

BROKENNESS



The Alabaster Box Must Be Broken

*“And behold, a woman brought an
alabaster cruse of ointment and
anointed His feet.”*

(Luke 7:37–38p)

Our Mission Statement:

The reason for publishing this journal is to encourage youth to mature in the Lord. We desire all to be challenged to seek the reality of God in their own lives. We hope you will see, by the testimony of many youth, a Christian life that radiates the power of God. God's desire for all of us is much more than to escape Hell. It is for us to live a victorious life by abiding in Christ. All material will be edited with this goal in mind.

The Editors

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In Upcoming Issues...

**Agape Love—The Unifying Factor
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At this time, we plan to run these themes in this order, but if our readers desire an issue on a different topic, or submit material for an issue planned for a later date, we are willing to switch themes. Reader *feedback* is important!

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The Release of the Spirit

—Watchman Nee

The Importance of Brokenness

Anyone who serves God will discover sooner or later that the great hindrance he has in the Lord's work is not others, but himself. He will discover that his outward man (soul) is not in harmony with his inward man (spirit). Both tend to go toward two opposite directions from each other. He will also sense the inability of his outward man to submit to the inner control of his regenerated spirit, received through the new birth. Thus, he is rendered incapable of obeying God's highest commands. He will quickly detect that his greatest difficulty lies in his outward man, which hinders him from using his spirit.

He will sense the inability of his outward man to submit to the inner control of his regenerated spirit, received through the new birth.

Many of God's servants are not able to do even the most elementary work. Ordinarily, they should be enabled by the exercise of their spirit to know God's Word, to discern the spiritual condition of another, to send forth God's messages under the anointing, and to receive God's illumination. Yet due to the distractions of the outward man, their spirit does not seem to function properly. It is basically because their outward man has never been dealt with. For this reason, excitement in revivals, pleading prayers, and zealous activities are but a waste of time. As we shall see, only one kind of basic dealing can enable man to be useful before God—**brokenness**.

The Inward Man and the Outward Man

Notice how the Bible separates man into two parts: "*For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.*" (Romans 7:22) Our inward man delights in the Law of God. "*To be strengthened with power by his Spirit in the inner man.*" (Ephesians 3:16) And Paul also tells us, "*But if indeed our outward man is consumed, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*" (2 Corinthians 4:16)

First of all, when God comes to indwell us by His Spirit with His life and power, He comes



into our **spirit** at the time when we were born again. (John 3:6) This regenerated spirit located at the center of man's being is what we call the inward man.

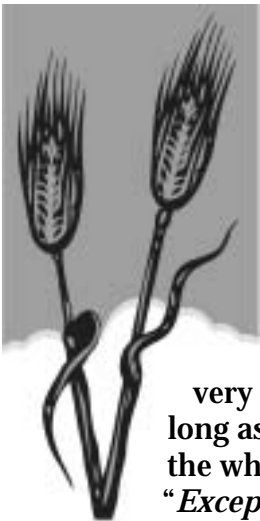
Secondly, outside the sphere of this inward man indwelt by God is the **soul**. Its functions are our thoughts, emotions, and will.

Thirdly, the outermost man is our physical **body**, characterized by its external instincts of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch.

We thus will speak of the spirit as the **inward man**, the soul as the **outer man**, and the body as the **outermost man**. We must never forget that our inward man is the human spirit where God dwells, the place where the Spirit of the Lord is joined to our spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:17) Just as we are dressed in our clothing, so our inward man wears an outward man—i.e., our spirit wears the soul. Moreover, the spirit and soul similarly wear the body. It is quite evident

that men are generally more conscious of the outer man and the outermost man, but they hardly recognize or understand their inner man, their spirit.

We must know that he who can work for God is the one whose inward man can be released. The basic difficulty of a servant of God lies in the failure of his inward man to break through his outward man. Therefore, we must recognize before God that the first difficulty to our work is not in others, but in ourselves. Our spirit seems to be wrapped in a covering which cannot easily break forth. If we have never learned how to release our inward man by breaking through the outward man, we are not able to serve. Nothing can so hinder us as this outward man. Whether our works are fruitful or not depends upon whether our outward man has been broken by the Lord so that the inward man can pass through this brokenness and come forth. This, in a statement, specifies the basic problem. The Lord wants to break our outward man in order for the inward man to have a way out. When the inward man is released, both unbelievers and other Christians will be blessed.



Nature Has its Way of Breaking

The Lord Jesus in John 12: *“Except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit.”* (V.24)

Life is within the grain of wheat. But there is a shell, a

very hard shell on the outside. As long as the shell is not split open, the wheat cannot sprout and grow.

“Except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die...” What is this death? It is the cracking open of the

shell through temperature and humidity working together in the soil. Once the shell of the husk is spilt open, the wheat begins to grow. So the question here is not whether life exists inside the shell, but whether the shell on the outside is cracked open.

The question is not how thus to obtain life, but rather how to allow this life to come forth.

The scripture continues by saying, *“He that loves life (Greek ‘PSUCHE—‘soul’) shall lose it and he that hates his life (Greek ‘PSUCHE—‘soul’) in this world shall keep it to life eternal.”* (V.25) The Lord shows us here that the outer shell is our own life, identified as our soul life, while the life within is the eternal life which He has given to us. To allow the inner life to come forth, it is imperative that the outward life be replaced. Should the outward remain unbroken, the inward would never be able to come forth.

It is necessary (in this writing) that we direct these words to that group of people who have the Lord’s life. Among those who possess the life of the Lord, they can be found in two distinct conditions: One includes those in whom life is confined, restricted, imprisoned, and unable to come forth. The other includes those in whom the Lord forged a way out, and life is thus released through them.

The question is not how thus to obtain life, but rather how to allow this life to come forth. When we say “we need the Lord to break us,” this is not merely a style of speaking, nor is it only a doctrine. It is most vital that the Lord breaks us. It is not that the Lord’s life cannot cover the earth, but rather we imprison His life. It is not that the Lord cannot bless the church, but that the Lord’s life is so confined within us, nothing is flowing forth. If the outward man remains unbroken, we can never be a blessing to His church. And we cannot expect the Lord to bless the Word of God through us!

The Alabaster Box Must Be Broken

The Bible speaks of an *“alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure spikenard.”* (Mark 14:3) God purposely used this term “pure” in His

Word to show that it is truly spiritual. But if the alabaster box is not broken, the pure spikenard will not flow forth. Strange to say, many are still treasuring the alabaster box, thinking that its value exceeds that of the ointment. Many think that their outward man is more precious than their inward man. This becomes the problem confronting the church. One will treasure his cleverness, thinking he is quite important. Another will treasure his own emotions, esteeming himself to be more advanced than other people. Others highly regard themselves, because they feel they are better than others, their eloquence surpasses that of others, or their quickness of action and exactness of judgment are superior, and so forth.

However, we are not antique collectors. Nor are we “vase” admirers. We should be those who desire to smell only the fragrance of the ointment. Without the breaking of the outward, the inward fragrance will not come forth. Hence, not only do we individually have no flowing out, but also the church has no living way. Why then should we hold our outward man to be so precious, especially if the outward only contains the fragrance, instead of releasing the fragrance?

