

# FACTS AND VISIONS

ADDRESSES AND SERMONS

*by*

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***TO MY STUDENTS***

## **PREFACE**

**The Addresses and the Sermons which have been compiled in this volume were delivered from October, 1960, to March, 1963, at the Theological College and in the Holy Trinity Cathedral at Addis Ababa, and at Debra Zeit Air Base Station, Ethiopia. They were printed as they were delivered, with only a few slight modifications; they have not been rewritten for publication. Only those speeches and sermons are included in this collection which have evoked a response from the students and the faithful.**

**The purpose of publishing this volume is to make it of use to my students and to all those who work in the spirit of Christ who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister".**

**To those who have helped me in preparing this collection for publication, and to those who read it with thoughtful understanding, my hearty thanks and cordial gratitude are due.**

**†Terenig Poladian**

**March 12, 1963.**

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## KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH

Delivered in the Holy Trinity Cathedral at the opening of the Theological College, October 5, 1960.

Reverend members of the clergy, honored ministers and members of the College Committee, my dear colleagues and students.

It gives me great pleasure, indeed, to be with you this morning in this holy sanctuary, at the first opening of the Theological College. This noblest educational enterprise, which is the first of its kind to be organized in Ethiopia, is undertaken by His Imperial Majesty Haile Sellassie I.

Several months ago when I was invited by the Ministry of Education and the leaders of the Ethiopian Church, to head the Theological College, I gladly accepted the invitation, and our church authorities willingly consented to it in order:

1. *To render our deep gratitude to His Imperial Majesty for the great and unforgettable service which he has so kindly offered to the Armenian congregation in Ethiopia.*

2. *To serve wholeheartedly our sister church in Ethiopia, by preparing clergymen to meet her needs.*

3. *To strengthen the age-old traditional bonds of friendship, mutual understanding and love existing between the Ethiopian and the Armenian churches.*

The principles underlying the establishment of a Theological College in Addis Ababa have been expressed in the following statement of objectives:

1. *To prepare clergymen, religious teachers, and missionaries to meet the needs of the Ethiopian Church.*

2. *To provide opportunity for the present clergy, religious teachers and missionaries, to study modern methods in religious education, teaching, mission and young people's work.*

3. *To make the Theological College a center of learning for the ancient oriental orthodox churches.*

This institution, along with its college level curriculum shall have its own Elementary and Secondary Schools and a Teacher Training Course. These shall have a uniform program and curriculum, which shall be arranged in accordance with the canonical requirements of the Ethiopian Church.

Provision shall be made for the needs, aptitudes, and abilities of each individual student. The College shall have a course of four years in religious, Biblical and philosophical studies. In all courses of study instruction shall be given through lectures, recitation, class-room discussion, preparation of essays, readings from reference books, selection of data and material from various sources and texts.

The students of the Theological College and its affiliated institutions shall be carefully chosen from all parts of Ethiopia. The **quality** rather than the quantity will be stressed, for it is much better to prepare a small band of learned clergymen who can open up new realms of truth and power, rather than have big groups of them lacking dynamism, insight, perseverance and profundity. To prepare a nice suit of clothes it is necessary to have adequate and valuable material. No sculptor can make a beautiful out of rough stone. He needs good marble. The Theological College should have students with outstanding backgrounds, whose minds can penetrate into profundity and whose souls could be receptive to spiritual insight. Yes, souls who can really comprehend that, as a French writer has pointed out, "La vie n'est que d'un instant, mais cet instant suffit à entreprendre des chose éternelle", that is, "Life is but an instant, but that instant is sufficient to undertake eternal things".

All the students of the Theological College, the Secondary School and the Teachers' Institute, throughout the year, shall go to church and participate in the daily services. Arrangements shall be made also during Lent for periods of devotion. Weekly assemblies shall be held at which the Dean or one of the faculty members shall preside. Moreover, all the students shall participate in extra-curricular activities, such as religious, social, and manual work, not only as diversion from the regular curriculum, but also as a part of their training and preparation as future leaders. The Theological College shall have an historical, religious, and educational periodical. Students should take part in the publication, through the guidance of their teachers.

According to the instruction of the church authorities, during the first term in residence each student's abilities and his religious purpose shall be re-examined by the Dean and the members of the faculty to determine if he could be qualified for the sacred priesthood, religious teaching and missionary work. All students must reflect the seriousness of their purpose by maintaining satisfactory grades and exemplary conduct.

We are living in an era which is most characterized by its revolutionary aspects. Materialism, in any of its forms, dialectical, logical positivism or scientific humanism, is being spread all over the world, leading peoples and nations to spiritual vacuum and ruination. What should the Ethiopian Church mean to her people in such a time? The answer shall be given in the future by the graduates of the Theological College. They should have the insight and vision to be the pioneers and harbingers of the new era. But only those can achieve this goal who have a higher calling, a holy of holies within themselves where the sacred fire is ever burning. Therefore, the Theological College must be a center of **knowledge** and **faith**, a center for growing souls, souls who seek profundity and inner illumination. This noble purpose can be realized through the united efforts of the leaders of the Ethiopian Church, the Ministry of Education, the Committee of the College and the

members of the faculty; the former by their moral and financial help and support; the latter by their teaching experience and guidance, moral integrity, devotion and sacrifice.

I said that the Theological College has to be a center of Knowledge and Faith. By knowledge I mean that our students shall transcend the shallowness and superficialities, the superstitions and bigotries of life, by breaking through the surface and penetrating the profundities. For it is in the depths where truth prevails. Otherwise on the surface we have only shallowness, trivialities and superficialities. It is the deep ocean that supports the huge waves upon its surface; it is the depths that sustain the trivialities and superficialities and often make them lovely. If a student tries to live only on the surface, in the shallows, with no depths to undergird him, he will not be of any service to his church and country, or to humanity. What is trivial and superficial is soon destroyed, while that which has depth will endure. Happy shall be the student, who after getting the sweet yoke of Christ shall have the courage to step forward out of the light and illuminate the darkness around him.

