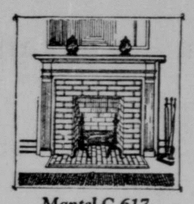
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THE CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR TOPIC

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

March 8th—**The Master's Method of Winning Followers.** John 1: 35-51

We are to have three topics on the general subject of WINNING OTHERS TO CHRIST. This is the main business of the Church and the real work of all followers of Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that "he who winneth souls is wise" and "they that turn many to righteousness shall shine like the stars forever and ever." It is proper, therefore, that this series of subjects should be introduced by considering the method which Jesus Himself used in winning His followers. In one sense He used no methods. It was His radiant personality, the spirit of love and fellowship which He manifested in all His dealings with others which attracted followers unto Him. None of His methods, if such there be, can be separated from His own personality. In this respect the Church has made very little progress. We have invented many schemes and devices. We have inaugurated methods and plans and programs, but none of them is as far-reaching and as successful as the personal approach which Jesus had to the men and women of His day. In studying the way which Jesus had of winning His followers, a few definite suggestions emerge.

First, He always dealt with the individual. Every soul was for Him a distinct thought of God. He saw value in each and every one. He impressed this fact time and again. Even a little child was of priceless value. He knew men. He recognized their strength and their weakness. He saw that they were not all alike, that they had their own peculiarities and characteristics, and consequently He approached each one on his own level. He steadily avoided the crowd and put very little value upon winning men en masse. He knew the weakness of the crowd and the shallowness of mob influence. He would not gather men in wholesale fashion into His Kingdom. It had to be an individual affair. It involved the choice of each one separately.

Second, He went where men were. While it is true that He said, "Come unto Me," and "Follow Me," nevertheless, He went where the men and women were whom He invited to follow Him. He studied each one in His own peculiar way. He saw Nathanial under the fig tree, Zachaeus on the sycamore tree. He saw Matthew at the toll gate, and the fishermen mending their nets by the Galilean Sea. He came to the well where the woman came to draw water. He picked out His followers. He did not leave such a vital matter to chance or at random. What careful preparation He made, spending a whole night in prayer, before He chose His twelve intimate disciples! Jesus used every possible occasion when He might find men who would be His followers. No matter where He was—at dinner parties, on the public highway, in the synagogue, everywhere, He was searching for and inviting people to follow Him. When He ate bread, when He healed the sick, when He was on a journey, He sought followers and found them. Some, like Nicodemus, came to Him at night; others He found in the broad, open daylight. Not one did He approach exactly like the other, and yet He had a constant passion for followers.

Third, He never made it easy to follow Him. It seems strange that in spite of this consuming passion which He had, He should still make it so difficult for people to follow Him. He said, "If any man will follow Me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me." He set the cross, with all that that implies, before him. He never offered bribes or inducements or worldly emoluments. He discouraged all that. When some asked Him what they should have, He rebuked them. The hope of a reward was not the burden of His appeal. Some followed for loaves and fishes, but He put little confidence in their sincerity. What he wanted was strong, brave, heroic men and women, those who could stand the test and who would not readily forsake Him. We may well here learn a lesson from the Master. We have in many respects let down the bars too low and we have made it too easy for men and women to become followers of Jesus Christ. We have pictured it as a soft and easy berth and have not appealed to the heroic and courageous elements in the human soul. We have held out all sorts of offers to people and pictures of what they would receive if they would follow Jesus, and some there are who are following Him simply for the temporal reward, and others, perchance, for a spiritual reward. But Jesus never set any value on this. He never appealed to the selfish interests on the part of His followers. They would have to be unselfish like Himself. They would have to be willing to renounce the things of the world and be ready to suffer and sacrifice and die, if need be, for the new cause to which they had pledged their allegiance.

Fourth, He never used sensational or high pressure methods. Jesus did not win men by force. He had no tricks or devices by which He might catch them napping. He had no subterfuge or camouflage methods whereby He might take people unawares. He always presented His challenge openly, fairly and squarely. He did not conceal anything. He was open and frank. He did not appeal so much to the emotions as to the will of people. He made following Him a matter of personal choice. "If any man **willeth** to do the will of God, he shall know." "They will not come unto Me that they might have life." He wept over Jerusalem because they **would** not. Jesus never temporized. He allowed men to exercise the power of choice, knowing that then only would they become real and true followers of His.

Fifth, He won His followers by prayer and by persistent, patient effort. He did not depend entirely upon Himself, but He brought this matter constantly to the Father in prayer. Study the prayers of Jesus and see how many of them center around His followers. He prayed for His followers alone in the stillness of the night, in the garden of Gethsemane and on the Cross. He prayed for them individually and collectively. When one of them was weak He prayed that he might be strengthened. "Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee that he might sift thee as wheat, but I have **prayed** for thee." He was persistent and patient. He did not give up. He went after the lost sheep **"until He found it."** Here we have a great lesson for us. It is not enough to extend the invitation once. We must be persistent and perservering. In parable and in personal practice, Jesus illustrated the power of patient perseverance in winning others unto Him.

