

THE FUTURE OUTLOOK

J. F. JOHNSON..... Editor & Publisher
 MISS EMMA P. JOHNSON..... News Reporter
 MISS IRIS A. DONNELL..... Secretary & Bookkeeper
 L. A. WISE..... Staff Photographer

Make all checks payable to and mail to:

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A WORD TO THE WISE

By Miss Annie B. Herbin

With the opening of school approaching, many youngsters are looking forward to new and challenging experiences, and this is characteristic of youth eager to learn new things and to meet new friends, as well as new teachers. This is and has always been quite an adventure in school life. In past decades many of us look back with joy in the anticipation of who would make the first team, or who would possibly get the leading role in the school play, or be chosen class president. These were innocent desires; they were innocent days wherein the least worries were, perhaps, whether or not one would make the honor roll the first semester, or do better in math. There were those of greater responsibilities such as patrolling on the campus or in the corridors; such responsibilities as driving the school buses, or editing the school paper. Those of us who came along in such a time cherish these reflections and would live them all over again if we could. But that was yesterday, and it seems impossible to turn back the hand of time.

As we look upon today's students, in both high school and college, a stream of mixed emotions of pity and fear sweep over us as we seek to sort out their interest, their objectives in school and life itself. While many of them step forth with grave determination towards academic accomplishments, a great number will be side-tracked, persuaded down the lane of disaster, for lurking at the corner of their destiny lies an enemy waiting to blow their minds, destroy their integrity, their self-respect and ambitions; it lures them like a fly into the spider's web where they become so entangled that their senses become fuddled and non-functionable. The pathetic thing about it is that these innocents abroad on life's little excursion fails to conceive the character of the enemy; they are swept away with the wonders, the curiosity of youth, carried away with rosy dreams of escape into a world of irresponsibility, one of fantasy and ease. The deplorable thing about it is that once in the web, the young girl or boy finds that he can not escape, that he is caught good, hooked and his senses of self-protection are impaired, and he and she are on their way to the bowery. Some can never return, some never have a chance.

This is just a small part of the story, for indeed, it is a long one. We can not tell it too much, if we intend to save our young people. We need to respect ourselves enough and them so as not to place before them a stumbling block in their paths. But the forces of evil are never idle in life, and like a monster, engulfs many young people on their way to success. Hence, I would say to the young traveler: "Choose your friends carefully; be self-confident in the principles of good living, in the Commandments of Christ, who met temptation on every hand of every kind." I would say to them: "Set your goal and let nothing separate you from clean habits, practices and thoughts. Take nothing harmful and detrimental to your minds or to your bodies, for damages to one faculty can hinder activity in the other or even destroy what could have been a profitable and happy life."

I would say to the youth, turn THUMBS DOWN ON DOPE, SPEED, ACID and/or whatever you call it. I can't see any good in legalizing any kind of it for it is that enemy that destroys the bridge of your future. You can not master it; as it eventually masters YOU. You become its slave, its tramp and you do what it commands. You come to steal, to be shameless and common. So, if you can keep your

THIS WEEK'S SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

SHARING IN CHRIST'S WORK

What Is Our Concern?

Christianity has been described as the most secular of all religions. This description grows out of the great emphasis Christians place upon the world and God's involvement with the world. The world is viewed as the arena in which Christian disciples are to act out their faith, obey their Lord, and serve their fellow men.

As we continue our search for an increased and developed devotional life, we must face squarely this matter of Christian involvement with the world of men. We are economic creatures; we are political, social, racial, national, religious beings. In all these aspects of our existence we are involved in many complex relationships with other persons. What we are in our lives acts for good or ill in the lives of others. In turn, what they are deeply affects our own well-being. If our Christian discipleship, then, is to be genuine, it must act powerfully to shape our interpersonal relationships.