In the second place, if we have all the knowledge of the world, we will not succeed, unless we have faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. The essence of faith is a steadfast moral purpose. When faith fails, life will go into eclipse and perish. A greater tragedy cannot be imagined than the failure of faith. The ultimate foundations of a great country and nation are ethical and religious. It is to the faith of your fathers that you owe your existence, the preservation and perpetuation of your national ideals and aspirations, which no subversive power could destroy. This faith, your valuable heritage, the embodiment of which is His Imperial Majesty Haile Sellassie I, was more powerful and enduring than devouring armies and other aggressive forces, the glories of which are blown to the winds or buried under the sands.

Soon the Theological College will start sowing the seeds of knowledge and faith. Some of the seeds shall fall on the road and the birds shall devour them. These shall be those students who lack vision; they shall not be aware of the chances given to them. Some seeds shall fall on stony soil; they shall quickly spring up, but soon shall fade away. This shall be the case of unstable souls who shall have no deep root in themselves and no strong convictions. Some seeds shall fall among thorns and they shall be choked by them. These shall be like those souls who have no true perspective; they shall lack imagination and persistence; they shall have no sense of proportion.

All these which we have mentioned are those cheaper souls who put their hand to the plow and look back; they take their career as mere breadwinning and miss its moral and religious import; they shrink from duty, sacrifice and heroism because these are costly.

But some seeds shall fall on good soil and shall bring forth good fruit. These shall be like those souls who have seen a vision, who have been filled with faith and knowledge, who are undaunted and heroic and who sacrifice themselves for the service of their church, and nation, and for the welfare of the whole world.

This seed will now be implanted in the hearts and minds of our students. After a quarter of a century we will not ask our graduates what they have done; perhaps the most modest of them might not tell us the truth. We will ask their recording angels who are with them. Here is a priest from some far district in the empire. His recording angel says, "He dedicated his life to the service of his Church. He remained the student as well as the steward of the mysteries of God. He prevented untold suffering and has been a true shepherd of his flock. Where he has entered his presence has been a benediction". Then comes a missionary whose recording angel certifies, "Under very difficult circumstances he has preached the Gospel and reached the unreached. Through his endeavors many have come to know the Truth, Christ. He has greatly improved the living conditions of the poor and backward people. By his exemplary character, sound knowledge and good judgment he has earned the respect of all". And here is a teacher, whose influence has radiated among the pupils as beams of the spring sun on a garden. Through him they have grown in mind and spirit, and for him the recording angel has written, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant".

May the merciful Lord, grant that the number of seeds which fall thus on good soil be numerous, so that they will bring forth good fruit in due season; some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirtyfold, for the glory and perpetuation of the **Holy Orthodox Church of Ethiopia**.

## TELOS

Delivered in the Holy Trinity Cathedral at the beginning of the academic year, October 5, 1961.

Your beatitude, reverend members of the clergy, my dear colleagues and students.

In this Holy Sanctuary, where ever are present the assembly of our saints and martyrs, at the reopening of The Theological College, I would like to address you on **telos**.

This Greek word means "The inner aim of a life process". According to the explanation of the Theologian Paul Tillich, Telos, for the Greeks, was "The actualization of man's potentialities and the conquest of those distortions of his nature which are caused by his bondage to error and passions". This idea is still in modern thought.

We are in the midst of the most revolutionary era in human history. The shape of life has changed; the dogmas of the church no longer dominate human thought; new existential questions have arisen. The craving of the heart and mind has been expanded and broadened. The Christian Church must cope with the abyss and the embarrassment, with the meaninglessness and the disillusionment which are being created in man by destructive nuclear bombs and by his probing into space to colonize even the solar system. Humanity, growing scientifically, technologically, and educationally mature is falling from one collapse into another. Science is corrupting and ruining religion of modern man by giving him only means and not ends — Telos.

Nowadays we witness man's singleness of purpose in the material realm of things, in nuclear research, in rocket technology, etc. We surely know the immense task which has been accomplished and the enormous human effort and sacrifice proffered for the achievement of these objectives. It is obvious that such objectives are very important and their solution indispensable. But many forget that these aims are superstructures. They must be built on ethical and spiritual foundations to sustain them. Any world order, scheme or structure, shall collapse if the religious foundations underneath are not adequate; "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it."

The aim of the Theological College is to call the youth of Ethiopia to be chosen ministers of the gospel of Christ. Never in history have the responsibilities of this calling been more exacting and significant than they are at these times. Therefore, as a student in this institution what is your Telos? Is it the glamour of fame? You will get it by some judicious advertising and a little putting forth of yourself. But what is important and valuable is the act which is the life itself and not fame. If your Telos is mere

breadwinning, you have missed altogether the meaning and importance of the education in this College. Or, is your aim to possess wealth, seek pleasure and gratify ambition? Remember, these are only the superficialities of life with no profundity and lasting significant.

The Telos of the ministers of the gospel is succinctly described in St. Mark's Gospel: "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out demons" (3:14-15). Here we have a threefold Christian calling:

1. *The disciples had to be with Jesus.*
2. *They had to go where their Master sent them.*
3. *They had to do for people what Christ had intended them to do.*

Let us take the first calling. Every seminarian has **to be** with Christ, with the Church. This is his *raison d'être*. He ceases to be a student, when he is not with Him and seeks other masters. What does it mean to be with Christ? St. Paul in II Corinthians gives the answer: "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (5:17). Therefore, to be with Jesus signifies sharing the new life which He revealed and exemplified, living in the new world which He has announced and opened up.

