

## THINGS THAT ARE SACRED

Every man who makes room for God in his life needs a practical and scriptural method of setting apart for use the sacred things of God and religion. This is important. Secularity when it invades life and takes full possession will in process of time drive out of life all the proper groundwork of religion.

High in this list we would place the Word of God as sacred to us. This regard is a matter of faith, and sincere reverence as an expression of our faith. Having received the Bible as the Word of God, of full authority and in the original inspired of God, it has become to us the greatest and best book of all the libraries of earth. We place it uppermost in our affections; we read it with profit; and we are jealous of its preservation in our day and generation.

Next to God's Word we would speak of Sunday, the Christian Sabbath as the day of God. It is a sacred day, and set apart in the faith of millions of God's people by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was the Lord's Day to the early saints of this Christian era, and so it continues in the work of millions of His people. We confess to great alarm over the world's invasion of Sunday; and in equal measure this sacred day is being lost at the hands of formal religion, such as the churches who start the day with the worship of the mass in its early hours and then proceed to make the remainder of the day the outstanding holiday of the week. And when war takes possession of the world, as it has in recent years, the Lord's day is one of the first casualties. Yet we will not give up and give away our high regard for the sacredness of the Lord's day. We can at least do our part to keep it and to hold it in reverence.

Our house of worship is a place we love with a deep and ardent affection. It may be just another church to fellow-Christians, or simply a church building to the world, but to those upon whose shoulders rests its support and success, the place where we meet to worship God is a sacred and greatly loved place. And out of this loving concern all work, all service, and all expressions of devotion to God take on a new meaning. The church is a visible means through which our investments with God take form. We love the church with a deep and practical devotion. Other places also are sacred to God's people whose program of service is such as to include its widely spread institutions; its missions, and colleges, and special institutions of service over the country.

In our personal experiences of life there are sacred incidents, and times, and places that we cherish. Here some loved ones are buried, and the place and the mouldering dust of the dead are sacred to us. Here in a grove of trees we held forth with a tent campaign, and though the grounds are long since vacated of all the marks of that meeting, memories linger there, and the ground seems to us a sacred place. Here we started our church in a city, and passed on from that rented place to other and better locations. But as we pass along the street and memory calls up once again the spiritual conflict and hard-won victories the place seems sacred to us. And there are numerous places scattered along our journey of life where our souls met God in prayer and worship that are sacred in our memories, even as an old soldier keeps fresh in life's memories the places where battles were fought and victories won or lost. This high regard for the

sacred things and places of our Christian faith is important; in many respects we would say it takes on enough of importance as to decide between a life of little depth and meaning in God's service, or a life of deep and far-reaching capacity of service.—Selected.

## EVANGELISM OF YOUTH

"Every church," someone declared, "is only one generation removed from extinction." The author of that statement saw clearly that a church that cannot lead its youth into a vital Christian life today, will be a dead church tomorrow.

Has it ever occurred to you as strange that youth needs to be evangelized? Consider Jesus' welcome to little children, with hands of blessing on their heads, and the most solemn warnings to any who might "cause one of these little ones to stumble." Under ideal conditions we might easily believe that Jesus might expect every child of a Christian home to grow up a Christian just as naturally as the acorn becomes an oak.

Yet the hard fact remains that the process of evangelism is important in the life of every youth. With the power of choice, it is vitally necessary that each one, for himself, make the supreme and controlling choice of his life, a personal surrender and commitment of life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

We live in a world of hard choices. Every youth who is alive to the possibilities around him must face almost daily many situations which compel him to choose. He brings to these problems a mind that is much inclined toward selfishness. For all of us it is true that every decision we make is made in harmony with our judgment that it leads to the greatest happiness for ourselves. This is true of the decisions that appear to be altruistic and completely unselfish. What matters most is the kind of happiness we seek. When a young Judson, and his beautiful bride, Anne, chose to go to Burma, facing bitter persecution, hardship, loneliness, and early death, rather than the comfort, companionship, and easy pleasures of their New England village, even they made that choice because for them it was the path to inner contentment and joy.

The rich young ruler refused the challenge of Jesus because he believed that the greatest happiness for him would come in the way of the immediate, self-centered pleasures that his wealth would afford.

Face to face with the necessity of making many decisions, we are conscious that at times at least "all we like sheep have gone astray." There lies the need for personal forgiveness. But together with the peace that Christ gives, we need his continuing Presence to enable us increasingly to make the right decisions until they become habitual. Evangelism of youth must help young people to be so related to Christ that they find forgiveness, life-purpose, and power to live the victorious life.

Intelligent young people today want to know clearly just why the Christian life is the best way. In our appeal to youth, as Sunday school teachers and pastors, we need to make clear the outstanding reasons for accepting Christ. In addition to the immediate blessing of inner peace that comes through forgiveness, the following appeals are valid.

There is, first, the choice of the best. Where is there a youth who does not, secretly at least, no matter how sophisticated the "front" may be, have a genuine desire

to be the best that he can be, and relate himself happily to the best in the world? Young people cry for life—larger life. Happy is the friend of youth who can enable them to see that the most abundant life is to be found only in Christ. Youth wants that way which will lead not merely to present happiness, but to that which is eternally best. Young people in preparing for their life work, try to build for permanence. They continue their scholastic training in college and select school.

In the second place, there is the fear of the worst.

A great deal of foolishness has been written and spoken against the appeal to fear. We know now that exaggerated fear may be very unwholesome, but we also know that there is such a thing as a godly fear, which is not only wholesome but necessary to the most beautiful and effective life.

As the old whaler said, "I will have no man in my boat who is not afraid of a whale," so we want no one on life's voyage with us who does not have some genuine fear of the consequences of wrong decisions in life. We need not seek to frighten young people into the kingdom of God by descriptions of an angry deity, but we do need to speak the truth as to the fatal results which may result from any conduct less than the best.

Third, there is the challenge of the hard right.

Who wants an easy job? Only the lazy person wants it. Youth, with strength, ambition and courage, responds to the hard right. If there are "impossible" tasks that need to be done, youth responds to such a challenge. If there are unoccupied areas of the world, where Christ needs to be made known, if there are areas of life that need to be redeemed here at home, if there is a new world to be made after the pattern of the mind of Christ, young people will give their lives to it. The marching millions of youth in the world today are proof of the spirit of youth in its response to such a challenge. But only Christ can give proper direction to that marvelous spirit of youth, which, if captured for Him, will give point to His declaration that "The kingdom of God is at hand."—Evangelical Young People's Quarterly.

## MORE MENNONITE SCHOOLS

More than 2,000 clerical and lay delegates from all parts of the world attended the recent Mennonite Conference at Allenville, Pennsylvania. They were told by one of the speakers that the public schools are failing to give adequate character training along spiritual lines. The speaker declared that many Mennonite boys and girls in public high schools are being led astray by the example of teachers not of their faith. He urged the extension of Mennonite schools from the present elementary grades to high schools and colleges under the church's control.—Religious Digest.

Years ago a group of newspaper reporters approached General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, and inquired what in his opinion was the greatest peril of the immediate future. He answered, "The world's immediate and greatest peril is that the Church will offer the world a philosophy of Christianity that provides forgiveness without regeneration, Christianity without Christ, religion without the Holy Ghost, politics without God, heaven without hell."—Selected.