

From The Pulpit

by Rev Donald M. Clark

PERSONALYSIS, OR
LOOKING AT OURSELVES,
(Our Better Self)

Scripture: Luke 15:11-24

A YOUNG PEOPLE'S paper recently carried an article entitled "You Fascinating Thing, You!" and gave these facts about the human body: a man who weighs 140 pounds contains enough fat for seven cakes of soap, carbon for 9,000 pencils, phosphorus for 2200 matches, iron for one nail, enough lime to whitewash a chicken coop, enough sulphur to rid the dog of fleas, and water to fill a ten-gallon barrel!

We know that this is not a complete picture of a human body's worth. . .its value is more than any such listing. Likewise, when we look at a man's spiritual side, we could list all his outer words and actions and conclude he is a pretty bad thing! But there is something finer in every person--a better self!

I. EVIDENCE OF THE BETTER SELF

Beneath ordinary behavior, below the surface of our cutting words and thoughtless actions, there is a better self: the sum of all the good ever impressed upon us, the collection of all the ideals and standards we cherish.

How do we know that this better self exists? Try a simple test: think of all the common expressions we use which hint at this better self. We say: "I'm ashamed of myself for acting that way," or "I'm not myself today," or "I must pull myself together." What "self" do we mean if not some better standard within, something which has been thwarted or checked?

Another way to be convinced that a better self lies within is to recall how we have felt at those moments in life when we were "on top of the world". What was your mood when the one you love gave back your bursting affection? How did you feel when years of hardship and study gave you finally a diploma? What about your attitude when you succeeded against some illness or some obstacle in your work?

Why, of course, the world was wonderful--your spirits soared--you could and maybe did shake the hand of anyone you met, greeting all the world with exuberance. You wished everyone well, even your enemies; and for that moment, the better self had the upper hand. Gloom and cynicism and pettiness were crushed by the boundless good you felt!

IT IS A FASCINATING THING to think what possibilities for a better life there are if such a better self could exert itself in us each day. Much unhappiness and sadness would be swept away if our good selves would dominate all we did.

II. THE BETTER SELF OF THE PRODIGAL

If there is this better self within us all, why does it not show itself more often? We turn for the answer to our Scripture lesson, the spiritual classic, Jesus' parable of the prodigal son.

This story of the young man who wasted his inheritance in riotous living is among the best known in all of our Holy Scripture. (Its value was shown recently when it was made into a Hollywood movie, the acid test for the worth of any plot!) But the universal appeal of the story is not so much due to its plot as it is to its commonness. The experience of the younger son is in some measure the experience of all of us: a wealth of time or talent or treasure squandered in wasteful living, the realization of loss and then the desire to be returned to the better life.

The parable divides into only two parts: the reckless, useless waste of his fortune, and the return to his home. The key to these contrasting halves, the turning point in the story, comes (See PULPIT, page 15)



REV. D. M. CLARK

SECOND BAPTIST DEACONESSES STAGE SUCCESSFUL "PEW RALLY"



REWARDING--Was last Sunday's "Pew Rally" at the Second Baptist Church sponsored by the Deaconesses as is clearly indicated by the prideful group pictured here (seated l-r): Sisters Beatrice Jackson, Minnie Reid, Pearl Sims, and Samella Richardson. . .Standing (l-r): Sisters Victoria Beck, Lillie Smith, Carl Massingale, Harvey Jones, Arie Miller, Beulah Jones, Leatha Thomas, W. Foston, Josephine Lovey, I. Pullins, Ida M. Coleman and I.M. Blake. Shown in rear of ladies from (l-r) are Brothers J.A. Walker, Sam Richardson, R.G. Reid, Leon Pullins, Toney Jackson, and Perry Foston.

ALTAR CALL

By EMORY G. DAVIS, D.D.
NEGRO PRESS INTERNATIONAL

EDUCATION UNTO DEATH

All brutality is not in the South. In a Chicago suburb, a 1965 high school graduate and a student in a junior college, in search for part-time employment to assist himself in getting an education, was beaten to death by four white youths. Reason: One of the assailants claimed he was attacked by "some" Negro, once-upon-a-time when in Chicago.

Although I never knew this promising youngster, my wife had the unique opportunity to teach him in high school. On him, she says, "He was a quiet boy because he liked to mull over ideas." To her, his tragic death was almost traumatic.

EVEN WORSE than the discordant note of tragedy is the fact that she, like other Negro teachers, preachers and leaders, continually encourage Negro youth to study hard, get an education to get ahead, to somehow become equipped to beat the color rap.

Then, to see a youth, doing just this, snuffed out by violent vengeance must be somewhat disheartening to other Negro youth who are conscientiously trying.

One of his favorite high school English subjects was "Hamlet." He believed that the story was a tragedy because the last act ended in death brought on by vengeance.

As my wife reflected upon his evaluation of this Shakespearean classic, she said, "It is almost unbelievable that a young man so pensive about life, so eager to find the good in his fellow human beings, so willing to look for reasoned settlements of human differences should have been taken off by the very force which he believed to be so base in mankind."

OH, HOW TEDIOUS is the task of the church and its leaders. How often, has the church itself had an attitude of anti-intellectualism.

And yet, despite what fate may befall those trying to upgrade themselves, and thus save a race of people, we must, if we are true to the God of our Creation, continue to insist that all our youth find for themselves the best; develop themselves to the fullest; get the best education their labor and study will provide.

EVERY TIME I hear an illiterate preacher trying to justify his own illiteracy by saying the only degree God requires is a B.A. (Born Again) degree, I shudder.

A man's personal salvation is worthy of all life effort, but at the same time, it seems useless that God would create and sustain life to continue to produce illiterates who have opportunity to do better and don't.

May the former fellow classmates of Jerome Huey, and other youth, not only revere his memory, but also go forth to get the best education for themselves, even if their heads are bashed in the process.

It will not always be thus. Many can and will make it to the Altar of Education. Let us point the way to all our youth.

RACE and RELIGION

By NEGRO PRESS INTERNATIONAL

INDIRECT APPROACH

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah - (NPI)--A group of young Mormon scholars, in announcing the publication of the first issue of a new quarterly, "Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought," noted, among other things that the subject of exclusion of Negroes from the Mormon priesthoods, "would probably be approached indirectly." Subsequent issues will also cover such topics as pornography, civil rights and the impact of commercial values on art and religion.

AWARD WINNER


CHICAGO - (NPI)--Archbishop John P. Cody, head of the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Chicago, was given the 23rd annual Dorie Miller award during ceremonies at the Opera House last week. The award, presented by the Rev. Elmer L. Fowler, honors the first Negro hero killed in World War II's Pearl Harbor. The plaque cited the archbishop for his "keen interest and leadership in the field of brotherhood and civil rights for all Americans."

BIAS END SEEN

NATAL, South Africa - (NPI)--Roman Catholic Archbishop Denis Hurley, Durban, believes that "my own generation may see the end of separate development of South Africa's racial groups." Speaking to students at the University of Natal, he said: "Most of you will live to see the end of the dream of apartheid in South Africa."

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