Second, every student has **to go**. Christ said to His disciples, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19). Going out should be in obedience, as did Abraham, not knowing where he was to go. When we go we bring others into light, to the ultimate Truth, Christ. No student should say, "Why shall I go? Everyone knows that the Church exists. If they want let them come". Unless we go, preach and teach, people will not come of their own accord. The French say, "Partir c'est mourir un peu", that is, to depart is a little like death. Those undaunted, noble souls who possess Telos even in their death shall bring a new life to the Church.

The third aspect of the calling is **to do**. Students must be ready to render service to their fellow men. Herein lies the very meaning of their life. The Son of man was sent to serve. Christ says about his own mission, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life, a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). This means that Christ Himself came to us in the form of a servant and invited us to become His fellow servants. The readiness to serve should not depend on the likelihood of a reward or of success. Our service must be unselfish, self-sacrificing. The disinterested fruitful life is the only one that is worth living.

But many shall say, this threefold Christian calling is very difficult to achieve. To those who have the calling as their Telos in life, impediments and troubles shall become like foam which comes and vanishes, but the stream continues on undisturbed. Man is never saved from hardship and

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troubles. If he possesses the Telos he will make them an element in his joy and happiness.

In this country our forefathers **were** with Christ; they **went** where He sent them, and they **did** what the Master had intended them to do. Therefore, we must have the same Telos even though

“It may not be our lot to wield  
The sickle in the ripened field;  
Nor ours to bear on summer eves  
The reaper’s song among the sheaves”.

May the Almighty God in His ever-loving kindness bless, preserve and providentially maintain our esteemed and beloved Emperor Haile Sellassie I, and our Patriarch Abuna Basileos, in order that the number of students with **telos** may be multiplied for the glory of the All-Holy Trinity, for the proclamation of the gospel, and for the progress, advancement and the perpetuation of the **Ethiopian Holy Orthodox Church**.

## DUTY AND SELF-SACRIFICE

Delivered at the beginning of the academic year, October 1, 1962.

Reverend members of the clergy, honored President of Haile Sellassie I University, my dear colleagues and students.

As you enter the premises of the Theological College, you see with great joy and satisfaction the many changes which are being made. Three dilapidated barracks are being converted into classrooms, the administrative building being converted into classrooms, the administrative building into library and staff rooms, and the junk shop barrack into a storehouse. A new *injera* kitchen is being erected at the back of the dining hall, and a new gate in front of the dormitory. One wing of the latter has been converted into offices, guest rooms, Sunday School office, and a reception hall. A recreation hall shall be made ready in November by renovating the building facing the library. In due time the old *injera* kitchen, the adjoining ex-music school, and the existing secondary classroom barrack will be demolished to prepare a large playground for the students.

All these alterations and renovations are being done by the authorities of the Haile Sellassie I University. The same authorities have also arranged that all the expenses of the Theological College and the Secondary School students — tuition, board, physical care, etc., shall be free **as long as their work and conduct are satisfactory**. At this solemn occasion, it gives me great pleasure, indeed, on behalf of the members of the staff and the student body, to express our heartfelt thanks and deep gratitude for their esteemed thought and consideration, and their assistance and support. Through them, we all express the same spirit of sincere gratitude to His Imperial Majesty Haile Sellassie I, the architect of modern education in Ethiopia, who is very eager to see that this institution may bring its good fruit in due season.

It is our firm conviction, that if **good and useful work is achieved in this College**, we shall be worthy to have not only renovated buildings, but new erections, which could be made the main center of theological studies and research in the whole monophysite world, and also the core of religious education and missionary activities in the whole Empire.

His Imperial Majesty and the authorities of Haile Sellassie I University, are much concerned with the needs of religious education in Ethiopia. With them even laymen agree that it should be placed on a new and higher level, the level of university education. It is a known fact in this country, as also the ecclesiastical authorities realize, that general education has outstripped religious education and the latter must now catch up. Therefore, if adequate and higher education cannot be provided, the Church, that stronghold of Ethiopian faith, culture, and national aspiration, shall lose most of her adherents. It is with a view to this

fact that not only the Theological College but also the Secondary School, as well, were integrated into the Haile Sellassie I University, and many facilities were accorded to them.

Now, therefore, it is our won turn as teachers and students to ask, "What can we do for this college?" Our answer is that everyone can have his own place and his answer is that everyone can have his own place and his own share in its growth and progress. All we have to do is to "work hard and figure things out". The members of the staff shall assist by their knowledge, enthusiasm, inspiration, devotion, true leadership and exemplary character; the students by their vigor, determination, good conduct and behaviour, and by opening their hearts and minds to the truth. We consider this institution a big family. If any of its members will always think about what we he can get from it, he will constantly be unhappy and not satisfied; however, anyone who loyally seeks to serve its bests interests, will get the glow of belonging to it.

To live means to love, to work, and to serve. Where there is no love, work and service, life moves towards its epilogue, it's "finis". Love is strength and life. He who lives, loves and toils, achieves great things. **Love should be a burning fire in ourselves**, a fire which no one can extinguish. Therefore, **let us love this College**, let us love everything which it provides for us and let us work for its growth, success and greatness. If we do not love and work, our life will be mechanical, superficial, stagnant, and we shall be, as St. Paul says, "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal". Yes, we should love and work, for indifference, carelessness, indolence are negations of true and fruitful life. When a person loves and works, giving, serving, and self-sacrifice become a great joy to him, like the tree's surrender of the ripe fruit.

