive, let attention be called here to only one. For several years a method of gathering the financial support of the great causes called the Assembly's Plan, has been before the Church. According to the intent of this plan, each member of the church is to be brought face to face with his individual responsibility in the sight of God to assume some definite part of the financial support of these causes, and to indicate to his own local church organization what that part is. Provision is made for convenient gathering of each member's gifts at the time and place of regular Sabbath services, and these funds are to be handled by a special treasurer who is to forward them promptly and regularly to their proper causes. This in brief is the Assembly's Plan. There are, of course, certain minor details that need not be listed here, and also in the application of the plan to individual congregations there will of necessity be particular features that need not be mentioned for the purpose now under consideration.

The Plan was not new. Some churches in a conscientious attempt to meet their duty as they saw it had already been doing this very thing and doing it successfully, with large increase of gifts to the causes, with great comfort and satisfaction to the people, and with much spiritual and material benefit. The new feature was in the commending of the successful experience of a few churches widely scattered and varying in size and location and in all the other peculiar conditions of church life, to the earnest consideration of all the churches, and also in the urgent request that all churches adopt and put into operation as soon as practicable the general principles which were found in the successful experience of the few churches and which were briefly formulated into the "Assembly's Plan."

There is nothing that can fairly be said against the Plan. The churches that have tried it with energy and faithfulness and intelligence have found it all that was claimed for it and

more, and while there are new adjustments to be made constantly to meet special conditions, probably no one of these churches would consider for a moment going back to what they had before.

It is clear, however, that some have a radically wrong notion of what the Plan is to do. If an illustration may be taken from railroad words and thinking, the Assembly's Plan furnishes a track and a schedule. This track has fewer tunnels and the curves have been straightened and the rails made heavier and the ties renewed and the road bed better ballasted. The schedule gets rid of many former dangers of collision and provides for faster time and more convenient arrival and departure. But when all this is said we have still only a track and a schedule, and while tracks and schedules are of supreme importance they are of no value by themselves. Faster trains need more intelligent handling, but more than anything else they need more *power*.

The application is so plain that little more needs to be said. In the use of the Assembly's Plan what is needed is more *power*. Not steam power, not electric power, not water power, but Christian motive power, love power. Let us not abuse or throw away schedule and track, but let us rather provide for new power. It securely needs to be added that this power is in the Cross. If the people are to do Christ's work they must have a burning love for Christ and for Christ's work. "Lovest thou me?" is Christ's question to every one who would do his work. If we cannot answer in his very presence with his eye looking into our very heart of heart, "Thou knowest that I love thee," then we have nothing to do with his work. If we can say, "Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee," then he has work for us, enough to fill our hands full. What does he say? "Love me, love my lambs and my sheep." Of course that isn't a literal quotation, but isn't it what he means?

And now for a final word. How easy it to become so full of the details as to lose the principle! How easy for the pastor and other spiritual leaders in the Church to find heart and head and hands full of things! How easy to see nature's beauties



and forces and to miss God! How easy to have all our time and strength consumed with mere machinery when we need to find and apply the power! And in this extremely important matter of providing adequate financial support for the great causes to which we are pledged in loyalty to our Lord and Saviour, the people must be moved by the power of a love that so possesses their hearts as to make work easy and sacrifice a delight. And let us not fail to lead them outside the city wall to where the crosses are standing, where at that cross between the other two they may learn to love. It was out of a rare spiritual wisdom that a great Christian leader could write to his people, "For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." On this foundation he could build and go on to say to the same people:

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come."

"But as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all earnestness, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. I speak not by way of commandment, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity also of your love. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich. And herein I give my judgment: for this is expedient for you, who were the first to make a beginning a year ago, not only to do, but also to will. But now complete the doing also; that as there was the readiness to will, so there may be the completion also out of your ability. For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not."

*Franklin, Tennessee, Nov. 14, 1914.*