

Jan 25, 74
from the
PASTOR'S PEN

Three fishermen who are called Peter, James, and John, had left their father's ship and their nets. Jesus had said to them: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men". They felt that they must follow him and their business was to obey.

On a certain day, the Scripture says He led these fishermen to a lonely place in a high mountain and then a sudden change came over Him. His garments became white. His face became bright and glorious, like no face they had ever looked upon.

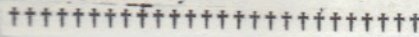
Presently, there were companions with him. They were men who had dwelt on the earth ages before. One was the old lawgiver - Moses. The deliverer of the Israelites. The other was Elijah, the prophet, who bore witness for the Lord God to Kings and the people had forsaken him.

They did not talk of Elijah's chariot of fire, or of the law. They spoke of the death that Jesus should die in Jerusalem. It was a marvelous vision. Peter wanted to stay always on the mountain and to build tabernacles for His master, and for Moses, and for Elijah.

A voice was heard saying, "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him". All of history is contained in these few verses. They fell on their faces and fixed their eyes upon Jesus. He spoke to their hearts and they understood him better.

I do not know to whom God grants such manifestations; but I have no doubt from what we have here in the Scripture there are some who have special work, or suffering to go through - humble people, that he gives bright visions of his presence. These three fishermen learned that they were to not speak much of anything concerning themselves. They were to speak of him, of his resurrection from the dead. Christ cares

for all men on the mountain and in the valley. A vision of the Glory of God is a cure for cheap talk. The fishermen had an important subject of conversation -- Jesus only.



from the Jan 18, 74
PASTOR'S PEN

"My brothers, what good is there in a man's saying that he has faith, if he has no good deeds to prove it? Such faith cannot save him, can it?" James answers these questions, "I will shew you my faith by my works." James 2:14-16.

There is no question about the fact that involvement in Christian service develops a stronger and more effective Christian. A living faith, if it is vital and alive will bear fruit. A man may say I have faith, but unless he like Abraham enters into action for God, his confession is only words.

If you have faith - Get going for God. Spiritual exercise "tone-up" Christians. The Christian is compelled to action by an inner force. The Holy Spirit will press for good works.

The man of faith will give everything to Jesus Christ and serve Him. Christian growth comes through service. A faith that does nothing is dead and is a disappointment to God. A living faith has a desire to participate fully.

Individuals respond according to what they are inside. That is why some men turn to swearing, some to drinking, some to pleasure, some to cursing God, and others turn to praying and lean wholly and completely upon Him.

This is the rule and expected results of Christian faith. It is a precious light that burns out in service for others and the Kingdom of God. Faith says lets worship God each Lord's Day, witness each day, minister to the sick, teach the word, render some good deed, seek the lost, and give a cup of cold water in His name.

What do you get out of all the time and money you put into your church work? James would answer "I get an awareness of the nearness of God and a consciousness that I am well-pleasing in His sight."

Jan 11, 74
from the
PASTOR'S PEN

"I've got a good record in this world, and I want to go out that way." This is not only good philosophy for an honest man but for every man on this earth.

The bank had been robbed at Grottoes, Virginia, and the money had been stashed away in the snow under a brush pile on a mountainside. Police had arrested a man, but had not located the money.

Bill Coleman who had often hunted in the area knew where the brush pile was and went out to search for the stolen money. He looked up in the top and crawled under the brush and found a place where the snow was all patted down. He dug around and came out with a bag of money. He phoned the police at the country store and returned to his home and helped to count the \$4,963 on the kitchen table.

At least fifty people have told him he was a fool to give the money back. Other people have ask why he didn't take part of it. He knew where the money belonged and he returned it. His reason for turning the money in was honesty. "I've got a good record in this world, and I want to go out that way."

What kind of a record do you have? Is it one that you are proud of? Would you be happy to die with the record you have made in life. It is an important thing for you to have a good clean record. There is no fault that so condemns a man as untrustworthiness. Honesty is a virtue that pleases God. Here surely is a challenge to an adventurous faith. There is a demand from the Ten Commandments on through the words of our Lord for a clean record. We are urged to live day by day keeping a good record with our fellowman and our God. Each person has the ability to do this, in life we can never stand still. We must move forward and do our very best.