Sixth, He appealed to men's own experience. He told people that they should "come and see" for themselves. They were not to accept Him simply because others had told them of Him, but they should come and experience it themselves. That was the ultimate appeal. That must be the final appeal today. Heresay evidence does not suffice. Only when men and women have tasted of Jesus and found Him precious will they have convictions of their own and will exclaim, "Now we believe, not because we have been told, but we have seen and heard Him ourselves." They will be like the Queen of Sheba, who would not believe the glory of Solomon until she came and saw for herself, and then she realized that the half had not been told her. Jesus wanted to have intelligent followers. They were not to be blind men following they knew not what nor where. He wanted them to understand and to realize clearly whom they were following, and this they could realize only through their own personal experience.

Seventh, He set others to work for Him. Jesus knew how to multiply Himself. That was the great secret of His life. He was always multiplying. Once it was the loaves and the fishes; then it was spiritual blessings entrusted to Him, and then it was Himself in His followers. So it came to pass that immediately after Andrew had found the Messiah, he went and brought his own brother Simon unto Him. When Philip had found the Christ he went and found Nathanial. The followers of Jesus became the winners of other followers. This established them in their faith and fellowship. This is too much lacking in our day. We do not set others sufficiently at work, and thus we forfeit their interest and their service. What untouched resources there are in the men and women who are following Christ but who have not been set to work in winning others unto Him!

The motive which prompted Jesus in win followers was not a selfish one. He sought not to make a name for Himself nor even to swell the number of His followers, so that He might present glowing statistics to His Father in Heaven. None of these things entered His great soul. The motive which prompted Him was the good of the individual who chose to follow Him. This caused Him to be moved with compassion when He saw the multitude without a shepherd, and this made Him weep over Jerusalem when He saw the apathy and indifference of the doomed city. And what was the message which Jesus announced in winning followers? It was of a fold-fold character: (a) repentance; (b) the love of the Father; (c) the worth of the human soul; (d) the Kingdom of God, or social fellowship in Christ. These are the lessons which Jesus teaches us through the ages in winning followers for Him. How far short we have come! What greater things we might do if we would just go back and study again the Master's method and try to put it into practice now!

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 8

THE SAVIOR ON THE CROSS

LESSON TEXT—Luke 22:33-46.

GOLDEN TEXT—"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"—Rom. 8:32.

PRIMARY TOPIC—Jesus Forgives His Enemies.

JUNIOR TOPIC—The Savior on the Cross.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—The Crucifixion of Christ.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—Christ Died for Our Sins.

This lesson brings us face to face with the greatest tragedy of all times. No record in the annals of history approaches it; it is the very climax of all history. Though unique in its blackness, from it flows streams of liberty and life for all the world. It is highly important that every teacher have personal experience of Christ's death for himself, and then get his pupils to see that Christ's death was instead of their own death.

I. The Place of Crucifixion (v. 33).

They led him away to Calvary, a hill north of Jerusalem, resembling a skull. "Calvary" is the Latin word and "Golgotha" is the Hebrew. This is a most significant name for the place where man's redemption was accomplished. The skull is an apt picture of man's condition as the result of sin—life and intelligence are gone, leaving only the dark, empty cavern which once contained them.

II. His Companions on the Cross (v. 33).

Two malefactors were crucified with Him. Their names are not given. This is a fulfillment of the Scriptures. "He was numbered with the transgressors" (Isa. 53:12).

III. His Forgiving Love (v. 34).

He cried, "Father forgive them." He doubtless had in mind not only the soldiers who acted for the government, but the Jews, who, in their blindness, were ignorant of the enormity of their crime.

IV. The World Revealed (vv. 34-43).

Jesus Christ on the cross is the supreme touchstone of human life, and discloses the world's heart. Take a cross-section of the world at any time since Christ was crucified, and representatives of the various classes therein were found around Jesus on the cross.

1. The Covetous (v. 34).

They gambled for His seamless robe right under the cross where He was dying. This represents those whose primary interest in Christ is a means to get gain.

2. The Indifferent (v. 35).

"The people stood beholding." They gazed upon Him with indifference. The great mass of the world gaze upon the crucified Christ with stolid indifference.

3. The Scoffers (vv. 35-39).

(1) The rulers reviled Him for His claim to be the Savior. They wanted Savior, but not a crucified Savior. Many today are religious, but have only contempt for a salvation which centers in an atonement made by blood.

(2) The soldiers reviled Him for claiming to be a king. The title, "King of the Jews," had been placed over Him in bitter irony, but it was true for, by right of the Davidic covenant, He shall be one day King over Israel (II Sam. 7:8-16). The fact that the superscription was in Greek, Hebrew and Latin shows that he was to be king over all the world.

(3) The Impenitent Malefactor (v. 39).

This brutal man joined in reviling the Savior, even though he was under condemnation.

