

“Stonewall Jackson and the Lord’s Day”

At the supper-table Mrs. Jackson made some remark about the preparations for his expected departure, when he said, with a bright smile: "My dear, to-morrow is the blessed Sabbath day. It is also the regular communion season at our church. I hope I shall not be called to leave until Monday. Let us then dismiss from our conversation and our thoughts everything pertaining to the war, and have together one more quiet evening of preparation for our loved Sabbath duties."

Accordingly the dark cloud of war was pushed aside. He read aloud to her for awhile from religious magazines and newspapers, and then they went to their accustomed study of the Bible lesson, which was to be taught on the morrow to the colored Sunday school. It was such a bright, happy Saturday evening as is only known in the well-regulated Christian home. Alas! It proved the last which he ever spent under his own roof the commonwealth ordered him to march the corps of cadets for Richmond at 12:30 o'clock that day. Not waiting for his breakfast he hurried to the institute, and spent the morning in making necessary preparations for the departure of the cadets, not forgetting to send a request to his pastor that he should be present to hold with them a brief service before they marched forth at the call of their sovereign State.

At 11 o'clock he came home to take a hurried breakfast and make a few personal arrangements, and the last thing he did before leaving home was to retire with his wife into their chamber, read a part of the fifth chapter of Second Corinthians--beginning, "For we know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"--and then made an humble, tender, fervent prayer, in which he begged that the dark cloud of war might even then be dissipated; that the God of Peace might calm the storm and avert the calamity of war, or of Peace might at least go forth with him and with the young men under his command to guide, guard, help and bless them. At 12 o'clock the venerable pastor was present to make to the corps an appropriate address of Christian counsel, and lead in a fervent, tender prayer.

At the appointed hour to the exact minute, Major Jackson gave the order: "Attention! Forward! March!"

And thus the loving husband bade adieu to his home, the faithful church-member turned away from his communion service, the earnest Sunday-school teacher left his lesson untaught, and the peerless soldier marched forth from the parade-ground to win immortal fame, to come not back again until his body was borne to its burial in the beautiful cemetery at "Lexington, in the Valley of Virginia," and two continents were bursting with the fame of "Stonewall" Jackson.