Our calling is to function as Christians within these many webs of relationships in which we are bound. Our calling is to exhibit in the busy world of trade and politics the same frame of mind, the same character that we experience within the sanctuary. It is the work of Christ to meditate, to pray, to worship, and to share in the sacraments. It is equally the work of Christ to bring to bear his spirit and principles upon all of human life.

Our concern in this week's study is to understand the task in which Christ would have us labor, to discern what God is doing in our times, to gain insight to fulfill our ministry of sharing in Christ's work. We believe Jesus implied these concerns when he told his disciples to "bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples." (John 15:8)

We are not concerned with good works in order to be saved. Rather, our concern with good works is an expression of the fact that in Christ we are saved. Good works are the fruit, not the root, of Christian discipleship. There is an order to Christian living. First in importance is the recognition of God in Christ; second is the recognition of Christ in the person of our neighbor. (Compare Matthew 25: 31-46.)

head while some about you will be losing theirs, if you can hold on to principles of decency, home and church training, you will succeed. The only cure that I know of is ABSTAINIOUS, NEVER TRY IT AND YOU WON'T HAVE TO KICK THE HABIT.

Remember, life is a one-way street; your destiny is determined by how well you travel it and the manner in which you maneuver. Sane, self direction is a sure sign of arriving.

Searching the Scripture

The Scripture for this lesson is Matthew 17:1-20; John 15:1-11. Selected verses are printed below.

John 15:1-11

1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. 9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

Memory Selection: He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.

—John 14:21

What the Scripture Says to Us

The biblical passages suggested for this study hold a peculiar significance for Christians. They are prime examples of the Christian emphasis upon a union of praise and labor in the disciple's life.

The Moment of Realization

The experience of the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-20) was recorded to declare for us the divine glory that dwelt in Jesus. The three disciples were privileged to participate in a striking religious experience. In this experience they were convinced of the unique presence of God in, and with, Jesus. In surroundings and under circumstances that would have called to mind the face-to-face encounter of Moses with God (Exodus

24:9-18), the three disciples realized the superiority of Jesus.

The fact that the two greatest figures in Jewish history were seen standing with Jesus showed that his ministry was the work of God. Moses was uniquely the bringer of God's law to men; Elijah was uniquely the prophet of Israel, for through him God had spoken with directness to men of faith. "It is as if the greatest figures in Israel's history came to Jesus, as He was setting out on the last and greatest adventure into the unknown, and told Him to go on. In them all history rose up and pointed Jesus on His way."

Here again, Peter, who so often reminds us of ourselves, speaks not because he knows what to say but because he feels that something must be said. On this occasion he learned that though worship is fundamental to Christian discipleship, there comes a time when the worshipful attitude must be expressed in service to mankind.

Worship reveals to us what manner of person we must be. Service in the midst of human need affords us ample opportunity to be the Christian person.

The Vine and the Branches

The passage from John (15:1-11) illustrates the close relationship between Jesus and his disciples that is essential to Christian service at its finest.

Two figures of speech used here are especially important for us. First is the word picture of the vine and the branches. Second is the emphasis upon the word abide.

In the Old Testament, Israel is often compared to a vine. (See Psalms 80:8-19; Ezekiel 15: 1-6; 19:10-14. Compare Isaiah 5: 1-7.) A true vine is a vine that is perfectly in harmony with its intended nature. Jesus is "the true vine" because of his absolute faithfulness to God. He reflects perfectly the character and the glory of God. (See 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:6; Hebrews 1:3a.) As "the true vine" Jesus can be the source of genuine life and health for those who "abide" in him.

What meaning are we to understand in the term abide?

A first and very important meaning may be one of mystic relationship between an individual believer and Christ. Some persons have that disposition which makes possible for them a pervading and unshakable sense of Christ's presence in all they think, say, or do.

A second meaning points to the need to keep in contact with Jesus through the witness left to us. Chief among these are the Bible, especially the Gospel records; the church in its sacraments and worship; and the fel-

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