



News and Notes for Young People

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EDITORIAL

THE CHALLENGE OF DIFFICULT TASKS

The daily routine of life demands that we give attention to many tasks. The tasks are practically infinite in number. Sometimes the task is very easy and a pleasure to perform. Other times it is a burden and a chore. For instance, there is nothing but pleasure in the task of reading a letter from a loved one, or in kissing the bruised head of a little child. These can scarcely be called tasks, for indeed they are joys. On the other hand, the task of carrying on under adverse conditions and against heavy odds is not so pleasant. When reverses come, when there is nothing to encourage our labours, when we are forced to stem tides of criticism—then is when the test comes and we are given a chance to prove ourselves.

The Bible gives to us some excellent examples of men and women who faced very difficult tasks. One day an angel of God challenged a man by the name of Gideon with the task of freeing himself and his people from the heel of a foreign oppressor. The Midianites needed to be driven from the borders of ancient Canaan, and Gideon was the man called to do the job. The natural reaction was to shrink from so dangerous an assignment. "It could not be done!" This was the human answer. But with the assurance that God would be with him, Gideon reconsidered, realizing as he did so that when God and man work together, they make a team that cannot be beaten. This was the divine answer! Note that the task was accomplished, the victory was won, and Gideon came through to register his name among the conquerors of all time.

Queen Esther, another Old Testament hero, was also challenged by a job that needed to be done. Her immediate reaction was one of fear and hesitancy. To enter the king's presence unbidden might well mean death. That was asking too much! But like Gideon, Esther considered the alternatives carefully until she came to the resolute conclusion that she would face the king, intercede for her people, and take the consequences. Her words were these: "If I perish, I perish." The memory of Esther's triumph is immortal.

The New Testament account of Ananias going to the house of Judas in Damascus is an illustration of unusual devotion to God and great personal bravery. Ananias had been instructed by the Lord to lay his hands on the newly converted Saul. As far as Ananias knew, Saul's only desire in life, at that time, was to destroy all the followers of Jesus in Damascus. To meet Saul would mean certain death. The task was unreasonable and foolhardy, judged on the basis of human wisdom alone. But here again, God made the difference. His presence had made possible a scene of great victory for the Early Church.

The tasks which confront our lives may not seem so outstanding or dramatic as those which challenged Gideon, Esther, and Ananias, but I venture to say that if our tasks are to be accomplished, we shall be obliged to manifest the same moral courage and self-abandon as was found in the hearts of these heroes of the faith.

L. K. M.

The King's Highway

A NEW CREATURE

Is it not said of Augustine that after his conversion he was met by a fallen woman who had known him in his sin, and he passed her by? She said, "Austin, it is I," and he turned and said, "But I am not Austin. I am not the man you once knew, for I have become a new creature in Christ Jesus." That is what the Lord Jesus can do for you. Oh that you would look at Jesus and begin to live! It is time a change was made; is it not? Who can change you but the Lord Jesus?

—Spurgeon

THE TROUBLE LIES DEEPER

A good story is told of old Thomas K. Beecher, who could not bear deceit in any form. Finding that a clock in his church was habitually too fast or too slow, he hung a placard on the wall above it, reading in large letters: "Don't blame my hands—the trouble lies deeper." That is where the trouble lies with us when our hands do wrong, or our feet, or our lips, or even our thoughts. The trouble lies so deep that only God's miracle power can deal with it. Sin, indeed, goes deep, but Christ goes deeper.

—Christian Witness

THE BONDS OF MARRIAGE

Andre Maurois has suggested that this vow be made a part of every marriage ceremony: "I bind myself for life! I have chosen from now on my aim will be, not to search for someone who may please me, but to please the one I have chosen." To this he adds: "This decision can alone produce a successful marriage, and if the vow is not sincere the couple's chances for happiness are very slim, for it will run the risk of disruption when the first obstacles and the inevitable difficulties of life in common are encountered."

—The Art of Living

HE DEPARTED . . . HE IS HERE

The Good News of the Resurrection is that Christ is alive here and now. He is here. He left us in the physical body in order that he might not be constrained by the physical body. He could not remain a Jew confined to the narrow limits of Palestine. He must be available now to the man in Hong Kong, Kiev, Sidney, or Omaha—not just to the man in Galilee. "And he departed from our sight," said St. Augustine, "that we might return to our heart, and there find him. For he departed, and behold, he is here."

—Woodrow A. Geier in Religion in Life

JUST REPORT FOR DUTY

Once a mother heard her son praying. She noticed that what he was doing was telling God what he planned to do and seeking to direct God to help him. She said to him, "Son, don't bother to give God instructions; just report for duty."

—Robert O. Smith