Our careers are often based not so much on the opportunities which we have, as upon **the use** we make of them. Often we are quite ignorant of the chances that have passed by us unobserved. Too often we let our opportunities slip away through laziness, indifference or the blindness of inertia. Any student who possesses the force of character can accomplish much. Without force of character talent is of little value. But what is force of character? It is determination, persistence, diligence, and devotion to higher goals and ideals.

The worth of "a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions", but in the light in which he uses them and in the ends to which he applies them. How can this be achieved? The answer is simple; by being of worth to others. "We are to serve with honour and not for honours". Our Lord laid down a great principle, He said, "If you have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" (Luke 16:12). A person gets his value in life by first being trustee of others' interests. His merit lies not in what he has, but **what he is and what he can accomplish for the good of others**. In this status-seeking society a

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man may be rated by the number of his cars or servants. Mark you, in our history-making perspective a man is measured by the number of people he serves.

In April, 1912, the magnificent British ship Titanic, struck an iceberg in the Atlantic Ocean and was sunk on her maiden voyage. Fifteen hundred persons suffered tragic death. After the calamity two cartoons appeared side by side in an American publication. One picture depicted the ship striking the iceberg and sinking in the ocean. Underneath the drawing was written: "*The weakness of man, the supremacy of nature*". The other picture showed one of the passengers, W.T. Stead, stepping back to give his place — the last place in the last boat — to a woman with a child. Underneath the picture was this line: "*The weakness of nature, the supremacy of man*".

Can we cultivate and have this ennobling spirit of self-sacrifice?

Herein shall lie the success and fame of this College, and the preservation and perpetuation of our **Holy Mother Church**.

## THE FULLER LIFE

This sermon and the succeeding one were preached in the Holy Trinity Cathedral, on April 30, 1961, and on July 29, 1962.

*"Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."*

(II Cor. 4:16-18)

Any one who, for the first time, reads these words of St. Paul, forms a paradoxical opinion. For generally, people believe that the things which are seen are the only things of value and consequence for their existence, whereas the things which are not seen are temporal. We should point out that this is the main object of controversy between two philosophical thoughts, **materialism** and **spiritualism**. Materialism strives to prove and convince people that the things which are seen and are tangible are real, and the unseen things are unreal. On the other hand, spiritualism views the visible universe as merely transitory, and holds that life's true meaning is found through those things which are not seen.

Some may ask, "*How can unseen things exist?*" Let us take, for example, the concept of an idea; do we see it? Yet an idea can be creative force in life. No one has seen an objective; but an objective can direct and guide our lives. Likewise, no one has seen love, but love is the basic principle of life's existence. All these — ideas, objectives and love — are unseen, infinite and eternal, but very real.

The thinking mind tries to find meaning and value in life. This feeling arose in man when he became conscious of his own existence. For most people the meaning of life lies in the possession of material wealth. In view of the fact that we are finite beings, particularly delimited in time and space, what does it profit us if we acquire all the riches of the world? For the destruction of our finite bodies will end the enjoyment of our accumulated wealth. Some people seek the significance of life in high positions and honours. They spend most of their time frivolously and superfluously obscuring their intellectual thoughts and spiritual feelings. Position and honours are likewise transient. The king, the president or the dictator of yesterday, is a prisoner or a fugitive today who can only exclaim, "**Alas, old glories have vanished**". There are also a great number of people, who imbued with Epicurean mentality, have yielded themselves to pleasure and delight, eating and drinking; they are seeking the meaning of life in transitory bodily joys and attractions. Bodily pleasures and delights are

elusive like a shadow; time takes them away. There is a class of people for whom life's significance lies in the length of their years. But, what significance will these years have if they are not filled with intellectual and spiritual values? Lastly, there are those for whom life is: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity". But these pessimists, like Schopenhauer, should realize that time is meaningful; it is the mirror in which we see eternity; it brings us toward an ultimate end, into a new creation, which gives significant to our being. Man is a center of creative force; the years that have passed by would not have the weight and the importance of one minute of time if their duration did not contain deeds of lasting value. Methuselah lived 969 years and Shubert 31. For the first, time was an accumulation of minutes, hours and days with no real value and significance. But for the latter time meant growth, a duration; in the words of Bergson, "The continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances", to wit, time with content, meaningful, fulfilled time, in which every moment has an infinite significance, and that significance is this: "in it we decide, and are decided about, with respect to our eternal future".

Listen again to the words of the apostle: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Cor. 4.17-18). St. Paul during his lifetime had many misfortunes and tribulation, he was maltreated and persecuted. But all these he considered "light" as compared to an eternal glory which outweighs them far. In our daily life, persecution, suffering, misery, pleasure, clothes, ornaments, etc., are "the things which are seen"; they belong to the visible and the material world, and they are destined to pass away with it; time carries them off for they possess a transient and finite nature. But on the other hand, there are "the things which are not seen", which are not related to our external life, because they are above it and transcend it. They are a part of our real spiritual essence, our inner self, our personality, our being, which does not belong to time and space, but it transcends them for it is eternal and infinite. St. Paul says, whatever belongs to the external world passes away with time, but whatever is formed in us as spiritual value, that will continuously be ours because it does not pass with time but is of the Eternal.

But what is the Eternal? St. Augustine defines it as follows: "*It is the Presence of the Past, the presence of the Present and the presence of the Future*", that is to say, the Eternal contains the three parts of time, past, present and the future. The past is not something which has gone; but it is like memory which survives in the present. For example, the time which we have spent listening to a beautiful melody or reading an inspiring poem, is passed, but the impression which we have formed from them, and the feeling which has been created in us, has not disappeared, but it is actively

retained; it is present in us now and it will be present also in the future. As the great philosopher says, "The past in its entirety is prolonged into the present and abides there actual and acting". Thus the past and the present form one organic whole, where there is mutual penetration, and succession without distinction.

