

Here is (battle) Jesus knew the young man's capability and possibilities. He knew the young man's aspirations, and temptations. He knew that underneath and alongside of that (craving for eternal life) there lay a heart of worldliness. Two forces were battling. There was flesh and spirit making their battlefield in his heart as in every human heart. Scholars will tell you that the word divine and demon have their origin in the same root word. The word "deva" just as the two words knight and knave, may be traced back to a single root word. The divine and the demon in the same human soul. That which makes heaven also makes hell. The rich soil may raise fine wheat. It may also raise weeds. He who might have been an apostle can also become apostate. What awful alternatives confront every human soul born in the world. Your soul must be on guard.

This struggle for the mastership was acted out that day in the young man's soul. His worse self and his best self, the flesh and the spirit, the demon and the divine waged an awful warfare. And Jesus saw it all. And Jesus knew. Here was the young man's response in danger of throwing away his capacity for noble service. The young man was capable of great deeds. He did not want to be commonplace or mediocre.

Here was a (critical moment) The finest, the noblest impulses of his nature were at a critical moment surging in his soul, urging him to divine life. Jesus would have made this permanent

THE GREAT REFUSAL

Mark 10:17-22

This interview between Jesus and the rich young ruler is one of the most (dramatic) scenes in the New Testament.

The face of the young man turned toward Jesus eagerly inquiring after eternal life. His (face) was radiant, beautiful, aglow with hopefulness. But he turned away and made what Dante calls "the great refusal". His face fell. His face lost that glow of hope and became dark, despondent. He went away grieved.

He went away from Christ. (What) does it mean to go away from Christ?

It means to go away from the highest manhood. It means to live on a lower level of life than God intended man to live. The call of Christ is the (call of the cross). And the call of the cross is always a call to higher manhood, nobler achievement, larger adventure for God's service. This young man went away (sorrowful). His sorrow was the sorrow of a man who had not the courage to follow the highest ideas. The story of this nameless young man is a tragedy which appeals to our sympathy.

It is strangely like the (suicide) of a soul. A great golden opportunity came to him that day; but he missed it, lost it forever. That's the tragedy of the thing. The turning away from the call of the cross, is enough and tragic enough to cause angels to weep.

The hour this young man stood before Jesus was an illuminous hour in his life. For a moment the transcendent things of the kingdom of God rose in deafening splendor before him. Under the impulse and influence of that divine moment, he asked for the highest and divinest gift Jesus could give or confer. There had come to him what does not often come in a man's life. A heavenly vision. The sad and tragic thing about it all is he was not obedient to the vision, and voice that called him up to the heights. He heard the call, he saw the opportunity, and he turned away and missed it and lost it forever.

We regret his refusal. What an ideal disciple he might have been. Or made. What a champion of the faith he might have become. With his learning, his position, his gift, he probably could have become one equal unto Paul, the preacher. Had he been obedient to the heavenly vision, had he followed the light, of God, Jesus could have fitted him for the highest of deeds. But the young man turned away and so far as we know, missed forever the highest good his nature was capable of possessing. He dropped down to the commonplace in character and service.

Men today stand ^{like} this young man stood. They stand at the parting of the ways. Men are tempted as he was tempted. They turn away from the heroic calls of religion and make the great refusal and lose the life that is real life, that is

eternal life. You and I may not have the great possessions that this man had; the love of the world may be a dominant and deadly part in the heart of a poor man as well as that of a millionaire. You will find greed thriving on the alley as well as on the boulevard. It is the love of money that Jesus warns against. And the love of money is active in all men's hearts.

This incident rather shows Christ's interest in young manhood. The heart of Jesus went out like a tidal wave of love and goodwill toward him. Jesus looked upon him, loved him. He saw in him possibilities of noblest manhood and of highest service. This young man had grown up in a well-to-do home. He had been educated, he was the best product of culture and religion of that day.

Many who come to Jesus come like the prodigal and Magdelene. Their lives marred and scarred by open vice. But this young man had kept his life clean. He possessed great wealth and his wealth had not dragged him down into riotous living. He was a clean, upright, cultured, educated young man moving in the high circles, the best of circles of society.

Jesus looked upon him and loved him. You must not water or weaken or tone down this significant fact. We could not modify it. Because was a splendid young man. A fine fellow in every way.

until we reach this measure of perfection.

The young man wanted to do some heroic thing. Jesus showed him how he might. And the tragic side of the incident is that the young man did not measure up to the standards. Did not rise to the occasion. Instead of rising, (he went down). Instead of being a diamond, he was content to be just a piece of charcoal. And instead of being a blazing, shining electric light for God, he was content to be just a candle.

