

From The Pulpit

by Rev Donald M. Clark

THE DIFFICULT BEATITUDE

Text: "Blessed are the Meek, for they shall inherit the earth," Matt. 5:5.

This beatitude provokes our thought, and it also provokes our opposition. The average man would prefer to be known as a man of some spirit. Meekness evokes the thought of the proverbial doormat.

Christ's claims that the meek inherit the earth appears to be contradicted by the facts. The aggressive, self-assertive, self-advertising win their way in the world and gain the earth for themselves.

Meek... there is difficulty in the very word. In II Corinthians 10:1, Paul appeals to the Corinthians "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ". Gentle conveys the idea of meekness much better although present in the Old Testament--that of reverence and humility before God.

Some think that meekness is the same as poor in spirit. The difference between the two words in the Hebrew and Aramaic is slight, but there is no confusion, here, for a different result is stated. The poor in spirit will find the realm of heaven in theirs: The humble are to inherit the earth.

We may mark the difference by saying that the poor in spirit are conscious of their own insignificance as assumed by those about them.

Yet, they are not insignificant. One cannot imagine Jesus saying! Blessed are they who have an inferiority complex, or blessed are they who have nothing to



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commend them except an appearance of docility.

THE TWO MEN who are called meek in the Bible are Moses and our Lord. "Meek as Moses", we say--do we understand what that means? Moses broke the tablets of stone when he saw the apostasy of the people. Jesus who said, "I am meek and lowly of heart," drove the money changers out of the temple and asked men how they could escape the damnation of hell.

Yet He is 'gentle Jesus,' meek and mild. The noun qualifies the adjective, when the noun is Jesus.

The meek, then, in Jesus' interpretation, are those who have gone out of themselves altogether. In the presence of God, there is humility, a sense of unworthiness. But in the presence of the King, the meek no longer care about their own feelings. They are "lost in wonder, love and praise."

When Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek" he meant "Blessed are men whose souls are not for sale, who can always be counted upon to say what they think is right, regardless of personal consequences; for they shall inherit the earth."

Blessed are the truly humble, the teachable --like Abraham Lincoln who, when he was defeated by Stephen A. Douglas, wrote to a friend: "I am glad I made the late race. It gave me a hearing on the greatest question of the age such as I could have gotten, I believe I have made a few marks that will tell for the cause of liberty long after I am gone."

Blessed are the forgiving, those who do not avenge themselves. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

These qualities of integrity, of teachableness, of forgiveness, of magnanimity woven into the meaning of meekness--as Jesus used it, required strength far beyond our belief. Self-discipline and the grace of God together produce it.

There is the difficulty of the claim. "They shall inherit the earth." But they don't--or do they? The arrogant, the self-assertive, does get his way for a time; but what do the centuries say against the hours? Jesus recognized what we call "survival value" in meekness--Integrity and humility, and willingness to overcome evil with good, will make them the real posses-

ALTAR CALL

NEGRO PRESS INTERNATIONAL

By EMORY G. DAVIS, D.D.

FORCED TO DECIDE

The comments of passers-by, during a civil rights demonstration--generally derisive, seldom complimentary--can be interesting and thought provoking.

Frequently heard is the expression "white niggers" hurled at those whites who identify with the struggle by visible participation in demonstrations. The whites in such demonstrations generally laugh at such epithets.

The name-callers are saying, in effect, that those whites who join with Negroes in demonstrations, have abandoned their loyalty to the "white" race and have willingly identified with the "nigger" race, which to the critics is moving down the human ladder. Bigoted whites cannot accept the fact that some whites regard Negroes as human beings.

Name-calling is a form of confession, and as such it should have a purgative value. Its confessional aspects indicate that the person who calls another human being a name recognizes himself to be something different. Apparently this recognizable difference is a disturbing factor and the name-caller is forced, within himself, to do something about it.

OUT OF HIS GUILT-RIDDEN consciousness

--his impacted bigotry--comes an occasion to confess his own sub-humanity. Inwardly, he would like to be human enough to be able to see himself identifying with other humans, either black or white. He would like to get rid of his burden of guilt. He is like the Gadarene demoniac who cried out to the Man of Nazareth "for God's sake, don't torture me."

To participate in a demonstration is one of the most profound occasions to bear witness to one's belief in humanity. The act, in itself, forces a decision in the mind of those who participate as well as in those who pass by.

The viewer must ask himself--if he is at all honest--"Where do I stand on this issue?" The answer he gets becomes a mirror in which he sees himself as he is.

Perhaps if more people who feel that their greatest witness is being concealed and hidden in a church building, would get out on a demonstration line, they would discover a form of "religious" witness--both for themselves and others--that would provoke more "conversions" than 100 sermons or testimony meetings.

There is an Altar of Personal Witness begging for those who are unashamed to bear witness to their humanity. It is the civil rights demonstration. Confess, believe and be "saved."

Twice Blessed Are Those Who Love Children



CHILDREN'S HOUR is every Sunday evening at the Second Baptist Church when the youngsters gather for the weekly B.T.U. services. In upper photo, Rev. V. C. L. Coleman, church pastor, with some of the adult leaders of the weekly Sunday evening program, pose with enthusiastic youngsters--Last Sunday was a doubly happy Sabbath at Second Baptist... The newly organized Church Advisory Board held its initial meeting--Shown in photo right are board members, from left: Rev. Joseph Jefferson, Mrs. Jefferson, Sister Sarah Ray, Brother Robert Ellison (B.T.U. Director), Sister Mable S. Barr (B.Y.U. Associate Director) with the beaming Shepherd of the flock, Pastor Rev. V. C. L. Coleman.

sors of the earth.

The meek man is a new thing on the earth. For half a million years, the "strong man" has been striding across the planet. Yet to whom belongs the future? The whip-crackers? The sabre rattlers? Or men willing to cooperate?

The terrible meek is a prophecy. A Roman soldier under orders, drove nails, but said to the mother of his limp victim: "I tell you woman, this dead son of yours, disfigured, shamed, spat upon, has built a kingdom this day that can never die... something has happened up here today to shake all our kingdoms of blood and fear to the dust. The meek, the terrible meek, the fierce agonizing meek, are about to enter into their inheritance.



Acknowledgment

We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to our many friends for the kindness and sympathy shown us during our recent bereavement at the loss of John (Harry) McDowell, beloved husband, father, and brother.

The McDowell Family