

Flashes in the Night

An old man rocking on his porch at night, looking out into the darkness. He lived high up in the Rockies on what he considered his special mountain. His little grandson had crept into his lap and asked for a story. The old man said, "Tonight I would rather tell you about what I see out there in the valley. I have sort of special powers, you know."

The little boy couldn't understand. He said, "I can't see anything out there."

"Don't you see the light out there? To me it represents the good that people do."

"I see nothing."

"Are you really sure?"

"Sure! Except there are some tiny flashes from time to time."

"Yes! That is exactly what I am talking about!"

"That's just fireflies, I guess."

"No, it is much more than that. Notice that the light is white and not green."

"Yeah, I guess." The little boy was trying to understand, but was wondering if his grandfather was all right. "But it is still so very dark."

"People indeed are not very good. But within each is a great capability for good. And sometimes there is a spark of goodness that is emitted from them. Just there, look! That was the widow Benson cooking dinner for a sick neighbor. And that flash over there was old Joe, who has just decided that he will actually keep his promise to treat people better. Off to the left there was the glint from a young man, a little older than you, who has just committed himself to the Lord."

"I remember that during the Great War it was the blackest that I had ever seen. There the flashes of good were even more thrilling, as countless men and women refused to let the unspeakable evil overwhelm them. They saved so many at the risk of their lives and souls."

The little boy, hearing a strange sound to his grandfather's voice, looked up to him and saw that there was a tear in his eye. "Papa, are you feeling bad?"

"No, on the contrary, I am so happy."

"But why are you crying?"

"It is because I love goodness so much. It is true that there is so much blackness; but it only makes the contrast greater when you see the light. I love to see people struggling to do what's right. When you come to love goodness like I do, then you will understand."

As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. "I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

Luke 21:1-4