

**URBANÉ AND  
HIS FRIENDS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649243730

Urbané and his friends by E. Prentiss

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**E. PRENTISS**

**URBANÉ AND  
HIS FRIENDS**



Warne's Star Series.

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URBANÉ  
AND HIS FRIENDS.

BY

MRS. E. PRENTISS,

AUTHOR OF "STEPPING HEAVENWARD," "AUNT JANIE'S HERO,"  
ETC. ETC.



LONDON :  
FREDERICK WARNE AND CO.  
BEDFORD STREET, STRAND.

LBK 1-7-53

PS  
2655  
P919m

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## INTRODUCTION.

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### URBANÉ.

“Christian saw the picture of a very grave person hung up against the wall, and this was the fashion of it: it had eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, the law of truth was written on his lips, the world was behind his back; it stood as if it pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over his head.”

NOT very unlike this portrait, is that of one whom we now introduce under a fictitious name. Urbané is no longer young; he has been a Christian pastor for more than thirty years. During all that time, he has been listening to lamentations and confessions without number, from those professing the name of Christ. Doubts, difficulties, sins, failures, sometimes agonising temptations and falls, have met him everywhere; yet he has said to himself, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever. But are most of the men and women under my influence, glorifying Him? And are they enjoying Him? And if not, why not?” He pondered and prayed over these questions for years,



meanwhile preaching Christ from week to week, out of the depths of an experience that made his face to shine as he spake of Him; the consequence of which was, that ever and anon, a man or a woman would come to him with such language as this:

"I know I ought to love to read the Bible, but I do not." "I get no answers to my prayers." "I am tormented with doubts; I fear I am not regenerate." "My easily-besetting sins overcome me; I get no dominion over them." "I have lost my property, and am anxious to know what I have done to make God so angry with me." "My children are disobedient and ungrateful and worldly. Why am I so unfortunate?"

Again and again, Urbané tried to explain and do away with these difficulties; they confronted him in all directions, until at last, he bethought himself of devoting one evening in each week to instructions more colloquial and simple than those of the pulpit, and thus meet the wants so painfully felt and expressed.

His plan was to set his young people upon the *study* of the Bible, in place of the careless habit of mechanical reading, so much the evil of the day. And while he did not pretend to strike out new and original thoughts, his living voice had a power that cannot be reproduced upon paper. Imagine a man of threescore years, every inch a man, and yet with feminine sweetness in his face: imagine a form dilating, at times, as earnest thought filled and expanded it; behold one that has "seen the Lord," standing up week after week, year after year, to "plead with men," to look also and live,

and you have a faint idea of one whose passion was his Christ. He had caught up no new and popular doctrine, but what he spake he knew. He had been down into a mine, and patiently sought there for hid treasure; he had come up to share his silver and his gold with whoever would accept them from his hand. No one man knew his whole life. One could say, "He has talked and prayed with me, urging me to self-consecration, a score of times." And another, "When I was sick he came unto me, and brought sunshine into my room, for weeks and months." And another, "He snatched me out of a career that was about to ruin my soul; it cost him prayers and tears and sleepless nights; but he *lavished* them upon me." "To me he came when I was poor, and a stranger; he took me by the hand and encouraged me," could be said by yet another. "He gave me the very coat from his back, and the shoes from his feet." "He poured wine and oil into the wounds of a guilty conscience, he was my son of consolation, when I was weeping over a new-made grave; I owe him life-long devotion."

Yet no such language was heard. Urbané did his work, not to be seen of men, but of God; his right hand knew not what was done by the left; he had no thirst for human praise; he rarely thought or spoke of himself, but hid himself humbly away behind his Lord.

It has been thought that the conversations held in the study of this Christian pastor, might meet the wants of a class always existing in the Church, who

are dissatisfied with themselves, yet not satisfied with Christ; who would style themselves, as

“Grovelers below, yet wanting will to rise;  
Tired of the world, unfitted for the skies.”

Most of those who attended the meetings regularly were young, yet not of the youngest; there were professional men and business men; there were wives and mothers, who came thirsting for the truth. Others, eager to harmonise their two separate masters, God and Mammon, Christ and self, came and went, came and went. If there was no ball or festival, they would come idling into Urbané's library, personal friendship and respect for him being quite as much their impelling motive as any other. Then there were some who had found life a disappointment, a failure, and came for healing.

There were two friends whose presence he always desired, fancying they could sometimes state a truth more happily than himself. Philologus was a man of less pliable character than Urbané, but he was one who studied the Word of God with great diligence; his Greek Testament, amply interleaved, and enriched with careful notes in his own hand, bore witness to no common research. Claudia had been the friend of both from her youth up. She was one of the least among petite women; not a dwarf, but a perfect little fairy, and the brightest of souls looked out of her shining eyes; once seen, she was never to be forgotten; if you met her in a picture gallery, hers was the image