
A PARALLEL

“Hello there! A penny for your thoughts. Why the merriment? What’s puzzling you?” With these words a friendly slap on the back. I look up quickly and say “Oh it is you, is it? You startled me. I was thinking. I had a queer thing happen to me a few moments ago and I was puzzling over it. I went into the offices of our mutual friend Jones and found him crouched under his desk, in a most uncomfortable cramped position and evidently greatly disturbed about something, so I said to him ‘Jones, what in the world are you doing there?’ He replied ‘Oh I’m in great trouble. The law of gravitation has ceased to operate for me, and I am in immediate danger of flying up into space.’

“To this I answered ‘Why, Jones, that’s sheer nonsense. Here, give me your hand and let me help you out’, at the same time stretching out my hand toward him.

“Jones said ‘Don’t touch me. I know what I am talking about. The law of gravitation has departed from me and I am in the greatest danger. Were it not for this friendly desk of mine I already would be floating about in space.’

“I protested ‘What nonsense you are talking. Gravitation could no more cease to operate for you, than the sun could cease to shine. Come out’, and with that I took him by the wrist and with a strong pull on his resisting body, I had him out and standing on his feet again. Of course he didn’t fly off into space and instantly found the law of gravitation was working for him as for all of us, whereupon he went back to his work and was perfectly normal.

“As for me, I went on my way, puzzling over the oddity of the thing, and wondering how a man could have such queer notions, and I was in fact so oblivious of anything else that I didn’t even see or hear you until you slapped me on the back.”

Then you lock arms and go your way to a common destination, chatting over the queerness of the incident.

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Let us go back now to Capernaum, some nineteen hundred years ago. Down the street strides one who is a man in every sense of the word. He is bronzed, bearded, burned by the sun and the wind; he is tall and broad shouldered, blue eyed and fair withal; clean cut and looks as though he could swing an axe, cast a net, or run, jump or ride with the best. His dress, well, it doesn't matter, for his inconspicuous garments cannot conceal his innate distinction,—it is Jesus the Nazarene. Around his lips plays a curious little puzzled smile as though he were trying to fathom something which so far has evidently eluded him. He is so engrossed that he is startled by a hand on his shoulder and a voice which says "A penny for your thoughts? What is puzzling you? You seemed amused."

At this point he looks up, then laughs quietly and says "Oh Phil! It's you. A queer thing happened just now and I was pondering over it."

Philip answered "Yes, what was it Jesus? Tell me about it."

Jesus went on, "Well, I was walking along at a good pace intending to meet you and the others, when as I approached Jairus' place, I heard sounds of grief and crying coming evidently from within. You know where Jairus lives of course, Philip? Everyone about here knows the place. The house, standing back from the roadway, surrounded by the iron fence with the great bronze gates which permit the passerby to look within at the broad lawns, with its statuary and flowers—you know it I am sure—well as I approached I heard people weeping and wailing as though something terrible had happened. When I came to the gates themselves I stopped, looked through and called out 'What's the matter?' At that there was a stillness for a moment and then a voice answered and said 'Oh sir a terrible thing has happened. The law of God, the law of Life, has departed from our master's little daughter, and she lies within, dead.'"

Philip interjected "What did you say to that?" Philip knew the Master so well through daily association with him that he sensed something wonderful had occurred, and was impatient to get to it, whatever it might be.

Jesus replied "Oh, I said to the man who had spoken, 'Why that's impossible. The law of God or the law of Life could no more de-

part from your master's daughter or from anyone else, than could a stone thrown into the air fail to return to earth. That is quite impossible. The maid is not dead but sleeps.' ”

Philip said, “What then, Master?”

Jesus went on again, “Well Philip that is one of the odd things about it all. They simply jeered at that statement, laughed me to scorn. What I had said was to them evidently ridiculous. In spite of their evident grief they simply laughed at me.”

“Then”, said Philip, breathlessly, “what then?”

