

FROM MAX HEINDEL'S WRITINGS

But One Thing Is Needful

THIS EVENING we will take the magnetic needle as our subject of meditation, for it has a lesson of supreme importance in our spiritual career, a lesson which it behooves every faithful follower of the Mystic Light to take earnestly and prayerfully to heart.

The magnetic needle is made of metal which has an inherent affinity for the lodestone, namely, steel. Other metals are but indifferently affected, if at all, but when steel has once been touched with the lodestone, its whole nature is changed. It has become alive, as it were, imbued with a new force, which we might describe as a constant yearning after the lodestone which once kissed it. Needles made of other metals, and unmagnetized steel may be put upon a pivot and they will stand in any balanced position wherever they are placed, they are passive to whatever force is applied to them from without. But the needle which has been touched by the lodestone resists, and no matter how often or how severely we push it away from the magnetic position, as soon as the force exerted against it is removed, it will instantly revert and point toward the magnetic pole.

A similar phenomenon is seen in the life of the Christian. Once he has felt, thoroughly felt, in his being the love of the Father, he is a changed man.

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The worldly forces from without may be exerted in various ways to divert his interest and attention, but every particle of his being yearns for God and is always turning in that direction, unaffected by the world of drifting listless men. Whatever else he may do in the world (because it is absolutely necessary to take the proper part in the world's work) will be done because it is right and dutiful to do so, but with his whole being he yearns towards the Father, whose Love, whose Being, and whose Force has drawn his soul. To him "But one thing is needful"—his Father's love, and his every effort is

directed to win His approval.

When we turn from the earth to heaven, we find almost identical conditions there. Everywhere through the great firmament millions and billions of miles, yea, infinite apace, is filled with marching orbs that move with a velocity which beggars comprehension by the human mind. At the time when we entered the Pro-Ecclesia the stars were in a certain position, but during every moment since we have been here they have changed and they are now changing with every tick of the clock—all but one. Among all these countless stars moving at such an enormous speed, there is one that is changeless, one that always occupies the same position—the North Star. No matter what time during the day or night, during summer or winter, from birth to death, when we look up into the heavens, that star will be found always in the same place. Whenever it is visible to our eyes or by the help of a telescope at any time, it will always be found to occupy the position which we speak of as “North.”

Now mark the phenomenon of the changeless needle, always pointing towards the changeless star, and consider the connection between them and the lesson there is for us in this phenomenon. The magnetic needle is not a fair-weather follower. It does not matter whether it rains or shines, whether it is calm or stormy, whether there are fogs or clouds. Under all circumstances the magnetic needle points with unvarying fidelity towards the North star. Upon this great fact the mariner stakes the property and life of himself, his crew, and his passengers. Though the sleet and the rain, snow or hail may beat in his face, almost blinding him and making it impossible for him to see the front of his ship, yet so long as he can see that faithful needle he knows that he is on the right course, he knows that it will never swerve, that even though the ship should founder and find a watery grave at the bottom of the sea, that faithful needle will still remain in the same position, pointing to the changeless star until the very last atom of its being has been disintegrated by corrosion.

Therefore he trusts implicitly to this faithful guide as he “lays him down in peace to sleep rocked in the cradle of the deep.”

There is in the unswerving devotion symbolized by this magnetic needle one of the greatest and most wonderful lessons for those who have seen the mystic light and who aspire to the privilege of guiding others who have not yet found the path. Let us realize that to do this, the first, foremost, and the greatest prerequisite is that we shall ourselves have become firmly grounded and rooted so that we are not disturbed by worldly changes going on about us—whether the clouds of doubt, skepticism, or persecution be cast about us by others, or whether they seek to ensnare us in blinding fogs of other doctrines.

It behooves us to hold fast to that which is good, yea, even though life were the price we have to pay, we must imitate that faithful needle, as the ship founders and settles to its watery grave; we must continue to point to the one goal of all, “Our Father in Heaven,” never swerving to the right or to the left, no matter what may come. As the needle that has once been touched by the lodestone is impregnated with a yearning after that changeless star, a yearning which does not cease, even though it finds a watery grave, a yearning which lasts until the last atom of its being has been dissolved by the action of the elements, so also must we, if we are really and truly yearning to be competent guides to others, continue with unswerving devotion on the path which we have chosen, looking neither to the right or the left but fastening our eyes upon that changeless star ahead “Our Father in Heaven,” in Whom there is no change neither turning. For as the slightest deviation upon the part of the magnetic needle in the compass would be sufficient to dash the mariner upon the shoals or rocks of a dangerous shore, wrecking both ship and lives, so also, if we swerve from the path we have once chosen we become stumbling blocks to others who are looking to us for guidance and example, and their lives are on our heads. “To whom much has been given, from him much will be required.” We have received much from the teachings of the Elder Brothers, the mystic light has beckoned us on. May we realize the great responsibility that we have by our example and our lives to faithfully guide those seekers with whom we come in contact to the haven of rest and refuge. □