Napoleon said the French Revolution was the open path for talent. Now Jesus showed this young man an open path for talent, for heroic service to God and humanity. And this young man sank below the great occasion. He missed the heights of holy character. And humane service that he was capable of reaching. He stayed down in the valley.

His book was on the threshold of boundless life. He was at the very gateway of the kingdom of God. And with its divine splendor beckoning him on, he refused to enter. He was disobedient to the heavenly vision. "He would not follow the call of the cross. And so fell back into the life of worldliness. Lost to the use and name of Christ."

What is it to fail in life? To die early is not to fail. We live in deeds, not years. She who passes away in the morning of her radiant young womanhood did not lose her life or live in vain. For service here, she passed to higher service beyond

and victorious. Christian experience, Christian character, and Christian achievement.

The young man wanted to become possessor of eternal life. He says, "Good teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" I have wealth, education, position, reputation. But wealth, education, position, and reputation combined do not and cannot satisfy the craving of the immortal nature. As something higher and better for me than this world can give. Tell me how I may secure this high attainment that can come to a man. He felt within himself the push or the passion for perfection. It was the Christ influence over him that gave him the craving for these high things. For Jesus sent his disciples into the world with a passion for perfection.

Jesus did not repress this young man's ambition. On the contrary, he pointed out to him the broad opportunities for character, duty, service. In effect, Jesus said to him, you are conspicuously rich. You have social preimence, intellectual culture, prominent station and possessions. (For my sake and the gospel's renounce it.) Sell all you have, give it to the poor. (verse 21) Use your wealth, not for yourself but for humanity. Use your talents, not to win fame, but to lift humanity to higher levels.

This was Moses turned his back on the court, the crown,

His H.A. Rothmann called... you'll find... 32 worked hard 20 yrs - yes what did he get for it
 Life is divine. And here was an opportunity for service. Take 80000 fine hand money in bank - 80000 insurance: Now that is what you up the cross, the symbol of consecrated service to man, and get, but what did he get out of it? We're going to get him a 115 oak leaf! follow me. (Invest your life in the work which I have dedicated

my life to. And you could feel that Jesus was saying to him,

"I am here. Caring for humanity. Against the tides of crime Two friends in conversation - one told of a good friend died left to heal, bring health, to free demon-possessed souls, to release \$20,000 - what a pity the other said "that he left behind when those that were bruised and broken. He is not likely to ever hear he might have sent it ahead."

Here is a great consecration. Now Jesus answered the young man's question. He showed him that the great life can be lived only by making the great consecration. He who (expects) great dividends must be ready to make great investments.

If a man wants to get the best that can be gotten out of the kingdom of God, he must invest in it the best thought, the best talent, the best energy, the best wealth, the best brains he possesses. It is not anything less than the best.

Religion is the incarnation and manifestation of the divine. It is the (throwing of one's) self into the plans and purposes of Almighty God. It is the committing of one's life to the cause. Here in this world and in the world hereafter. It requires and produced the highest possible type of manhood. And to you comes (the call of the cross). And from you will come some response.

Jesus asked this young man to do a great deed. No, because Jesus felt that he was capable of doing a great deed. Jesus asks more of some men than of others. He lays great obligations

of service and self-denial on some than on others. He places large opportunities for service before some than he does to others.

Listen, the higher you are, the wealthier you are, the more talented you are, the more cultured you are, the greater the demands Jesus and the gospel make on you. You show what kind of clay you are made out of in the response that you give to the call of the cross.

Jesus, did not repress this young man's ambition. He clarified it. It elevated it. It refined it. He put it on a higher plain. He tried to make him ambitious to render service to needling humanity.

The greatest of the demands Jesus made on him was a tribute to the possible greatness of the young man's nature. When God calls us to the highest, the call itself is pledged and prophesied that the highest is within our reach. Be ye holy for I am holy. That is a command of God in Revelation, which seems almost impossible. And yet it is possible in man's redeemed nature. The gospel helps us to measure up to this, attainment. We can be what God asks us to be.

No other religion has so much of a man as the religion of Jesus Christ. The demands of the gospel for high character. Be ye holy as I am holy. What a hope for humanity is that high command of God. We are to go on growing in grace and holiness

and spiritual attainment. God made man with the capacity for heaven in his soul and man should not be content with anything less or lower. He builds too low. He builds beneath the stars.

Some people think Jesus was too severe with this young man. He was severe but it was because of love. He loved him. There is nothing so exacting in its demands as love. Love says for me you must give up everything and everybody. The love of Jesus gave the young man everything and asked of him everything.

