

The People of the Way

Acts Eph. 4:17-5:10

S. School Con-
vention, Pta
March 1951.

Glancing through the list of subjects which have been chosen under the theme: "Christ - The Way" I presume that this past subject was introduced at this stage to drive home the truth that the way is not just ~~as~~ message but primarily concerned with the messengers: the people of the way. It is not enough to know that Christ is the way - it is not enough to show ^{or teach} others that way - we must be sure above everything that we are ^{ourselves} to be a vital, living illustration of that way! Others > ourselves

Not so easy: to teach the way to others is difficult but not impossible; to be the way ourselves is a much more formidable & diff. task - in fact im-
possible but for the grace of God. And yet no reason to be daunted by the high standard of life which Christ sets for his followers.

Impossible within the scope of half an hour to give a full and detailed picture of the people of the way. Therefore I would like to stress these three definite truths in connection with the people of the way:

- I ^{attitudes} Their Disposition
 II ^{Words} Their Speech
 III ^{Life} Their Deeds

2. Very well-known but
 necess. to be reminded
 → Group discussions

Summed up in one word: different.

1 Peter 2: 9 - "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light"

I Their Disposition: A spirit of

① Honesty: The minimum qualification: truthfulness. Stephen as example: a man "of honest report". No amount of "fancy spirituality" can take the place of truthfulness and honesty.

So much dishonesty of motives, so much untruthfulness in speech today - comes as a decided challenge to the people of the way: basic honesty of heart and spirit! Children: mistook even when s/p is dishonest

② Humility: The need for humility - Christ's illustration of humility - a child. If we do not humble ourselves we will never be able to

3.
 ③ Joyousness: living in a world lacking in true joy and gladness - trying to bolster it up with a sham of pleasure and happiness which it does not feel at heart.

Christians as a group, however, not much better off to-day: // so much complaining and grumbling over so many things that there is very little difference noticeable between the people of the way and the people of the wayside! What the world - and ourselves - need is a bubbling, contagious joy because we know that in Christ we have the answer to all problems and all needs!
 - youth attracted to it!

④ Fearlessness: O, how do we need ~~the~~ to recapture the spirit of fearlessness as the people of the way! So little faith in the world to-day, so much doubt and questionings - with all its resultant fears and complexes! Against that the challenge of Christ to his followers: to have faith, the faith that banishes all fears and doubts (Peter, Stephen).

- youth attracted by such courage!

⑤ Forgiveness: One of the outstanding & challenging characteristics of the Christian of all ages: his ability to forgive his enemies. Forgiveness has never been easy to grant - every time we are called upon to forgive somebody we must first conquer ourselves!

- Stephen.

- Youth attracted to such a spirit!

⑥ Unity: Burning question of the day: what is chr. unity? Just a spiritual unity, inward unity of thought and heart or spirit or does it also include outward unity: social, cultural, economic?

I do not want to discuss this problem to-day but I do want to say that God is using all the clashes of class, race & colour to cultivate a deeper ~~unity~~ ^{unity} toward unity in the lives of Christians of all races & classes.

II Their Speech: Making a special point of this aspect of our lives because we have only lately realised the power of the word: spoken, written, printed & ^{seeing} just think for one moment how the world and the devil wield the sword of ~~their words~~ ^{speech} without perhaps always realising it, we must acknowledge it as a fact that the speech of the people of the way is different to that of the people along the wayside.

Even though we talk about the same things there is a difference - a diff. in quality, in content, and in aim:

a) In quality: because the Spirit of God lives in our hearts: therefore the way we will talk about people and things will be different - it will always be in a spirit of truth, of love; it will also be in a spirit of grace and power; direct, unaffected, simple (Step. & apostles)
 → How many times do we lack these qualities in our speech!

b) In contents: Although we will ^{take any} interest in many of those things which hold the attention of the world -

in the long run the things we talk about will be different: our main interest lies in the things of the Kingdom of God and not the Kingdoms of this world.

c) In aim: Our aim is to glorify God, to win others to Christ, to further the interests of the Kingdom.

How deeply does this affect every-thing which we say as pastors, as S.S. teachers, as Christians! What a challenge to our messages, our witness, our ordinary conversation!

III Their Deeds: There remains very little to be said: ~~we~~ all of us realize that the challenge of Christ comes to us as people of the way in our daily walk and life. In the long run it is the witness of our lives that count: whether in the home or S. School makes no difference. ~~We have~~ ^{All of us have} ~~all~~ seen the influence exerted by one godly consecrated teacher in a S.S. — led to a change of life in many young lives! Especially "small" deeds.

This is the great challenge of our day: and we know that we cannot meet that challenge in our own power or through our own lines. Without the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit our lives can never become an effective witness. And even then our witness will always be faulty and tainted with sin.

That is why we will be called upon, as people of the way, to lead other people not to ^{see & appreciate} our witness but to place them before Christ and his witness because in the final instance only Christ can say with truth: "I am the Way"

- The Gospel of the Lord Jesus: by Cusad Skinner
- A life of Christ: Basil Matthews.
- The Eagle Booklets: 60 in all (The life of some great Christian)
- The Story without an End: Hugh Ross Williamson (73 Plays). (Brit. Brands. Corp.)
- No New Thing: A. J. Watts (Visual Aids).

① An adult teaches more through his attitude than through words or example

② ~~How can we make that~~
~~Does the child always understand the~~
~~words in which the adult expresses his~~

③ ~~How can we use the power of speech more effectively to this~~
~~How can we~~ what practical effects

can be suggested in the S.S.

to apply ^{illustrate} the truths of the Way in daily life?

④ How can we ^{promote} ~~promote~~ a deeper sense of unity among believers of diff. churches & races?