Jesus said, “Then I went in through the gates. You know I know Jairus quite well, so I pushed the gates open, walked through the group of servants gathered about, went into the patio, and sure enough there was Jairus, sitting with his wife, on a great stone bench—his arm about her shoulders, supporting her. She was crying softly and Jairus' eyes too were filled with tears. They both looked up as they heard my footfall, and I asked ‘What's the matter, Jairus? Why are you so sorrowful?’

“Jairus answered me, ‘Oh, Jesus, a fearful thing has happened. My little girl. The law of God, the law of Life has departed from her, and she lies there in the next room dead!’

“I said in reply, ‘Why, Jairus, that is utterly impossible. The laws of God, the laws of Life could no more depart from your little daughter, than could a stone thrown into the air fail to return to the ground. It is impossible, I tell you. Your little daughter is not dead at all, she is only sleeping.’

“Philip,” Jesus went on, “if you had seen Jairus' face when I said that to him, you hardly would have known what to say or think. Such crass ignorance of spiritual law from one who seemed to be so learned! And on top of it all, he gave me a sort of commiserating wan smile as much as to say ‘Why man, don't you think that I know when a person is dead rather than asleep,’ but at the same time he said aloud, ‘Man, if you can do anything to help us, do it, but see for yourself, there in the room to the left, lies my little daughter, dead.’ And he turned to his wife and held her a little closer than before.”

By this time Philip was in a tense sort of excitement and said to Jesus “Oh Master, you are so deliberate. What happened then?”

Jesus went on, "Well, then I went into the room to which he referred and sure enough there was the little girl stretched upon a marble couch, a wonderful piece of cloth of gold over her, hiding her face, and one little white hand sticking outside the rich brocade covering. I pulled down the cloth from her face and looked at her. Sweet little thing, a little girl about twelve years of age, cold and still, stark and white, like marble. Evidently she too believed that the laws of Life had departed from her. Poor little child. It seemed so strange that anyone could thus foolishly believe."

Philip interjected here again, "What then? What then?"

Jesus replied, "Then I began to talk to her. Told her that the departure of the laws of God or the laws of Life was utterly impossible, not only in regard to herself but for anyone. I told her that God was her life, that her life depended on God and not on matter at all, or on her heart or her heart action; in fact I told her that her heart and her heart action depended on her life, which was God. I said everything that came to me to waken her, but it was no use, there she lay, motionless, cold, white and stark—apparently dead."

"And then——?" questioned Philip.

"Well, seeing that it was impossible to make her hear, and that she paid not the slightest attention to what I was saying, I took hold of her hand and pulling her into a sitting position, supporting her at the same time with my arm about her shoulders, said 'Now my young lady, get up' or 'Damsel, I say unto thee arise' or something like that, and then of course she opened her eyes, sat up alone, saw me, (I know her, you know) smiled a little, and pulling the clothes about her modestly, she slid off the couch and stood erect. I supported her a little for a moment, then led her out to her father and mother and said to them 'She'll be all right now. Give her something to eat,' and handed her into her mother's arms. Philip! You should have seen her father and mother! You would have laughed if it hadn't been something you just couldn't associate with merriment. They acted any way but such as you might expect of the dignified Jairus and his more dignified and stately wife. She actually tried to embrace me, and so did Jairus. They discarded all thoughts of stateliness and dignity. They were just Jairus and his wife, a father and mother. He stood there holding my hands as though

loath to let me go, and dear knows what they would have done had they not been primarily interested in their little daughter, now standing there with her color back and looking the picture of health and strength. Finally I managed to break away and went out into the grounds—and then my troubles really began. The servants who knew of it almost instantly of course, threw flowers in my pathway, bowed down to me as though I were God Himself, kissed the hem of my clothes, began to sing hosannas, praise the Lord, and then tried to lift me up on their shoulders, but finally I got away from them and started down the street to keep my appointment with you. When you met me I was so preoccupied thinking over what had happened and how odd it is that people can bring themselves to think that the laws of God could depart from them even for a moment, that I didn't see you at all, until you tapped me on the shoulder."

So then Jesus and Philip strode together arm in arm down the street, talking over the strangeness of it all, that people could get so far away from the truth of God as ever to believe that the law of Life, the law of God, could depart from this world or even for an instant cease to be law.