

In The Religious World

A KING WHO PUT BUSINESS INTO RELIGION.

The International Sunday School Lesson for November 7 is "Joash Repairs the Temple."—II Kings 11:21:12:16.

(By WILLIAM T. ELLIS.)

If I were czar of this Western world in this present unequalled crisis in human events, there are three or four fundamental things that I would set the people to doing. Chief among these I would require that all the churches and religious societies throughout the land receive fresh attention, and that as many may be necessary, they be rebuilt in their physical equipment and spiritual organization. Wherever there is a breach in the walls of the church—literally or metaphorically—it should be quickly repaired. The fashion of young king Joash, of long ago, whose experience in rebuilding the temple is today's Sunday school lesson, is a fundamental fashion to follow.

The reason is clear: such crises in a nation's life as the present are to be met first of all by spiritual forces. All the armies and navies that military genius could devise or command cannot safeguard a nation whose people have lost their vision and their noblest purposes. Ideals are ultimately the defence of a nation. No graver issue is before our time than that of rehabilitating in the minds of the multitudes the great old convictions and purposes which first made us strong. Nobody need lose sleep at night from fear of a hostile invasion; but there is real reason for sleepless concern over the steadily undermining of the integrities of faith and duty may be detected in process.

The nation looks to the Church for spiritual strength and for the vision that will meet the new duties of the high hour that is upon us. What help remains if, in this time of times instead of a Church with a clear, lofty, ringing message to men's souls, we have merely an agglomeration of petty, contending, small-minded and sordid ecclesiastical organizations, so engrossed with trifling politics and the material needs of self-subsistence, that they are deaf and blind to the heroic summons of God and humanity?

Life Mirrors Religion.

Like every other national leader who has had wit enough to know anything about his business, Joash understood that the prosperity of Judah was bound up with the welfare and fidelity of religion. No nation ever comes to its height apart from the inspiration and support of a religious faith. Both France and Germany a year ago, were the subject of many articles concerning their religious decline. Now, in the seven-times heated furnace of war both have found their souls. Yet it is because the nations had subordinated spiritual concerns to material values that we have this world war. Life mirrors religion. When religion becomes perfunctory, mechanical or secondary, then we have such collapses of civilization as that which is today staggering humanity.

Is it too much to hope that after the awful obligations which this war is creating have been laid upon the survivors, and accepted open-eyed, some nation will deliberately undertake to give religion the right of way in its life? Can we imagine a people dedicated wholeheartedly to God's highest purpose? What could such a nation do in this re-made world? Occasionally mankind has seen what one wholly, dedicated Christian could accomplish. When Dwight L. Moody was a young man he heard a speaker say, "The world is yet to see what God can do with a wholly consecrated man." Moody resolved that he would be that man. And Moody, whose bones are mouldering on Little Round Top in Northfield, still lives as one of the world's greatest forces.

Making a Clean Sweep.

If anybody asks why the temple at Jerusalem so sorely needed repairing, there is one sentence in the lesson which makes answer. After the record of Joash's loyalty to God, we read "Howbeit the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places." That is a good picture of modern life. Theoretically, we have a Christian civilization, actually, materialism, pride, arrogance, cruelty, selfishness and avarice have kept the incense burning on their high places. There is no room even in the circumambient ether for the smoke of the rival incense from the altars of Jehovah and the altars of idolatry and self-indulgence. God demands that He be God alone.

A queer notion is lodged firmly in certain pious minds that the passive virtues are all that are needed for the bringing in of the kingdom of heaven. Some folk don't want to be disagreeable even to the devil himself. They would not speak ill about even the worst foes of society. This is the more strange when we remember that if anything at all is clear in the programme of God, as indicated in both the Old Testament story and the New Testament Record of the life of Jesus, it is that whosoever must be

overthrown. The Christian is called to be an iconoclast, an idol smasher. There are some men who are church when it comes to driving corruption when it comes to driving corruption out of a community. Yet to fight evil is as surely a part of the Christian program as to proclaim the good. The high places must be overthrown if the Church is to be maintained in her integrity for the service of the world. There are a host of social ills that will have to be remedied if we are going to meet the new day in the spirit of the kingdom of heaven.

For a long time King Joash tried to have the temple repaired, but without success. He was slow in finding out the reason, which was nothing more or less than that he had followed a very modern fashion of trying to have the priests do it all. He wanted the priests to provide the money and to do the work, but that was more than even the patient peacher could stand. Not until a business system was introduced, and burdens distributed, and the lay workers called in each to do his own part, was the big job of temple restoration put through.