The Holy Spirit has not ceased working. He makes sure one event after another and one difficulty after another come to us. These disciplinary workings of the Holy Spirit have but one purpose—to break our outward man so that our inward man may come through. Yet here is our difficulty—we fret our trifles, we murmur at small losses, and we complain about insignificant things. The Lord is ever finding and preparing a way in order to save us. Yet when His hand slightly touches us, we begin to feel unhappy—even to the extent of quarreling with God and having a negative attitude. Since the time when we were saved, we have been touched by the Lord many times in various ways—all with the purpose of breaking our outward man. Whether we are conscious of it or not, the aim of the Lord is to break this stubborn vessel called our outward man.

Nevertheless, the Treasure is in the earthen vessel. (2 Corinthians 4:7) But if the earthen

vessel cannot be broken, who can see the Treasure within? Have we seen what is the final objective of the Lord’s working in our lives? It is to break open this earthen vessel (2 Corinthians 4:7), to burst open our alabaster box (Mark 14:3), to crack open our shell (John 12:24). The Lord longs to find a way to bless the world through those who belong to Him. Brokenness is the way of blessing, the way of fragrance, the way of fruitfulness. But, it is also a path sprinkled with “blood from our wounds.” Yes, there is blood from many wounds we suffer. When we offer ourselves to the Lord for His service, we cannot afford to be lenient and spare ourselves. We must allow the Lord to crack open our outward man utterly so that He may find a way for His working through us.

Each of us must find out for himself personally what is the mind of the Lord in his life. It is a most lamentable fact that many do not know what is the Lord’s mind or intention for their lives. How much they need Him to open their eyes, to see that everything which comes into their lives can be meaningful. The Lord has not wasted even one thing. To understand the Lord’s purpose is to see very clearly that He is aiming at a single objective, and it is simply this—the breaking of our outward man.

However, too many of us, even before the Lord raises a hand, are already upset. Oh, we must realize that all life’s experiences, troubles, and trials which the Lord sends are for our highest good. We cannot expect the Lord to give anything better, for these constant difficulties are His best. Should one approach the Lord and pray, saying, “O Lord, please let me choose the best thing of my life,” I believe the Lord would tell him, “What I have given you is the best—your daily trials are for your greatest profit.” So God’s motive behind all the things He has ordered for our lives is clearly for the breaking of our outward man. Once this occurs, and our spirit can come forth, we will be enabled to exercise and release our spirit consistently.

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Beautiful Brokenness

–Tyler Griffin

Beautiful...Brokenness? Seldom, if ever, are these words placed together. We think of beauty as something that appears perfect, unmarred, and complete—such as a sunset, a rose, or a famous painting. However, I believe God views beauty somewhat differently than we do. Psalm 51:17 says that the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, and God will not despise a broken and contrite heart.

There is an example of brokenness in the Bible perhaps some of you have not thought of before. I believe it brings out how truly beautiful real brokenness is:

The room buzzed with the sound of happy, joyful voices. In the center of the room, there stood a long wooden table. On either side, the friends of an honored guest sat reclining in the common couch-like chairs of the day.

In the midst of the crowded room sat the honored guest, surrounded by some of his closest friends. Although the guest joined in with the joyous talking and laughter, his eyes had a serious look to them.

No matter how beautiful the box looked, its true worth would never had been known if had not been broken.

Suddenly, a startled hush fell over the room. A young woman had entered and walked quickly to the center of the group where the honored guest sat. She was carrying a small box and everyone wondered what she was about to do.

They could see that someone had carved the box with great care. It looked middle-eastern in design. She knelt at the feet of the guest



and, to the shock of all, broke open the small box in her hands.

At once, a strong perfume filled the air. The smell was so strong that some sitting near felt nearly smothered. The young woman poured the contents of the box on the guest's feet, and proceeded to wipe them with her hair.

Responses varied but all were shocked as the powerful perfume filled the room. "Spikenard!" Someone gasped, "Why, that amount would cost as much money as most workers earn in a year! Why wasn't it sold and the money given to the poor?"

All quieted when the honored guest spoke. "Leave her alone, she has saved this for the day of My burying..."

I am sure you have heard or read this account many times. I believe both the box of perfume and Mary herself illustrate brokenness.

Although the box contained the most precious perfume of the day, until the box was broken open it could not profit anyone. **No matter how beautiful the box looked, its true worth would never had been known if had not been broken. The moment it was, no one in the room could escape the intense smell. Likewise, although Christ through the Holy Spirit lives inside of each true believer, until self is broken, God's love will not flow out of us to touch others.**

Mary illustrated brokenness by her sacrifice of

money to show her love for her Savior. Her action did not impress anyone there except Jesus. That is all that really mattered to her!

If her goal had been to impress people, she would have given her money to the poor or something else that would have given her a lot of attention. But she did not care what people thought! Her goal was to please the Lord.

It can be the same way for us in our day. Sometimes people do not understand why we spend so much time praying and reading the Bible. Maybe they say we would do better to help the needy. We must realize that we can only really help people when Christ is working through us.

I am not suggesting we ignore the needy because we say we need to pray more. It all needs to be in the proper balance. Jesus first, others second, and ourselves last. Our goal in it all needs to be to please the Lord, not man.

Consider the statement that man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart. Another way of saying this could be, people look at outward beauty, but God looks for inward beauty. People look at the face, God looks at the heart. People see the action, but God sees the motive. The natural man is attracted or repelled by a person's appearances, speech, or actions. God is attracted or repelled by a person's attitudes, thoughts, or motives.

Many times, God views the worst sin not as outward, but inward. We look at adultery, theft, or murder as the worst sin. God sees differently.

Jesus began His ministry with the words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor, He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."

Jesus Christ came looking for brokenhearted people. Those who were sick of serving their self, whose self was broken by their failure and fear. Where did He find such people?

Jesus found them among the outcasts of society, harlots and tax collectors. People whose profession others despised—fishermen. Jesus

Jesus showed which sin repulses God, and will keep God a distance from that person's life—pride.

Christ, Who was God in flesh, showed the world God's heart for sinners.

He showed which sin God hates the most. He showed which sin repulses God, and keeps God at a distance from a person's life. Jesus mostly found this sin in the religious leaders of the day. Because they would not forsake this sin, Jesus told them that the publicans and harlots would go into the kingdom of God before they would. He said: "Well has Isaiah spoken of you, this people draw nigh to Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me."

Why were their hearts far from God? Because their hearts contained this sin that repulses God. This is the only sin that the Bible records having made Jesus angry while He was on earth. You have probably realized by now of which sin I am speaking—the sin of PRIDE.

I believe God's word shows us that pride is the most abominable and horrific sin there is. In fact, it is more than that. It is the root of all sin. This sin, in one moment, turned one of God's most glorious creations, Lucifer, into the most horrible creature, Satan.

Pride also caused the fall of man from the perfect state that God created him. Truly, it is the subtlest of sins. The moment we think we have conquered pride, pride has conquered us.

What is pride? It is allowing our flesh to be exalted. The opposite of pride is humility. What is humility? It is allowing God to break us down. When our fleshly self gets built up, we tear others down. When self gets torn down, God can use us to lift others up. We can choose which direction we want to go.