Being honest is a joy, not a hardship for the Christian. No Christian should ever speculate about the decision of honesty. This should be a built in force that decides an issue with out question in favor of this high virtue. Life becomes manifest. It will declare itself and a Christian will pursue the

from the
PASTOR'S PEN

[PASTOR'S PEN CONTINUED]

Nov 30, 1973
from the
PASTOR'S PEN

14-73
The calendar has a day marked Christmas Day. Christmas does not come to us - we come to Christmas. Christmas is not a date in the almanac, it is a condition of the soul. There was peace in the music of the angel. That peace must become a part of the soul. Christmas is a redeeming time.

Herod never found Christmas. He did not look in the right place and closed his heart to the real event.

The wise men found Christmas. It was a matter of the soul. Ringing of bells, mince pie - these are simply the swaddling clothes in which Christmas is wrapped. You have to unwrap these and you will find Christmas. These wise men with open hearts worked their way through the swaddling clothes and found Christ.

The Star of Bethlehem was simply a help in finding Christ. The Star proclaimed more light is on the way. The Light of the World! However, the star was not Christmas, it was the star in the east to lead wise men to Christ.

They found the manger in which Jesus slept. It was a spot more dear to the eyes of the wise men than the palaces of Herod. They cherished the manger because it held the infant Saviour. They had found Christmas, they had come to the very place with open hearts.

They worshipped on the spot with gold, frankincense, myrrh, and hearts of joy. Life for them became an endless song.

Christ can be found, he is everywhere. If you want to receive him, then make room for him in the Inn.

Go find Christ, and you will find Christmas. The wise men inquired

diligently and rejoiced in the light of the star. The "wise men" had no doubt of his identity. No soul doubts when he finds Christ. "They gave gifts" - we naturally offer gifts when we find him.

The stage is all set for another celebration of Christmas. "The birth of Christ", has an open door for entrance. Christ is waiting for wise men to make the trip. Follow the light and worship Him.

Go find Him, and you will find Christmas. — o —

Dec 7, 1973

from the
PASTOR'S PEN

"I Sing," echoed in the sanctuary as two year old Mary Ann Clements made her gallant announcement after the Worship Service. To show that she was on pitch, she proceeded in removing the coat and hat, mounting the steps, and taking the position of an alto in the choir loft. Mary Ann proclaimed, "I Sing!"

There came to mind a sermon in this simple illustration by a child. What if adults were as willing and forthright in doing God's work? There is real intellectuality in action taken by little children. No one had to twist her arm or conscript her. It would be a beautiful thing if each Christian in accepting the Lordship of Christ would fervently say, "I Sing," "I Serve," "I Teach," "I Visit."

Dr. E. B. Allen tells how a kindergarten teacher gave up her work in the public schools of a Mid-West city to go out as a missionary. Her children were interested in her new work and wanted her to know about it. One of the girls wrote to the missionary's father afterward, and said, "We talk about her to Jesus every night when we go to bed." It was a beautiful expression of child faith, and one of the most natural Christian things to do.

A child has a philosophic mind inquiring into gigantic tasks with ease. One little girl seeing her mother peel a radish for the first time said: "Mama, undress my radish."

Yes, think of the possibilities wrapped up in these little lives. They are like little sunbeams that kiss the earth and cause the violet to bloom at your feet. We have a wonderful church. In the face of Mary Ann shine the light of a glorious future, "I Sing." Tell the Lord what you intend to do for Him.

Married life is a strong hand in our social order, and if treated with due respect it will greatly enhance individual happiness. Some may exercise the privilege to remain single.

The foundation of marriage is fixed in the law of God. "It is not good for man to be alone." History has shown that the permanent union of one man with one woman establishes a relation of affection which can in no other way be made to exist.

The good wife may through words of sympathy and encouragement give a man courage and happiness. There is no outward prosperity which can counteract folly and extravagance at home. Bad domestic influences will drive a man to despair.

