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THE CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR TOPIC

By the Rev. Charles E. Schaeffer, D. D.

June 1.—**In His Steps. 6. How Jesus Faced Duty.** Matt. 3: 15; John 9: 4; Luke 22: 42.

This is the sixth in this series of topics entitled, "In His Steps." We have been seeking to learn how Jesus lived and what His attitude was to certain phases of life and thereby to gain inspiration for ourselves as we face similar situations. Of course, Jesus is more than an example. He is a constant inspiration. He is a giver of life as well as of light. He not only shows us the way and how to walk therein, but He also gives us the ability to walk. In this respect Jesus is different from other men so far as His influence over others is concerned. Now, in no aspect of His life do we see Jesus loom up more wonderfully and heroically than when He faces the real issues of life. He never flinched nor faltered. He had a clear and convincing purpose in His life and He allowed nothing to sway or swerve Him from that. Jesus was always serious. That does not mean, however, that He was somber and solemn and sedate, but rather that He had a compelling purpose in His life. He did not drift aimlessly through life. He knew why He had come and He bent every energy to accomplish that purpose. It would be interesting to go through the Gospels to study the "I am comes" of Christ. Just notice a few of them: "I am come not to destroy, but to fulfill." "I am come that they might have life and might have it more abundantly." "I am come to kindle a fire upon the earth, and how I am straightened until it be accomplished." "I am come not to send peace, but a sword upon the earth." "Lo, I come! In the volume of the book it is written of me. I delight to do Thy will, O Lord." "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Now, with a clear consciousness of having come from the Father and going unto the Father and being here to do the will of the Father, He held Himself resolutely and persistently to that compelling purpose and mission in His life. There was a drawing power from without in the will and love of the Father, but there was also a driving power within Himself in His own sense of truth and justice and righteousness; in His love for the things that belonged to God and His determination to do the will of His Father in Heaven. It was this drawing and this driving power which constituted the duties which Jesus faced in His life. He recognized it at an early age. At twelve years, in the Temple, He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" There was an inward compulsion which constrained Him. Later on He said, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me." There was a constant "must" in His life. This was not so much an outward compulsion as an inward constraint. When one studies the temptations of Jesus one finds that they were constantly of a character to make Him deviate from the course which He had originally set down for Himself. They were offered to cause Him to adopt another and an easier course in life. They were intended to draw Him away from what He regarded as a sense of duty. We know the vehemence with which He resisted and resented all such suggestions. The blandishments of position and power which were offered Him in exchange for doing His duty indicate how clearly and conscientiously He faced His mission in life. No material offers, no place or position in life could swerve Him out of His chosen path; not even the suggestion of His friends could prevent Him from doing His duty. On one occasion His mother and His brothers were trying to cause Him to take a different coure, but He would not yield for one minute even to their solicitations. On another occasion one of His intimate disciples, Peter, made a suggestion that He should pity Himself and thus save Himself from the consequences which were sure to come if He would continue in His course. We know with what indignation He resented that suggestion, when He said to Peter, "Get thee behind Me, Satan, for thou are an offense to Me."

He would do His duty not only in face of opposition, but also when others thought the deed was too lowly and humble even for themselves to do it. On one occasion the disciples neglected to wash each other's feet as had been their custom, and so this Master of us all took a basin, girded Himself with a towel and began to wash the feet of His disciples. No duty was too lowly for Him to perform. He knew that only by doing the lowly and little acts of kindness and service could He prepare His great heart and helpful hands to do the larger deeds.

He never did His duty in a superficial or a slipshod manner. When, as a carpenter, He made yokes for the farmers back of Nazareth, or bedsteads for His fellowcountrymen, He did that work as conscientiously and as rendering a service to God, as when He went about doing good, healing the sick, raising the dead and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. Duty was imperative in His life. The will of God was primary. He did not consult His own pleasure nor His own convenience, but in the doing of His duty He found real pleasure. One goes through the life of Jesus and there is no note of sadness struck. On the other hand, one feels that Jesus experienced joy and gladness in the doing of the Father's will. He constantly spoke of His joy and His peace, and it was these which he longed to bequeath as a legacy to His followers.

When death, with its darkening shadows, approached, He faced His duty still more devotedly. "He set His face steadfastly towards Jerusalem," and in the Garden of Gethsemane He lay upon His face and prayed, "Not My will, but Thine be done." In those final moments He had a consciousness that He had done His duty, for He said, in that High Priestly prayer, "I have accomplished the work which Thou gavest Me to do," and with His last expiring breath He faintly whispered, "It is finished." Thus Jesus faced duty in His life and death. By precept and example He taught us how to be true to truth, loyal to convictions and faithful in the performance of our duties. He tells us that duty is not the hard word which it is sometimes supposed to be. If our wills are in tune with the Infinite we shall find duty a joy rather than a hardship. We shall find it a blessing rather than a burden in our lives.

