

ANTIQUES

March 30, 1958

Romans 8:27-28; 35-39

Throughout our world there is a frantic search for antiques; anything old is becoming valuable whether it is porcelain, brass, silver, furniture, jewels, or lusters. Recently two small paintings which originally sold for less than one hundred dollars brought the handsome price of two hundred thousand dollars. Out-of-the-way shops are being combed for some rare find for the insatiable market in antiques.

There are some verbal antiques rarer than a Rembrandt; but because they are lost in the corners of man's sense of values, they often are overlooked as worthless remnants, collecting dust in the attic of memory. I want to point you to three of these antiques—two of which are priceless; they need to be shined to a new brilliance for they are of inestimable value.

"GOD WORKS IN ALL THINGS"

The first verbal antique is rarer than the works of old masters, and yet it can be yours free of charge. Here it is: "For we know that God works in all things for good to them who love Him and who are called according to His purpose." I call this an antique indeed because so few people have ever paid any serious attention to it, and those who have noticed it felt that it was beyond their comprehension or practice.

Do you really believe that all things work out for good? Certainly not! That isn't what the passage says at all. Trying to teach that suffering and disillusionment is happening for some type of good is to deceive and mislead. Some of these coalition of circumstances: hard knots of bad health, nature's wild sprees, the monotonous repetition of evil choices, the vastly impersonal universe: these are hardly "good." It is a blind gullibility that takes a literalism and somehow or other tries to put it into some well-intentioned yet contradictory truth.

Such was the case recently when a man, out of religious conviction, refused his wife a blood transfusion because he said,

"It isn't the will of God." He contended that if God wanted her healed, He would heal her without the aid of medicine. Sometimes God doesn't have much of a chance to heal when His will involves the use of transfusions and medicine as well as the patient's enduring faith in both processes.

NOT GOOD IN THEMSELVES

Take pain, for instance. Pain in itself is certainly no good. In fact, it is about as bad as it comes. Poverty in itself will never save a person and is confoundingly inconvenient besides. No, these things are not good in themselves. Paul said instead that God works through these things for the higher good of the individual's spiritual welfare. That is, He can equip life with the necessary tools to convert stumbling blocks into stepping stones. The minus signs can be crossed into plus signs by the love of God as He works out His divine purpose in His disciples' lives.

Many are asking today, "Then why don't Christians in general believe and practice this antique truth?" Part of the answer is the fact that we are most inclined to look at life from a short range. The immediate focus and the short range are not much proof. Contradictions, disappointments, frustrations almost rule out a belief that purposive good is the underlying deduction in all this maze of things for millions. But that is the trouble.

The child of God, while gazing down at the present tense, must always keep one eye on the ultimate issue, the final decision, the last word. This telescopic way of peering into the future will bring back a firm grip on this antique truth that God is working, though admittedly mysteriously, through all that happens to His own children for the higher good whether it is personal or not.

"WAY THAT SEEMETH RIGHT"

I stumbled on this next antique the other day, but it already is highly brassed. As a matter of fact, it has been in such constant circulation that it never was allowed to collect dust. It is good trade

in any locale, but the deceiving thing about it is that it is not the real thing. It was cheap when first made, yet it still brings a fabulous price.

Listen to it—this verbal antique: "There is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof is death." A way that seemeth right—if it seems right, that is enough for many. It is amazing how we can collect little bits of partial truths here and there: a dab of mild ethics from one place, a few old superstitious proverbs from another, hearsay philosophies and theologies from the street corner, verbal remnants from old wives tales, insomuch that the mind welds together this motley conglomeration and calls it convictions. Little wonder then that many things pass the censor board of our consciences when they are schooled by this collection of variant teachings.

NEED INSTRUCTION

There are times when one simply does not know what is right. At such times he needs instruction. For others there is a time when a knowledge of right is in question; and then there are times when right is known quite clearly, but one refuses to act accordingly. Many are quick to ask, "But what is wrong with doing the things that seem right?" Just this: it matters not how an issue seems if that seeming does not square with the Word of God. Man can take something that is pleasing to his senses and can justify indulgence on the basis of its seeming pleasure.

As a matter of fact, most any act can be justified in the minds of some people. Who believes that a criminal loses sleep after he has conditioned his nature for habitual crime? Few indeed! The flame seems good to a moth; but as it flies into the flame, it is consumed. Salt water seems good to a man dying of thirst at sea; but as he drinks, certain death will follow.

No, it is not a trustworthy guide to follow what seems right to a person no matter how logical, how timely, how current, or how popular if that thought, activity, or attitude is in conflict with God's clear-cut truth found in the Bible. The warning is that it leads to death and destruction. Despite the beautiful flowers along the

road, if a person is going in the wrong direction, the floral beauty is of little consequence in determining his ultimate destiny.