There are a good many objections to the present popular program of loading all the work of a church on to the preacher. One is sufficient to point out. It does not succeed. There never was a preacher big enough to carry a whole church, and there never will be. Those congregations who are asking their ministers to be errand boy, parish visitors, property committee, financial agent, church supper organizer, delegate-to-everything, and general factotum and roustabout, are guilty of several blunders, the cardinal one being sheer stupidity. The only way a church is going to thrive is for everybody to bear his part. The minister's tasks ought to be to preach the Gospel, instruct the people and to be pastor of the flock. The officers of the church should have gumption enough to see that he does this without neglecting it, and that they do their own share of the work with equal fidelity. The priests fitted beautifully into Joash's scheme when Joash came to his senses, and developed a business-like scheme for the enterprise of temple repairing.

It has been said that the quickest way to dampen the enthusiasm of a prayer meeting is to talk money. Nevertheless, as of old, so today, money is needed for the work of the church. To secure it from proper motives and in adequate amount, is one of the greatest single difficulties of organized religion. Somehow, the church has not as keen a financial sense as she had in the days of Joash. There is more pettiness exhibited in the financial aspect of religion than in any other manifestation of Christianity—and that is saying a good deal.

Anybody who has ever set on a church board has witnessed the strange phenomenon of business men, who are accustomed to doing practical things in a practical way, and to conducting large enterprises in a broad spirit, going about church matters with an entirely new state of mind, which is chiefly characterized by its smallness. Who can explain why it is that when business men go at the financial side of the Church their ideas immediately become peanut size? Men who pay generously in the chamber of commerce, or in their social clubs, count pennies when it comes to the church.

There is many a man with an income of thousands of dollars a year who is a total stranger to the experience of giving as much as one hundred dollars in a single year to the Church. A whole crowd of epligrams and stories have arisen, concerning this well known condition. One is "Some men give according to their means, and others according to their meanness." "Some Christians are so stingy that when the minister gives out 'Old Hundred' they start to sing 'Ninety and Nine' in order to get one per cent off."

If a Christian has not religion enough to give generously, proportionately and systematically to the Church, he has surely not religion enough to take him to heaven, or to any other Christian goal. The first evidence of a revival in religion in many a church would be an increase in the pastor's salary, and the repairing of the church. I have observed in heathen lands that at the entrance to the temples there is a large chest—Joash fashion—for the receipt of offerings. The first act of worship in heathendom is to make a gift.

Now, as of old, the grave problem is one of putting the church into fit condition on her material side, and in her spiritual strength, to meet the crisis that is now upon the world.

DARING TO DO THE DEED

Terse Comments on the Uniform Prayer Meeting Topic of the Young People's Societies—Christian Endeavor, etc.—for November 7: "Tasks That Are Waiting for the Church of Christ."—Luke 4:14-21.

(By WILLIAM T. ELLIS.)

The simplest and most direct way of profoundly serving our time and

our race is to live consistently for those things which are true and beautiful and ideal and divine. The lofty life lifts.

"Do ye next thing." We are to begin our service by taking up the duty next at hand. Only on this line of duty can we progress into wider service. Nehemiah's splendid company of Christian Endeavors built every man over against his own house. So should we.

We may serve Christ by serving the Church. It is possible for us to run too far afield in search of special work to do for the Master, when right at hand in our own churches there are pressing and important duties awaiting us. There is something radically wrong with the Christian Endeavor principles of the young person who is active and prominent in outside work but non-effective in the affairs of his own church.

Peter wanted to tarry on the mount of Transfiguration. He felt that he would be supremely blest if he could remain there in the presence of the transfigured Christ. But it was not to be so; the wise Master led the disciples down to the plain, where the sick and sordid and needy multitude waited.

The Church as the organized, visible kingdom of Christ on earth has great work to do. She has to fulfill the purpose of a mighty army, sweeping solidly and compactly forward against organized foes. There are tasks to be done for Christ for which only a mighty and united Church is equal. The Church, as a Church, has a definite mission to perform. Nevertheless, the greatest work of God among men is to be performed, not through the instrumentality of his Church as a whole, but through the instrumentality of individual men and women. It is by the faithfulness of single souls that the kingdom is to come. The one indispensable human factor in the divine plan is the individual Christian, witnessing and working.

We should serve men because we love Christ.

John puts to practical test our religion. If you have, he says in substance, and your brother has not, and needs, and you do not share—why, how dwelleth the love of God in a stingy man? Impossible! All the loud and elaborate professions of a man cannot prove that the love of God is in him. He is only a sounding brass, if his practical deeds of charity do not equal his declarations.

Let every hand find work to swell the store Of common welfare, and let all hearts pour Their offering of service, till the best That each can bring is shared by all the rest. —Washington Gladden.

The test of a religion is what it can do for the average man.—C. Silvester Horne.

