

THE FUTURE OUTLOOK

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ST. VALENTINE'S DAY

By HELEN RICHARDSON BATTLE

One of the outstanding days of this month is February 14, Valentine's Day. This day, often called the Day of Hearts, is a day in which love should be stressed in all our undertakings.

Saint Valentine was a lover of flowers and poems. As he cultivated a variety of flowers, he created poetry to correlate with them. February was one of his most expressive months for as he bedded such plants as tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, gladioli and iris he often bedded in his mind ideas for poetry which correlated with their beauty.

Shakespeare had the notion that birds begin to couple on February 14th. From this arose the custom of sending on this day letters containing professions of love and affection. How beautiful it is for one to meet the mailman on Valentine's Day and receive an impressively-worded card from a loved one. Husbands, wives, boy-friends and girl-friends are always joyous that they were remembered and appreciated for the greatest pleasure in life is love. Mother is even more tenderly touched when the card or gift is made by the little hands of her young one.

The month of February also marks the final announcement of engagements according to tradition. The purpose of the engagement is for the preparations necessary before matrimony just as February was used by Saint Valentine to make preparations for his blossoms in June. Since Valentine's Day is a day for the declaration of love many couples do become engaged on this day.

Valentine's Day has also been set aside by the Director of the Heart Fund as a major day for receiving contributions. This is done with the hope that when glorious and glamorous treats are given to those so dear to our hearts a gift will also be given to this worthy cause. Giving on the Day of Hearts is more joyous and advantageous to the donor if he makes a contribution toward the ill and suffering victims of heart illness. Of course as Mrs. L. M. Child wrote "The cure of all the ills and wrongs, the cares, the sorrows, and the crimes of humanity, all lie in that one word 'love'".

Sunday is Valentine's Day. Show someone that you care for if there is anything better than to be loved, it is loving.

SING WHILE YOU DRIVE

- 45 miles per hour—sing, "Highways are happy ways."
- 55 miles per hour—sing, "I'm but a stranger here, Heaven is my home."
- 65 miles per hour—sing, "Nearer my God to Thee."
- 75 miles per hour—sing, "When the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there."
- 85 miles per hour—sing, "Lord, I'm coming home."



THIS WEEK'S SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

HUMILITY BEFORE GOD Beginning Where You Are

In C. S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters* an imaginary devil named Screwtape writes to his nephew, Wormwood, concerning the best methods of destroying the virtues of the Christian man and defeating the Enemy (God).

"My dear Wormwood,

"The most alarming thing in your last account of the patient is that he is making none of those confident resolutions which marked his original conversion. No more lavish promises of perpetual virtue, I gather; not even the expectation of an endowment of 'grace' for life, but only a hope for the daily and hourly pittance to meet the daily and hourly temptation! This is very bad.

"I see only one thing to do at the moment. Your patient has become humble; have you drawn his attention to the fact. All virtues are less formidable to us once the man is aware that he has them, but this is specially true of humility. Catch him at the moment when he is really poor in spirit and smuggle into his mind the gratifying reflection, 'By jove! I'm being humble,' and almost immediately pride — pride at his own humility — will appear. If he awakes to the danger and tries to smother this new form of pride, make him proud of his attempt — and so on, through as many stages as you please. But don't try this too long, for fear you awake his sense of humour and proportion, in which case he will merely laugh at you and go to bed.

"You must . . . conceal from the patient the true end of Humility. Let him think of it not as self-forgetfulness but as a certain kind of opinion (namely, a low opinion) of his own talents and character. Some talents, I gather, he really has. Fix in his mind the idea that humility consists in trying to believe those talents to be less valuable than he believes them to be. No doubt they are in fact less valuable than he believes, but that is not the point. The great thing is to make him value an opinion for some quality other than truth, thus introducing an element of dishonesty and make-believe into the heart of what otherwise threatens to become a virtue. By this method thousands of humans have been brought to think that humility means pretty women trying to believe they are ugly and clever men trying to believe they are fools. And since what they are trying to believe may, in some cases, be manifest nonsense, they cannot succeed in believing it and we have the chance of keeping their minds endlessly re-

volving on themselves in an effort to achieve the impossible. To anticipate the Enemy's strategy, we must consider His aims. The Enemy wants to bring the man to a state of mind in which he could design the best cathedral in the world, and know it to be the best, and rejoice in the fact, without being any more (or less) or otherwise glad at having done it than he would be if it had been done by another. The Enemy wants him, in the end, to be so free from any bias in his own favour that he can rejoice in his own talents as frankly and gratefully as in his neighbour's talents — or in a sunrise, an elephant, or a waterfall. He wants each man, in the long run, to be able to recognise all creatures (even himself) as glorious and excellent things."

Searching The Scriptures

The Scripture for this lesson is Luke 14:7-11; 18:9-14. These verses are printed below. Luke 14:7-11

7 Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he marked how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, 8 "When you are invited by any one to a marriage feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest a more eminent man than you be invited by him; 9 and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. 10 But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. 11 For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Luke 18:9-14

9 He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others: 10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.' 13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Memory Selection: Every one who exalts himself will be hum-

bled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

—Luke 14:11

The Meaning of Humility

The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector is Jesus' way of describing the meaning of humility before God. Like most parables it will raise more problems than it solves if we try to read too much into it.

We cannot assume that Jesus was criticizing any religious act or that he meant to commend the vocation of tax collecting or even the basic attitude of self-abasement. On other occasions he spoke approvingly of keeping the commandments and recommended both tithing and fasting. He also warned against hiding one's light under a bushel. Rather, the parable is a pointed reminder that God hears the heart, not the oratory.

The parable presents humility in two phases — first, as an attitude of mind; second, as an act of affirmation.

Significantly, the Pharisee began immediately with a fatuous claim to moral superiority. The tax collector, on the other hand, expressed his need simply and clearly with no apologies or excuses. His attitude was one of seeking. Needing God, he called upon him for mercy. This wholly realistic and self-forgetful attitude is what the Bible calls humility.

Yet we must go one step further — to affirmation — before humility is completely defined in Christian terms. Thomas Kelly states it in these words: "Humility does not rest, in final count, upon bafflement and discouragement. . . . It rests upon the disclosure of the consummate wonder of God, upon finding that only God counts, that all our own self-originated intentions are works of straw."

We can thoroughly mistake the intent of humility unless we understand it in terms of our relationship to God. It is in the recognition of our dependence on God and the affirmation of his power that we find true humility, for only that affirmation places all else in true perspective.

True and False Humility

In this basically affirmative stance we find the difference between humility and mere self-deprecation.

Self-criticism is not necessarily a sign of humility. When a friend praises our accomplishments, we may protest, with false modesty, "It really wasn't anything; anybody could have done as well." Yet all the while our honest opinion is that it was a pretty remarkable achievement.

When we have developed these patterns of self-deprecia-

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