

SECOND HAND RELIGION

ACTS 9:25.

GREENVILLE

Did you ever have to wear some clothes handed down to you from some other member of the family? Did you ever go to a used car lot and buy a second hand car? If you did, why you realized one thing very plainly and that was that you had come into possession of something that some body else had owned. As you know some things handed down are good and useful and others are worthless. At any rate other hands had used them.

In our scripture today Paul had been in side the walls of Damascus. He was now a converted man and was soon to be used of God as the great missionsry to the Gentiles. This had caused the Jews to rise up as his bitter enemy. The gates to the city were alerted by day and locked by night. It was imperative that he escape that he might carry the religion of his newly made brethren to wider regions. The religion that they had been enjoying was handed on down to Paul and the hands of his brethren helped him on to his mission.

All of you remember the experience that he had on the Damascus road when God thwarted his cruel plans and brought him face to face with the Chirst he had been trying to defeat. In this experience he learned two lessons:

1. His utter dependence upon God through Christ.
2. His debt to his fellow men for help in trouble.

This feat of letting him escape was a daring one. Who thought of it? Who dared to get the ropes and the basket and then let him down out side the walls? We do not know any one by name. It only says, "The disciples took him by night and let him down by the wall in a basket." He owed infinite gratitude to the unnamed friends for his delivery. UN-NAMED FRIENDS.

If there had been a daily news paper or an early morning news cast you can be assured that Paul's dramatic escape would have made big news.

This episode proves, among other things, that ours is a hand-me-down or second hand religion. For what we know of God we have received from our fathers, mothers, teacher

and forefathers. Some things, you know, grow dearer the longer they prevail, the more they are cherished from one generation to another. The danger is, however, that we may fail to see the hands that have handed down our faith to us, fail to see the hands and recognize the hands that have let us down the walls in safety from the enemy of our immortal souls. And failing thus we might fail to see and to feel our dependence on that part of the church that has already gone on to heaven that places around us "so great a cloud of witnesses." I wonder if there is not a basic reason here why some Christians got together in the ninth century and formed All Saints Day to pay tribute at least,

For all the saints, who from their labor rest,
 Who Thee by faith before the world confessed
 Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blessed
 Alleluia! Alleluia!

When we speak of second hand religion I am thinking of all the saints, whose hearts and hands in past days have led us in straight paths and pointed out to us, sometimes at great personal sacrifice, "This is the way walk ye in it."

Whose hands ~~were~~ they? Besides the saints of centuries ago you will, as you think on this, remember your dear mother, father, maybe a pastor, school or Sunday school teacher. They may have been hands belonging to a face that smiled under adversity, and gave you strength when your life seemed fraught with bitterness and dread.

The thing that matters most is not whether we remember all the hands that have helped us but that we understand that all the saints who from their labor rest, have been at work in our behalf.

We should realize that we did not conceive the gospel of faith, hope, and love by which we live but that we have received it from hands beyond our hands. {Some say it was not 1st hand it was 1000 years}

Furthermore, we need to remember, as Paul did, how utter? we have to depend on God. When science has made things so easy for us we must take pains to see God's hand at work in the soil, the sunshine, and the rain to say nothing of His Spirit that works hard upon the stubborn hearts of men.

Here it is: "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised and we esteemed Him not."

When the movement was on to nominate Calvin Coolidge as president of the U.S. Senator Lodge opposed it on the ground that he would be socially unacceptable. "Nominate a man who lives in a two family house..never, Massachusetts is not for him."

omit { After Bliss Perry's first novel was well on its way to publication a W.C. Brownell wrote a comment of the galley proofs "I hope that your next novel will be ampler and more adulterous." And that is often the way of the world. So if you are doing your best and the world is not accepting you just remember that you stand all right before one that is greater than all the worlds.

When Simon Lake was experimenting with his submarine U.S. naval experts cited many facts to prove that the under water trips which he was making every day could not be done, and told him that if he made any more of them, he would be thrown in jail.

When Lee De Forest claimed that his audion tube might some day transmit the human voice across the Atlantic ocean, a New York district attorney pleaded with the judge to send the wicked man to prison. That's the world for you. So if God is telling you that your acts are right do not bother what the world thinks.

Some of the greatest decisions being made to day are made in living rooms but the world does not know it. Some of the most heroic battles are being fought on sick beds but the world does not understand it. The contemporary world sees through a glass darkly and only in later years do they come around and some of the things they have been putting first they put last and things they have been putting last they are putting first. WE SOME TIMES PIN OUR MEDALS ON THE WRONG PERSONS.

The foolishness of God is wiser than men nad the weekness of God is stronger than men. And feeling unwanted some times when follow ^{my} conscience to the higher levels of life we need the steadiness of seeing to day through the eyes of tomorrow and of judging the now in terms of the always.

And so we come to God and the frequetly neglected fact that God has a place for each of His children. There are no unwanted children in God's family and even as the hairs of our heads are numbered and not a sparrow falls with out God's knowledge, so He loves each least person of earth as if he were His only child.

we have no choice to find every

think of

* The little old lady who could not feed herself but could produce a smile for every one who came her way. When the roll is called up yonder the credit side of her ledger may be better far than that of millions of persons let them do whatever they like to do.

Let us then conclude that God has need not only for the proud potentates of business and politics of education and religion, but also for the humble human beings whose battlefields are kitchen sinks, garbage trucks, postal routes and typewriters, hospital beds, wheel chairs, and crutch

When he sounds the deepest levels of his life, no man has any cause to fear because the world does not seem to want him. The cause for worry would be that God did not want him and if God had not wanted him He would not have created him. If God did not want you my friend He would not have made you.

Shall we pray?

Oh God help every one listening in to know that he or she is wanted and needed of God. ~~In the name of Christ we pray~~ and that his life will count if consecrated to God - In the name of Christ we pray -