"BECOME LIKE HIM"

Friends, look with me at the other antique. It is stacked back in a corner collecting dust, but it is rarer than a Rembrandt. It is the verbal antique which states, "If one walks with God long enough, he will become like God." That is the original 23 karat gold leaf of life-proven truth. Nothing has been restored to this truth because it is in perfect condition. It means simply that one takes on the nature of his environment.

In a household where discrete speech is spoken one becomes a bit sensitive about his own patterns of speech. Where the floor is cleanly scrubbed, one is least apt to drop crumbs or grease. In a bar-room one doesn't care too much about where the spittoon is placed. Among one's associates can be found the tonesetters of the person's life. Just so when you walk with God.

No man can walk with God and can remain his old self. Pretty soon he finds a growing sensitivity to the world's needs, an inclination to nausea at evil's selfishness. Recoiling from every appearance of evil, he seeks a direction to life away from the dim-lit flats of indulgence—when he walks with God. Cultivating an awareness for beauty, he searches among base ugliness for potential beauty and purity because his association with God activates such quests. No longer does he seek to be served but to start serving.

LOSING ONESELF

The magnificent truth about losing himself becomes a bit more discernible as he seeks to pour himself out for his Saviour's sake. He hears the admonition of another who had walked in the same company, "Stir up the gift of God that is within you." So he goes his way in diligent application of mind and soul to make something out of himself.

In a small midwestern community, life almost dried up as the young people moved away. The same old patterns of poor vision prevailed (no good jobs, no

expanding opportunities), so the people resigned themselves to the belief that nothing good can happen here. Then one day a young engineer moved to town. He surveyed the river that ran through the community. Soon they built a dam across the river, and a hydroelectric plant woke up the sleepy town. New folks moved in, paint appeared on the dingy buildings, and soon the whole complexion brightened within and without.

That is much like what happens when you walk with God. Life comes alive to significance and purpose. The sleepy, pagan futility is replaced by a vibrant faith that the One with whom you walk is a new likeness. This antique is priceless. Yet, it can be yours if you will begin that journey right now!

HYMN OF THE MONTH

(Continued from Page 7)

quent and popular young minister. After one so gifted and industrious, but before five years at Kibworth, Doddridge went to Northampton to serve as pastor of the Castle Hill Congregational Church, and there he served until his death at the age of forty-seven.

In addition to his pastorate, he taught in the seminary which was established soon after he went to Northampton. During his twenty years there, more than two hundred young men from England, Scotland, and Holland received instruction from him for the evangelical ministry.

WRITINGS BANNED

Although a staunch nonconformist, whose writings were frequently banned by both Catholics and Anglicans, Doddridge was widely respected. Among his friends he numbered the fellow Congregationalists, Isaac Watts, the radical Wesleys, the fiery George Whitefield, and the Countess of Huntington. On the other hand, he was also friendly with many in the Anglican church, including Thomas Secker, who later became archbishop of Canterbury. He never stooped to bickering and name calling, and did much to bring the different nonconforming groups together.

The members of his own church were the first to hear and sing the hymns their pastor wrote, for they were all written for the purpose of driving home the principal thought of a sermon, and were "lined out" to the congregation at the close of a service in the hope of capturing their minds through the charm and power of rhyme. "Awake, My Soul, Stretch Every Nerve" was written to follow a sermon he had preached on Philippians 3:12-14.

HANDEL'S TUNE

"Christmas," the tune to which our hymn is usually set, is taken from one of Handel's operas, *Siroe*. George F. Handel was the son of a German surgeon, born at Halle, Prussia, in 1685. His fame as a composer was gained chiefly in England, where he composed his sacred oratorios—all of which were written after he reached the age of 50. *The Messiah*, his greatest oratorio, has immortalized his name.

THE BAPTIST HOUR STATION CHANGES

NEW STATIONS

Swainsboro, Ga.	WJAT	800 kc	8:00 a.m.
Sparta, Tenn.	WSMT	1050 kc	7:30 a.m.

CANCELLATIONS

Chillicothe, Ohio	WBEX
New Orleans, La.	WJMR
Silver City, N. Mex.	KSIL

NEW FREQUENCY

Anniston, Ala.	WHMA	1390 kc	5:30 p.m. (Sat.)
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TIME CHANGES

Pensacola, Fla.	WCOA	1370 kc	1:30 p.m.
Eastland, Texas	KERC	1590 kc	10:30 a.m.

A complete listing of stations carrying the Baptist Hour will be sent upon request.