It grieves my heart, dear friends, to think of the many times my pride caused me to hurt other people, sometimes my closest friends. Why do I

“I am crucified with Christ, therefore I no longer live. Jesus Christ now lives in ME!”

do such things? Quite simply, because I love myself too much. Although this thought sickens me, it is true. Until I am honest with myself, God cannot deal with the pride in my heart. And this is the same for each of you.

Do you long for the presence of Christ to be a fresh reality in your life? Ask God to give you a broken heart. The Bible says God is near to those of a broken heart.

Do you long for the character of Christ to be evident in your every action? Ask God to give you a broken life. The Bible says “I am crucified with Christ, therefore I no longer live. Jesus Christ now lives in ME!”

May the sweet smell of Christ flow out of our lives, filling the world with the fragrance of Beautiful Brokenness. TG



“It was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in...”

Ezekiel 47:5

Abandonment

In the hour when I think I'm abandoned,
Alone in the dark and afraid,
When I think I can't come near Your greatness
Because of the mess that I've made,
When I fear that You've left me in shadows,
An idiot, shoved on a shelf,
It's not that You've left me abandoned,
But I need to abandoned myself.

*When I see my own deficiency
When I see my own desire,
Then I need You, Lord, to set me free,
To cleanse me in Your fire.
And I abandon myself to You.*

I have followed my own satisfaction
And sought how to save my own life,
But, Father, you bade me abandon
My profitless folly and strife.
So Lord, I completely surrender,
And harness myself to Your yoke,
For I know Your burden is easy
And follow the Word that You spoke.

As I gaze on the cross where You suffered,
And see the ground stained with Your blood,
When I hear You say, “Father, forgive them,”
And see Your love flow like a flood,
Then Father, my heartbeat is broken,
I know Your forgiveness and grace,
I will follow Your Son with abandon,
And keep my eyes fixed on Your face.

*When I see my own deficiency
When I see my own desire,
Then I need You, Lord, to set me free,
To cleanse me in Your fire.
And I abandon myself to You.*

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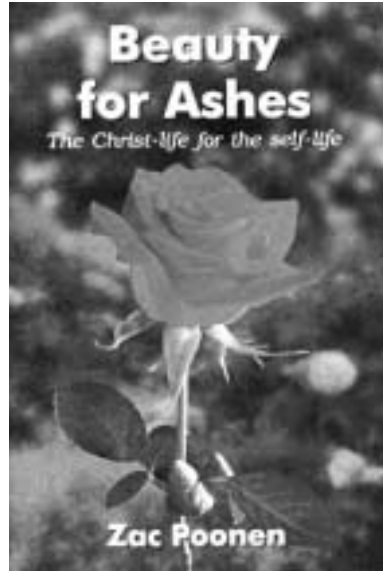
Book Review: *Beauty for Ashes*

–Written by Zac Poonen

–Review by Anna Maas

Beauty for Ashes, written by Zac Poonen, tells of the importance of being broken in order to experience the Christian life as God would have us. This book is a set of four messages delivered at a Deeper Life Convention held in South India in 1971. Each message portrays a different aspect of deliverance from self-life into the way of the cross.

The first chapter describes the utter filthiness of living for one's self, while the second and third relate what it means to be both broken and emptied of self, and the fourth chapter gives a picture of the beauty and joy in living a life in Christ. Each of the principles set forth in this volume are spelled out simply and sincerely in plain words, citing Biblical characters and events as examples.



commit sin, and a sheltered upbringing may perhaps have kept us from falling into the grosser sins that some others have fallen into. But we cannot on that count consider ourselves better than they. For if we had faced the same pressures they faced, we would have undoubtedly ended up committing the same sins. This may be a humiliating fact for us to acknowledge, but it is true. The sooner we recognize this fact the sooner we shall experience deliverance.

Our different circumstances may influence the way our corrupt nature is demonstrated, but it will show up sooner or later. In the parable of the

prodigal son, we usually consider the younger brother to be the greater sinner. However, it states here:

“...As we look a little more carefully we will discover that in God's eyes he was just as bad if not worse.”

The older brother was selfish. Although he worked hard serving his father, he was really working for himself—for his own inheritance and his own reputation.

Many Christian workers also labor only to build up a reputation of being pious and diligent in God's service. This is not the way God ordained that man should work. Therefore, when we stray from God's method and laws we experience spiritual death. The older son's true attitude is not revealed until his brother's return. When he sees the celebration, it irritates him and he becomes upset.

Similarly, we can go along for quite some time pretending to be spiritual, but when we run into troubles, the facade is broken and the self-

If we had faced the same pressures they faced, we would have undoubtedly ended up committing the same sins.

This book begins by revealing man's total depravity:

“The human heart is basically the same in every individual...the Bible describes the human heart as deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9)...The refinements of civilization, lack of opportunity to

life shows through.

“Suppression is not victory. God does not want us merely to appear delivered and spiritual—but to be actually delivered. Paul said, ‘It is no longer I, but Christ Who lives in me.’ (Galatians 2:20) This is the point to which God wants to bring us.”

Self-centeredness results in a legalistic and unreachable attitude towards God. The elder son was not serving his father out of love, but the desire for reward.

“Self can try to serve God. It can be very active in such service too—but it is always legalistic service. It seeks a reward for the service it offers to God.”

Our purpose in serving the Lord should be our love for Him. When we love, we will want to serve Him.

The elder son also proved unteachable when his father implored him to rejoice with the others. The self-centered person is proud and not willing to accept correction easily. When relating to others, one who is self-centered is often jealous, as the older son was of his brother.

“A self-centered Christian leader hinders others below him from becoming leaders, lest his own position be threatened.”

Rather than making sure we are always needed, we should be willing and eager to train others to take our place. Being focused on self comes along with being prideful, and that pride leads to condemnation of others. Seeing our situation in this light may make our prospects seem quite dismal, but now for the good news. God gives all believers the Holy Spirit to help in putting self to death, and taking up our cross every day.

Galatians 2:20 sums up what it means to be broken before God and transformed into His image; *“I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”*



It took many more years of frustration for Jacob to become hungry for the Lord. Then, God again met with him.

The way of brokenness is the way of the cross. It is through the cross that we receive life. From birth, Jacob lived by cleverness and deceit, always trying to take from others. When God appeared to him at Bethel, Jacob went his own way instead of following God. It took many more years of frustration for Jacob to become hungry for the Lord. Then, God again met with him. There He touched Jacob's thigh, weakening him physically and breaking him spiritually. Jacob then begged for a blessing, but first God tested Jacob's earnestness by saying *“Let me go.”* But Jacob held on and received a great blessing.

For us to enter into an abundant life we must be made weak, we must hunger for God, and we must be earnest in our pleas for help. Then, the Lord will be faithful to empower and transform us.

We must be broken upon the cross and emptied of all self and power in order for this empowering to take place. God had great plans for Abraham's descendents, but He waited until Abraham and Sarah were barren. They had to depend on God and truly believe in faith. God required a further step of sacrificial worship when He told Abraham to take his son for a sacrifice. We also must be willing to be obedient in giving up everything we are and everything that we have to God.

Once we are broken and emptied, we can minister through Spirit-filled service. We can serve God because we love Him. We can have true evangelistic passion, and fulfill our God-given calling.

The Spirit-filled life will be a life of contentment.

