

the altar of sacrificial service. It means purity of motive, a heart without alloy, ever seeking to keep in first place the things of His kingdom.

Much as that Phi Beta Kappa graduate who gave his life to foreign mission service. After returning on his furlough from New Zealand, one of his former class mates asked him, "Why on earth do you go way over there as a medical missionary to heal those primitive people when there are millions of sick people here at home?" Would you note that he didn't answer by saying that he went because he was called, or that he couldn't be happy doing anything else, or that the world will go to the dogs if more missionaries don't go. He said simply, "I went to heal them because they were sick." Isn't that reason enough? Isn't that the straightforward honesty that should characterize all that we do in His name? Work for the sheer joy of working and for the purpose that it needs to be done. If our motives were given a clean scrubbing, then both method and result would be greatly enhanced. Or, if you please, like a preacher friend of mine who accepted a call to a church less than half the size of the one in which he was serving with a fifty percent cut in salary for the sole reason of wanting to help those who needed him most.

Such rare goodness sets no limits to sacrifice, knowing that the one who is being served had sacrificed his all. If much of the theological rigmarole, the elaborate speculative theories, the grandiose rationalizing that has a way of clouding the picture—if these could give way to a warm

heart in decisive action . . . the Kingdom of God would be in better stead.

Let me state with certainty that righteousness will never win the world to God but goodness will. Reluctance not supported by affection will not compel man's sloven allegiance. The world has tried the road of legalism and found that it ended at Sheol. It has tried a looseknit system of mild ethics all interspersed by superstition and witchcraft. These have left him in his old condition. Now: let us lay hold of that unique fashion of uprightness and honest-to-God goodness as a weapon for this warfare of life. This will command respect and response; this is the way of our Christ.

Seeing smoke and flames curling out of an upstairs window in an old southern plantation home, a huge Negro man rushed into the house, fought his way through blinding smoke up the spiraling stairway into the bedroom of its only inhabitant, sixty-eight year old white woman. As he brought her out, he was singed, smoked and paining as he crouched his heavy chest down over the frail, sickly body of the woman to protect her. There on a mat made of Spanish moss he placed her safely away from the burning home. Both survived, but till this day the man wears the scars from the flames. Someone asked him one day, "Isaac, why did you do that? Why did you run such a risk?" He answered in muted tones, "Cause da Missus is such a good lady!" "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet, peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die," and Jesus dared and died for you and me.

NOT FOR SALE

December 8, 1957

Romans 12:1-2; 14-21

There are some things in life that should never be sold, some properties never listed for the market. Man is endowed with birthrights that are not barter for the world. But demagogues and tyrants go on the belief that every man has a price on his head . . . that every man can be bought regardless of his principles or convictions. Unfortunately, this is too nearly the truth. So, I come to tell you anew

that there are some things on which you should never put a price tag, no matter how brisk the buying or sharp the bidding. The proof of the matter is easily seen when one tries to buy them back.

CHRISTIAN VIRTUE

You should not sell your Christian virtue; it is a rare possession. Purity, chastity, honesty, and the like are but a few of the facets to this diamond that en-

hances the value of life. Virtue is a singularly clean self: a young person who can hold his head high, a middle-aged person who still remembers that God made one man for one woman; virtue is a long-stemmed lilly that refuses to be scalded by the heat of human indulgence. To sell it is like selling your soul.

When Joseph was sold into Egypt, that young, clean Hebrew found himself in the household of Pharaoh in a trusted place of rank and privilege. But, because of his clean deportment, his very bearing created a snare of temptation. Potiphar's wife, the captain of the guard, sought to buy Joseph's virtue. Though he had full range of Potiphar's affairs, there was one door through which he could not go, like there was one tree in Eden forbidden to Adam and Eve. Potiphar's wife was no area of indulgence for young Joseph. But Satan is never content with our being told that some things are off limits, so the temptation was intensified and seduction entered the picture. She said to him, "Why don't you come in and lie with me?" In effect, she continued, "You are a young man, no one will know about it, you only live once, after all you are a human being," and all that kind of talk.

