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Building Up Yourself.

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THE epistle of Jude is a short one and somewhat peculiar. In tone and topic it reminds one of Peter's second epistle. Much of it is occupied with a description of certain classes of ungodly men who oppose the gospel, some of whom even affect to be ministers of righteousness. Of such he warns the saints, "beloved in God the Father," to beware since they are deceivers. Jude was one of the Lord's brethren, though he simply calls himself "the brother of James," and "a servant of Jesus Christ." Short and peculiar, and somewhat obscure as is his writing, it has some things in it that touch the very heart of the gospel and the very soul of spiritual godliness in the personal Christian life. Such things are greatly worthy of study.

"Building up yourself on your most holy faith" is an exhortation which, could it be heeded, would correct a thousand inconsistencies in the common Christian living of today, and make twice ten thousand weak and comparatively worthless church members strong in the Lord; strong to bear burdens and to perform services; strong to withstand the allurements of the world, to separate themselves from sinners, and to live godly in Christ Jesus, all of which, while professing to be dead to the world, they are not now doing. A great mass of nominal Christians are not building themselves up in or on their most holy faith, nor are they being built up either by the preaching of the gospel, or by private devotions, or by the inward witness of the Spirit. Some of them are most assiduously building up themselves in worldly goods and gains, in wealth and respectability, in position and influence, but not in Christ, not in Christian knowledge or experience, not yet in conspicuous Christian usefulness. He who is not striving to build himself up in Christian grace and strength cannot be built up by any means whatever. And these multitudes who are neglecting Christian culture by divinely appointed means and methods, like old neglected buildings, are going fast to decay.

Building up, is the literal rendering of the word here used, as in the erection, enlargement, repairing, or embellishment of a house. It is here, by a figure of speech applied to the development of a Christian life and character, Paul uses the same word quite often, with a similar intent, but in his case it is always rendered "edification," and to "edify"; never "building up," as an edifice is constructed, repaired, enlarged or embellished. He laid much stress on edifying one another, and the church of God. He would have all things done to edification in spiritual things. Alas, that so little often is done in the cause and Kingdom of Christ to build up, to edify Christians, especially young Christians, on this most holy faith. Faith here is taken objectively, and means the system of gospel truth, the entire plan of salvation by which men are made anew in Christ and grow up into Him, building up themselves and being built up and edified by all the means which are divinely provided and prescribed.

The grandest, the most beautiful product of the gospel is an individua, disciple of Christ, who bears most perfectly his Lord's image. It is not a boasted civilization, only as he is a part of that. The great Christian ideals in a community are not grand edifices, eloquent preachers, elaborate and attractive services, or institution called Christian; these are good, and may be called great relatively; but these are human ideals. God's ideal is a soul born from above, with a character which is a transcript of Christ's and a deportment which repeats that of His soul. If candidates for the Hall of Fame were selected by a spiritual insight, the first names admitted there would be those of some humble saints, transfigured by Christ's indwelling. They would be those of whom the world has not heard, but of

whom the world is not worthy.

Why is there so little edifying one another among Christians, and so little edifying the church? Doubtless a true and a sufficient answer is because there is so little following Jude's injunction, "building up yourselves on your most holy faith." Hence it is that so many Christians are so weak, and their example and personal influence so ineffective to stimulate and edify others; hence it is that so many pulpits, while they may be interesting and informing, are not edifying to the spiritual lives of those who sit under their ministry. Their religious characters are not developed; they do not grow in grace. We talk of strong churches, usually meaning churches with a large number of members, or having members of wealth, intelligence and prominent public standing. Those things do not and cannot make strong churches. They make conspicuous churches; churches to be vain of, and over which a cruel pride may boast. But as to spiritual vitality, the power of true godliness and an endless life, they may be very weak churches, and usually are.