“We can praise God only when we are perfectly content with all His dealings with us. If we believe in a God who is sovereign and Who can therefore make everything that befalls us work together for our good, (Romans 8:28) then we can be truly content in all circumstances. Then we can praise the Lord, like Habakkuk, even when the trees of our garden don’t bear fruit, when our flock dies, and when we have suffered heavy financial loss—or in any situation (Habakkuk 3:17,18).... This is one of the first marks of the Spirit-filled life.”

As we seek to become more holy, we will realize how unholy we really are. We see how perfect and holy God is. We must live as if truly crucified. To be dead and have Christ alive in us is the goal of a Spirit-filled life.



Beauty for Ashes is a thought-provoking book. It is readable and written earnestly, with much truth, so that reading it provides much encouragement to take up our cross and follow Christ. I would recommend *Beauty for Ashes* to anyone willing to be challenged to attain greater depth in their

relationship with Christ.

Anna Maas lives in Cedar Grove, Wisconsin with her parents and two sisters, Mary Mei and Sarah Xiao.

“I hear and know continually the cry and irritation, *for what purpose is this waste, could it not be sold and given to the poor?* Let my life answer by its whole devotion for the sake of the wounded palms, and feet, and side of the Savior of the World.

—Oswald Chambers, 1901

We are in confining quarters, indeed, when we are enclosed in self, but when we emerge from that prison, and enter into the immensity of God and the liberty of His children, we are truly free.

You asked for a remedy, that your problems might be cured. You do not need to be cured, you need to be slain.

Quit looking for a remedy and let death come. This is the only way to deal with self.

Do not seek any comfort from self-love, and do not conceal the disease. Uncover everything in simplicity and holiness and then allow yourself to die.

—François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon

Recommended Books

Oswald Chambers: Abandoned To God

David McCasland, \$14
Discovery House Publishers
www.dhp.org

Available through your local bookstore.

The Release of The Spirit

Watchman Nee, \$6
Christian Fellowship Publishers
www.c-f-p.com

Widely available through booksellers.

Beauty For Ashes,

Zac Poonen \$3.50 (Includes shipping)

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Kent, OH 44240

Streams In The Desert

L. B. Cowman, \$13
Zondervan Publishing House
www.zondervan.com

Available worldwide in several editions.

Deeper and Deeper I Go—Oswald J. Smith

Hymn History by Andrew Rocke

Into the heart of Jesus deeper and deeper I go,
 Seeking to know the reason why He should love me so—
 Why He should stoop to lift me up from the miry clay,
 Saving my soul, making me whole, tho I had wandered away.

Into the will of Jesus deeper and deeper I go,
 Praying for grace to follow, Seeking His way to know;
 Bowing in full surrender low at His blessed feet,
 Bidding Him take, break me and make, till I am molded and meet.

Into the cross of Jesus deeper and deeper I go,
 Following thru the garden, Facing the dreaded foe;
 Drinking the cup of sorrow—Sobbing with broken heart,
 “O Savior, help! Dear Savior, help! Grace for my weakness impart.”

Into the joy of Jesus deeper and deeper I go,
 Rising, with soul enraptured, far from the world below;
 Joy in the place of sorrow, peace in the midst of pain,
 Jesus will give, Jesus will give—He will uphold and sustain.

Into the love of Jesus deeper and deeper I go,
 Praising the One who brought me out of my sin and woe:
 And thru eternal ages gratefully I shall sing,
 “O how He loved! O how He loved! Jesus, my Lord and my King!”

“I was traveling secretary of the Pocket Testament League, founded by Mrs. Charles M. Alexander. Arriving in Woodstock, Ontario, one day in the year 1911, I was invited to preach one Sunday morning in the largest Methodist Church in that city.

“As I walked along the street on my way to the church, the melody of this hymn sang itself into my heart and with it the words, ‘Into the heart of Jesus, deeper and deeper I go.’ I can still recall the joy and buoyancy of youth, the bright sunshine overhead, and the thrill with which I looked forward to my service that Sunday morning, as I again and again hummed over

the words. I wondered if I could retain the music in my mind until the service was over. I was then just twenty-one years of age.

“After preaching, I returned to my rented room, and the first thing I did was to write out the melody as God had given it to me. I had been able to remember it, and it has never changed from that day to this.

“The verses were more difficult. I worked on them at Belwood, Ontario, but it was three years later, in the First Presbyterian Church of South Chicago, of which I was pastor, that I completed them. It was then 1914, and I was twenty-four years of age.

“The writing of the hymn afforded me much joy, not has it ever grown old. I still love it and always will, for it was the child of my youth. It proves conclusively that God can impart His deepest truths to the hearts of the young, for I doubt if I have ever written anything more profound since.”

Oswald J. Smith was born in 1890, outside Odessa, Ontario, Canada. He was the oldest of ten children. Oswald was saved at the age of 16 under the preaching of R.A. Torrey. Two years later he felt called to preach the Gospel. He was soon preaching wherever he could. He graduated from seminary, and held pastorates in the United States and Canada before going to Toronto and founding The People’s Church in 1928. This Church, which he pastored, soon became the largest Church in Toronto.

Oswald J. Smith was soon known all over as one of the greatest evangelical preachers and missionary statesmen of the 20th century. Not only were his preaching and books in demand (he wrote 35 books), but his songs were also well liked by many.

Dr. Smith wrote over 1200 hymns, poems, and songs. Although he wrote the music to some of his hymns, Bentley D. Ackley composed most of the tunes. They wrote over one hundred songs together. Homer Rodeheaver wrote the music to a song Oswald called, “Then Jesus Came.” Other hymns written by Smith are “Joy in Serving Jesus,” “The Glory of His Presence,” and “The Savior Can Solve Every Problem.”



As with all great men, his quiet time was his source of strength. Oswald’s son told Alfred B. Smith, friend of Dr. Smith, that “One of the earliest things I remember about Dad was his walking back and forth in his bedroom which was next to my brother’s and mine in the parsonage. Very early every morning, that is when he was not somewhere in meetings, I would hear Dad pacing back and forth in his room. No one had said anything to us children about this but somehow we knew that Dad was spending the time talking to the Lord and making impor-

“Somehow, we knew that Dad was spending the time talking to the Lord, and we knew he should not be disturbed.”

tant plans for the day, and we knew he should not be disturbed.”

As Oswald said, “It was when I walked alone with God that I learned the lessons He would teach. I set aside a time and a place to meet Him, and I have never been disappointed.” He called these times his “morning watch.”

Alfred Smith, hymn-writer, arranger, and author, first met Dr. Smith in Kansas City, Missouri, when they were both the guests of Dr. Walter A. Wilson. This was the first of many times they met. Alfred Smith has written that the two qualities that stand out most to him of all in Oswald Smith were his sincerity and the urgency of his life. Alfred Smith wrote, “He never seemed content just to sit still, but even in a motel room he had the habit of walking back and forth as he spoke to you.”

In his later years, Oswald Smith retired as pastor of The People’s Church and became their Minister of Missions. His son, Paul, became the pastor after him. The People’s Church was a strong supporter and promoter of missions. Kenneth Osbeck in his book, 101 Hymn Stories, states that this Church contributes over a quarter of a million dollars a year to the support of over three hundred missionaries. Obviously, Oswald Smith had a heart for missions.