What this young man missed would also be quite interesting. It was the young man that Jesus loved and sought to win. It was not his money, it was the man himself that Jesus wanted. Therefore he said, give your money to humanity and give yourself to me. Come join in this great movement of world evangelization. I am laying the foundation for a kingdom that shall have no end and I want you to be one of the charter members.

Sell all you have and follow me. Was an invitation rather than a command. It was an opportunity rather than an obligation. Had he accepted the invitation, had he seized the opportunity, there would have been one more bright star in the stars to shine for Christ. Think what he might have become had he joined the movement that day. What a preacher, what a leader, what a reformed. But he missed it, he lost it forever.

If there is any good in one's soul, Jesus will bring it out. If there is any evil in a soul, Jesus will bring that out. The

What is it to fail? To be baffled? To overcome and ~~beat~~ down in a noble cause? That is not to fail.

What then is it to fail? To fail is to be less and do less than one is capable of being and doing. To fail is to fall below the divine possibility of our God-given nature. To fail is to aim at less and achieve less. To be content with less than we are capable of being and achieving. To lower your standards to the mud level of the world. To fail is to be content with earth when you could have heaven. To consent and descend to a lower good constitutes the tragedy of multitudes about us. He who sees the high idea and then turns away from it. Many today looking back at the parting of the ways where they took the lower road are saying in their hearts, that they had a call from God and yet turned it down.

But that golden time has gone by, never to return. They have lost that rich inheritance of opportunity. They have failed so far in life as far as life is concerned. To this young man was given the vision of splendor. An idea of character and service stood before him. Jesus showed him an open path to high and honorable manhood. He offered him a place in the kingdom. The task for which he was born and called was that there waiting for him.

The great crisis of his life, yet he failed. He was disobedient to the heavenly vision. Years after you might have

heard him say up the lament of life saying, I had a noble purpose and had the strength to compass it but I stopped half-way and wrongly gave the first fruits of my toil to objects little worthy of the gift.

The artist Hoffman has given us a good interpretation of this incident. We have this in art, in poetry, in sermon, in literature and on the canvas. But here in his imagination the face of Jesus as he looks on the young man. One of the finest faces of Jesus that art has given. It is a strong, earnest, manly face. Jesus is pointing the young man to the poor and needy just outside the door. As though he was saying to him here is the chance of your life, seize it and be the man God intended you to be. The young man standing in his splendid robes looked thoughtfully and earnestly. He was half-minded to do what Jesus bid him to do. He is almost persuaded to take the decisive step that would link his life with Christ. But lower ambitions clamor for the supremacy in his soul. And these things do their damnable work and he turns away and made the great refusal.

As Dante points out on wanderings through Hades searching for his lost opportunity, "So on our souls the visions rise of that fair life we never led. They flash in splendor past our eyes; we start and they are fled. They pass and leave us with blank gaze, resigned to our ignoble days."

Young men and women need to listen. You will be tempted

every day and year of your life. And this young man was tempted. You will be tempted to be less and do less than God knows you are capable of doing and being. You will be tempted to read inferior books, you will be tempted as Muskin puts it, to gossip with your housemaid or stableboy when you might hold high converse with the kings and queens of literature. I fear for young people men and women today is not that they will be too ambitious nor too aspiring. But they will not be ambitious enough. Your ideas, your standards, your aspirations, your purposes, your plans, will be too low rather than too high. The temptation and danger of your life will be that you will not make the best and the most of your life. You will be smaller when you ought to be a giant. You will be working in clay when you ought to be carving in alabaster. You will be wading in the marshes when you ought to be treading the high mountains. You will be giving your time to foolish, silly things and may God pity you.

Remember, your life is all you have. You make it or mar it just once. Your first duty and highest privilege is to develop your powers to the highest reach of excellence and devote them to the highest service. The best that you can be intellectually, spiritually, is the service of God and he asks you to covet earnestly the best things. To go to perfection. Forget the things that are behind and press to the heights of intellectual

of linking his life with the greatest moral movement that ever touched this planet. The privilege of companionship and service with the purest of souls. He lost honor of being associated with Jesus Christ. He lost the chance of being enrolled as a charter member of the church of the firstborn. Take up the cross and follow me was the chance of his life. He missed it, lost it forever, and the tragedy of it in the closing part of verse 21.

Think what he might have done with his life. His talent, his culture, if he had only been wise enough to follow the call of the cross. Think what Peter did with his life; what Wesley did with his life. Think what Livingston did with his life. Think what Katherine Booth did with her life. Think what Moody did with his life.. Think what you might do with your life. If you cheerfully consecrate it to the service of Jesus Christ.