The present, which is a point without extension and in which the future becomes the past, is in the Eternal; and the Future, which is yet to come, is also in the Eternal. In these three parts of time our spiritual inner being, or personality, is formed which matures and goes on recreating itself endlessly. That self is everlastingly with the Eternal. St. Paul says, "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day". The outward man passes away with time, whereas the inner man, being renewed day by day, forms a part of the Eternal. According to the biologists, our body, during a period of seven years, is entirely renewed in all its elements. All the cells decay and dies and in their places new ones grow; so, once in seven years we put on a new body; but our inner spiritual being does not change. Because of the permanence of my soul my body continues its existence. I move on through days and years, but days and years cannot take my soul along with them. The soul delivers from transitoriness all those things which it has shaped into a spiritual being which is eternal. When, according to St. Paul, we consider the things that are not seen, then, we deliver the spiritual fullness and reality from transitory time and render it to the eternal. The days pass away, but not my being, my essence. The seen things pass away, but not the unseen things which are united with the Eternal. When I associate myself, my being, with evanescent things, then, I say, "Alas my day is gone, it will not come back". But when I shape my inner spiritual being by the passing days, it lasts, it does not perish. As for example, the music of a concert or a recital continues to live in me after the performance, or the meaning of a poem long after it has been read. So, also, my spiritual body continues to live after my physical body has perished, because it has been united with my eternal being.

When Socrates was condemned to death and was prepared to drink hemlock, one of his disciples, Criton, asked him how he would like his burial to be performed. The great philosopher answered: "*Whatever concerns burial formalities, let my friends conventionally do it*"; "but", he added, "*you cannot bury Socrates*". Yes, people could only bury Socrates' body, but never his eternal soul.

How true are the words of the writer who says: "We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths, in feelings, not the figures on a dial. We should count time by heart throbs. He lives most who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best".

Here is the fuller life. Not a conglomeration of days with no content and significance, but a meaningful duration, a fulfilled time. Time out of which we have formed our spiritual values, our self, our real being, which

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transcends "the things which are seen" and which is infinite and eternal. The fuller life leads us from darkness to light, from the finite to the infinite, and from death to immortality.

## THE GROUND OF OUR BEING

*"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

(John 14:1-6)

When the last days of the terrestrial life of our Saviour Jesus Christ drew nigh, His disciples were extremely worried for they realized that they would soon be left alone, without the master's guidance and care. Christ observing their anxiety says, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.... I go to prepare for you". One of the twelve, Thomas, on behalf of all the disciples states, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" Jesus says to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life".

This morning, as we meet in this holy sanctuary to offer our prayers to the Almighty, I would like to expound the meaning of these three plain, but at the same time, mysterious phrases.

*"I am the way...."*

Mankind has always sought to discover the true way to approach God, and thus communicate with Him. Many religious and philosophical systems have strived to show the way. In vain philosophers exclaimed, "*O vitae dux philosophia*", that is, "philosophy is the guide of life". The human soul was not satisfied with religions and philosophies which had never pointed out the true way. The Romans with their material wealth and military might, the Greeks with their intellectual greatness and cultural fame, and the Jews with their moral principles and legalistic rules, had not been able to show the true way.

It was Christ, the Saviour of the world, who truly and fully manifested God to mankind. When people saw him, they felt that they had seen the Father: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14: 9). Through Him men recognized God and were able to approach Him and have communion. Thus, mortal man found the way leading to immortality. That way was Christ, the Light of the World, and man no longer had to falter and grope in labyrinthine ways.

There should be a way to reach one place from another. By the incarnation of the Son of God, the way was established, whereby man upon the earth could reach God Himself. St. Augustine says, "Do not waste your

time trying to find another way. The way is in front of you, here, it is up to you to stand up and walk". And for us that way is Christ Himself.

In this world man cannot attain his objective and fulfill life's real meaning, nor in the next can he enjoy divine peace and blessedness, unless he first finds in Christ the true and the only way. It is through Christ, who subjected Himself to transitoriness and wrath in order to lead us in His way, that man will achieve his perfection, which will bring him face to face with God.

*"And the truth...."*

The Greek term for truth means, **disclosing the hidden**. In Greek thought, no one possesses truth generally, because it is hidden and must be discovered. It lies beneath the surface in the depths. So the truth had to be manifested, revealed, in order that mankind could see it and abide with it. That manifestation was actualized through Christ, in whom the finite and the infinite were made one.

The surface of our existence changes, as if it were a delusion; but the depths are unchangeable, certain and eternal. In life's depths is our Saviour, Jesus Christ, the Truth. In Greek thought, as well as in Christianity, truth which is hidden is a mystery. But in Christianity the mystery of truth is revealed in an **event**, which is related to a special place, to a special time and to a special personality. That event was the incarnation of Christ, **God became man**. Therefore, truth is something which was **done** by God in time, in human history.

In Greek thought truth is the manifestation of the immovable essence of things, the eternal; whereas in Christianity truth is the new creation, the revelation of God in history. Man has confronted that revelation and lived by it. For the Greeks truth was a mere opinion, for Christians it is life, personal life, a living reality centered in Christ and actualized in everyone who is in communion with Him. When we accept Christ, we accept the truth, when we reject Him we reject the truth. St. John says, "He that doeth truth cometh to the light" (17:20). When you accept the truth, you are through with sin, you are filled with His Spirit, you follow Him, you **do** the truth.

Sometimes we find men who by their arrogance and conceit form false images of truth, which are shallow and transitory. Truth lies in the depths. Not in the shallows. It is revealed not created. So, only when men penetrate the surface, only when their minds are permeated by the heavenly light of a spiritual transformation, can they comprehend that the ultimate truth is Jesus Christ, God incarnate.

