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THE CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR TOPIC

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

March 1—The Cost of Friendliness.
John 15: 13, 14; 1 Sam. 20: 1-4, 16-42; 2 Sam. 1: 26.

In a series of topics we have been discussing the general subject of Friendliness. It is one of those beautiful virtues which adorn our lives and make them worth living. But like all good and worthy things, friendliness has a price of its own. It costs something to be a friend and to show oneself friendly. There are many people who are ready and willing to share the blessings of friendliness without paying the price thereof. In the last analysis there are very few things that are really worth while which can be had for nothing. There must be a price paid by someone. Lowell says that Heaven is given away and God may be had for the asking. Even so, but it cost God a great deal to make Himself available to man. It cost Him His deepest love. It cost Him His only begotten Son. So that while in a sense it is true that God may be had for the asking, without money and without price, nevertheless, there is a real cost involved. The same is true with regard to friendliness. We will have to pay the price involved. Let me enumerate some of the things which must be paid.

First, Time. In this age when we are rushing to and fro breaking the speed limit at every turn, we scarcely give sufficient time to be friendly. Time is a most valuable asset. Some folks seem to have a large amount of it. For others it passes too quickly. I am told that the reason many people are working out cross-word puzzles is to make the time pass more quickly. The fact of the matter is that we nearly always have time for the things which we desire very much to do. We rush after many things that are not essential.

"For a cap and bells our lives we pay;
Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking."

We spend our hours and days in things that don't count and when it comes to the weightier matters of life we offer an excuse that we have no time. The old hymn bids us "Take time to be holy." In the same way we may enjoin, "Take time to be friendly." The Priest and the Levite in the parable, passed by on the other side when they saw the waylaid man by the side of the road. They were in a hurry; they could not take time. Duties elsewhere were summoning them. The Good Samaritan, however, came along and he took time to be friendly. He stopped and rendered the assistance which the case required and even went out of his way to show himself friendly to the man who was in need.

Second, Thought. Friendliness demands careful thinking. One must plan wisely and well if he wants to be of real service to others. Friendliness that costs no thought is in danger of being misdirected and may work more harm than good. We are so inclined to follow the course of least resistance. We give thoughtlessly and heedlessly. We toss a penny to a beggar or give a donation to some object without ever taking pains to inquire how we can help to the best advantage. Few people stop long enough to think. In fact, the great majority of people never think on anything. Most people are willing to get their thoughts ready-made. There are a few persons who do the real constructive thinking in the world and the others merely reflect the echo of their thoughts. The reason for this is that thinking is hard work. It means the sweat of the brain and most people shrink from that kind of an effort. Friendliness that is not reasonable, that is bestowed in a hap-hazard and thoughtless way never amounts to much. We must take time to think in order that we may render the best possible service to others.

Third, **Effort.** Friendliness must express itself in deed. It is far more than a mere sentiment. To be sure, a great deal of sentiment enters into it. All the virtue of love and trust and goodness and kindness and courtesy must enter in, but these must express themselves in friendly action. Do noble deeds, not dream them all day long. There are many people who are friendly disposed towards others but who can never summon energy within themselves to translate their emotions into action. Friendliness is an active, not a passive feeling. It is an effort that goes out in loving, helpful service to others. Now, all service involves a price. No effort is even put forth in any direction without costing something either of nervous force, physical energy, will power; sometimes inconvenience and discomfort, sometimes breaking through opposition and overcoming obstacles. Whatever it may be, there is a price which must be paid. Friendless people never render any service. There are some folks too tired to do anything. They pride themselves on being good, but simply being good is not enough. One must be good for something. Goodness must be translated into living, loving service. So we must show ourselves friendly by friendly deeds.

Fourth, **Patience.** Friendliness demands patience. Sometimes folks are dull and stupid; they are unkind and ungrateful. They do not always appreciate what is done for them. Sometimes even they misjudge and misinterpret efforts that are put forth in their behalf. Some folks simply make it very hard for others to be friendly towards them. But then patience is the price that must be paid. How largely that shone in the life and experience of Jesus! He had need for patience with the very people whom He came to befriend. Every Christian worker is not above his Lord in this respect. If people rebuke you and criticize and condemn you for trying to do them good, or if they are slow to respond and your efforts seem all in vain, just be patient and never lose heart or hope, but persevere all the more.