4. The Penitent Malefactor (vv. 40-43).

The conscious sinner who discerned the heart of the Savior prayed for mercy. The man confessed his sin against God and cried to Jesus for salvation. He saw that the dying One was the forgiving God. The fact that he acknowledged his sin showed that he was penitent. His request that Christ remember him when He came into His kingdom shows that he recognized that the One who was dying on the cross was making atonement for sin, and that He would come to reign as King. His salvation was immediate. Christ said, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

V. The Death of Christ (vv. 44-46).

So shocking was the crime that nature herself threw around the Son of God a shroud to hide Him from the godless crowd. When the price of sin was paid He cried with a loud voice, showing that He still had vitality, that His death was not through exhaustion, but by His sovereign will.

IN THIS LIFE

It is in this life alone we can learn lessons of patience and self-denial, for there are no sick-beds to watch by, no sufferers to soothe, no mourners to comfort in the mansions of the Father's house.—George Macdonald.

A Dull Fellow

By FRANK WALL

(©, 1925, Western Newspaper Union.)

EVERY one smiled when Johnson returned to the office this morning from his vacation. Two weeks ago he walked out at five o'clock as quietly as if he were only going for the evening, and this morning he came back just as quietly. What does a man like that wan. with a vacation anyway?

"He's such a dull fellow," murmured 'Billy' Delaine languidly. "If ever I want to die of ennui I'll make him fall in love with me."

Johnson didn't hear her, and it wouldn't have made any difference if he had. He was trying to concentrate his attention on his job and that was taking all his energy.

This dull fellow was shaken to the soul. He had gone away as part of the routine of life. There had been a time when the thought of a vacation would have conjured up wonderful pictures in his mind, but nothing now seemed able to give him a thrill. Perhaps he lived too much in a groove. Where the others looked on life as a series of gay adventures to be sought deliberately as one seeks entertainment in a theater, he took his adventures on paper. He found his romance in the short stories he wrote so untiringly in all his spare time. Sometimes he wondered if he was chasing the shadow and missing the substance of life; yet he must have known that romance and passion are always round the corner. One is liable to run into them at any time.

..nd that indeed was what happened to this dull fellow, and perhaps that was what made him take his experience so seriously. He had lived in a world of illusions, you see, creating people to suit himself, playing with the imaginary passions of imaginary men and women, and now fate was playing with him.

He went to the coast prepared to enjoy himself in his own quiet fashion, and on his first day there he met Daphne Russell, whom he had known years ago. He would have walked past her in his absent-minded way, but she came up and greeted him; and even then he didn't know her at first. There was some excuse for him, too, for in the intervening years since their last meeting, she had changed almost beyond recognition.

What is the feminine equivalent for a dull fellow? Whatever it was, that was the way Daphne had been heading as inexorably as rivers head to the sea. Then she went to live in Canada, and Johnson had not seen her for seven years, and now, when he met her he could only stare at her in amazement.

For this piece of lovely wistfulness was not the Dahpne he had known. Her profile had taken on an exquisite delicacy. Her mouth trembled to a thousand moods. Passion stirred wistfully in her dark eyes. Her hair looked as if painted by moonlight.

Something leaped in Johnson's heart, something that flamed passionately and throbbed and hurt.

"Oh, I'm so glad to see you," she cried. "I came back from Canada and I couldn't find any one I know. It seemed as though all my friends had gone. And then I came here for a lonely vacation and I met you."

"Your vacation isn't going to be lonely at all," said Johnson firmly. "I am the Committee of Welcome appointed to meet you. After you've been through our program you'll never want to leave home again."

"You talk in just your old lovely way," she murmured contentedly. "I never knew whether you were in earnest or not."

And he looked at her quietly. "Yes," he said. "I never was so much in earnest."

And after that a new life began for Johnson and perhaps for Daphne also. They had long evenings of the most perfect comradeship, evenings when the whole world seemed to be drenched with sheen beauty. That was the way he saw it anyway. It brought him out of his shell amazingly. He became gay, brilliant, tender, all in turn, until it seemed that Daphne must have transferred to him some of her own secret of living vividly. Life danced ahead of him, beckoning, leading him on, whispering all kinds of wonderful promises; and he believed them all.

And so the vacation went by, each day sinking in turn into that strange, bottomless pit men call the past, and leaving in its place one still more wonderful. And to both Daphne and Johnson, as the last day approached, there came a resolution which they guarded resolutely from each other until the time should come.

They sat together staring at the sea on that last evening. The beauty of the night was all about them, enfolding them in its strange glamour. Johnson turned slowly and looked into the wistful loveliness of Daphne's eyes. He leaned towards her, and she turned.

"I've something to tell you," she said.

There was a queer dryness in his throat. He couldn't speak.

"I was married in Canada. Five years of perfect love and comradeship—and then he died. I think my heart died with him." A little sigh broke the silence. She turned to him again. "You were going to say something?" she said, quietly.

Johnson shook his head. All his new world had toppled about his ears. He was just a dull fellow again. They noticed it as soon as he entered the office this morning.

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