When Christ declares, "*I am the truth*", He means that He is the spiritual and the intellectual light. Natural light reveals to us the visible universe and fills us with joy and delight. In like manner when man's mind and soul are filled with divine light, the truth, he experiences untold joy, not because he comprehends the mysteries of life and the universe, but because

the truth itself becomes a great joy in his soul by the resplendence of that Light.

Christ is the light of truth; the light which emanates from Him brings us exuberant joy and happiness. Christ is the way, and through it He leads us to God, our creator. Christ is also the truth, and as such, the spiritual light of man and of the universe.

*"And the life..."*

Life is love and the fulfillment of love is God. When Christ says, "*I am the life*", He means that He is wholly love, and men who can have that love will have life too, abundant life. Love lasts; love alone is permanent; nothing exists without love. Love is the ultimate meaning of everything in the world; it is the joy which is the root of all creation. It is the highest bliss.

Life, even in its simplest state, possesses love. The more we love, the greater, deeper, and more exalted is the life which is revealed in us. Therefore, the more lofty our love the more meaningful and all-embracing our life becomes. Where there is no love, life has no significance. Really a man ceases to live, when he loves no more. In love the human soul transcends its limits and reaches across the threshold of the Eternal.

Life is a design of several loves. The animal loves grass and the plants, and strives to possess them. For it the significance of life consists in the satisfaction of eating grass. Grass and eating constitute its whole life. There are many people also for whom life means no more than their daily food, pleasure and delight. They possess the life of the self, and not the life of the **soul**. We should have pity, indeed, on such persons who have no proclivity, affection, or enthusiasm towards the higher aims of life, for they shall never attain the immense joy which that higher life could bring to them.

However, when a man's life consists of the kinds of love which transcend the material and the transitory, then life becomes for him richer and more meaningful—lofty, profound and abundant. Christ says, if you live my life and love as I love, you will have abundant life; you will find spiritual happiness, joy and fullness. To love and thus to rejoice is the aim of life.

Christ loved men and taught them to love God. He considered them to be the sons of God, who are called to live the life of love. Their union with God depended upon this love. When we love God and walk in His path, He loves us, and comes near to us. Our souls are filled by His love in which we find unending happiness. Happiness is the climax of life, its ultimate end. The ultimate desire of man is this eternal blessedness in which he finds his highest and perfect realization. Our Saviour gave us life and uplifts us that we might achieve it; He is the only one who can bestow upon us the bliss which is identified with His life. And that life is endless for it is freed from earthly restraints, it transcends time and the universe and it is established in the Eternal.

Christ is the ground of our eternal being, for He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is our Leader, our Light and our Love. May He lead our

## THE GROUND OF OUR BEING

souls from earth to heaven, from the finite into the everlasting order, the Kingdom of God.

## **SCIENCE AND RELIGION**

This address and the succeeding one were given at Debra Zeit Air Force Base, on October 5, 1961 and on March 10, 1963.

Science and religion are names of two modes by which man everywhere and in all times has sought to express himself in his relationship to the universe. They are the source of that fundamental belief and conviction that there is an eternal and supreme truth, and man's task is to seek and to find this truth in the physical and spiritual universe. Without this quest, human life loses its significance, forgets its Creator, which means the telos of its existence.

Religion provides man with the hope of immortality and the means for expressing this hope through its worship. Religion reveals the existence of God and His providence and assists man to communicate with Him. Here religion shows and affirms the meaning and the aim of life, and through its sacraments assures the real fullness of that life.

Religion, with philosophy, believes that its particular realm is the wholeness of the universe, and that it is of no avail to contend with science, as science is nothing else but the organized knowledge of the diverse phenomena of the universe.

Science, on the other hand, is also a system of demonstrated knowledge which gives empirical descriptions of objects, beings, and natural phenomena. Science is never perfect or final, it is always in a process of development. It cannot reach the ultimate or supreme truth or reality, but it seeks to find the nature and laws of its phenomena.

Science avoids making a warrant about the totality of objects; it admits that its knowledge does not encompass the universe. Science strives to build the whole from parts, while religion starts from the whole—the absolute Being and His manifestation and strives to verify the totality of the universe and the values of its parts.

Nowadays man is still trying to understand the totality of the universe. This is possible through science and religion properly understood. Therefore, there is no sense in reiterating what some people foolishly declare, "We want either science or religion." This is like saying, "Would you like to have food or water?" The answer to this is very plain, "We want to have both."

We should point out that the struggle between science and religion which began in the seventeenth century is, at present, considerably diminished; but there are still many narrow minded people who insist that opposition exists between the two. The essential point in the issue is that throughout the ages, religion has been a means to provide the daily needs of man and satisfy his wishes and aspirations. The Psalmist says, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want . . . I will fear no evil: for Thou are with me: They rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23). But now we realize

that science is a great and strong factor in obtaining the necessities of life. It is over this issue that science and religion disagree and clash.

The motto of the twentieth century can be formulated as follows: "Science is my shepherd; I shall not want . . . I will fear no evil; for science is with me; its rod and staff, they comfort me". History shows that man in all times has relied on religion to achieve his longings and satisfy his needs. He has had recourse to divine providence in order that he might be exempt from diseases and epidemics. But, nowadays, thanks to science, epidemics have been decreased and the necessities of men can be adequately taken care of.

Previously, where religion looked after the needs of men, now it is science which does the same in a fruitful and miraculous way.

Formerly the life of the people in Egypt depended upon an abundant supply of the waters of the Nile. How piously people prayed in their temples, in front of their idols when the waters of the Nile were decreased and famine threatened to take many lives. At present, by the erection of Assuan Dam, such prayers are offered no more. The fall of ancient Greece was caused more by malaria than by her enemies. Can you imagine how earnestly the Greeks prayed to their gods to get rid of that unseen and insidious enemy?