Self-sacrifice is the royal law of the new life. Because Christ "laid down his life for us," "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." This is a high, hard teaching, but it is the Lord's. We can never enter into the likeness of Jesus until we have learned how to surrender self, and how to deny self for the sake of men who may not be worthy, and for the sake of the Master who is surely worthy. The call of our Lord today, especially to young people, is for disciples who will literally lay down their lives for Him, through tedious and toilsome years. He needs servants whom He can send anywhere; upon whom He can lay large responsibilities as well as humble, obscure duties. The person through whom Christ can best express His mind to the world is one who is consumed by a passion for doing only the will of God.

Christianity is not to be played with, but to be practiced. It is not a toy, but a business; not an avocation, but a vocation. It is not an incident of life; it is all of life.

We are set among men to live our own best life for their good and for God's honor. We dare not live for self alone. Our mission is to be as widely and as deeply helpful as possible. All our powers are for the benefit of our fellows. What we are and what we may become belong to the world to which God would have us minister.

What is the best help that a man can render his brother? It is not himself? Sometimes our goods and our dollars are needed, but oftener our friendship, our trust, our interest and our presence. The choicest gift that can be laid on the altar of brotherhood is a human life.

SEVEN SENTENCE SERMONS. If one hope fails, find another.—Salena Sheets Martin.

He that can have patience can have what he will.—Franklin.

Do not look for wrong or evil— You will find them if you do: As you measure for your neighbor, He will measure back to you. —Alice Carey.



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He who has conquered doubt and fear has conquered failure.—James Allen.

Wherefore, if meat maketh my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I make not my brother to stumble. —1 Cor. 8:13

Sing me, O singer, a song of life! Cried an eager youth to me: And I sang of a life without alloy, Beyond our years—till the heart of the boy Caught the golden beauty, and love and joy Of the great eternity. —Edward Rowland Sill.

If any one speak ill of thee, consider whether he hath truth on his side; and if so, reform thyself, that his censures may not affect thee.—Epictetus.

DUKE SENTENCED TO ROADS FOR 12 MONTHS

(Special to The News and Observer.)

Henderson, Oct. 29.—E. L. Duke, proprietor of the Southern News Company, was tried here yesterday in the Recorder's court and convicted and sentenced to twelve months on the roads on the charge of having young boys to steal merchandise from the stores to be resold by him.

He was released on a bond of \$150. The boys were called into the court on connection with the trial. It was stated that about half a dozen boys in the city had been engaged by Duke to aid him in his alleged illegal business. One of the boys confessed having been "trung into the scheme" but said so far he had done no stealing.

Story True, Says Taylor.

Kinston, Oct. 29.—Sheriff A. W. Taylor today declared that a story printed in the News and Observer several days ago referring to a statement by him to the effect that E. L. Duke, of Henderson, alleged to be a married man, had plotted to elope with a single young woman of this city, was correct in every detail. Duke denied the affair in a statement to a newspaper man.

"I have unquestionable information that Duke attempted to cajole the young woman referred to to Raleigh, under promise to marry her," said Taylor. Duke was shipped from Kinston to get him out of the community. If he returns here he must serve a four months' sentence held out against him for check-flashing. Also, I have cases against him for other bad checks, larceny of a watch and embezzlement. I know him to be a disreputable character. I made public the story for the benefit of other young women of the working class who sometimes have to encounter men who, on the surface correct in their conduct, are tough under the hide. I cannot help but believe that the fellow is mentally incompetent.

Woman's Club Meets.

Apex, Oct. 26.—On Thursday afternoon at 3 o'clock, the Woman's Club met in regular meeting at the home of Mrs. A. T. Seymour on South Salem street.

Mrs. G. N. Cowan was appointed referee to take the place of Mrs. Samuel Watkins, Jr. After the business of the meeting was over the following program was carried out.

An interesting paper on "Two Literary Leaders of Germany," was read by Mrs. Percy J. Olive; a Reading, "The Erl King," was read by Mrs. J. Raymond Harward; a sketch of the life of Hans Sachs, The Cobbler Poet, was given by Mrs. A. V. Bacon.

Following these intellectual and interesting papers Mrs. Seymour served a course of delicious fruit salad with wafers.

The club adjourned to meet again on November the 11th at the home of Mrs. Robert L. Bagley on Elm street. At this meeting Mrs. Jacques Busbee, of Raleigh, will lecture to the club.

According to the American Pomological Society, the only apple tree in the world bearing the Barnes stripe is on the farm of Simeon King of West Milbury, Me. The apple resembles the Blue Pearmain.

Widely separated settlements in the Congo Free State have been linked and connected with civilization by a system of wireless telegraphy which covers 3,000 miles of African jungles.