

THE MAGIC KEY

By Rev. Winifred Higginson

The Rev. Grant Herstow was in a most mundane mood. He was tired and sleepy, having spent the night with a sick parishioner. In vain he sought to extract from the Word some message for his prayer meeting that evening. His mind roamed about, visioning what he might do had he access to a theological library, or the wherewithal to buy several popular commentaries on various books of the Bible.

Suddenly the door opened and a man in white garments entered. That he was a stranger was apparent by his clothing, so different from that worn in our northern clime. He was greeted cordially and seated in a chair. Wasting no time in commonplaces he observed, "You have a nice library here, and I see you have the greatest Book. What a fountain of inspiration it is!"

"Oh, yes," Mr. Herstow replied, "but just now I am in despair, as I can think of no text or topic for our meeting tonight."

"How strange that I should have been sent with a magic key to unlock the Book, so that from it, through you, there may be a constant stream of light and blessing. See, here is the key," and he held out a shining shaft with brilliance thereon. These sparkled and glowed the one word "Obedience" engraved in jeweled with iridescent lights, surpassing any gems the pastor had ever seen.

He took the gift from the extended hand of his guest and said, "How shall this be used? Is there not a set of directions with it?"

"The combination is so simple a child may understand," continued the man in white. "In fact, the simple, the underprivileged, the dull of mind, find this key to work magic. Take it and lay it upon the passage you wish illuminated, meditate on it, and then take the ground of acceptance, pledging yourself to live it out, and you will experience what you most wish to know. Let me demonstrate on this passage, 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.' Here is the passage." And suiting the action to the word he laid the key upon it. But the jewels became dull, while the stranger gazed amazed.

Mr. Herstow needed no further directions. A shaft of conviction pierced his heart like a dart as he remembered the struggle he had experienced forgiving a brother pastor who had made it uncomfortable for him on his last charge and now occupied it. He could easily forgive sinners. In fact, his generous nature never held resentment at what some weak sinner might say about or do to him.

But when it came to people who professed everything that holiness involved behaving as ethical unbelievers would blush to—well, he had not grace to love such. He bowed his head and groans mingled with tears as he prayed for a forgiving spirit towards all.

He forgot about his visitor until, glancing up, he saw that he was gone. But still he wept and prayed until he felt that all claims to his own rights had been melted and swept away.

He saw the Christ bearing his iniquities as well as his sin and saying, "Why smite me in vain and injustice for you? No shaft of sin has pierced you until it has passed through me and I have suffered and quenched it in my blood."

Love and faith filled the heart of the pastor

as the enmities of years melted away; slights, apparent or otherwise; spites; wrong that hurt the cause as much as they had wounded him—these all melted away and a fountain of divine compassion and longsuffering filled the void.

Looking up, he was attracted by the strange glow. It was the rainbow hues on fire from his magic key. And he awoke!

SOUL WINNING

By James A. DeWeerd

It would be well for us to discuss the methods of winning souls. There are two leading ways, mass evangelism and personal evangelism. There are two extremes within the Church, one element which believes in continuously carrying on an evangelistic campaign with paid workers and another which opposes this type of progress and urges that the church through its pastor and membership carry on personal campaigns to reach those who are without Christ. However, to my mind the ideal method is to have that which is best in mass evangelistic effort accompanied with personal visitation. There has been as always sweeping the religious world several movements, that which emphasizes mass evangelism is the typical movement, that which emphasizes personal work is the Oxford group and various other advocates of personal visitation. There are attendant evils on both methods, the first puts a church in such a psychological condition that if they are not having a sensational and emotional stir, the members grow disinterested, cold and backslidden and are soon drifting off in search of other thrills; and the other which does not believe in revivals is attended by people who are simply interested in having Belshazzar's or knife and fork affairs. A recent campaign of this type did little more for the church than to adjust membership and involve a large system of bookkeeping as well as enormous expense. Not until we find a middle of the road where the church has consecrated and Spirit-filled workers who are willing to devote themselves to person to person, house to house, hand to hand evangelism along with occasional evangelistic services in the church will we be able to combine both methods and succeed.

However, to lay the stress in this article upon personal work, we would like to mention some helpful things. We are going to base these rules for success upon the suggestion which Christ makes when he compares fishing to the art of soul-winning. There is a very excellent comparison and analogy. In order to be fishermen, we must first have a pole, line, hook, bait, sinker and bobber. As a fisher of men, our pole is the Bible, our line is prayer. It is wonderful to think of a line that can be cast about the entire world, of one that can go behind closed doors and reach to places where we ourselves could not go. At the end of this line there must be the hook which is faith and, after all, what would the Bible or prayer be without faith, that element which can get the "hook in the jaw" and the "harpoon in the soul" to which it is sent? This hook, however, must not be thrown bare, it must be baited with love. Too many have tried to bait the hook with sour holiness. When one's heart is filled with a hundred per cent love for God and one's fellow men, they

are ready then to love men into the Kingdom of God. As the chorus puts it:

"Lord, lay some soul upon my heart
And love that soul through me,
Oh! may I humbly do my part
To win that soul to Thee."

Also, in our equipment we must have a sinker. We compare that to the quality that enables our hook and bait and line to be carried deep, for, after all, there are all classes that must be reached, many who are down and out, many neglected and forgotten ones in whom no one has seen spiritual values. We could compare the sinker in this analogy to conviction, that something that is deep and pungent, that which grips and stirs. If you fish as I do, you need a bobber. In fishing for men, I call this the spirit of discernment, that element we call tact that helps us to know just when to pull the line or draw the net. I have seen many people who did not have this essential. Perhaps the very first time they saw some one in church without any definite leading of the Holy Spirit they would go back and speak to them personally in such a way as to embarrass them; the individual, rather than being drawn to Christ, was driven farther away. The personal worker lacked tact and discretion. A bobber will help to keep our line out of the mud, and if there was ever a time when the gospel standard needs to be lifted high where the banner will no longer trail the dust, where the doctrines of the Bible will no longer be associated with free love, and emotional orgies, and many other distracting scandals that have crept into the Church, it is now. The good fisherman must always have patience. The best fishermen are those who can sit for hours when they are having no luck. This eternal and untiring patience will keep us calm and unworried in the face of defeat and failure at that which is mostly needed among the discouraged Christian workers of today. Another thought in this analogy is the impression that a good fisherman cannot talk too much and so it is that we who are attempting to catch souls for Christ must not criticize or we will scare the fish away. Many prospects have been driven from our churches and altars because of our boisterous, rackety, fire-eating, carping, criticizing type of workers. Along with this, we would suggest that we should always string the fish. Too many churches after they win souls do not tie them up to the church and to a place of responsibility. As a result of this, we have a shiftless, undependable group of people who are always in and out, off and on, up and down in their experience and attendance at a place of worship. Society is the sea before us, the church is the boat, the gospel is the net and if there was ever a time when we needed to have a sweep and a great draught, it is now. Too long we have been having fisherman's bad luck. Our appeal now is to both masses and individuals that they will use every sane and reasonable method in reaching the lost.—Wesleyan Methodist.

God has two cures for ignorance and they are inseparable.

1. If any of you lack wisdom, **let him ask of God**, that giveth to **all** men liberally (James 1:5).

2. **Study** (Chambers says, "Study until your brain aches") to shew thyself approved unto God (II. Tim. 2:15).