In all phases of our daily life is there a need which science does not claim to be able to handle? Science, therefore, while not negating religion nevertheless attempts to assume religion's role in the physical world. Herein lies the essence of the conflict between the two, and also the cause for many confused opinions concerning the right relationship that science should have to religion and vice versa. Let us consider only the discoveries made in the twentieth century and all the needs of men which have been met by them. At present there are men who neglect religion because they feel that science will ultimately be able to provide for all their needs. Such men say, "Science is our shepherd; we shall not want."

In our age we witness the fact that science is used grievously. Throughout the world men are terrified by the atomic and hydrogen bombs. Could we use their energy for useful purposes? Much expectation which we had from science came to naught. The truth is that man can become so foolish and so debased, that the energy which he possesses now he can use it for the destruction of mankind. The last two world wars are the best proof of this. Therefore, the main need of today is not physical power—because there is more than enough of that—but ethical and spiritual power to handle it. Science gives us power, but with that alone we cannot guarantee what will be done. Something more than power must decide, something that mankind has always called its religion, the spiritual values which it cherishes.

Surely, our purpose is not to assert ourselves against science and let it down. On the contrary it has done its work marvelously, and will continue to do so. Science has advanced so tremendously that the discoveries which it has made, and of which we are the witness, would have been beyond the

imagination of our fathers. But we need something more than science in order that we might have peace on earth, goodwill among nations and peoples. Yes, we need something more in order that the character and the ethical and the spiritual life of the people may be ennobled, and that the scientists may obtain guidance to use their knowledge substantially for the good and the benefit of mankind. The opinion of those who say the more science we have the less religion we need, is wrong. But the contrary is true, that is, the more knowledge we have the more religion we need. Even Einstein found in religion a virile force. He said upon one occasion, "I never had any special interest in the church before. I hated it, and spoke against it, but now I feel a great affection and admiration because it alone has had the courage and persistence to stand for intellectual truth and moral freedom. I am forced to confess that what I once despised I now praise unreservedly."

Science is based on scientific principles and investigations. It speaks about the universe, explains its structure and the process of its development, etc. Science asks "What is this? From where and how does it come about?" But it does not ask the question, "Why?", that is, it does not pursue the meaning and aim of the creature and creation. But we ask:

Why are we here?

What is the universe for?

Is there a purpose in it?

Is it only a natural contingency, or is it of eternal significance?

We ask again:

What is the origin of man?

Is he the product of an accident, or is he the son of God created in His own image?

Science cannot answer these questions. They belong to the realm of religion.

Science explains the physiological structure of man, but we need more than that. Can it tell us about the real value and aim of life, or about the ideal of courage, of mercy, and of spiritual life? In these circumstances to state that "science is my shepherd", of course, would not be right. It is true that science provides for our physical and natural needs, but there are such deep needs in the nature of man that science cannot handle and take care of. When sorrow and anguish dominate our hearts, science is helpless. Religion comes to our aid. We seek love, friendship, goodwill, and peace. Can we get them through science? Can we enjoy the beauty of a dawn or twilight by science? We need something greater than science gives—deeper, more inward, spiritually sustaining, which controls and directs life.

The conflict between science and religion is mainly due to the fact that religion often has held a negative attitude towards the innovations and discoveries of science, and has not adjusted or harmonized its doctrines to the changes of time. Religion has endeavored to remain unchangeable even in matters of secondary tenets and opinions. For these reasons it has been thought that when man accepts the innovations of science he has already lost his faith in religion. At present, however, great thinkers, especially among the clergy, have abandoned such views and opinions.

Science might destroy particular beliefs and doctrines, which ignore the new truths revealed by it, but it cannot destroy religion because it is the result of man's spiritual demand. That spiritual demand is the characteristic of man's nature, as the scientific demand is also the characteristic of the same nature.

Nowadays, many scientists declare that religion should resign the pretension according to which it embraces the whole life; because they say, science is the true messiah for whom the world was waiting. They consider religion unnecessary and irrelevant. They also state that the salvation of man depends on the light which he has received through science.

Science, like religion, is concerned with man, with life and with the universe. But the role of the two is different. Each one of them labours for a special purpose. Religion is not science, and therefore, any attempt to bring it within the framework of science would mean to kill religion. The practical role of religion is to assist man in order that he may be able to use the means of science for the well-being and progress of mankind. Science, on the other hand, has the practical role of preparing man with new knowledge, enabling him to subdue nature with better means and forces.

Therefore, how could we determine the limit of each? The philosophical mind is engaged with that realm of reality with which science is not directly concerned. This is the realm of values. Science is occupied with facts and their relationship to each other, but it should not express opinions about value; its job is to understand and describe but not to delineate and define values. On the other hand religion—as also art and ethics—has its own object especially in the realm of values, that is, appreciation of good and evil, the beautiful and the ugly, pleasure and sorrow, justice and injustice, right and duty, truth and falsehood. Religion deals with objectives; while science deals with objects. Thus, the distinction between the two is quite great. Let us explain it further.

When I say, "This is a book", I affirm a fact; but when I say, "This book is beautiful" or "useful", I make a judgment of value. Therefore, when the scientist says, "The atom is a great storehouse of energy," he only states a fact. When he comes out of the laboratory with the atomic bomb in his hand, he says, "Now the atomic bomb is a fact, a new fact in science." But as a scientist he cannot say that the bomb is good or evil, useful or harmful, for he can make only a real judgment on the measure of the productivity of

the bomb which he has made. However, when he says, "Here is a new discovery it is up to you and to me as men to say whether it shall be a useful, or destructive instrument," the scientist is speaking as a moral man, that is, as one who believes in values which transcend facts, and not only as a scientist.