Dr. Oswald Smith died in 1986. At his funeral, evangelist Billy Graham said of Dr. Smith, “The name Oswald J. Smith symbolizes worldwide evangelism. His books have been used of the Holy Spirit to sear into the very depths of my soul and have had a tremendous influence on my personal life and ministry. He is the greatest combination of pastor, missionary, statesmen, hymn-writer, and evangelist of our time.”

AER

Oswald Chambers—Preacher, Teacher, Mystic, A Man

Rain. Despair and gloom. Full of utter awe and fear of the Living God. Alone. From all available accounts, these are the feelings that Oswald Chambers felt in the summer of 1901. This 27 year old man was highly respected and recognized in the college town of Dunoon. Yet, inside, his spirit was in the midst of a raging battle. He was filled with an awareness of his own wickedness. He was trapped in a depravity he could not escape. He knew not why or how this had come upon him.

When Oswald emerged from this battle, there were very few that knew it had even occurred. It was not until years later, after his death, that people were to look back and realize that this was the defining moment of his life.

What was the battle that was going on in young Oswald's life? It was the struggle to become a man whose self was broken. At this point in his life, *he* had reached his summit, but how much farther did God's heights go? *He* had come to *his* greatest effectiveness, but God was calling for much more. Oswald was at the point many never pass.

Countless Christian's have come to this point and have stopped. Why? What held them back? Perhaps some didn't realize there was anything to go on to. Others knew, but didn't know how to continue. Some, I am sure, knew both what lay ahead,

**At this point in his life,
he had reached his sum-
mit, but how much farther
did God's heights go?**



and how to get there, but were unwilling to make the sacrifice that was necessary.

How did Oswald go on? How did he escape the trap he found himself in? Journey with me as we walk through one of the most stirring and poignant lives that have ever lived.

His Beginnings

Oswald Chambers was born just one month after D. L. Moody held a revival crusade in his hometown of Aberdeen, Scotland. His father, Reverend Clarence Chambers was a pastor in one of the local churches at the time. Both his father and mother were saved and baptized under the ministry of Charles Spurgeon. Clarence had been one of the first students enrolled at Spurgeon's Pastor's College.

While Oswald was young, his family moved quite often. First Aberdeen, then Fenton, England, Perth, and finally, London. This constant movement prevented him from displaying his ability as a scholar. He never was in one school long enough to get anywhere.

Oswald was known early for his simple, yet unwavering faith. His brother, Franklin, three years his senior, recounts: *“As a child his prayers were very original and frequently, when he had gone to bed, with instructions to leave his bedroom door open, the older members of the family, including his mother, would listen on the stairs to hear him pray.”*

Throughout his childhood, he developed the precious quality of faith. He *knew* that God would answer his prayers. Once, he asked God to give him two guinea pigs for pets. Each morning, he checked the chicken pen to see if they had arrived yet. He was not in the least surprised when they were there one morning.

This faith was of absolute importance for a man who would spend most of his life not knowing where his next meal would come from. He just trusted that the God who fed the sparrows would make sure that His servants would not suffer *need*.

A Gift for Art

Throughout his teenage years, he displayed little of the profoundness and depth for which he is now known. The only exception to this was in his art and music. At twenty, he was awarded a Art Master’s Certificate and a scholarship to study art in Europe. He declined this privilege on moral concerns. Instead he decided to attend Edinburgh University to study Art.

His desire was to bring back the Spirit of God into the realm of Art. In a letter, Oswald wrote, *“Methinks I have heard that cry and have seen the beseeching look of Christ toward that kingdom (of Art), longing for it to be his own. It may be said that the ordinary minister can do this, only a few can, the majority know not the love of beauty as an artist knows it, and artists as a rule will not heed ministers. The*

duty of ministers is to instruct the people out of the bigoted notions against art. It is for the man of God artist to enter this aesthetic kingdom and live and struggle and strain for its salvation and exaltation.”

Despite the highest praise and recommendation from his teachers and professors, every door of opportunity in Art was slammed tightly shut. During this trying time, he had thoughts that perhaps God wanted him to go into the ministry. He pushed these thoughts away by reasoning that he had been given the gift of Art, and had never aspired to the task of a preacher. He wrote his friend, saying, *“I shall never go into the ministry until God takes me by the scruff of the neck and throws me in.”*

One night, God spoke to Oswald plainly: *“I want you in my service—but I can do without you.”* Oswald was startled into action. Not knowing what he should do next, he returned to his lodging house. On the table, there was a report from Dunoon Training College. It had been



Two of Oswald’s works. They were drawn during this time.



sent to him by the principal, Reverend Duncan MacGregor. Oswald decided to apply. He was accepted, and left Edinburgh to attend Dunoon.

The Breaking of a Man

This brings us to the decisive time of Oswald's life. At 23, Oswald turned his back upon all that was familiar to embark on the training of a minister. At Dunoon, he quickly became a popular figure, and consequently was appointed to positions of influence. He became Tutor at college in Logic, Moral Philosophy, and Psychology. That fall, F. B. Meyer came to preach at Dunoon. The message, and his response plunged him into a storm. Here is how Oswald later told it:

F. B. Meyer came to preach at Dunoon. The message, and his response plunged him into a storm.

"I was in Dunoon College as tutor of Philosophy when Dr. F. B. Meyer came and spoke about the Holy Spirit. I determined to have all that was going, and went to my room and asked God simply and definitely for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, whatever that meant. From that day on for four years, nothing but the overruling grace of God and the kindness of friends kept me out of an asylum. God used me during those years for the conversion of souls, but I had no conscious communion with Him. The Bible was the dullest, most uninteresting book in existence, and the sense of depravity, the vileness and bad-motivedness of my nature, was terrific."

Oswald was experiencing the wrenching double-life described in Romans 7:23–24 *"I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?"*

Throughout his life, Oswald had always done whatever he thought God wanted. He volunteered in missions, witnessed with friend and foe alike. He was first to bear a burden, and last to let it down. Despite what everyone else saw, God knew that Oswald was doing it in his own strength. When Oswald asked God to give him the Holy Spirit, he little realized what God would have to deal with—Oswald. Before God could fill Oswald, he had to make Oswald dead to his own desires. God had to make Oswald see that he was weak, sinful, and useless of himself. Oswald had to have his mind, will, and emotions become completely submitted to the Spirit of God. In short, he had to be broken.

How did God go about breaking Oswald? First, He had Oswald surrender all his hopes and ambitions. The girl he had promised himself to had to be forsaken. His activities had to be curtailed. Much of his previous writings had to be burned. Next, God had him stripped of much of his honor and respect. He was accused of misconduct with a young lady from the local church. He was vindicated, but people continued to shun him.

Finally, God opened Oswald's eyes to see how, despite the intentions of his spirit, the sinful disposition in him was capable of as great an evil as any man has ever committed. No, he did not have an affair, but he could. No, he was not a thief, but he could be. No, he had not committed murder, but the human anger within him could easily kill many.

For four years, the struggle went on. Years of Hell on earth, as Oswald called them. At the end, Oswald realized that to continue to live as a Christian on his own strength was hypocrisy. Here are Oswald's own words:

"I see now that God was taking me by the light of the Holy Spirit and His Word through every ramification of my being. The last three months of those years things reached a climax, I was getting very desperate. I knew no one who had what I wanted; in fact I did not know what I did want. But I knew that if what I had was all the Christianity there was, the thing was a fraud.