Duty is supreme in life. Nothing ever can take its place. The poet Longfellow gives us an account of a monk who had been praying for a vision of the Christ and had waited for it a long, long time. Every day at noon, when the bell of the great cathedral rang, it was his duty to minister to the poor that waited outside the door. So one day, as the bell was ringing, the vision of the Christ appeared to the monk in his cell. He wondered what he should do. Should he entertain the vision or should he go and minister unto the poor? Then came a voice to him which said: "Do thy duty, that is best; leave unto thy God the rest." And so he went and ministered to the strangers outside, and when he returned to his great surprise, he found the vision of the Christ still there, and the vision spake: "'Hadst thou stayed I would have fled,' that is what the Vision said." Thus, if we are faithful in doing our duty, we shall find new light on our way and new strength from day to day. "Where duty calls or danger, be never wanting there."

STATEMENT OF CONDITION OF

THE WESTMINSTER SAVINGS BANK

Westminster, Maryland

Close Of Business April 10, 1924

RESOURCES

Loans and Discounts	$ 338,980.50
United States Bonds	278,307.31
Other Bonds and Stocks	1,422,345.89
Loans on Mortgages	579,656.22
Banking House and Lot	14,500.00
Due from Approved reserve agent	92,351.18
Cash in Bank	30,145.24
	$ 2,756,286.34

LIABILITIES

Capital Stock paid in	$ 50,000.00
Surplus (Earned)	175,000.00
Undivided profits	30,988.14
Dividends unpaid	5,000.00
DEPOSITS	2,495,298.20
	$ 2,756,286.34

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Although many special occasions have been observed, Put in the Window Screens Week, Roll the Lawn Week, Plant the Garden Week, Spade up the Shrubs Week, and other notable anniversaries have not been thoroughly celebrated as yet in Westminster.

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL

Sunday School Lesson

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D.D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)

(©, 1924, Western Newspaper Union.)

Lesson for June 1

THE BABYLONIAN EXILE OF JUDAH

LESSON TEXT—II Chron. 36:11-21.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people."—Prov. 14:34.

PRIMARY TOPIC—What a Boy King Did.

JUNIOR TOPIC—The Destruction of Jerusalem.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—The Last Days of Jerusalem.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—A Nation in Ruins.

I. The Sins of the Nation (vv. 11-16).

1. Zedekiah, the King (vv. 11-13).

(1) Insubordination to God's prophet (v. 12). In the theocratic government of Israel God's prophet occupied a higher place than the king himself. The prophet was God's messenger. Instead of receiving Jeremiah as God's messenger and conforming his life to God's will, as made known by the prophet he refused to humble himself before God.

(2) Rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar (v. 13). Zedekiah was made king of Judah by the king of Babylon but, in spite of this kindness and the word of the Lord spoken to him by Jeremiah (Jer. 38:17, 18; 52:3), he rebelled against the king of Babylon.

(3) He stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against God (v. 13). Those who rebel against rightly constituted authority soon are resisting the will and grace of God.

2. The Priests and People (vv. 14-16).

(1) They followed the heathen (v. 14). Even the priests who ministered in the house of God were practicing the sins of the heathen nations surrounding them.

(2) They polluted the house of the Lord (v. 14). The house of the Lord was sacred, having been dedicated to the Lord and consecrated to His service. For priests to officiate while living lives of impurity was pollution to God's house.

(3) They mocked God's messengers (v. 16). Instead of receiving them as from God, they mocked them.

(4) They despised God's word (v. 16). To set at naught God's counsel is to despise His word (Prov. 1:25).

(5) Misused God's prophets (v. 16). They not only mocked them but imprisoned some and slew others. This they persisted in until God could no longer restrain His wrath.

II. The Judgment Falls (vv. 17-21).

1. Slaughter by the Sword (v. 17). So severe did this judgment fall that the King of the Chaldees slew young men even in the house of the sanctuary and "had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man or him that stooped for age."

2. The Treasures and Sacred Vessels Carried to Babylon (v. 18). This included, not only the treasures of the house of the Lord, but of the king and his princes.

3. Burned the House of God (v. 19). This was the sacred temple built by Solomon with certain additions and modifications.

4. Broke Down the Walls of Jerusalem (v. 19). The aim in this was to render the walls useless as a means of defense.

5. Burned the Palaces (v. 19). It would seem that the common houses were left for the poor people who remained in the land.