But Joseph remembered his upbringing; he looked about him to the favored lot that was his despite his slavery and this quick survey of blessings gave him courage to say to her, "Mine is the freedom of many men; I have anything I want except you, but I do not want you at the price of my principles." When lusty love is spurned on the spot, it always acts in vindication; it seeks a method of revenge. So did she. The very idea that one of the King's household should be spurned and refused by a Hebrew slave! Perhaps you know the rest of the story. She made it look as though he did yield to her, called the guard, told her husband and saw to it that Joseph was put behind bars.

Some reward for not selling his virtue, you say? Ah, but don't forget that God was with him in prison as much as in her boudoir. Sometimes maintaining one's soul will cost a tenure in prison, or social ostracism, or the ugly epithet that "you're not a man," but just buck up, take new heart, for "so persecuted they the prop-

hets who were before you." He who is not willing to suffer for his Lord and his own soul's enrichment isn't worthy of the Name. Little wonder that they said about Sir Lancelot that he had the strength of ten men because his heart was pure!

I shall never forget that day when we walked up to the mouth of a coal mine in Kentucky and noticed flowers blooming right near the entrance of the shaft. We reached down and plucked one but lo, the white blossoms were all covered by black and grime. Our host told us to blow over the flower's petals, whereupon, one puff removed the dirt and the petals were white as lilies. Growing at the mouth of a dirty coal mine and maintaining their pure whiteness even amidst the dirt and soot. So should we in a world of smog and vice, while living in the midst of a sinful environment, maintain the purity of virtue. Do not offer that for sale.

FREEDOM FROM CHAINS

Another of your prize possessions should never be put up for sale: your freedom from chains—all kinds of chains; mental, religious, moral, economic, national . . . all these. It is so easy to parrot the word freedom as though it were some pale, effete virtue coming naturally to all mankind. The only people who are truly free in our world become that way by the tortuous route of self-denial, battlefields, facing the ugly virus of prejudice and fighting it out to the end. No. freedom is a rare residue, accruing to none without laborious effort. Those who are most inclined to blab about the world being free are also past masters at forging chains. In one breath, the Kremlin can release the doves of peace simultaneous with a long cattle-car train leaving the Kremlin station for Siberian prison camps. While extolling the paragon of peace in the United Nations Assembly, many a little despot lives like a totalitarian. To know these facts is to alert a people who enjoy this wondrous dimension of life—freedom.

There are many pairs of chains being forged for the souls of men in this twentieth century. There is an ecclesiastical behemoth at work in the world working under the guise of religion which

says to mankind that theirs is the voice of God and the hope of humanity. But to subscribe to its totalitarian edicts is to surrender the total bastion of mind, body and soul. Jesus' type of religion was a truth that eventuated in real freedom—not the crippling strictures of servitude!

One can be held in the slavery of habit and no more free to live his life intelligently than an inmate on Devil's Island. Victimized by this ball and chain, he goes his groping way serving the gods of appetite, passion, drink or mammon.

There is that heavily financed, well-propagated infamous teaching of Communism that is subtly and cleverly concocted to enslave the human race. To accomplish this despicable purpose, they would move heaven and hell without the single genuflection of conscience or decency. Look at their record in Hungary; To those gallant freedom fighters in that little country must go the eternal admiration of all those who would be free. The fact that the rest of the free world sat idly, though sympathetically by, and permitted the rape and murder of a free people will remain in infamy as a dark night in the civilization of mankind! What we moderns need to learn is that some things are dearer than even life itself. That to live without honor is existence for animals alone.

"Once to every man and nation comes
the moment to decide,
In the strife of truth with falsehood,
For the good or evil side.

Some great cause, God's new Messiah,
Offering each the bloom and blight,
And that choice goes by forever
'Twixt that darkness and that light."

A polite note of protest from an embassy is a sad excuse to counteract machine guns! Don't sell your freedom to any loudmouthed zealot . . . no matter what he offers, including the whole world.

PRINCIPLES FOR POPULARITY

I mention the other diamond that should not be put up for sale. Do not sell your principles for popularity. If you do, you have struck the poorest of bargains. This

day of rating with the upper caste, of idolizing the myth of success, or subscribing to the current jargon that one has to be happy to accomplish anything . . . just such a day has blown up popularity like a balloon. So to achieve it, in a tight place, it is easy to compromise our principles, especially when the principles are vague and poorly rooted.

