

THE FUTURE OUTLOOK

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THE FUTURE OUTLOOK

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Institutions For Welfare Children

Children who are placed in homes by the welfare agency sometimes develop in a deplorable situation. Many of the welfare agencies contend that it is hard to find a suitable family who is willing to take care of children and that families who are able to take care of them and who are willing, are not properly situated. On the other hand, there are some people who are willing and able and have all the facilities needed to care for them properly. These people take this responsibility because they are concerned and love the children.

Many families who take in these children do not live in suitable locations, do not have the facilities needed, are unable to prepare food to provide a balanced diet, do not furnish proper clothing and do not know how to take care of children.

Many of these people have not had children of their own and take these to capitalize. They are too lazy to find a standard job and are in declining health.

The children placed by the welfare department come from homes where there has been some type of tragedy such as accidents, chronic illnesses, illegitimate births, and in most cases, from broken homes due to violations of some criminal law.

The children are not responsible for such incidents, but the tax-paying people are. Therefore, these children should be properly cared for.

One contractor suggests a multi-purpose building which he would be responsible for with a little aid. This multi-purpose building would be suitable for all convalescing persons and would not be agreeable or suitable for public school-aged children now being placed under supervision of families.

It was publicized in the papers a few weeks ago that the welfare department was allotted more money but the purpose for the money was not stated. Many of the welfare agencies should take this matter of a suitable institution before the County Board of Commissioners or the City Council to recommend a referendum to raise the money for it.

One may pick up the morning paper and see the scene of an auto accident where both parents were killed leaving six or seven children or the mother and father had a heated quarrel which ended in murder. The other parent is sent to prison. Just go to the courtroom today, or the hospital, or take a long trip on the highways. You will see all of these different types of tragedies which cause broken homes leaving little innocent children without proper supervision.

Some may say that the victims have relatives who are able to come to their rescue by adopting them, but, in most cases, they are not prepared and are upset. Then what will become of the children while settlements are being made? Sometimes it might be better to place the children in a suitable institution with trained people to care for them until they are able to take care of themselves.

The health department should supervise more of these homes capitalizing on welfare children so they will see the need for a suitable institution.

Poet's Corner

I shall have peace, when I go home."
 "When I go home may quiet reign
 And nothing will I say or do —
 To cause regret or needless pain
 In those I love when I go home.
 When I go home, my glory Crown
 When heaven's host to Him bow down,
 Will be that Christ is there enthroned;

This Week's Sunday School Lesson

POWER FOR WITNESSING BEGINNING WHERE YOU ARE

The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century was basically a struggle over the nature of the church. What was the purpose of the church? Where was its authority? What was its mission? Conflicting answers to these questions divided Christendom, and it has not yet been knit together.

Today the church is again in turmoil as it faces similar questions. Within both Protestantism and Catholicism loud voices join in debate. Various groups of Methodists with special concerns caucus at annual conferences. Eager young ministers leave the pastorate because they feel "the church is irrelevant," while troubled laymen stay home on Sunday because they don't want to hear "pulpit editorials" about the "secular problems" they face all week.

The basic problem between these groups is that they do not agree on the nature and purpose of the church. Unfortunately, some of these views are so contradictory that they cannot be realized within the same church.

In such a time of confusion and division we may find it helpful to go back to the beginning. How did the church start? What view of the church did the first Christians have?

For the next three months we shall be thinking about the place of the church in God's plans for his people. The next eight lessons will be drawn chiefly from the Book of Acts, supplemented by reference to some of the Letters. For this first Sunday after Easter, we shall consider the fifty days after the Resurrection. The story is told in the Book of Acts.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

The Scripture for this lesson is Acts 1:1 through 2:42. Selected verses are printed below. Acts 2:1-6, 14, 36-42

1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. . . .

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.

" . . . 36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall

we do?" 38. And Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him." 40 And he testified with many other words and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." 41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Memory Selection: You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. —Acts 1:8

EXPLORING THE QUESTIONS

The Book of Acts is the second book of a two-volume work, Luke-Acts. The author does not tell us his name, but tradition credits the two books to Luke, Paul's traveling companion and physician.

After a brief introduction, Acts 1 tells of resurrection appearances that Jesus used for further teaching about the Kingdom. On the fortieth day, Jesus commissioned the disciples to be witnesses "in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8) This commission can be taken as a rough outline of the book.

Acts 1 also records Jesus' instructions to his disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the gift of power in the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 2 tells how, on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit came with power upon the little group gathered in the upper room. The whole company moved outside, where a great number of pilgrims who had come to the festival were attracted by the strange happenings.

Peter then preached the first Christian sermon. (Acts 2:14-36) His message was that Jesus, who had been crucified, was proved by his resurrection to be the Messiah. Therefore Peter summoned the people to repent and be baptized in the name of Christ. And three thousand of them responded.

FINDING HELP WITH YOUR QUESTIONS

The church that went out from Pentecost to conquer the Roman world in three centuries had few visible assets. This church owned no property, had no endowments, and met in a borrowed room. It had within its fellowship no men of wealth, power, or prominence. Its financial resources seem to have come chiefly from a few devoted women. It had no committees, boards, or executive secretaries. Peter assumed a natural leadership, but decisions seem to have been reached by a sort of consensus. Yet the church was remarkably successful.

This evaluation of the early church does not mean that fine buildings, financial resources, and efficient organization are necessarily bad. Nevertheless,

each person must ask whether the contemporary church may assign too much importance to the material means of accomplishing the church's mission while losing sight of its object. This reversal of values leads many zealous young critics to regard the church as an institution concerned with guarding the status quo while forgetting the suffering victims of our culture.

The Power of the Early Church

Why was the early church so powerful in spite of its lack of money and elaborate organization? Several suggestions can be gleaned from the lesson Scripture in Acts.

1. The church expected divine aid. Before Jesus parted from the disciples on the mountain, he counseled them to wait in Jerusalem for the gift of the Spirit. While the disciples waited, they met daily for prayer, perhaps in the upper room, where they were staying, or in the Temple, as they did after Pentecost or both. We may picture an earnest group of about 120 men and women, uncertain of their immediate future, but heartened by their encounters with the risen Lord and confident that their way would become plain if they waited for God's guidance.

In their gatherings the disciples undoubtedly shared with one another their remembrance of Jesus' words. But, above all, they waited upon God in the ancient worship of Israel and in their private group prayers.

2. They were open to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Since the events described in Acts 2 happened so long ago, it is pointless for us to attempt a scientific analysis of what occurred. But the fact that these men and women were transformed is beyond doubt.

They ascribed their change to a new and vitalizing endowment of the Spirit of God. Fear and uncertainty were swept away. They could only describe their experience in symbolic language: sounds as of a mighty wind and tongues of fire. They had received the gift of power the Master had promised them.

3. The church shared its gift with others. These early Christians did not remain in the upper room keeping their ecstasy to themselves. They went into the street proclaiming Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah.

Pentecost is one of the most important Jewish festivals. It is observed fifty days after Passover and celebrates the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai.

Since Pentecost comes at a time of year favorable for travel, first-century Jerusalem was even more crowded than at Passover. Devout Jews from all across the empire were in the city. Many of these pilgrims were among the crowd to whom Peter declared that Jesus of Nazareth, recently crucified by the leaders of the people, had been raised from the dead and thus was shown to be the Messiah.

The main significance of the events at Pentecost is that only seven weeks after the authorities had demonstrated their op-

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