This self-culture in a spiritual life, this exercising one's self into godliness, this building one's self up on his most holy faith is strictly according to the analogy of human growth and development in all other respects. There is no profession, trade or calling which men intend to enter, and in which they hope to succeed, for which they do not train themselves by patient study, usually under competent instructors, building themselves up in that particular faith and practice that they may be thoroughly furnished to its longest possibilities. The professional man, the merchant, the mechanic, the artisan, even the disreputable pursuits, exhibit a practical wisdom and devotion to the type they copy and the end they seek that might well shame the Christian's indifference to his own growth in grace. It is positively amazing, when you come to consider it, to what extent of overcoming themselves men go in training for even the most neccallings and professions—the pickpocket, burglar, the prize-fighter, and others like. What painful discipline, what self-denial, what brave persistency, building themselves up on their faith, though it be withal a most unholy faith! All this to accomplish their end, though it be a most unworthy end; all this to become expert and accomplished in their calling, though it be a most unholy calling.

The Christian profession and calling is about the only one in which those who enter it seem to have no ambition to attain excellency, either in character development or in ability for conspicuous service. And yet no other calling is like this to inspire the latent energies of the soul: A high calling, a holy calling, a calling of God, a calling to exalted service, and finally to endless glory. And yet how little effort is there among the mass of those called to be well fitted for the calling, or to achieve success in it; how little building themselves up on their most holy faith.

Mount Vernon, N. Y.

An Appeal.

I wish to call attention to the proposed fund to be raised in behalf of Bro. Ervine, who is now in enfeebled health at Perth, Victoria Co. As his many friends know, our dear brother is laid aside from active service and has been for more than a year living in retirement. At our convention in Hartland it was agreed that an appeal should be made to present him with a fund similar to that raised last year. It seems but fair that the churches should remember in their sympathies and assist those who have faithfully ministered unto them in spiritual things. We now ask all who feel it in their hearts to assist a most worthy object to send their offerings in as soon as possible. Will not some of our young people in the churches where our brother was well known aid us by collecting what they can without delay? These amounts may be forwarded

to me at any time, and I will see that all are sent together.

W. E. MCINTYRE.
Chipman, N. B., Oct. 15th.

Purposeless.

Like some instrument of music,
Made with great, exceeding skill,
Framed for sounds of sweetest rhythm,
Lying always mute and still;
Left where no man knows the secret
Of a single, noble chord,
Melody for ever silent,
Is thy life without the Lord.

Incomplete as some rich setting—
Finely chased, of purest gold;
Left without the priceless jewel
It was made alone to hold
Useless as some hidden treasure,
When none knew the magic word
To unlock the secret chamber,
Is thy life without the Lord.

Thou, created for His glory—
Is thy purpose unfulfilled?
Have thy heart's deep chords of music
Never by His touch been thrilled?
Is thy soul without its jewel?
Is thy power a hidden hoard?
Is thy spirit dead within thee?
Is thy life without thy Lord?

Notes.

This poor lost world that has swung out into the cold and the dark doesn't know anything about the love of God, and if we do not love men with the same kind of love that Jesus had for this lost world, we are not going to reach them. I wish we could rise to a higher plane of duty and let love be the motive power. How easy it is to work for God if the heart is filled with love! And if it is not filled with love, let us pray God to fill it with love. What we want is to be baptized with the love of Christ for this world, and if we are full of love for the perishing, we are sure to succeed.

It is one thing to help us in our plans; it is quite another thing to ask God how we can be helpers in his plans. Every man is glad to have God's help; only now and then is found a man whose first thought is how he can help God. What is your chief desire in your morning prayer for the day? Your honest answer to that question may reveal to you your spirit and purpose in life.

A Methodist clergyman told the writer this summer that he never knew a stinging church to be a spiritual one, and vice versa; and our personal experience backs up that statement. The good Baptist who carried his pocketbook into the water with him, so that it might be baptized, too, had a vital religion.

Dr. Watson (Ian Maclaren) bears testimony to this, that there is no preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified—the preaching of the cross, where there is now the living Lord, not hanging upon the cross, but, with the cross as a background, the Lord alive forever.

The nation holds the front door of the saloon while the devil tends the back door that leads to the gutter, the brothel, and hell.

It is only in proportion as men return to the great Foundation truths of the Gospel—of Sin—Repentance—the Atonement—the Deity of our Lord—and Faith in Him—that there can be a revival of religion. There is a feeling of weariness all round. Many ministers are weary of their failure, congregations of their coldness, and "outsiders" of their disappointed hopes. Now, then, is the time to proclaim, as never before, the Saviour's Divine invitation, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—*The Christian*.

Do we fear that our work is beyond our strength? He over to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength th.