

A SUCCESS TALK FOR FARM BOYS

An Old Story of a Progressive Farmer Whose Life Was Nevertheless a Failure.

(Clarence Poole, in the Progressive Farmer.)

My Dear Boy:

There is a story in a certain Old Book (you can read it in Luke 12: 15-21) about a man who was a progressive farmer.

I know he was a progressive farmer because the account says that his "ground brought forth plentifully" and that his barns were filled to happen by accident. Such things do not happen by accident. If this man's farm brought forth plentifully, it was because he was a good farmer—intelligent, enterprising and industrious. He no doubt set the whole neighborhood a good example in the way he broke his land and cultivated his fields. He was no doubt keen to learn all the best methods of making crops and managing livestock. He no doubt practiced a proper rotation of crops, kept his fields from gullying, and generally gave strict attention to business. If he were alive today, he would doubtless be one of the best informed men about the work of experiment stations, and agricultural departments; a recognized authority on farming subjects in his county. Everybody would speak of him as "one of our best farmers."

Nevertheless, we have the highest authority in this universe for saying that this man's life was not a success. On the contrary he was a failure—a miserable, pitiable, ridiculous failure. Just at the time when all his work and study and planning should have been coming into their richest fruitage, God Himself wrote his epitaph in just two terrible, withering words: "Thou fool," said the Almighty as he summoned the soul of the man from his perishing body.

Why was this man a failure? A success in many notable respects, he yet failed for just one reason. He forgot that he was an eternal being. He had thought of himself as a mere earth-animal and had taken no thought of anything beyond this earth.

I am writing this letter, my boy, in the hope that I may say something which will help keep you from making the same fatal mistake this farmer made.

This is a great big subject and it is not easy to say what I wish in simple words, but I believe it can be done. Will you permit me then to make just three statements, and then follow me while I try to make my meaning clearer?

Every one of us in this world has a dual or double citizenship. That is to say I am an inhabitant of the earth but I am also an inhabitant of the Universe, of which the earth is only a fraction. I am a citizen of time, but I am also a Citizen of Eternity, of which time is only a fraction.

Look out tonight when the stars come out and think a minute. You have been thinking that everything has a beginning and an end, but it is not so. Everything connected with our bodies has a beginning and an end, but there is another world which knows of no such limitations, and it is with this other world that the soul of man has kinship.

This rolling world on which we live circles around a glorious sun, and a dozen other worlds wheel with us around that colossal globe of fire. But in the sky tonight we shall see the twinkling light of ten thousand distant suns, each attended by no one knows how many worlds like ours. And if you go millions, billions, trillions of miles to the most distant of these visible suns, what lies beyond? Do yet other worlds and suns shine with yet diviner splendor for other billions and billions of miles, on—and on—to the end?

But here the brain reels and staggers. We suddenly realize that there can be no "end." For if there is an end, what lies beyond this "end?" So what seems to the human mind an impossible conclusion is yet an inescapable conclusion. We are citizens of a universe which knows no beginning and no end.

And so, with regard to time. "In the beginning, God"—that is to say, in the beginning of our earth. But what lay back of "the beginning?" And after a million years from now, how many more million years will there be—until the end? And after the end?

No, there can be no end. I live on the earth which has a beginning and an end. I live in Time, which has a beginning and an end.

But at the same time, by reason of my dual or double citizenship, I live in a universe which knows neither end nor beginning. I live in an Eternity which is without beginning or

end. We cannot understand how these things can be. The human mind is helpless in reasoning out these facts. Nevertheless, we know that they are facts.

Does anyone tell me therefore that it is strange that man, partly mortal should also be partly immortal? I answer that it is not stranger than the facts that face us in every starry sky, and every shining sun. "The heavens declare the glory of God."

The reasonableness of christianity

—that is what I should like to make clear to you, if possible.

What I have already said has been with a view to showing that we are born into a creation wrapped around with the mystery of Infinity and Eternity. It is a creation bigger than our human minds can understand. In other words, in every one of the million starbeams of the night God whispers to man that he was born for something bigger than earth, something more enduring than time. No wonder Napoleon Bonaparte, when

some infidels argued with him one night, pointed up to the starry sky and answered: "Who then made all that?" And no wonder Lord Bacon declared he had rather believe any fable ever written than believe that the earth and heavens developed by mere accident.

