

THE LAST UNSURRENDERED OUTPOST

It usually happens that our economic interests are the last areas of our life to be surrendered to Christ. It very often happens that we find it far easier to break with vicious habits, or to make peace with old time enemies, than to bring all of our possessions under subjection to the Lord Christ.

A homespun old farmer in Kansas was talking about this very matter with his pastor. He had not been a Christian long, and was explaining the struggle he had gone through before his present preacher arrived on the scene.

"Guess the truth of the matter was that I was just plain stingy," he said, and reports that the preacher had received from other sources previously confirmed the man's confession. "I found it awful hard to let go of money, and my family was suffering because of it. My girls were not taking music lessons as they should have, and my oldest boy was getting just a little bitter because I wouldn't agree to let him go in town to high school.

"But I was really honest about my new religious life, and I was trying mighty hard to make a success of it. But it seemed like every time I prayed this thing of money would come up before my mind. I couldn't shake it. I couldn't argue with it.

"Finally one day out in the field in the back lot I got down on my knees alongside the fence, and I promised the Lord that I would loosen up a little. That gave me a little peace, and then I went further. I said, 'Lord, I've always laughed at the missionaries, but just to prove my case I'll give them twenty-five dollars.' Right then the battle started. The devil says to me, 'Why Dave, that's too much. You can't afford it. You mustn't.' And then I knew I had to go through with it, and I says to the devil, 'Old fellow, I'm going to double it. I'll make it fifty.'

"And do you know, that old devil wouldn't give up on me. I kept raisin' my promise, and raisin' it. I was determined to get it up to the place where he'd call it quits and leave me alone. And I had to make it four hundred dollars before I got any peace of mind.

"Well sir, I was so afraid that I'd change my mind and lose out that I went up to the house, got into the car, and drive over to the preacher, with my check book. And I gave him a check for four hundred dollars before the sun went down. He'd known me, and he'd known how stingy I was, and I guess that four hundred dollars about shook him down to the ground. But he took it, and then thanked me, and then prayed for me.

"And that's the way I won the battle. After that, every time I began to get cautious I'd double my promise. Sometimes I had to do it several times, but after a while I got so much fun out of it that I lifted it before I had to double it."

That was the reason the people in that farming community said, "Dave's sure got religion. Nothing else could have changed him."
—The United Evangelical.

"The work of the Spirit in sanctifying the human soul is contingent only upon that soul's hearty compliance at the three points of earnest desire, unreserved consecration, and implicit faith for cleansing.

The Glory of The Commonplace

It cannot be too often or too emphatically affirmed that Christian life has to do with spiritual vision and commonplace circumstances. Someone has said that it is kin both to the skies and to the streets. The loftiest flights of spiritual vision are meaningless unless they are translated into actualities of earthly service. It requires hands, that is, practical application in lowly service, to save vision from being merely visionary. On the other hand, the work of the hand is futile, if it is not the result of a heavenly vision; if it is not carrying out a heaven-given pattern. It requires wings to impregnate the ordinary with the eternal. All of which means that the ideal Christian life must be expressed equally in the twin terms of wing and hand.

Yet very few of us maintain the proper balance. All too frequently we are satisfied to cultivate only one of these phases. Many of us are men and women of only one dimension—of the wing. We are always soaring. We seldom come down to earth. We consider ourselves too spiritual to be contaminated with secular duties or the commonplace things of life.

God does not reveal Himself to men in a continuous ministry of miracle. For the miracle would vanish by becoming the commonplace. If God carried us along by a constant supernatural afflatus, that would deliver us from exercise or effort, it would be inimical to man's truest development, by robbing him of the opportunity of acquiring moral strength and fibre. This is why our angel-ministers are but visitors and not permanent dwellers. This is why our moments of inspiration are moments and not hours or days. This is why every moment of transfiguration must have its valley where demons wait to be cast out. It would thwart God's whole purpose of soul and character training, if He did otherwise. When these moments are past, we must turn the message they have brought into obedience and translate their ministry to us into service to others. "It is of little use to light our torches at the heavenly flame, unless we carry the light with our own hands into the dark places of human life and light its daily round of common task." For ordinary life is our common opportunity of glorifying God. While it is true that if all life were miracle, none of it would be miracle because the miraculous would become commonplace, it is also true that every life that is yielded to God is a constant miracle, since God is in all of that life's events, the commonplace as well as the sublime. For, when a commonplace thing is done in obedience to God's command and for His sake, it ceases to be commonplace and becomes impregnated with the miraculous.

The one who is always sighing for some extraordinary circumstance in which he may show his devotion or prove his consecration, while at the same time neglecting the God-given opportunity of serving in lowly commonplace ways, is failing signally. We need to recognize the glory of the commonplace. If we do not glorify God in the commonplace, we shall probably not glorify Him at all. In these days of sensationalism and showmanship in so-called spiritual things, we are in danger of developing a love for the spectacular, which by incapacitating us for the ordinary, does great

THE TESTIMONY OF A GREAT AFRICAN MISSIONARY

I am thinking of a quiet Sunday night in the month of May. The scene is the Scotch village of Gourock, on the Clyde, and a humble little meeting-place with whitewashed walls all covered over with gospel texts.

The meeting that night was a small one, and I was there for the first time. I was indeed anxious to be saved. For two long weeks God had been convicting me of sin, and oh! my misery was intense. Eternity in all its horror to me a Christless soul was looming ahead a terrible reality. My sore distress was at the thought of meeting God. During those two weeks I had got a glimpse of what a sinner was, and this Sunday night found me at my very worst.

A working man that night told the simple story of a Saviour's love, but the close of his address found me, as at the beginning, still dreading the wrath of God. I seemed riveted to my seat and could not rise when the meeting dismissed. I waited on, until someone came to point me Christwards. For a long time we talked together, but I seemed chained with doubts. Never did I realize before how thoroughly I was Satan's captive. Great volumes of doubt rushed into my soul.

We had talked for nearly an hour when one dear man of God, taking a lead pencil from his pocket stooped down and drew on the floor a thick black line between the door and where I stood. Then rising, he deliberately said, "Dan, you won't step over that line until you have trusted Christ."

Everything seemed too terribly real to me that moment: heaven and hell; Christ and the world. I must make a choice. It pressed upon me that by my doubts I was making God a liar, and that if I crossed that line a Christ-rejector perhaps God might call me to judgment that hour. For several moments we lingered, I in the balances between life and death, they pressing me to accept Christ. At twenty minutes past ten o'clock, by grace, I crossed the line—a saved man.—Dan Crawford.

damage to Christian character. God had a reason for making life commonplace and humdrum. It is, I believe, for its character building value.

Our ordinary duties have, as a rule, so little glamor about them—they are so humdrum and call for so little heroism—that it is difficult for us to recognize them as opportunities for effective and fruitful service for Christ. They seem so often to be irksome burdens. They seem so often to conflict with our aspirations and with our inclinations, that we are inclined to think of them as actually a hindrance to our growth in grace and holiness. And yet they are God's own appointment for us, arranged with a view to our fullest realization of life.

The more immature we are, the more we sigh for great opportunities. It is so much easier to think of doing big things than actually to accomplish small ones. It is so much more agreeable to imagine ourselves as successful leaders of large causes than to be willing to be hewers of wood and drawers of water.

May it be ours to earnestly seek to combine in our Christian character in proper balance the qualities of both the wing and the hand.

—Abridged. Author Unknown.