Fifth, **Self.** This is perhaps the first and biggest price that must be paid. Friendliness, if it is anything at all, must be unselfish. It involves the giving up of one's own selfish interests and purposes and having a high regard of others. Instead of making self the end of life it substitues others as the chief goal. This is sometimes a very hard price to pay. Some folks make a show of friendliness merely to reflect honor back upon themselves. They lend a helping hand with the thought of themselves being honored and rewarded for it. True friendliness never seeks any return. It spends itself. It breaks its alabaster box of precious ointment but never seeks for any favors in return. It is a pure unselfishness. The word usually recognizes this fact. People generally come to see through the motive of an individual. They sense whether or not he is genuine and sincere or whether he is self-seeking in his attitude and efforts in behalf of other people.

"All of self and none of Thee,
Some of self, and some of Thee,
Less of self, and more of Thee,
None of self, and all of Thee."

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Mrs. Brown is only one of many Westminster people who have gratefully endorsed Doan's Pills. If your back aches, if your kidneys bother you, don't simply ask for a kidney remedy, ask distinctly for DOAN'S PILLS, the same that Mrs. Brown had, the remedy backed by home testimony. 60 cents at all dealers. Foster-Milburn Co., Mfrs., Buffalo, N. Y. "When Your Back is Lame, Remember the Name."

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL

Sunday School 'Lesson'

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D.D., Dean of the Evening School, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)

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Lesson for March 1

CHRIST BEFORE PILATE

LESSON TEXT—Matt. 27:11-31.

GOLDEN TEXT—"He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities."—Isa. 53:5.

PRIMARY TOPIC—How Wicked Men Tried Jesus.

JUNIOR TOPIC—The Trial of Jesus.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—The Trial of Jesus.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—Christ Before Pilate.

In order to have a proper perspective for this lesson it will be helpful if we view in their proper relations our Lord's trials.

A. Ecclesiastical.

1. Before Annas (John 18:13).

2. Before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin (Matt. 26:57, 59-66; Mark 14:53, 55-64; Luke 22:54; John 18:19-24). This was an irregular meeting and held at night.

3. Before the Sanhedrin (Matt. 27:1; Luke 22:66-71). This was held at daybreak and was a formal meeting.

B. Civil.

I. Before Pilate (Matt. 27:11-26).

The ecclesiastical powers had voted a sentence of death upon Jesus, but they lacked the right to inflict capital punishment, as this power had been taken from them by the Romans. For this reason they delivered Him to Pilate, the Roman governor. It was in the early morning after the mock trial before the high priests and Peter's denial that they bound Jesus and delivered Him to Pilate. It turned out, therefore, that both Jews and Gentiles were guilty of the crucifixion of the Savior.

1. Pilate Questions Jesus (vv. 11-14).

(1) "Art thou the King of the Jews?" (v. 11). When the trial was transferred from the Sanhedrin to Pilate they changed their charge of blasphemy to that of sedition or treason.

(2) Jesus' answer (v. 11). He admitted His claim to being a king but explained that His Kingdom was not of this world, else would His servants fight to put Him on the throne (John 18:3, 37). He declared that He was born and had come into the world to this end.

(3) "Hearest Thou not how many things they witness against Thee?" (v. 13). The members of the Sanhedrin—the priests and the elders—joined in their accusation against Him. They brought a three-fold charge (Luke 23:2).

(a) Perverting the nation—guilty of sedition.

(b) Forbidding to pay taxes to the Roman government.

(c) Claiming to be a king, thus changing the charge from a religious to a political one.

(4) Jesus' Behavior (v 14). His silence under such provocation greatly astonished Pilate.

2. Pilate Giving a Choice Between Jesus and Barabbas (vv. 15-26).

(1) The offer made (v. 17). It was the annual custom at great festivals to release a prisoner chosen by the people. Because he knew that for envy they had delivered Jesus he gave them the choice between Barabbas and Jesus. After several unsuccessful efforts to escape responsibility the expediency of letting the people choose between Barabbas and Jesus was resorted to. Pilate no doubt thought they would choose Jesus rather than the notorious Barabbas.

(2) A message from Pilate's wife (v. 19). She warned him against having anything to do in the condemnation of Christ.

(3) The choice made (v. 21). Influenced by the warning from his wife Pilate wished to give Jesus another chance by having the people choose between the innocent and the guilty. They actually chose the notorious criminal Barabbas instead of Christ.

(4) The demand that Christ be crucified (vv. 22, 23). Pilate, the judge, showed great weakness in asking the crowd in the court room what should be done with the prisoner. With one voice they cried, "Let him be crucified."

(5) Pilate washes his hands (v. 24). This was the sign that he was innocent of the blood of Jesus, but guilt could not be so easily removed. The blood of Jesus was on his hands.

(6) The people's awful choice (v. 25). The history of the Jews from that day to this shows how awful has been the execution of this curse upon them.