Granting then that there is a God, is it not also reasonable that He should wish to make some revelation of Himself to His creatures? And if He has so revealed Himself, what religion seems most like a genuine reve-

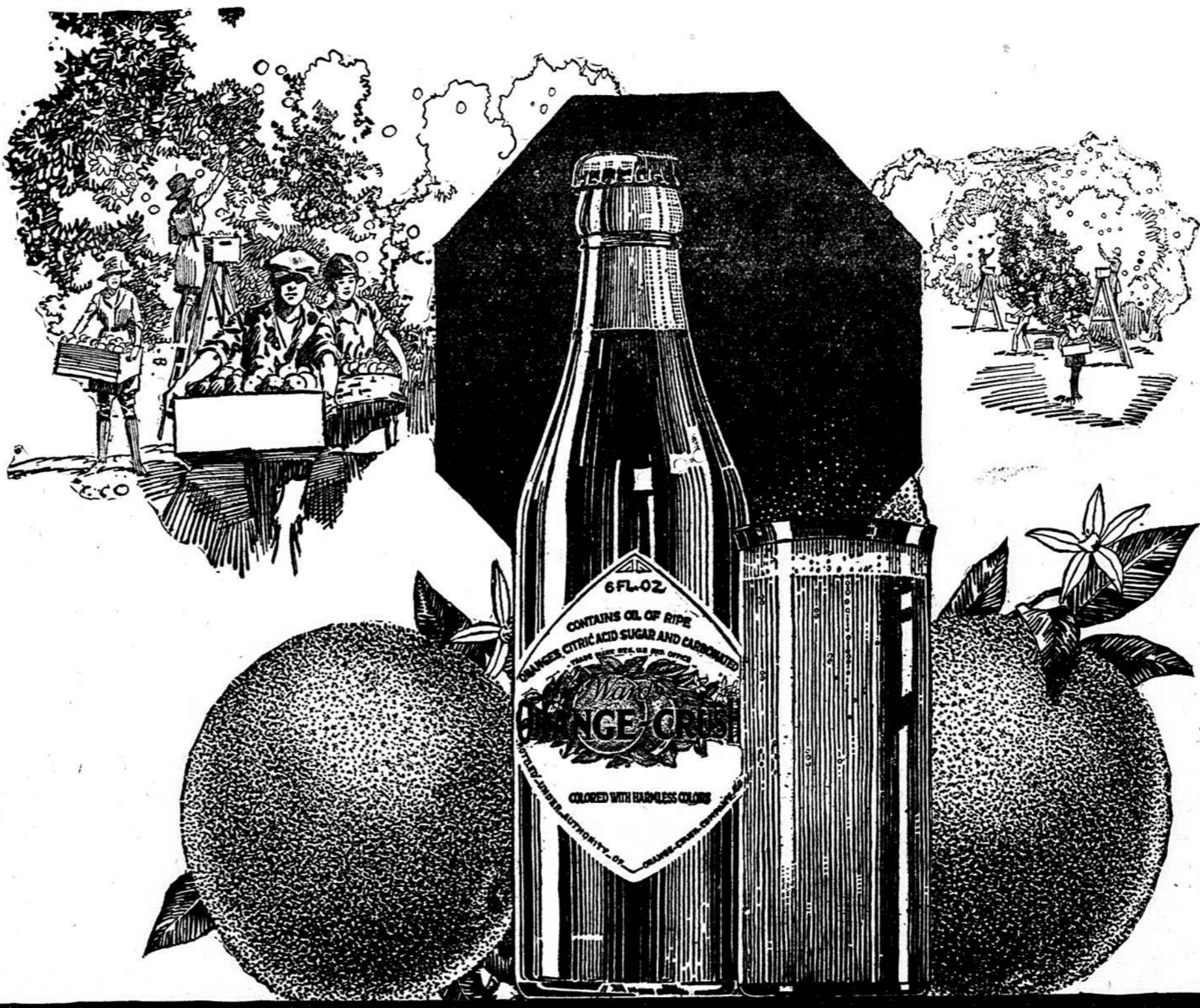
lation? What religion offers the noblest and most ennobling conception of God—Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Judaism, or Christianity? No one who has studied them with unbiased mind, I think, can be in doubt on this point. Nor do I think of anything more reasonable than the coming of Christ to earth. Why should not a God who loved His creatures say, "Let me show men how to live by Myself living the humble life of a man for three and thirty years. Let Me show men the glory of duty and

sacrifice by Myself living a human life of duty and sacrifice."

But perhaps you may say: "Why, then, doesn't the Almighty make everything so clear that a man need not be worried by doubts or fears? Why does not the Almighty speak so clearly about the life everlasting and about the wonders of Heaven as to satisfy every human being?"

No man, of course, can answer these questions definitely, but I have

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