"Then Luke 11:13 got hold of me—*"If ye then,*

being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" But how could I, bad motivated as I was, possibly ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit? Then it was borne in upon me that I had to claim the gift from God on the authority of Jesus Christ and testify to having done so. But the thought came—if you claim the gift of the Holy Spirit on the word of Jesus Christ and testify to it, God will make it known to those who know you best how bad you are in heart. And I was not willing to be a fool for Christ's sake.

"But those of you who know the experience, know very well how God brings one to the point of utter despair, and I got to the place where I did not care whether everyone knew how bad I was, I cared for nothing on earth, saving to get out of my present condition."

Broken, Not Crushed

Oswald reached his breaking point at a prayer meeting. Suddenly, Oswald knew his time had come. Now was the time to claim the Holy Spirit. He rose to his feet and did so. He felt humiliated enough, but the lady moderating the meeting said, "That is very good of our brother, he has spoken like that as an example to the rest of you." Oswald immediately stood up and declared, "I got up for no one's sake, I got up for my own sake; either Christianity is a downright fraud, or I have not got hold of the right end of the stick."

He felt no immediate change, but the next time he spoke, forty souls responded to the invitation. Oswald was scared stiff. He left the meeting and went to find George MacGregor. MacGregor told him it was Power from on High. Suddenly, Oswald realized what had been happening the last four years. He saw he had been wanting power in his own hand. He wanted to be able to say, "Look what I have by putting my all on the altar."

When Oswald was completely broken of his own desires, plans, and spirituality, God could answer his request for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. God would not fill Oswald until He was

sure that Oswald was so broken that he would never dream of taking any of the credit from anything that God would accomplish through him. Much as a horse that has been broken, there is much usefulness, but no fight. Oswald was now useful to God. His self had no fight left. His outer man was in subjection to God's Spirit.

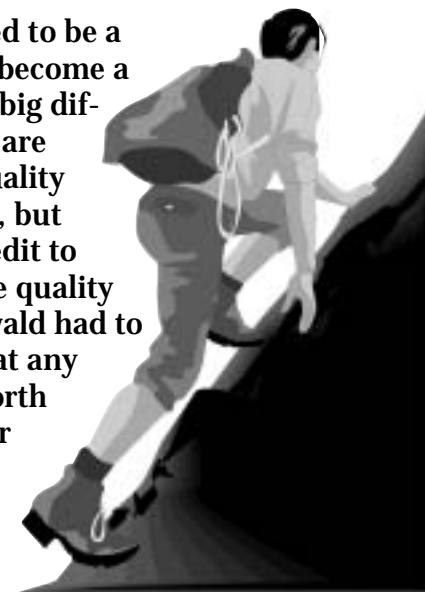
Oswald had ceased to be a *worker*, and had become a *vessel*. There is a big difference. Workers are praised for the quality of the job they do, but whoever gives credit to the pitcher for the quality of the drink? Oswald had to become aware that any good that came forth from his mouth or pen, sprang from the Spirit of God dwelling within him, not at all from his own vile self.

Real Living

After this experience, Oswald went on to, as he said it, "heaven on earth." So much did God do through him afterward that few even knew of the time he spent at Dunoon. The man who had reached *his* summit was led on to reach God's heights. The comparison is of hiking Mount Rushmore and scaling the Mountain Everest.

When he died in Africa near the close of World War One, few realized that, although Oswald's life was gone, his vessel wasn't. Forty-some books and hundreds of pamphlets later, including millions of copies of *My Utmost For His Highest* in many languages, God continues to use Oswald Chambers. **JD**

See page 11 for a recommended biography.



**The man who
had reached *his*
summit was led
on to reach
God's heights.**

OF DEATH AND BABY SHOES

—John Patrick Pazdziora

I walked slowly towards the car, lost in speculation. The wet wind chilled me despite my jacket. Behind me, the church rose starkly against the frozen gray sky. Everything was colorless and dreary—even the sodden grass where I walked.

Hearing footsteps behind me, I turned round. A man was approaching across the parking lot wearing a long trench coat over his suit. His face was dark, twisted into a horrible grimace. He was holding his wife's hand very tightly, but it seemed not from affection. He was very aware of the cold, and the slush squished beneath his rapid tread.

“Excuse me,” he said tensely, as he came closer. “Do you know which way they're going to the cemetery?”

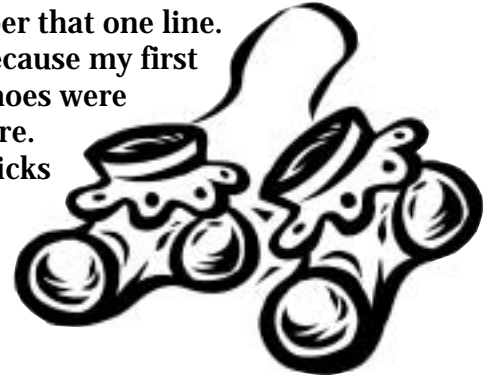
We had just come from the funeral of an old friend, so I only half heeded him or his question. I vaguely heard my mother explain that she was sorry but she didn't know, since we weren't joining the procession. The man, even more upset, said, “Well, I need to find out *somehow!*” and dashed off to his car, dragging his wife behind.

I knew what he was feeling. It wasn't just that he wanted to make it to the cemetery. He didn't know how to handle death. None of us do naturally.

During the hour-long drive home, my mind wandered over the funeral. Len had been a patriarch in his suburban community. The church was literally overflowing with mourners. He was a shoe salesman. He had inherited the business from his father. Now, his son runs it.

That was several years ago, but I still remember some of what the pastor said during the service. Holding up a pair of toddler's shoes, doubtless purchased from Len's store, he gently said, “You can't walk far in baby shoes.” I don't know

why I remember that one line. Perhaps it's because my first pair of baby shoes were from Len's store. Or maybe it sticks in my mind because it summarizes my spiritual waking.



I was raised in a Godly home. Before I could speak, my parent began to teach me to love and follow Jesus, the dearest Friend I could ever have. They demonstrated this friendship with Christ very plainly in their own lives. My older brother did as well. I tried to follow their example. As far as I knew, I was a Christian—after all, my big brother was, and I wanted to do everything he did.

But when I was about six, I was puzzled by a haunting question: I knew that Christians—people who had accepted the gift of true life in Christ, and had their names written in the Lamb's book of life—went to Heaven to be with Jesus forever. Non-Christians—those who refused Christ—went to Hell. “What if,” I wondered, “when I get to Heaven, my name isn't in the Lamb's Book of Life, and I am sent to Hell?”

This bothered me for some time. At last, I asked my mother if I could pray with her, to make sure my name really *was* in the Lamb's book of Life. So we prayed, and I asked God to forgive me for my sin, and thanked Him for sending his son Jesus to die on the Cross in my place.

That was all. There were no fireworks, and I didn't become a missionary or a pastor the next day. One thing was different—I was no longer afraid of the dark. I could sleep alone in my bedroom without fearing spooky things were creeping up to eat me. It may not seem like much, but I view this as the first evidence of my

conversion. At the time, I didn't fully understand the full consequences of my prayer. But God did, and once He had me, He didn't let me go.

