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## Interrupted Lives, Arrested Development

By ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D. D.

When by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God.—Heb., 5:12.

Consider the sad contrast of too many Christian lives. There are many so-called and, in a fashion, really Christian people, to whom Christ and his work are mainly, if not exclusively, the means of escaping the consequences of sin—a kind of "fire escape." And to very many it comes as a new thought, in so far as their practical lives are concerned, that these ought to be lives of steadily increasing deliverance from the love and the power of sin, and steadily increasing appropriation and manifestation of Christ's granted righteousness. There are, I think, many of us from whom the very notion of progress has faded away. I am sure there are some of us who were a great deal further on, on the path of the Christian life, years ago, when we first felt that Christ was anything to us, than we are to-day.

There is an old saying of one of the prophets that a child would die a hundred years old, which in a very sad sense is true about very much to be found within the pale of the Christian church who are seventy-years-old babes still, and will die so. Sons "growing brighter and brighter until the noonday!" Ah! there are many of us who are a great deal more like those strange, variable stars that sometimes burst out in the heavens into a great blaze, that brings them up to the brightness of stars of the first magnitude, for a day or two, and then they dwindle until they become little specks of light that the telescope can hardly see.

And there are hosts of us who are instances, if not of arrested, at any rate of unsymmetrical development. The head, perhaps, is cultivated; the intellectual apprehension of Christianity increases, while the emotional and the moral—the practical part of it are all neglected. Or, the converse may be the case; and we may be full of gush and of good emotion, and of fervor when we come to worship or to pray, and our lives may not be a hair the better for it all. Or, there may be a disproportion because of an exclusive attention to conduct and the practical side of Christianity, while the rational side of it, which should be the driving power of all, is comparatively neglected.

So, what with interruptions, what with growing by fits and starts, and long dreary winters like the Arctic winters, coming in between the two or three days of rapid, and therefore brief and unwholesome development, we must all, I think, take to heart the condemnation when we compare the reality of our lives with the divine intention concerning them. Let us ask ourselves, "Have I more command over myself than I had twenty years ago? Do I live nearer Jesus Christ to-day than I did yesterday? Have I more of His Spirit in me? Am I growing? Would the people that know me best say that I am growing in the grace and knowledge of my Lord and Saviour?" Astronomers tell us that there are dark suns that have burnt themselves out, and are wandering unseen through the skies. I wonder if there are any extinguished suns among us.

## Some Deacons I Have Known.

G. A. PELTZ.

In the many years of my active ministry, I have been acquainted with many deacons in various parts of the country. As the result of this observation, I would charge you brethren who enter upon this office, by picturing several deacons whom I have known, but whom I would present as the "awful example" for you to avoid.

(1) *The Talkative Deacon.* One rises before my mind at this moment who in Deacons' Meeting had more to say than any other, and possibly more than all the others combined. He had his

comments and criticisms upon the general services of the church, upon the sermons to which he listened, upon the conduct of individual members, upon the frivolity of the young, upon the other churches around his congregation; but appoint him on a committee which he had favored by his talk and the only report ever to be gained from him, was progress, which progress none other could ever discover. Deacons who do as well as talk are desirable but don't be a "talking deacon" only.

(2) *The Doctrinal Deacon.* Now, doctrine is not to be despised. It is the foundation of all church and individual Christian work, but doctrine which is only foundation is like a building which never rises above the surface of the earth. One deacon whom I knew years ago comes before me now who believed in particular redemption, limited atonement, eternal election, who could expound all the deep things of God, loved to soar amid the eternal purposes, but did little else. No matter how active and earnest and effective a fellowbrother might be, except he be squared up on all these doctrines, he is not a worthy Christian. Don't be a deacon like that.

(3) *The Optimistic Deacon.* I have known men who saw everything in a rosy light. Everything "goes" with them. Nobody does wrong, nothing is working at a disadvantage, failure is a thing unknown to them. Whereas, we know that everything is not going right, we know there is much that is wrong, whereas we deceive ourselves and stultify our brethren. Don't be an optimistic deacon.

(4) *The Pessimistic Deacon.* There are some deacons who never could see good in the church. I think of one especially who often declared that the churches were filled with unregenerate men. The best people they called practical hypocrites, their words could not be depended upon, their Christian character was not thorough. One such deacon called upon me to tell me of the difficulties member, and to ask my advice as to whether he had not better change his church relations. I thought he had, and so advised him. But then he told me he foresaw a crisis in the church of which he was a member, and thought it his duty to stay until the crisis occurred. Just why he wished to be in at the crisis, I do not know, but it reminded me of a dying sheep I once saw in a farmer's field. Around the sheep, perched on the limbs of trees and rails of the fences, were scores of buzzards. They were waiting for the crisis. Don't be a deacon of that sort.

