

MARKS OF A CHRISTIAN

By H. S. Dow

"If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Rom. 8:9.

Almost everything that we have to do with in this present world has its earmarks, whether it is something in nature, as animals and plants, or whether it is something in metals which are found in the earth such as gold, silver, iron, etc. They all have their distinguishing marks by which we can distinguish them from other things. For instance, we say, fire is hot, ice is cold, the sun is bright. Heat, cold, brightness are their ear-marks, or distinguishing features. Again, when we look at the things that are made by man, those that are made according to a standard of quality, the manufacturer puts his stamp of approval on the genuine article, to distinguish it from cheaper articles, substitutes made by other firms knowing that many people are looking for articles of merchandise, whether of food or clothing, which they can buy for less money than the genuine article costs. Hence, when we go shopping, we can find great quantities of cheap articles, which are often recommended to wear as well, or give as good service and satisfaction as the best on the market, and thousands of buyers are continually spending their money for the substitutes, because they are cheaper, only to be disappointed after they have tried them, and found them to be far from satisfactory. And many of us come to realize the truth of the old saying: "You can't get something for nothing."

Now we have said all the foregoing to say this: What men are doing in mercantile life, Satan is doing in the religious realm, for he knows that God has provided salvation for all men at a great cost, viz., by the sufferings and death of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ, and Satan knows also that it costs mankind much, yea, everything, to obtain so great a salvation. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not ALL that he hath, he cannot be My disciple." Luke 14:33. Note also the text: "If ANY man," there is positively no exception. One price to everybody, OUR ALL!

So, because of Satan's ingenuity and ability to deceive some souls, God has given many warnings in His word of the danger of being deceived, and he has spoken very plainly regarding the way and cost of obtaining salvation. In the words of our text the Apostle seems to sum up all that God requires of a soul in order to belong to Him, which is, that every soul must possess the Spirit of Christ. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." Notice, please, that the apostle does not judge our spiritual condition by our outward acts, but He judges by the spirit that we possess. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart."

Man may do many works of righteousness and still not possess the Spirit of Christ. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and give my body to be burned and have not charity I am nothing" I. Cor. 13. Again, Jesus said: "Many will say unto Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name and in Thy name cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works? Then will I say unto them, depart, I never knew you." Mat. 7:23. The Scribes and Pharisees boasted of their good works, and Jesus admitted that their outward lives were above reproach. He said they were like whited sepulchres appearing beautiful in the eyes of men, but inwardly full of rotteness and all

uncleanness. On the other side of the question, a man may love God supremely, and yet, through lack of watchfulness or because of strong temptation, he may be overtaken in a fault, and sin. Gal. 6:1. Still, if such a one returns to God in penitence and faith, God will forgive, for He sees the penitent heart and does not cast him off even though men might.

When the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery, seeking authority from Him to stone her, he said unto them: "He that is without sin (he did not say the sin that she was guilty of, but any sin) let him cast a stone." There were no stones cast, and our Lord said to the poor woman: "Where are thine accusers?" "Neither do I condemn thee; go thy way and sin no more." Jesus freely forgave her because He saw that in spite of her sin, she had a penitent heart and truly wanted to love God and to do what was right.

"A bruised reed He will not break and the smoking flax He will not quench."

Then the question naturally arises: How shall I know the Spirit of Christ when I see it? What are its most outstanding characteristics, as manifested in the life of a Christian? Or how can we distinguish the genuine from the counterfeit, seeing that one may do many good works, may be liberal and give largely to religious works or works of charity, and may be a member of a church, honest and respectable, and yet may not have the Spirit of Christ? For an example of one who possessed many splendid qualities, and yet would not pay the price of the genuine salvation, see the rich young ruler who came to Jesus asking, "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" When our Lord told him to sell all and come and follow Him, he went away sorrowful.

I think, readers, that you will agree with me when I say that the basic principle of the Spirit of Christ is love, supreme love to God, and to love our neighbor as ourselves, and furthermore love for our enemies. Of course this kind of love manifests itself in various ways in the life and works of one who possesses it.

This same Apostle Paul gives us a description of it in I. Cor. 13. Let us read it again. Verse 4: First, it is kind even when in suffering, perhaps caused by an enemy who wrongs you and tries to destroy you. There is no spirit of retaliation, or strike-back in love. You will have a genuine feeling of pity, and sorrow, and, as Jesus commanded you, will pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you. For example see the account of Stephen in Acts 7. If we can pass this first test of love and feel good and praise God in our hearts, I think perhaps we will be able to make a pass-mark on all that follows. Here they are: "Love envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own." Her own what? Her own rights, interests, feelings, etc. Why? Paul says, because "I am crucified with Christ." Our old man self is dead. Some one has said, you can tell how big a fire a man has had by what is left. If there is nothing left but some ashes, he has had a big fire, but if the house is still standing with only a little spot burned on the roof he did not have much of a fire. Likewise you can tell about how much the old man has been crucified, and the soul has been sanctified by how much selfishness there is left. Now say, Amen! And furthermore Paul says: Love is not provoked, thinketh no evil." How about that test? Are we thinking evil of people because we don't know why they do certain things, and don't

know their motives. "Rejoiceth not in iniquity." Love does not laugh when some one falls, and say, "I told you so." "Rejoiceth in the truth," loves the truth, the whole truth. Loves the Word of God, reads it, wants to hear it preached in all its fulness and thrives on it. And finally see its attitude toward ALL things in verse 7.

He may not like, or choose, all the things that come to him, but he who loves beareth all things, "will not murmur nor complain beneath the chastening rod and in the hour of grief and pain will lean upon his God." "Believeth all things" will work together for his good. "Believeth all things," when he cannot see or understand he hopes for the best. "We are saved by hope." From what? From discouragement and despair. "Endureth all things." Hence, "Never faileth." Why? Because it has faith for its support, founded on the promises of the Eternal God. That is the genuine article, which James calls "pure religion." It is costly, it is pure, but methinks we will all need it to get us safely past the judgment bar of God.

"O for a faith that will not shrink,
Though pressed by every foe,
That will not falter on the brink
Of any earthly foe.

That will not murmur nor complain
Beneath the chastening rod,
But in the hour of grief and pain
Will lean upon its God.

A faith that shines more bright and clear
When tempests rage without;
That when in danger knows no fear,
In darkness feels no doubt." Amen!

GOD'S SECOND BEST

(Continued from Page 3)

built up this great manufacturing business.

I have made millions of dollars.

I have given away millions to churches and charities.

"But all of my life I have been like thousands of young men and women at their lathe, shop bench, their office desk—a mere slave to my job. I have never known, and have never done, the work God had for me to do in the world. I taught a large Sunday-school class and I have supported the church, but I never knew and never did that work to which the Spirit of God was calling me that night in the park when I was seventeen years of age."

As I looked at this successful businessman, with his massive head, his commanding bearing, his penetrating eye, his great physique, he seemed the sort of overpowering, dynamic type of man that Moody was. Perhaps this was the one God was preparing to receive the mantle of this "Hound of Heaven" who won a million souls for God. Perhaps the greatest revival for which the men and women throughout America had prayed awaited the obedience of this seventeen-year-old boy!

The great man vanished.

In his place I saw a broken, fearful disappointed beggar asking an unknown preacher for help that could not now be given.

"Go out," said he, "and tell young people my experience. Tell them that there is only one thing worth while—they must obey God! Warn them, if you can, so that they will not miss it as I have missed it."

Whenever you pass a petrol pump, remember that it may be one invented and manufactured by this man and his company. And remember his message.—Unknown.