When I entered second grade, my parents took my brother and I out of public schools and began to home school us. As a result, I faced few of the problems many other children do. If I said there were no problems or that life was perfect, I hope everyone would laugh and read something else. Of course we had the tears, trauma, and quarrels common to every family, yet such things really add to a happy childhood rather than detract from it.

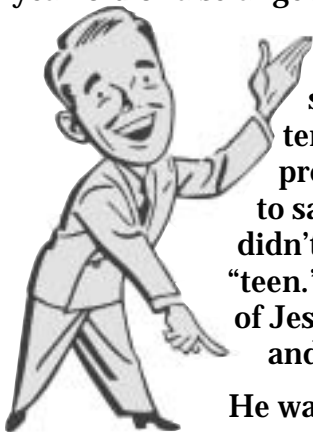
When I was about thirteen years old, we visited a small church a few miles north of us. Just walking in the door, we felt welcome. The people were friendly and cheerful; the pastor understandable and biblical. Everyone seemed excited to have visitors. We had finally found a place where we belonged. Or so it seemed.

We kept attending and later became members. We had been acquainted with the pastor before, and now we began to know him better. The people were outgoing, and we began to make friends. Many times, we would stay and talk for an hour or more after the service.

Perhaps the fondest memory I have of that church is the song leader. An operatic baritone, his voice boomed out over the congregation every Sunday, singing hymns with as much joy as the rest of the congregation put together. He meant what he said and sang from his heart.

What I liked most about him was the way he talked to me. He didn't treat me like a three-year-old or a strange species of protozoa. He treated me as he treated everyone: as a real person, an equal. He was utterly without affectation or pretense. If I had something to say, he listened to me. He didn't brush me aside as a mere "teen." His life radiated the life of Jesus because he *knew* Jesus and loved Him.

He was more than a song leader.



For years he and his wife had been asking the Lord to use them as missionaries. The Lord granted their request. They bade farewell to the church and went off, following their Master.

For a while, things seemed to flow normally. The pastor didn't have an operatically trained voice, it is true, and he wisely stood back from the microphone when he sang. Still, it was almost the same. So things went on, and on, and on. I slowly realized it had gone on too long.

Beneath the façade, people kept each other at arm's length. "Don't come too close," they seemed to say.

Many Sundays I wandered from conversation to conversation. On one side of the church, people were arguing about football. ("Green Bay is the *greatest* team in the world!" "Don't be ridiculous, everyone knows that Dallas is." "Says who?" "Everyone with any brain.") On the other side, they were talking about work, or stocks, or taxes. All the rest was small talk. ("That's a lovely hat you're wearing." "Thank you; it's from my grandmother." "Hasn't the weather been lovely this week?" "Oh yes. Friday was rather hot, though.")

Beneath the façade, people kept each other at arm's length. "Don't come too close," they seemed to say, "I don't want to know or be known."

I saw the shallowness of it even as the people spoke. They were friendly because one was supposed to smile in church. They didn't really like each other very well.

Looking back, I realize what I didn't see then: the church was engaged in civil wars. Factions and cliques had been fighting a cold war for years. Now the song leader was gone—the one person everyone liked—and this war erupted. Both my parents had been in such civil wars before, and they knew the devastating effects these wars have. They refused to join any of the factions.

Trouble was brewing, and it was unleashed in several ways. A great pressure was put on us to be “like folks.” Everyone else went to youth group, so my brother and I went to youth group as well.

Youth group was not what it claimed it was. There were devotions, of course, but the emphasis was on games and refreshments. On several occasions, some of the youth said things such as, “Why do we spend so much time *praying*? It’s so boring. We should spend more time on the games.”

I was developing a far more serious fault of my own. I was looking at the world through my own eyes, and not the eyes of the Savior.

I was fourteen—a volatile age. Certainly I was impressionable. Yet I couldn’t agree with the other youth. “Isn’t prayer what Christianity’s about?” I wondered. “If we’re supposed to be friends with Jesus, why wouldn’t we want to talk with Him?” Steadily, Jesus was drawing me to Himself, making me discontented with what I saw, so that I would yearn for something greater.

Jesus was beginning to wake me up. I had discovered my love of writing, especially poetry, and my interest in language. I began to comprehend more, especially the Scripture. The Lord began to teach me about prayer. I was beginning to find out who I was, and, more importantly, who Christ was.

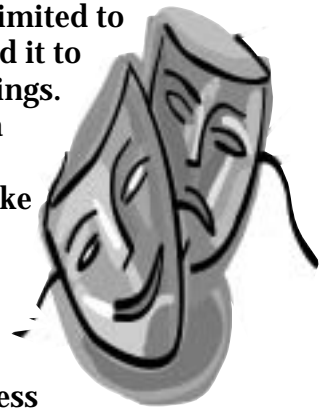
Now there was a problem: Others in the youth group thought I was just another teen and that my whole purpose in life was to have fun. That’s what youth group was for! They didn’t know the real me, and they didn’t want to. It came down to this: in order to be with them, I had to be like them.

So I was. At least, I pretended to be. I sat on

myself. I did my best to join into their empty conversations. I never have been an adept conversationalist, especially when I find the topic uninteresting. I usually remained silent, acting interested when I wasn’t. I joined their games when I could. The time came when what they called “fun,” I called “wrong.” So I sat out.

With my growing awareness came wit, and with the wit, cynicism. Behind the mask I paraded before my “friends,” there was another person, one who became more cynical every hour. I scorned them and their ways. Smiling outwardly, I scoffed inwardly. What was far worse, I thought they represented all of humanity. While mocking them for their faults, I was developing a far more serious one of my own. I was looking at the world through my own eyes, and not the eyes of the Savior.

My cynicism was not just limited to the youth group; I extended it to our Sunday morning meetings. Before, I had viewed it as a church; now I saw it as a mockery—a stage where, like the ancient Greeks, the players paraded about in enormous masks.



In the Greek theatre, the gods were nonexistent unless some difficulty arose. Then, they floated down from the sky and put everything aright. Jesus was not an active player. He was more of a distant acquaintance than a friend. But even as I inwardly berated the Church for this, my cynicism was causing me to drift from Christ.

During this time, some friends of ours invited us to a small Bible study. The teacher was an elderly man who went from flock to flock like a nineteenth century circuit rider. The pastor of our little church had been sliding deeper into legalism, an artificial Christianity. So I came to the study fully expecting to be bored stiff.

I wasn’t. The teacher riveted me to my chair. I had never taken notes before in my life. Now I scribbled down practically every word he said. He spoke like one with authority, and not like the scribes and Pharisees. (Matthew 7:29) This

is real Christianity, I thought! These people actually know Jesus. There's really something to this after all!

At about the same time, I began attending a Friday night men's prayer meeting with my father and brother. What I saw floored me. Here was a whole roomful of men, and every single one of them was worshipping like my old song leader! Rather than rushing through devotions to get to the games, they spent hours in prayer and worship, often far past midnight. Although all the men present were old enough to be my father, they spoke to me as an equal.