6. Destroyed All the Goodly Vessels (v. 19). This would mean that the palaces were plundered of all that was valuable.

7. Carried the People Into Captivity and Made Slaves of Them (v. 20). Those who had escaped the sword were now carried away and enslaved. It would seem that a number of people had deserted to the Babylonians. From II Kings 25:12 we learn that the poorest of the people were left in the land. Those who would not likely make any trouble were left as vinedressers and husbandmen. Since the custom was to colonize conquered territory by foreign peoples, the object in leaving the poor people was that the country might be ready and over these people Gedaliah was appointed with headquarters at Mizpeh. When the walls were broken Zedekiah fled by night, his object being doubtless to cross the Jordan at Jericho and hide in the mountains east of Jordan. He was overtaken in the plains of Jericho (II Kings 25:5) by the Chaldean army. He was captured and taken to the king of Babylon who was at Riblah, a town north of Damascus. Zedekiah was tried before Nebuchadnezzar, his eyes were put out, he was bound with fetters of brass, and carried away to Babylon, where he remained a prisoner until the day of his death (Jer. 52:11).

Duty to Your Neighbor

Your "duty" to your neighbor will have to be looked at in the light of a pleasure if it is to do either you or him much good.

Learning From Others

You can learn a hundred things from others where you learn one from your own experience.

Culture

Culture is to know the best that has been said and thought in the world.

Had Stolen Dummy Bank Securities

By CHARLES E. BAXTER

(©, 1924, Western Newspaper Union.)

ALICE accompanied Joyce to the bank entrance. "I shall wait here for you, and I shall just pray," she said.

Joyce looked up at the great building. It was three years since he had last entered it. During those three years a great deal had happened.

He had been one of the tellers, on the small salary that the bank paid its employees. Day by day handling money, as if it was so much lard—night by night racking his brains how he could further his prospects. Nothing but a bank clerk—forever! At forty, perhaps he could get married. At fifty he might have paid for a home. Struggle, unending struggle, with no prospects at all.

Temptation had come slowly. But at last its slow momentum had proved irresistible. Those securities—how easy to place another package in the safe on a Saturday afternoon and to walk out with the securities under his arm! Why, he could be half way to California before they discovered the loss!

That was what Joyce did. And that night, with the unopened securities at the bottom of his suitcase, he took his seat in the train. Opposite him was a girl. She was going to California, too. Her name was Alice Gray, and she was on her way to an aunt, her sole surviving relative after her mother's death.

On the train they became friendly. When he arrived he took a position in an office. There was no hurry about the securities. He might let several months elapse before disposing of them. He went to visit Alice.

It was six months later that he realized he loved her. Meanwhile he was doing well. He had been promoted. Suddenly he realized that he had no need of dishonesty. And how could he be dishonest with Alice trusting and believing in him?

Two years later they were married. The night before their marriage he told her all.

"I'll send them back, Alice," he said, "if you won't throw me over."

Alice told him in her grave, quiet way her conditions. She would marry him if—he would take back the securities in person and face the consequences. Then he would be a free man in spirit, even if he had to take the punishment.

"And I shall wait for you, whatever length of time you have to serve," she said.

It was a strange honeymoon East, and somehow a happy one. Now they had reached their destination. Now Joyce was entering the bank, and his last vision of Alice was standing outside, with her hands clasped together.

"I shall just pray—pray hard," she said.

Jones, the messenger, stared at Joyce. His mouth opened. He said nothing. Joyce passed through the gate. There was Miss Thompson, the manager's secretary, staring at him, too.

"Why, Mr. Joyce!" she whispered. "We thought—"

"Mr. Leeson in?"

"Ye-yes. I—I'll tell him."

Now Joyce saw that the news of his return had run through the office. They were peering at him through the grill and round the desks. In a moment or two Miss Thompson came out. Joyce walked into Leeson's room.

"Why, Joyce!" Leeson rose from his chair, sat down. "We thought—"

"I know, Mr. Leeson, and I've come to make restitution." He placed the package on the manager's desk. He plunged into his story. "Somehow I couldn't bring myself to it," he said. He told him everything, about Alice, his marriage. "And I'm ready to take my medicine, you understand, I'm not trying to bargain," Joyce ended.

There was that ironical smile on Leeson's face that Joyce so well remembered. "The way of the transgressor is hard," quoted the manager. "Yes, Joyce, we're not sentimentalists here. You deserve a good stiff sentence."

"I'm ready for it."

Leeson's hand moved toward the telephone receiver, fell back. "But I'm not going to call the police department," he said. "Open those securities, will you?"

For the first time in three years Joyce unfastened the package. He stared blindly at what he saw.

Inside was the dummy inclosure he had thought that he had placed in the safe instead of the securities—the folded newspapers, the empty envelopes!

But through the sneering face of Leeson he had a vision of Alice standing with clasped hands outside.

A Tough Problem

"You remember the gloves I bought the other day?" began the annoyed customer. "You said they'd last me two years."

"Yes, madam," replied the saleswoman.

"Well, I lost them," said the customer. "What are you going to do about it?"

Helpless

First Child Prodigy—When are you going to publish your next book?

Second Child Prodigy—I don't know. My stenographer's ill and I haven't learned to write yet.—Stanford Chaparral.

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