

# RIGHTING A WRONG

John Stuart Blackie (1809 – 1895) was a Scottish scholar – an author and professor of the University of Edinburgh.

He was very well known in his day, proud of his Scottish heritage, and produced a considerable amount of literary work, usually on classical or Scottish subjects, including some poems and songs.

But a telling incident defining his character occurred on one occasion in his classroom. Blackie was listening to his students as they presented oral readings.

When one young man rose to begin his recitation, he held his book in the wrong hand. The professor thundered his displeasure: “Take your book in your right hand, and be seated!”

At this harsh rebuke, the student held up his right arm. He didn’t have a right hand.

The other students shifted uneasily in their chairs. For a moment, Professor Blackie hesitated.

Then he made his way to the student, put his arm around him, and with tears streaming from his eyes, said, “I never knew about it. Please, will you forgive me?”

His humble apology made a lasting impact on that young man.

This story was told some time later in a large gathering of Christian believers. At the close of the meeting, a man came forward, turned to the crowd, and raised his right arm. It ended at the wrist.

“I was that student,” he said. “Professor Blackie led me to Christ. But he never could have done it if he had not made the wrong right.”

Humility opens doors – and hearts – because it represents selflessness and a concern for others.

Here is what some famous people have had to say about humility:

- “It is unwise to be too sure of one’s own wisdom. It is healthy to be reminded that the strongest might weaken and the wisest might err.” – Mahatma Gandhi
- “A great man is always willing to be little.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson
- “True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.” – C.S. Lewis

(more)

- “I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day.” – Abraham Lincoln
- “In the course of my life, I have often had to eat my words, and I must confess that I have always found it a wholesome diet.” – Winston Churchill
- “A man should never be ashamed to own that he has been in the wrong, which is but saying in other words that he is wiser today than he was yesterday.” – Alexander Pope

Words fitly spoken and advice to be remembered.

*But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6 NKJV).*

– Beecher Hunter