In the true wife the husband finds affection and companionship. There is no other companionship which can compare with the institution of marriage. This is the place where a man feels he may throw off restraint without danger to his dignity, and he may confide without fear of treachery. His heart can safely trust in one who overlooks his defeats.

A great deal has been said in a critical way about the immense number of unhappy marriages. However, we must not forget there are thousands of prosperous unions of which the world never hears. It is natural that the evil attracts the most attention. Men and women whose married life is full of good and helpfulness do not feel the need to defend the system under which they live.

They enjoy talking of the days of youth and improvement. It would do well sometime to calmly reflect on what happiness in married life depends. I believe you would find part of your happiness is found in consulting the happiness of another.

There are no short roads to happiness. Those who marry must acquire thoughtfulness, self-control, and patience. The crown of matrimony brings joys. Give your strength in the protection of marriage.

May 4, 73

from the
PASTOR'S PEN

"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything." Ecc. 9:5.

I conducted the funeral service for Mrs. Mary Williams. She left instructions for the service. The poem "A Rosebud For The Living" according to her plans was to be read. She was a kind woman and tried to give flowers to the living. She was extravagant with her hospitality in making people welcome in her home. While she lived she sought to show her appreciation and good will towards all.

Let me share with you part of her last request — "A Rosebud For The Living."

I would rather have a rosebud
While I am here to see,
Than have the costliest flowers
Placed on my grave for me.

I would rather have a rosebud
A tribute of today,
Than have the richest laurels
When I have passed away.

I would rather have a kindly smile
From hearts forever true,
Than tears around my lifeless form
When earth I've bade adieu.

I would rather have the kindest words
Than can be said to me,
Than flattered when my heart is still,
And Life has ceased to be.

Then give me a rosebud sweet,
A rosebud pink or red;

I'd rather have just one today,
Than millions when I'm dead.

— Henrietta Blair Heard

April 20, 73

from the
PASTOR'S PEN

Shall I use the short form or the long form? Good old 1040 is not a signal used by the football team, it is the number that taxes the possessions of every American. 1040 is like a race horse. He is an animal that can take several thousand people for a ride at the same time.

It is a real experience to sit down with this classic document known as Form 1040. Every one gets out cancelled checks, W-2 forms, social security forms, and figures out profit and loss. There is no literary flourish to the style; nor high-sounding options. The grand scheme of the form does not permit political freedom.

The form needs no interpretation. Name, number, and what you are worth covers the commentary. The government simply declares we have a sympathetic interest in what you have in your pocket.

Finally you have "crammed 1040 and left the results with the post office.

There is one final figure lingering in your mind. Is this all I have? Is this all I have received during the year? Is this all my life consists of? You have just listed your possessions. The things taxable, are these the only things I possess?

Turn with me to God's 1040 in the book of Acts and discover true riches. "Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly." Have you filed this declaration? The resurrection of Jesus speaks to us of a treasure to be thankful for. For real life, and real living are not related to how much I have in my pocket. Real life is bound up in the Easter season not the tax season.

Be thankful that you can sit down and list Acts 10:40 as your real treasure. This is beyond all taxation.

Dec 21, 73

from the
PASTOR'S PEN

With the returning of the Christmas and New Years Season, we all take pleasure in sending you the friendly wish: "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

Something happened in Bethlehem which set the bells ringing and the choirs singing; which set people to building churches, schools, orphanages and hospitals. This was one day when Heaven came to earth!

The real meaning of the Christmas Season is given in the announcement of the shepherds: "Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." And, then, a multitude of the heavenly host echoed the glorious refrain: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, Peace, Good Will toward men." This is the supreme message for our sorely troubled world today — a world of fear, and hate, and injustice and suffering and death throughout the earth.

The Bethlehem chorus brought meaning to the realities of earth. His Peace is higher than all worldly circumstances. Jesus is eternal while the Herods of the earth shall perish. Jesus founded an empire on love.

Our supreme need is to have Christmas in our hearts. Since God was so gracious in giving his only begotten Son, let us open our hearts to him. The first Christmas opened the way, the truth, and the light for all men. A poet points the way for us: "For somehow, not only for Christmas But all the long year through The joy that you give to others Is the joy that comes back to you: And the more that you spend in blessing

The poor and lonely and sad,
The more of your hearts possessing
Returns to make you glad."