There was no masquerade here. They didn't pretend everything was fine and dandy when it wasn't. No one was afraid to share even his deepest struggles. They knew Jesus. To them, He wasn't just a pie-in-the-sky Who gave us the blessing of football. He was someone dearer than a friend, closer than a brother. He worked in their lives daily. They loved Him dearly and lived in His love. They knew Him in whom they believed.

I still attend this group, and have come to love the men as brothers in Christ. From them I learned that there was something to Christianity. It wasn't just method or madness. It was a real devotion to a Living Lord.

I could not lead a dual life any longer. I couldn't be open and honest one day, and two days later don my mask for the Greek comedy. Something had to give, and it did.

My family reached the point where we could no longer be "like folks." We had refused to take any side in the gossip and backstabbing. Now we were caught in the crossfire. People began spreading stories about us, saying that we were spreading stories about them. They didn't tell us—they still acted friendly. We found out by accident.

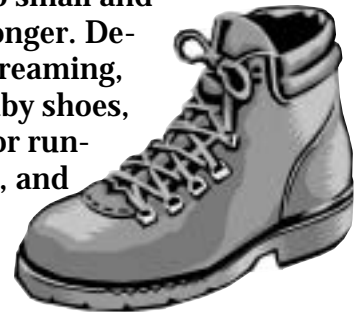
In a way, it was like working for a boss who hates you. He won't fire you; that would be crude. But he'll do everything in his power to make it impossible for you to stay. That's exactly what happened. The church passed a resolution saying I was too young and my brother

too old to attend youth group. (We're only four years apart!) Essentially, we were downsized. The church gave us the ultimatum: either be "like folks," or get out of sight. We left and didn't look back.

I had anticipated the break, even hoped for it. Yet it was still a shock. I was bitter, angry that those people who claimed to be Christians would treat us that way. If Satan had been able to convince me, as he very nearly did, that such actions were examples of real Christianity, I probably wouldn't be writing this today.

However, the Lord saw to it that I experienced true Christianity. I saw it in the elderly Bible teacher and his little flock; I saw it in the men at the Friday night meetings. Gradually, I began to see true Christianity was something far better and greater than I had ever dreamed. It is not just a safeguard against going to hell—as if it were fire insurance. It is a complete sundering with this world, flinging ourselves into the arms of Christ. We abandon all to follow him. My cynicism crumbled before reality.

"You can't walk far in baby shoes." It's simple, yet profound. For the first fourteen years of my life, I had toddled along in my little leather booties. Now, they were too small and worn to serve me any longer. Despite my kicking and screaming, the Lord took off my baby shoes, and gave me shoes fit for running, stumbling, hiking, and standing, so I might walk with Jesus.



Despite my kicking and screaming, the Lord took off my baby shoes, and gave me shoes fit for running, stumbling, hiking, and standing, so I might walk with Jesus.

**Until we die to ourselves,
completely surrendering our
lives to Christ, we can never
really live.**

I've often watched little children run around playing. I can still remember when I was their age. I find it enjoyable to watch my little childish antics replayed by others. But I would never want to go back and be a little toddler again. It was good for a season, but I've gone on.

Often when we don't know how to deal with something, we pretend it's not there. The man at Len's funeral could not handle the sight of death. In *Great Expectations*, Charles Dickens wrote of people at a funeral talking together as if they were of some immortal race completely unlike the deceased. But "you can't walk far in baby shoes." Eventually we're all going to have to face death.

In my Christian life, I was content to toddle on in my self life. But Christ had called me to die with Him, that I might have His life. You see, until we die to ourselves, completely surrendering our lives to Christ, we can never really live.

"I have been put up on the cross to die with Christ. I no longer live. Christ lives in me. The life I now live in this body, I live by putting my trust in the Son of God. He was the One Who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Gal 2:20, NEW LIFE Version)

"You can't walk far in baby shoes." There came a point when I had to choose whether to be "like folks," and toddle on in tiny little shoes, or throw my old life aside and completely follow Christ. In the words of Robert Frost:

*"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference."*

John Pazdziora lives in Delevan, Wisconsin with his parents and brother. As mentioned in his testimony, he enjoys poetry and linguistics.



None Of Self and All Of Thee

**Oh, the bitter pain and sorrow
That a time could ever be,
When I proudly said to Jesus,
"All of self, and none of Thee."**

**Yet He found me; I beheld Him,
Bleeding on th'accursed tree,
And my wistful heart said faintly,
"Some of self, and some of Thee."**

**Day by day His tender mercy
Healing, helping, full and free,
Bro't me lower while I whispered
"Less of self and more of Thee."**

**Higher than the highest heavens,
Deeper than the deepest sea,
Lord, Thy Love at last has conquered
"None of self and All of Thee."**

—Rev. Theodore Monod

The Tale of A Pot . . .

There once was a little pot which belonged to an old man who lived in a desert. Each morning, the little clay pot made a trip to the river to fetch water. This pot was hooked to a yoke with one of his fellow pots for the mile-long journey over the desert sands.

Now, this pot had a defect. It had a crack running from the bottom halfway up. As a result, by the time the pot had finished the return trip from the river, nearly half of the water had dripped out onto the warm rock and sand along the trail.

After several years of this same routine, the pot spoke to the old man as they were nearing their home.

“Dear Master, I am sorry I am such a cracked pot. I know it must be a burden to You that I can only get half a pot of water each trip. If I only didn’t leak so much water, You wouldn’t have to make as many trips. Please forgive me.”

The old man smiled and thought for a moment. Then He answered:

“Do not be sorry. I like that crack. I wanted it there. In fact, I am the One who cracked you. Have you ever noticed that I always carry you on the same side of the trail as we come back from the river? I do that because I know you will leak a half pot of water along the way.



“Did you know I had planted flower seeds there? You may not have noticed the flowers, but they are there. Without the water dripping on them, they would never grow. It is true that I don’t get as much water into the reservoir each trip, but I get beauty and pleasure instead. That is just as important to Me.”

“Now, my precious vessel, I want you to consider something else: Have you thought of the other pots that have carried water alongside you

these past years? They have brought more water home than you, but they have done nothing to beautify the wayside. Their side of the trail is still as dry, drab, and lifeless as the day it was made.”



“My dear water pot, those pots were very dispensable to Me. They were just like any other pot people can buy at the market. You are different. You are special. If I wanted to have another pot like you, I would have to get an ordinary pot and crack it Myself. Even then, I would not be assured of a pot as unique and precious as you.”

“For, my little gem, not all pots crack as easily as you did. Some shatter at the first blow. Others are so hardened that, when they finally do crack, they are likewise broken into pieces. There are pots that do not crack

enough. They would not spill enough water to give life to My flowers. A few pots crack too much, and spend all their water beautifying. They get no water home at all.”

“No, no, my priceless cracked pot, have no sorrow over your crack. It is the very thing that endears you to Me. Without it, you would be of no greater value to Me than the countless other whole pots I have. Rather, be content and rejoice, knowing that I love you as you are.”

After this, the little water pot gave no more thought to his crack, but rather spent all his time and energies trying to fulfill the special calling for which his Master had fit him.

This story has been rewritten. The original author of this widespread tale is unknown to the editors.

In the Next Issue...

Agape Love

The Lord is near to those who
have a broken heart,
And saves such as have a
contrite spirit.

Psalm 34:18

In This Issue... Brokenness

Abide

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