

A Call to Personal Service

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(The following stirring appeal should be read by every young man in our Societies. We recommend that it be given by some competent reader in every Epworth League, Club, Association and other Young People's Society, at some early meeting.—Ed.)

IT is said that the idea of C. M. Sheldon in writing "In His Steps" was to catch the thought of the world and focus it on the one thought, "What would Jesus Do?" until it could make an impression. It is good that Christmas comes once a year to focus our thought on the birth of Jesus till we catch its great significance. Our purpose in this essay is to hold up the idea of service as inspired by Jesus.

If I could feel my hand, dear Lord, in Thine,
And surely kneel,
That I was walking in the light divine
Through wear or woe;

If I could hear Thy voice in accents sweet
But plainly say,
To guide my trembling, groping, wandering feet,
"This is the way."

So sang Sarah K. Bolton, in a beautiful little poem on "Faith," and as we read it we are impelled to lift up our hearts to God and ask Him that we may be led so that we may feel His hand guiding us, and know that we are under His special care. We rejoice in His goodness and revel in His love. Life seems very sweet and heaven very near as we drink at this fountain, very sweet until we are called to service. Then our struggle begins. A rude awakening awaits us, as outlined in "The Prayer of Self," by Priscilla Leonard.

One knelt within a world of care
And sin, and lifted up his prayer:
"I ask Thee, Lord, for health, and power
To meet the duties of each hour;
For peace from care, for daily food,
For life prolonged and filled with good;
I praise Thee for Thy gifts received,
For sins forgiven, for pains relieved,
For near and dear ones spared and blessed,
For prospered toil and promised rest.
This prayer I make in His great name
Who for my soul's salvation came."

So we have prayed, following the example of our fathers; so the writer has often prayed; so he has heard others pray. But he was never conscious of the selfishness of prayer until he read the rest of this poem:

But as he prayed, lo! at his side
Stood the thorn-crowned Christ, and sighed:
"C blind disciple—came I then
To bless the selfishness of men?
Thou askest health, amidst the cry
Of human strain and agony;
Thou askest peace, while all around
Trouble bows thousands to the ground;
Thou askest life for thine and thee,
While others die; thou thankest Me
For gifts, for pardon, for success,
For thine own narrow happiness.

"Nay; rather bow thy head and pray
That while thy brother starves to-day
Thou mayst not eat thy bread at ease;
Pray that no heath or wealth or place
May lull thy soul while the world lies
Suffering, and claims thy sacrifice;
Praise not, while others weep, that thou
Hast never groaned with anguished brow;
Praise not, thy sins have pardon found,
While others sink, in darkness drowned;
Canst thou give thanks, while others sigh,
Outcast and lost, curse God and die?"

"Not in My name thy prayer was made,
Not for My sake thy praises paid.
My gift is sacrifice; My blood
Was shed for human brotherhood.
And till thy brother's woe is thine
Thy heart-beat knows no throb of Mine,
Come, leave thy selfish hopes, and see
Thy birthright of humanity!
Shun sorrow not; be brave to bear
The world's dark weight of sin and care;
Spend and be spent, yearn, suffer, give,
And in thy brethren learn to live."

This is the most heart-searching bit of English the writer knows. At first it seems far-fetched, overdrawn, and one-

-sided, but as it is read and reread its message sinks deep into the heart and appeals to the noblest within the soul for approval:

"My gift is sacrifice; My blood
Was shed for human brotherhood,
And, till thy brother's woe is thine,
Thy heart-beat knows no throb of Mine."

I suppose I might conclude this article by repeating these lines a score of times till they had burned themselves into the memory. It is said that the reading of Paul's poem on "Love" (1 Cor. 13) daily for a month will transform any life into Christlikeness. The reading of this poem daily for a week will, I think, give to any young man or woman a new and exalted vision of service:

"Come, leave thy selfish hopes, and see
Thy birthright of humanity."

We are in danger of being poisoned by a colossal selfishness. Our Thanksgiving exercises fairly stagger a with the account of our blessings. If the goodness of God in material blessings could draw us to Him, surely we would be resting in the secret place, yet on every hand we hear the call for a revival, and a confession that our religion is not sufficiently vital and virile. Can it be that we are praying the prayer of self? Can it be that if we could only see we would recognize the thorn-crowned Christ saying:

"Come, leave thy selfish hopes, and see
Thy birthright of humanity?"

Mr. Hudson, the founder of the Adult Bible Class Movement, was standing on the steps of his home one evening when he saw a man of peculiar mien walk up the pavement to his house. The man said, "You are Mr. Hudson? Do you know me?" Mr. Hudson could not recall having met him. He said, "Do you remember the man who was converted at your meeting at M——? I am that man." Mr. Hudson remembered and the man proceeded, "You are the only man who ever put any joy into my life. I had three years of it, but lately I have been so miserable that I have decided to end it all. I thought I would come here to-night and thank you before I ended my life." Mr. Hudson saw the form of a revolver in his pocket, and he said quickly, "Look here, I can tell you what is the matter with you. You have been living entirely for yourself. You deserve to be miserable. The only thing that will save you is to do something for someone else. Go down into the city and look up a boy who has no one to look after him. Get him and make a companion of him. Live for him. Give me that revolver." The man would not give up the revolver but he promised to follow Hudson's advice.

A few days after that he came up to Mr. Hudson's home, with a smile on his face—a changed man. "Did you get the boy?" "Yes, and he is the wildest boy I ever struck. We were out to the ball match this afternoon." With great pleasure the man went on to tell of the new joy which had come into his life.

There is no pleasure like the joy of service; no thrill like the inward sense of unselfishness. But the joy of selfishness is a sickly, costly luxury.

Do you remember the ecstasy of your first religious awakening? How the Spirit of God came to you and with a mighty uplift changed you into a new man? Moody was clerking in the storeroom of a Sunday School teacher came to him and asked him to give his heart to God. He was surprised that his teacher took so much interest in him and readily yielded. He says that when he went out of the store that night the sky was brighter and the birds sang sweeter than ever before. So it was with you. You remember it. How bright life seemed. How your ideals awoke. You remember how in your young enthusiasm you dedicated your life to service to God and humanity in humanity sprang up in your heart and you felt like going out to transform the world. The Bible became a new book, the hymns were all rich and grand, and sermons a continual inspiration. But after a while you failed to listen to the call to service, selfishness crept in and your joy left you.

Would we get back our joy? Would we awaken our slumbering young Christian manhood? Would we transform our young Canada? Then let us stop praying the prayer of self and listen to the call of Christ. He calls to service—to living for others.

Do you see that man just budding into manhood—just beginning to show a fondness for ladies' company, and an indifference to the Church? He has a heart with soul cravings, with growing ideals, and with social and religious instincts, just the same as you. He is a son of God, just as you are. Over and over again Jesus asserted His oneness with human-

"When a man loses hope of his brother he loses faith in his Father."