Suppose Peter and John had refused and stood aloof from the cause when the choice and the chance came to them. They would have dropped down out of sight. Lost to use in name. Suppose Moses had made the refusal when God called him to his life's work. There would have been no splendid leadership from Egypt's slavery to Canaan's freedom. There would have been no triumph at the Red Sea. Or eternal law at Sinai.

Young men and women today ought to think of what you have to give up to become a Christian. Think of what you give up not to be a Christian. You give up the possibilities of a noble charac-

insight into his heart. Such as he had never had before. The love of this present world was stronger to him than the desire of eternal life. His possessions and position were a hindrance to him. Then when he had the possibility of securing the highest the gift of God the love of money got in its deadly work and turned him aside forever.

"One thing thou lackest." (verse 21) Jesus said you lack one thing. What was that one thing? That one thing which kept him out of the kingdom and wrecked his life. It was not desire for he prayed and that he might have eternal life. It was not enthusiasm for he came running to Jesus. It was not humility for he publicly confessed his need. It was not morality for from his youth he kept the ten commandments. What did he lack? He went part of the way toward the Christian life. But not all the way. He had everything to make him a Christian but one thing. And that one thing was everything.

What is the use of a ship with everything but a rudder? What is the use of a watch with everything but a mainspring? One thing may be everything. The one thing this young man lacked was willingness to make a complete surrender of his life to the will of God. He called Jesus Good master, but when the test came he was not willing to let Jesus be master, of his life. The submission of his will to the will of Jesus was the one thing needed to complete his life. Paul did that one thing and it

brought him into the kingdom. If you do it, it will bring you into the kingdom. And make your life all that God intended it to be.

Men need to listen for they may be near the kingdom and yet not in it. A man may be almost saved and yet lost. It is not enough to admire and desire the things of God. You must desire them above all other things. You must choose them if need be at the sacrifice of everything else. The man who found the hidden treasure in the field sold all that he had to become its possessor. The man who does not value the gospel enough to give it the first place in his life is not likely to give it any place.

Jesus always brought men to the test. There had to be a decision and a choice. You cannot serve God and mammon. One or the other must be first. This young man faced that question and decided to let mammon be first. He refused to put the kingdom of heaven first. He deliberately rejected the religion on the conditions of Jesus' description. He did it very politely but he did it. In the secret of his soul he made his choice.

He did not throw away his Bible. And ridiculous religion. He simply allowed more things to hold the supreme place in his heart. Many respectable, cultured men and women are today doing the same thing. They give religion a secondary place in

their life. Their life is centered on something else than on the kingdom of God.

Here religion of the deadliest type may be found among people of wealth, culture as well as among people who live in the slums.

The young man went away sorrowful, the Bible says. (verse 22) I think he had many a sorrowful day after that. There were few days when he hated his possessions and position. When he looked on his glittering gold that he had; when he was commended for the great success he had made in life and yet here was a price too high for him to pay. His possessions became a reproach to him. They reminded him of the fatal choice he made the day he stood at the parting of the ways. They recalled to him his failure to respond to the call of the cross. As he looked on his gold, as he thought on his fame as a successful man in the world, there came back to his memory with producing pain the words he heard Jesus utter one day by the seaside. "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" What a tragedy.

To think of what he lost. This young man by refusing to follow Jesus. Well, I'm not thinking entirely of what he lost of heaven. Though that was sad enough. But you can think of other kinds of loss. He lost the opportunity of making his life tell for something good in this world. He lost the opportunity

ter and lie within the reach of your soul. You give up the highest service to mankind. You give up the joy that comes through the experience of God's great salvation here and you give up your birthright to the treasures in heaven.

The renunciation of this world for Christ may have its tragic side but what about the renunciation of Christ for the world? What was the renunciation Judas made? For a few pieces of this world's silver, he renounced Christ and left off following

What was the renunciation of the young rich ruler? He deliberately turned away from Christ and made the great refusal. Will

children - moved from London - was - I am - you do it? - little girl crying - with the first he said don't worry, daddy, I don't know what we are going to do. He says what the King does. Jesus wants us to go to the house where we are going -
When multitudes were leaving Jesus at a critical period in

his ministry, he turned to his disciples and he said, "Will ye also go away?" There answer was "To whom shall we go?"

What is your question? It is everybody's question. If you turn away from Christ, to whom will you go. There is Hinduism but you cannot save your soul in that vile stream. Buddiasm - you cannot rest your faith in that. Confucionism - you cannot bow and worship an idol. There is Mohammed but you cannot submit your life to that which is false. There is philosophy but you cannot quench your spiritual thirst in that ~~xxx~~ cistern. The final appeal, the reasonableness of Christian life, the high idea of the Christian life makes an appeal to you.

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