(5) *The Dominating Deacon.* I have known some who thought it their special function to lord it over God's heritage. They wanted to rule, while as Paul declares that instead of limiting their good ruling to their own households, they wish to extend it to the pastor, the other deacons, the trustees, the Sunday school, the church, the congregation, the world at large. Like Alexander the Great, they looked for and wept for other worlds to conquer. Don't be a dominating deacon.

But you will ask me what sort of deacons shall we then be? I answer, such as was portrayed in the 6th of Acts, "men of honest report," or as the revised version puts it, "good report," men of faith, men filled with the Holy Ghost, men who have the executive ability to manage the charities and other financial operations of the church, men whose spiritual power will be so marked that, as occurred in Jerusalem, "the word of the Lord grew exceedingly, and the disciples multiplied." Notice the progress as noted in the case of Stephen, the deacon. We are told he was filled with faith and the Holy Ghost, then we are told he was filled with faith and power. The revised version substitutes grace for faith. In this second citation, here then is the progress,—faith, the Holy Ghost, grace, power. Be such deacons as these, men of faith, men filled with the Holy Ghost, men enjoying all the graces God bestows, and then will you be men of power.

The precious seed grows because moistened by the tears of the sower.

## Mr. Spurgeon on "Evolution."

Mr. Spurgeon when asked what he thought of the doctrine of Evolution said, "My reply to that inquiry can best take the form of another question. Does Revelation teach us evolution? It never struck me, and it does not strike me now, that the theory of evolution can by any process of argument be reconciled with the inspired record of Creation. You remember how it is distinctly stated, again and again, that the Lord made each creature 'after his kind.' So we read, 'And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind; and God saw that it was good.' And again, 'And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind; and God saw that it was good.' Besides, brethren, I would remind you that, after all these years in which so many people have been hunting up and down the world for the 'missing link' between animals and men, among all the monkeys that the wise men have examined, they have never discovered one who has rubbed his tail off, and ascended in the scale of creation so far as to take his place as the equal of our brothers and sisters of the great family of mankind. Mr. Darwin has never been able to find the germ of an Archbishop of Canterbury in the body of a tom-cat or a billy-goat, and I venture to prophesy that he never will accomplish such a feat as that. There are abundant evidences that one creature inclines toward another in certain respects, for all are bound together in a wondrous way, which indicates that they are all the product of God's creative will; but what the advocates of evolution appear to forget is that there is nowhere to be discovered another—there are breaks here and there, and so many missing links that the chain cannot be made complete. There are, naturally enough, many resemblances between them, because they have all been wrought by the one great master-mind of God, yet each one has its own peculiarities. The Books of Scripture are many, yet the Book, the Bible, is one; the waves of the sea are many, yet the sea is one; and the creatures that the Lord has made are many, yet the Creation is one.

"Look at the union between the animal and the bird in the bat or in the flying squirrel, think of the resemblance between a bird and the fish in the flying fish; yet nobody, surely, would venture to tell you that a fish ever grew into a bird, or that a bat ever became a butterfly or an eagle. No; they do not get out of their own spheres. All the evolutionists in the world cannot 'improve' a mouse so that it will develop into a cat, or evolve a golden eagle out of a barn door fowl. Even where one species very closely resembles another, there is a speciality about each which distinguishes it from all others.

"I do not know, and I do not say, that a person cannot believe in Revelation and in evolution, too, for a man may believe that which is infinitely wise and also that which is only asinine. In this evil age there is apparently nothing that a man cannot believe; he can believe, *ex animo*, the whole Prayer-book of the Church of England! It is pretty much the same with other matters; and, after all, the greatest discoveries made by man must be quite babyish to the infinite mind of God. He has told us all that we need to know in order that we may become like himself, but he never meant us to know all that he knows. As for myself, brethren, I want to love my Lord more, to feel my sin more, and to learn how I can live more like Christ, but I do not want merely to know more. Here, 'we know in part,' and what we really know is so little that we shall be wise just to lay our heads in the bosom of our Heavenly Father, and love him, and bless him, and seek to do what he bids us."

God's mercy to sinners excites them to praise.