

Rev. A.F. Newcomb on the Hero and His Summons

Farewell Sermon of the Late Pastor of the Brunswick Street Baptist Church Who Has Removed to Brandon, Man.—An Able and Scholarly Discourse—Our Saviour the Greatest Hero of all Heroes.

In his farewell sermon at the Brunswick Street Baptist Church on Sunday, Rev. A. F. Newcomb chose for his subject "The Hero and His Summons," taking his text from Mark x, 45. He said in part:

The subject naturally divides itself into two parts. First, the hero; second, his summons.

The Hero.

Every nation has its heroes. The Jews have their Abraham and Moses, and David; the Greeks their Alexander; the Romans their Caesar; the Germans their Luther and their Frederick; the French their Napoleon and their Joffre; the Swedes their Gustavus Adolphus; the United States their Washington and Lincoln; the Scotch their Bruce and Knox; the British their Nelson and Wellington, their Roberts and Kitchener and Lloyd-George.

The annals of the church abound in missionary heroes: Paul and Carey and Livingstone, McKay of Formosa, and John G. Paton, Judson and Brainard, and a host of others.

Legendary Heroes.

Legend offers us some striking heroes—Achilles, Romulus, King Arthur—and how thrilling are the accounts of valorous deeds which the ink of imagination has enabled master pens to give us of these heroes, mystical or perhaps quasi-historical! Is there a boy who has never found captivating delight in reading of the Trojan war and the fabulous deeds of Achilles and Odysseus, of Paris and Hector! Who has not been thrilled as he has read of King Arthur of the Round Table and the ghost of the Holy Grail! And who, thereby, has not been moved to humbler, holier service!

Every religious system has its hero. Confucianism has its Confucius, Buddhism its Buddha; Christianity the Christ. But Christ is not simply the hero of the Christian religion; He is the Hero of all Heroes; He has no rival among the noblest, the greatest,

the holiest, of any country and of any age. He is not a hero among heroes; He is THE Hero; and as He is the Hero without a peer, so is Christianity the life of the truest heroism.

Heroic Qualities.

A hero is one who has exceptionally noble qualities, or who has done deeds showing him to possess such qualities. How wonderfully does Jesus Christ fill out the meaning of these words! This cannot be called a definition of Christ, for definition implies limits, and who has ever reached a circumference in the character or ministry of Jesus?

Neither are these words an adequate description of our Lord. What human language could be found commensurate with the facts of His life? But they are a suggestion which our Master gloriously fulfils; so that the words point to Him pre-eminently, and of Him we can truly say:

O Prince of Men, Thee we adore,
The Hero Thou for evermore!
Thy traits of mind, so noble, true,
That life with Thee makes all things new.

Thy service, too, so humble, grand,
That by it moved men take their stand
On love and truth; being ever won
To this high place by Thee, God's Son.
And through Thy name still men are drawn
From self to God, from night to dawn.
And well we know the world around
Thou yet wilt be the Hero crowned.

Christ's Noble Example.

Christ ever impressed men with His nobility and utter manliness. Nothing unworthy was ever found in Him.

When accusations were brought against Him they had to be false. When a betrayer was sought, he was paid for his perfidy. When a jury was desired which would bring in a verdict of guilty it had to be packed. When it was determined to have the voice of the Roman ruler in condemnation of Christ, it was necessary to press upon Him the certainty of political complications. When enemies of

Christ appeared, they were always the undisguised expression of the hostility of sin to holiness, of selfishness to the most heroic service for others. The truth of His life had so taken hold upon the thought of His countrymen, and eye-witnesses, that they came to know instinctively that any intimation of sin touching Christ was simply an expression of jealousy or hate. Even the hideously black and mercenary betrayer of Jesus knew that he had sold "innocent blood."

The Jews who voted "guilty" and vociferous cried out, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend," and "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" were all the while troubled in conscience as the question of the High Priest revealed: "If thou art the Christ, tell us." And the people showed equally with their priest entire disregard of honor and justice—indeed, the basest meanness—by turning Christ's plain acknowledgment of divine claims into ground for condemnation.

The Procurator, who gave Christ up to the hands of the violent mob, knew with irresistible conviction that there was "no fault in Him." No one ever became an enemy of Jesus Christ without first being an enemy of truth; no one ever opposed Him except first he was opposed to true, manly traits of character, of which Christ is the perfect exponent.



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Always Sympathetic.

How sympathetic was Christ! He was ever touched by human suffering and infirmity. How gladly He healed the sick and even raised the dead!

Never did appeal for help come to Him in vain. He delighted not in condemning, but in restoring to complete life. How sympathetic and gracious was He when He would not condemn a person taken even in the act of sin; but rather sent forth the repentant soul "to sin no more!"

Men crowded around Him hungry and weary, and He, by the multiplying touch of His finger of sympathy, gave them abundance of help. Men were brought to Him for physical healing, and He so far exceeded their hopes that He addressed to them the soul-renewing words, "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

Yet with all this beautiful sympathy and tender graciousness, there was never the slightest suggestion of weakness or unmanliness. He freely forgave the Peter who had so cruelly denied His Lord, and He would have forgiven the betrayer too, black as was his awful crime, had he come to Christ humble and repentant—and Peter was forever won by the "Son of God, immortal love."

Uncompromising Words.

And with His unique tenderness, how uncompromising with sin and error our Master was! From the very stronghold of the Jews He drove the unscrupulous Temple bankers with a whip of cords as a visible instrument, but with His moral dignity as the real power. Hear His words, which cut to the quick those legalists who prided themselves upon their ceremonial sanctity, "Woe to you, ye Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" and again to the Jews who had just been glorying in their descent from Abraham, and while their claim, "we have one Father, even God," was warm upon their lips, with utter fearlessness and with piercing plainness, He said that they were of their father, the Devil, and that the lusts of their father it was their will to do.

Listen to the grandeur of the uncompromising words in the very face of the representatives of Roman authority; when, too, as we would say, His life was in imminent danger: "Thou wouldst have no power against me except it were given thee from above!"

No Parallel Case.

This was the heroism of His character which found expression in all His beneficent life and its climax in the giving of His great and precious life on Calvary. We have glorious records of heroic deeds even to the death of patriots for home and country; but there is none other just like Christ, who gave Himself for the world. Numberless instances might be quoted where men, and women too, have died for those they loved, but Christ laid down His life for His enemies.

We shall never in this life adequately appreciate the meaning of the truth that "Christ came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many."

Think of all the glory He laid aside, and of the humble conditions He entered, of the great burden He bore, of the blessings He freely dispensed, of the opposition He encountered, of the persecution He endured, of the mis-

(Continued on page 3.)

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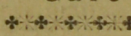
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