

The Pastor's Message

ONE THING NEEDFUL

Rev. F. A. Anderson*

Many things are desirable, but one thing is needful, and that is to sit at Jesus' feet and learn with Nicodemus that we "must be born again" if we are to be true Christians. We may raise our hand for prayer, we may shake hands with the preacher, we may sign cards and join churches and pray at altars and yet be no more Christian than we were before. We must pray and there's no better place than at a church altar, but the all essential thing is to have the witness in our hearts that we have been quickened by the Spirit and renewed by Divine Grace from the death of sin.

We need to sit at Jesus' feet with the disciples and learn the necessity of tarrying at our personal Jerusalem until we have received our personal Pentecost. We must have the baptism of Christ, which is the baptism with the Holy Ghost, upon us; our hearts cleansed by His power and filled with His presence. Until we have this experience we are not ready to go and witness "In all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

The Christ Who brought every atom of matter in the universe into existence and joined them together in different quantities to form the different substances that meet our sight and touch; Who, by the touch of His omnipotent finger started the mechanism of the universe in motion and Who upholdeth all things by the "Word of His power;" the Christ Who stilled the storm, healed the sick, raised the dead and cast out devils, has also bidden us go with the Gospel to a lost world and has assured us that our resources are His own infinite power, but He has also bidden us tarry until we are baptized with the Holy Ghost to qualify us for the service.

We need, as did Martha, to sit at Jesus' feet and learn the necessity of fellowship and communion with Him. The multitudes of our day are still so "careful and troubled about many things" that they forget to commune with Him in prayer and to listen to His voice as it speaks to their heart, until, when in the testing and trying experiences of life, when it seems everything worthwhile has been lost or taken away, and Jesus whispers, "Believest thou," we can still look up and say with her, "Yea, Lord: I believe."

We need to sit at Jesus' feet with the Rich Young Ruler and learn the need of consecrated discipleship. We must not only keep the moral code, which demands of us concerning some things "Thou shalt" and of others "Thou shalt not," but we must also follow Jesus with a spirit of submission and surrender to His will. A spirit, which, when He has laid His hand upon that thing, or those things, which lie nearest our heart and has bidden us part with them, we can look up through the tears of sorrow at the thought of parting with them and say in praise, "The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

The experiences which I have suggested here are not easily attained. They come only as we sit patiently at the feet of the Master and learn of Him. They become a personal experience only as we feel the burning fires

of pungent conviction burning in our souls, and as we walk in the light of that conviction, with our hand in His, over the rough and difficult places of life. However, looking back, the joy of possession will dwarf the sacrifice encountered in obtaining the heights. Let us not be so "Careful and troubled" about the "Many things" of life that we fill miss the all essential thing of sitting patiently at Jesus' feet.

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LET CHRISTIANS SPEAK

By Leslie R. Marston

The following I report to Christian America with deep regret. It is against my constitutional optimism to "view with alarm" or to magnify "the evils of the day." But I cannot blink facts, and some facts which come into my possession bring an appalling responsibility which I must share with my fellow Christians.

A letter reaches me from a global outpost of our far-flung battle lines. The writer of the letter is an army chaplain of long experience and unquestioned integrity. Our correspondence has extended over a considerable period of time and never before has he been severe in his comments. He is a sane man, a moderate man, with a wholesome outlook on the world, the army, his work. Before giving his letter, I quote the estimate placed on this chaplain by a fellow officer, not a chaplain, who was invalided home and wrote to the chaplain's wife as follows:

"We've many times ducked into the same fox hole during air raids day and night. Also, whenever we could sneak away, we'd jeep into the jungle, and then again we'd explore the coast as far as we could. Many unusual experiences were ours, and our associations I am sure made it easier for us to put up with the stinking heat, the vermin, the Japs, the chow, dehydrated potatoes and all that. Both of us got malaria, and I've seen that man of yours preach seven or eight services of a Sunday when he had a fever and could hardly drag around . . ."

"He is by no means a rock-ribbed preacher. He is a soldier's chaplain, and Sunday after Sunday I have seen men, lots of them, walk long distances to hear him. He is a humble, hard working man, and there are very few I know whom I think more of. He makes friends everywhere."

Such is the man who writes, under date of December 1, 1944, the following:

"Perhaps I would not be writing to you so soon again, except that at present my mood is one of utter disgust . . . Within a stone's throw from where I sit this evening in my office is the open air theatre . . . This evening there is a USO show in progress. Most of the voices are those of women entertainers. A few moments ago a song from a woman's voice came screaming through the loud speakers, which was the most vile, obscene thing I have ever heard. In seductive language she in her song is describing why she wants to get married. At the close of it the mistress of ceremonies yells through the mike, 'Men, you could all get twenty years for what you are thinking!' and then lets out a raucous, vulgar laugh. If what I hear as I sit here trying to write this letter is a fair example of the modern cinema, society is truly in a pitiable state. After one has been around army

camp as long as I have they know something of conditions and mental attitudes of depraved humanity, but in all my life my ears have never been forced to listen to more obscene, suggestive, degrading prattle than these female entertainers are blating over the air.

"It is a travesty on American citizenship that its people are asked to support an institution that will send to its soldiers such type of entertainment. It only tends to increase the moral frustration that is already defeating the lives of too many soldiers. It is an insult to God Almighty and human intelligence. My heart is sick over it. Sodom and Gomorrah would blush with shame if they were forced to sit and listen to such obscenity.

"The most severe shock of it all is that the shrieks of laughter from the audience are more pronounced among the Wacs than the men. This does not mean that all of the Wacs and soldiers are on the wrong track, for there are many fine Christians among them. It does mean, however, that unless certain current tendencies are checked by either public opinion or a mighty revival the moral worth of our nation will be ruined. If the plague of this vile "morale entertainment" that is cursing our army camps everywhere were generally known among our American citizenry certainly there are individuals and organizations that would militantly protest its continuance.

"Once before I went to a Special Service Officer with a protest and he informed me that there was nothing that could be done, for all programs by agencies entertaining troops were censored in Washington before being allowed to go over seas. If the Washington censors O. K. programs they had to be considered acceptable in this theatre.

"While it may be wise to delete my name for the time being, if any of the above statements are either used orally or printed, yet I trust that from some source there will go a word of warning to Christians who feel duty bound to be patriotic and support the USO who are hiring entertainers to exude their mental filth upon the personnel of our armed forces.

"Trusting that my next letter to you will will have a more cheerful note, and one of victory, I remain . . ."

God have mercy on our brave boys who are subjected to such seductive influences under official sanction in the pressure of their loneliness and heart-hunger for love. Let Christians speak!—The Protestant Voice.

INTERPRETATIONS OF LOVE

Patience is Love on the anvil bearing blow after blow of suffering.

Zeal is love in the harvest field, never tiring of toil.

Meekness is Love in company when it vaunteth not itself.

Perseverance is Love on a journey pressing on with unflagging step toward the end.

Joy is Love making its own sunshine where others see nothing but gloom.

Power is Love driving the soul's chariot wheels over all opposition.

Gentleness is nothing but Love in her own sweet voice and manner.—Jacques.

Tertullian wrote: "Clothe yourself with the silk of piety, with the satin of sanctity and with the purple of modesty; so shall God Himself be your suitor.—The Church Herald.