

MEDITATIONS ON THE TRUE CHRISTIAN LIFE

....*"This book of the law [the Word of God] shall not depart from [always be in] your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful [take heed] to do according to all that is written in it; for THEN you will make your way prosperous, and THEN you will have success".... Joshua 1:8 NASB*

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* Great industrial concerns have in their employ men who are needed only when there is a breakdown somewhere. When something goes wrong with the machinery, these men spring into action to locate and remove the trouble and get the machinery rolling again. For these men a smoothly operating system has no interest. They are specialists concerned with trouble and how to find and correct it.

In the Kingdom of God things are not too different. God has always had His specialists whose chief concern has been the moral breakdown, the decline in the spiritual health of the nation or the Church. Such men were Elijah, Jeremiah, Malachi, and others of their kind who appeared at critical moments in history to reprove, rebuke, and exhort in the name of God and righteousness.

A thousand or ten thousand ordinary priests or pastors or teachers could labor quietly on, almost unnoticed, while the spiritual life of Israel or the Church was normal. But let the people of God go astray from the paths of truth, and immediately the specialist appeared almost out of nowhere. His instinct for trouble brought him to the help of the Lord and of Israel.

Such a man was likely to be drastic, radical, possibly at times violent, and the curious crowd that gathered to watch him work soon branded him as extreme, fanatical, negative. And in a sense they were right. He was single-minded, severe, fearless, as these were the qualities the circumstances demanded. He shocked some, frightened others, and alienated not a few, but he knew Who had called him and what he was sent to do. His ministry was geared to the emergency, and that fact marked him out as different, a man apart.

To such men as this the Church owes a debt too heavy to pay. The curious thing is that She seldom tries to pay him while he lives, but the next generation builds his sepulcher and writes his biography, as if instinctively and awkwardly to

discharge an obligation the previous generation to a large extent ignored.

Such a man as this is not an easy companion. The professional evangelist who leaves the wrought-up meeting as soon as it ends to hurry over to the most expensive restaurant to feast and crack jokes with his sponsors will find this man something of an embarrassment, for he cannot turn off the burden of the Holy host as one would turn off a faucet. He insists upon being a Christian all the time, everywhere; and again, that marks him out as different.

Toward him it is impossible to be neutral. His acquaintances are divided pretty neatly into two classes, those who love him with all admiration, and those who hate him with perfect hatred!

.... "And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household." And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief".... Matthew 13:57-58 NASB