But this old battle started in the early church when bigotry, race prejudice and national sins prevailed. Peter had to learn it the hard way when he was confronted by those who recognized him outside of the judgment hall. Fearing the loss of popularity, status, or future security, he sold his principles and denied his Lord. Paul had to learn this lesson. Paul, that Hebrew of Hebrews, that pupil of Gamaliel, the prize student of Jewish lore . . . of all people, having to take the gospel to the Gentiles . . . those aforetime who had not been counted as worthy of being saved.

Today, when in our nation, people are being set against one another, by all types of suspicion, racial animosities, legal coercion, and pagan motives, we need to take that infamous price tag off our principles and let sense, reason, and wisdom prevail. To all the Colored and White people of our world, let us remember that the solution to the race problem like that of all other human knots comes not so much by law and policemen, not so much by sermons and harangue, certainly not by mob violence. The solution comes when every man has come alive inside to the decency of every other man, who sees in him the image of God and is willing to let that principle prevail regardless of consequence! Still abides that eternal warning, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." And if intelligent, disciplined love will not solve it, then God help us, there is no solution!

Had Jesus set as His goal the matter of being popular, He could have succeeded admirably. His would have been the acclamation of the status quo, and He could have been voted the number one citizen in Jerusalem. Theirs would have been a big banquet, a silver cup and distinction, an honorary degree of achievement, and the endorsement of little men. Had He

modified His demands, scaled down His cutting truth, ammended His starchy in-
vective, loosened up in his "either-or"
finality, they would have received Him in

open-armed popularity. But He didn't. In
telling certainty, said He, "Not for sale."
But in that decision He bought your salva-
tion and mine!

WHEN LIFE GETS CHOKED UP

December 15, 1957

Life has a way of getting us in a corner—those times when you feel caged in by the thrust of circumstances. Times when life seems to have combined its negative forces to defeat us. In such a predicament the Apostle Paul found himself when he said, "I am torn between two straits." That narrow rocky passage between two mountain gorges through which a ship must sail into wider seas is often treacherous and deceptively narrow. To admit that this life in the flesh has its hard places, that the channels get choked up, is to be honest with ourselves. Yes, for Christians too, despite their faith and virtuous living, still life can be cornered.

NATURE OF THE CORNERS

Some of these are physical corners . . . like recurrent illness or the inevitable approach of old age with its adjuncts of senility, waning energies and loss of perspective. Millions today have not grown old gracefully; theirs is but a retarded existence living in yesteryears, seeing little if any purpose in the present and the immediate future. They can not say with Robert Browning, "Grow old along with me the best is yet to be."

There are psychological corners where life can be crowded . . . mental ruts that can last forty years. Failing to break the vicious grip of some mental tick, one's personality can become warped and demented—largely because life did not break out of that narrow confinement in some mental corner.

Circumstantial corners have a way of denuding life of its zest. Much like a young scholar who had difficulty studying because on one side of his apartment was a blacksmith and on the other a carpenter. The intermittent ring of the anvil on the right and the saw and hammer on the left made studying a difficult

chore. Being unable to stand it any longer, the scholar paid both men to move. Next morning, lo and behold, he heard both the ring of the anvil and the whine of the saw. The men had merely exchanged shops. Sometimes life is a matter of jumping out of the frying pan into the fire . . . sort of a circumstantial corner which makes it hard going. Then there are life's close corners that we make for ourselves. Some of the people on whom much pity is lavished when looked at under close scrutiny are there because of their own designs. Ignoring the law of sowing and reaping, they went right ahead and chose the undesirable lot. Maybe not so much by deliberate intention as by wilful drifting. Oh, the corners are manifold but our real interest today is not so much to describe them—we know too well their nature—as to master the right methods of getting out of life's corners when the wheels grind to a halt. From the Word of God, from human experience and common sense come the following suggestions as to how we can get out of life's corners.

DO NOT PANIC

First and foremost: do not panic! Desperation will dictate a miserable course. Many a life has been consumed by fire unnecessarily because of lack of clear thinking in a split second of time. Look at your corner, analyze it, size it up for its rightful size and the chances are that it is not as fatal as you may think. Under that type of cool appraisal you may display the same intelligence as a man who was asked what book he would rather have than any other if he were shipwrecked on a remote island in the sea. The man quickly answered, "A manual on shipbuilding." That is good sense . . . and the right value in proportion. To grasp for a straw, though understandable, still a straw will not support the weight