(7) Jesus scourged (v. 26). It seems to have been the custom to scourge before crucifying. This was so terrible that sometimes the victim died as the result of it. Pilate stands for the man of expediency. The opportunist is a most contemptible man.

II. Before Herod (Luke 23:7-11).

The Best Man

The best man is the one who wishes and seeks best. His ability to do may be limited, but he touches his restrictions.—Presbyterian Record.

In Our Prayer

In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart.—Bunyan.

To Win Souls

If you want to win souls, love them, seek them, go where they are.

Clyde, the Clown

By ROSCOE G. SCOTT

(©, 1925, Western Newspaper Union.)

EVERY town has a Clyde Davis. God saw fit in His great plan for this world to send down into each community somebody to make other people laugh. Everything Clyde Davis did was funny—at least to us, who spent our rather listless days in Middletown, Ind. When he came after his mail the post office always rang with a good shout of old fashioned merriment. Our church socials went flat if Clyde happened to be away in Indianapolis seeing a show. He won more baseball games for our school team than all the members of the nine.

In our amateur theatricals he shone best. Our home newspaper would merely have to say:

The play given next Tuesday evening at the Opera House has a talented cast, the chief comedy role falling into the capable hands of our true humorist, Clyde Davis.

That was the trouble with Mildred Walker. She took Clyde's love making as a joke. Not that she didn't care. She did. Mildred Walker would tingle under the quaint bits of love making performed by our town humorist—until she saw his face and then she would break from his arms with laughter—saying his face looked so much like Buster Keaton's.

A year before, Millie graduated from the local high school. Clyde had been out of school three years and was trying with friendly overtures to build up a dejected little garage business taken over from a slipshod uncle. He had the promise of a good automobile agency when he got on his feet and he would have been standing there erect months ago, had he had Mildred. But she poohpoohed such an extravagant compliment.

Then to make matters far worse, two things came along. The first was a catastrophe—Millie Walker inherited nearly a hundred thousand dollars from her Grandfather Walker. The second was the advent of a dramatic coach, who hailed from Boston and coached plays for a living, after an alleged successful fling in metropolitan vaudeville. The whole thing looked like the makeup of the old fashioned melodrama with Clyde Davis the dejected hero, Millie, the pure hearted heroine, and DeVoss Langdon—he of Boston—the villain. Langdon talked knowingly of "back stage acting" and "hogging the spotlight" and very early he branded Clyde a "ham comedian"—but he retained him in the cast, for there was none other to be found.

One hesitates to jump to conclusions, but at the local hotel several of us boobs unwisely told this Langdon of Mildred's fortune, by way of getting reflected glory for ourselves.

The night of the play I saw Clyde take Millie to the darkest corner of the theater and I saw her run away from him. I knew the jig was up between the two. Clyde muffed every chance at a laugh that night and was funny only because he was so miserable and acted so rottenly.

She came to him afterward. I think she felt guilty maybe. He told us that De Voss was leaving after business arrangements the next night and Millie was going away with him. He confided in me the whole story. Millie had told him that her folks were set on Clyde and thought her love for the coach infatuation. "But gosh, Bo," he said to me tragically, "it's the real stuff." He told me how he had offered his clowning to help her get away, for the Walker home is less than fifty yards from our little depot and facing away from the tracks onto the Main street. Clyde was to amuse the family with stunts just at train time and Mildred was to beat it with her suitor. My protests were hushed. He said he wanted to.

I watched him the afternoon of the elopement. I had a point of vantage that nobody has ever seen. He started his fooling with Millie's little sister, Bessie. But nothing would tempt the parents from the house. For some strange reason Clyde's feeling had lost its charm. He clowned with the little sister, with Millie's great Dane, he called in vain to the house for them to see his stunts; once Mrs. Walker came to the door; but she went back and far away the engine of the Eastbound train whistled for Middletown. Her folks had always come out before to smile over his antics. Millie might think he was not honest in his desire to serve. If he failed she would only despise him. De Voss had gone to the train in the hotel hack fifteen minutes before. Millie was prisoned by parental eyes.

An idea! His fooling was forgotten. I saw him stagger about. I heard him shriek, "Oh God, I am dying!" Then he fell headlong and before I could get to him, Millie's father and mother were bending over him and he was half laughing, half crying. Into our circle came Mildred, parting us savagely and taking up his head in her arms. I heard him whisper to her in a true stage whisper that she must rush. But she held on and he was not allowed to explain. And the Boston dramatic coach disgustedly boarded the train and the villain had been—true to form—foiled.

"I am so glad you did it, Clyde," she said as she cried over him. "I thought it was all real and then I new how much you meant to me."

Which all goes to prove that the old melodramas were not so far off after all!

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