Aug 24, 79

Pastor's Pen

"Next to the word of God, music deserves the highest praise. The gift of language combined with the gift of song was given to man that he should proclaim the word of God through music. . ." — Martin Luther.

Those lines were written at a time when the foundations of Christianity were being tested. They are worth thinking about today when people are falling for everything new as substitutes for sacred music.

Some folks clamor for worldly types of music in the church. They look upon it as entertainment or background music of a shopping mall.

Music is the one common and universal language expressing our emotions and ideals. It is pleasing to man's ear and helps him praise plus appreciate the manifestations of God.

We are all aware of the melodies of nature. There are symphonies in the winds and rains. The fields on a summer night are filled with a thousand lullabies. There is music in the gentle lapping of the water against the boat and the ripple of water over the rocks of a brook. I have heard hunters say there was music in the voice of hounds during a chase. Did you ever hear the melodies of the wind in a pine tree or thicket?

Man's ideals are expressed, and are known by the kind of music he produces. The Scholar, musician and writer, Eric Routley, says this: ". . . I am constantly coming upon people in all sections of society who would rather hear what pleases them than hear the truth." Often you hear some one say the music is too "high-brow."

However, we need to remember the music presented in our services has been well rehearsed before it is presented.

We should think of this music not as entertainment but a means of worship. God loves the best for worshipping Christians. It should go beyond "tickling of the ear" and bring us in touch with The Gospel!

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Jan 4 - 74

from the PASTOR'S PEN

This business of living is described by Moses in the fate of the children of Israel who had disobeyed the divine law. Deut. 28:65-67.

"In the morning thou shalt say, would God it were even! And at even thou shalt say, would God it were morning!"

This description of futility of the inner life is very modern. This spirit of not having any confidence in life or in our colloquial phrase: "Fed up". This business of living becomes a burden. Life seems dull and uninteresting, at times futile.

There is nothing new about this type of mood. Moses described the condition of the ages.

We find in so many places the business of life desperate. The fight against temptations too much, the struggle to make a living too hard; living and working with uncogential people too difficult; it may be due to just the dullness of the same old routine. The symptoms may be seen in irritability, temper, and resentment.

What can we do about this? Some would say "snap out of it!" Others say surrender to the mood and live a defeated life. The advice may be "pull yourself together". The business of life will find morning and evening well-nigh intolerable unless we find the answer.

Moses called upon the people to make a covenant with the Lord. That is your answer to boredom. The person that commits himself to the Master will find joy in the morning and also evening. No one is lonely or bored, or "fed up" who keeps his eyes upon Jesus. Will you resolve to begin the discipline each day with his presence. We live in a difficult world. Yet with the Lord's presence "The business of life is a joy".

April 20, 74

from the PASTOR'S PEN

"On that very strange day, towards evening", following the resurrection two disciples reached Emmaus. Luke 25:13-33. A distance of about seven miles, or a two or three hour's walk from Jerusalem. It must have been near sunset that the journey was taken. The name of one of the travelers has been preserved. That of Cleopas.

These two men had occupied no prominent place in the work of the Saviour. It is reported that they reasoned with one another about the shameful crucifixion. They were confused by the events of the day and word had come that some had found the sepulchre empty. Is it true, could Jesus actually be alive again?

Jesus comes to them as a stranger and listens to their conversation. He questioned them about the things which troubled them. They do not hesitate to confess their faith in Jesus of Nazareth as a prophet mighty in words and deeds. Jesus asked to be informed and takes the place of an instructor beginning at Moses and expounded the Scripture concerning himself. They did not have an Old Testament with them, but they were familiar generally with the Scriptures about the Messiah.

It was literally God walking with men and this is what you need! It is not a waste of time to search the precious Scriptures on The Lord's Day in the church. The faithful exposition warmed their hearts. They constrained him to abide with them. He reveals himself and the joy in their hearts was such that they instantly arose and returned to Jerusalem to tell from burning hearts the glad news of the living Lord.