

Behold the Lifter

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“Behold the Lifter”¹

THERE are two kinds of people on earth to-day;
Just two kinds of people, no more, I say.

Not the sinner and saint, for it's well understood,
The good are half bad, and the bad are half good.

Not the rich and the poor, for to rate a man's wealth,
You must first know the state of his conscience and health.

Not the happy and sad, for the swift flying years
Bring each man his laughter and each man his tears.

No; the two kinds of people on earth I mean,
Are the people who lift, and the people who lean.

These lines, taken from one of Ella Wheeler Wilcox's poems, touched me deeply. We are not sure of the exact title ... someone called it “Which are You?” I immediately thought of the words of John the Baptist about our Lord Christ ... “Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). To take away sin is to “lift” the pressing and exhausting weight of our sins, failures, guilt, hurts, burdens, weaknesses, agonies, doubts and fears. Praise the Father that His Son is One Who “takes away” and “lifts.” He is One Who will “lighten” our pressures when our next crisis comes along. He “holds us up” whether our suffering is chronic or acute!

Thank God for those people who always refresh and renew us by their presence (Philemon 7). They share our burdens as Christ would (Gal. 6:2). They strengthen us by giving off the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ (II Cor. 2:14). They risk themselves for our good even as Christ did by His Own Cross Life (Phil. 2:30).

The serious Disciple is a “lifter.” One who brings the “Jesus light” of confidence, wisdom and hope to others. He or she determines never to be a “leaner” whose very presence can mean complaining, accusing, self pitying, grumbling and discouragement. Those who truly learn “to lean” on the Lord the most will “lean” on others the least. They have qualified themselves to be “lifters” as they walk most perfectly in the steps of the Savior!

The ten lines above were given to me by a dear friend. He truly refreshed my day by this gift of “lifting.” I have given them my own title ... “Behold the Lifter.” It expresses my feelings about the people who were and are my “lifters” in the midst of my battles. How wonderful when “certain people” come into our life and we don't have to say, “Oh, no, here they come!” How much greater it is to see a friend approach and say with praise ... “Behold the Lifter!” These are those who give us joy, strength and confidence. May many say it of each of us! This means, of course, that when “certain people” come to us with their negativity and need we should instantly and inwardly pray, “Lord, empower me to lift them up and give them spiritual eyes to see Your wonder and purpose for a their lives.” (See Acts 20:35 ... “Jesus told us we must help the weak ...” and also II Kings 6:15-17, “Open his eyes, Lord, that he may see that the angels with us are a greater force than the enemies (demons) coming

against us!') When we accept Christ's lifting for ourselves He then enables us to lift others! (See II Corinthians 1:3-5 ... this a magnificent truth!)

Which are You?²
Ella Wheeler Wilcox

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Just two kinds of people, no more, I say.
Not the sinner and saint, for it's well understood,
The good are half bad, and the bad are half good.
Not the rich and the poor, for to rate a man's wealth,
You must first know the state of his conscience and health.
Not the humble and proud, for in life's little span,
Who puts on vain airs, is not counted a man.
Not the happy and sad, for the swift flying years
Bring each man his laughter and each man his tears.
No; the two kinds of people on earth I mean,
Are the people who lift, and the people who lean.
Wherever you go, you will find the earth's masses,
Are always divided in just these two classes.
And oddly enough, you will find too, I ween,³
There's only one lifter to twenty who lean.
In which class are you? Are you easing the load,
Of overtaxed lifters, who toil down the road?
Or are you a leaner, who lets others share
Your portion of labor, and worry and care?

In addition to these compelling words, I would add a final stanza:

Have done then with your leaning, be a lifter of His light.
Make it your ambition to give others Messiah sight.
So when you are before them, a "God lamb" for all to view,
The Jesus power of lifting will create their world anew!

¹ I thought this work was anonymous until we were able to research and locate the full poem and the author. Before finding that Ella Wilcox (1850-1919) wrote the words I entitled the lines "Behold the Lifter." The words perfectly describe our Lord in John 1:29, at least to me. I can think of no more noble life than that of one who helps and enables others to find liberty and freedom by being "lifted" higher than this fallen world in which we all struggle! This spiritual release from what people HAVE BEEN in a fallen world creates for them an entrance into a new dimension of what they CAN BECOME in Christ! "He lifted me out of the slimy pit, mud and mire and set my feet on a rock" (Ps. 40:2).

² Title in question – we couldn't find the poem under this title when we searched Ella Wilcox's literary works available from Project Gutenberg.

³ Ween is an archaic word meaning believe.