We said that religion deals with the realm of values, and science with the realm of facts. It is difficult to understand this difference, because facts and values are not separate objects, but the inseparable phenomena of all objects. Values are not illusions, nor merely subjective sensations; they are always connected to an object, to a person or to an event. All values have close connection with facts and all facts can be appreciated or depreciated according to the accepted ideals of value. But value, by itself, represents as much of a reality as would be represented by any fact.

Religion is occupied with the realm of values. Christianity believes that not only its values are supreme, but that there is a value which is above all values. That value is the object of its worship, which is God. Christianity worships that value because all true values emanate from Him and are united in Him. He is the Supreme Good, the source of all values and truths. Science cannot deny this because God, in whose countenance men saw Jesus, and who is the source of all possible values in the world, is outside of the realm of science.

Some decades ago learned men were crying that they might be emancipated from the domination of religion. Today they do the same for science because they are terrified by its victories. When the atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima, the scientific world was unexpectedly frightened, seeing the ravage and destruction wrought by the new invention. Scientists immediately began to act like statesmen and evangelists, preaching all over the world that men are condemned to death unless a real religious and ethical revival takes place. Even now the same situation holds true. Science has turned preacher. It is mounting the pulpit. It cries to mankind that spiritual and ethical values which can wisely master and direct the powers which have been put into our hands, are necessities now. Science without religion is a scourge to humanity, but becomes a blessing when, in its true relationship with religion and its ideal, its energies and inventions are utilized for the well-being and advancement of mankind.

On the other hand, religion, in order that it might remain sterile, but be effective, useful and fruitful, must cooperate with science and harmonize its views with its achievements. It should appropriate to itself the new notions of science to utilize them for the realization of its objectives. If religion does not do this, it will gradually be weakened and begin to lose its influence upon its followers.

In this world, if we want to really live and make life worthwhile and deserving, we must use religion as our **guide** and **inspiring power**, utilizing

all the benefits of science which are good to the end that God is glorified and men's lives—including our own—are made meaningful.

## IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

*"God created man in his own image in the image of God created he him."*

(Gen. 1: 27)

*"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."*

(Gen. 2: 7)

According to an old tradition, living germs, at the time of creation, came into the presence of God and to each one of them the question was asked as to what he would like to be. One of the germs said:

"I do not need wings and legs for they are no use to me; I would like to have fins in order to swim in the sea."

And God created him a fish.

The second germ said:

"There is more air upon the earth than water, please give me wings so that I can freely soar in the blue sky."

And God created him a bird.

The third germ was satisfied with land. In order to eat, to live and to defend himself from his enemies, he asked for weapons in his mouth and paws. And God created him a lion.

At the end a small germ approached the Creator. God asked him:

"And you, what would you like to be?"

He humbly answered:

"I do not want what those who preceded me asked for. I can build for me ships, houses, bridges, chariots and wings, if I need them. **My sole aim is to be created in Thy image.**"

Then God answered the small and humble germ:

"You chose the most beautiful thing which I can give."

And God joyfully created him in his own image, man. "And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Thus, man has within him the image and the breath of God.

Man is the last in God's creation, that is, God's *chef-d'oeuvre*, who is the center of the universe. Only in him has the creation meaning. Without him this world would not be known, because there would be no one to know it. Space and time can be understood only by man and only for him have they meaning. Man is a creature in the image of the Creator, whose greatest merit is his ability to acknowledge his being a creature. Human history began at that time, when the consciousness of this arose in man. Before the awakening of this consciousness man did not know that he was a creature, the *chef-d'oeuvre* of God. During that period myriads of years elapsed without leaving any vestiges or results.

Philosophers argue and strive to penetrate the depths of reality; scientists study and analyze the physical realm of things and with their instruments penetrate the microcosm and the boundless universe. Both ask the following questions:

1. From where did man come?
2. Why did he come?
3. Where will he go?

Neither philosophy nor science can give a final answer to these questions. Here religion can help. It answers the following questions thus:

From where did man come?

"From the Creator of the universe! He is the source of our life."

Why did man come?

"He came in order to glorify God and to fulfill His will in our human nature!"

And where shall man go?

"To Him! To enter into His eternity! We have in us God's likeness, His image, His breath, His essence. He is eternal and everlasting, and since we are created in His own image we shall live forever."

"During our terrestrial life, it should be our duty to live according to the will of God, and through His Holy Spirit to have within us His likeness and image."

It is told that, many years ago, in one of the churches in a city in Sicily a famous artist was asked to paint on a canvas the life of Christ. After many years of hard labour the painting was ready, but two figures were lacking on it, the boy, Jesus, and Judas, the Iscariot. The artist looked far and wide for two models which would bear the required likenesses.

After months of searching, he saw some children playing in the street. One of them was twelve years old. His mild and gentle features attracted his attention. He had an angelic face. Evidently he would be an excellent model for the boy Jesus.

The artist took the boy home and began to paint, using him with great success as a model for Christ. But he had yet to find a model representing Judas, a treacherous, spiritually bankrupt person living in debauchery and lewdness. Finally, after many years, he found in a low tavern a dissipated man, asking for wine. The artist approached him and after carefully examining him, told him to come with him to his house where he would give him wine, food and clothes. The artist was very happy, for at least he had found a model for Judas.

While painting the face of the sinful man, the artist noticed that the man's expression began to change; his eyes grew red and became fixed on that part of the painting, the face, which was in his image.

One day the painter observing the impatience and the nervousness of the model said to him:

"I would like to help you. Why are you so nervous?"

The model began to weep and shame-facedly looking at the artist, said: "Don't you remember me? Some years ago I was the model of the boy Jesus whom you painted on the canvas; yes, I was the model of the boy Jesus, and now . . ."

He moaned bitterly.

The artist laid aside his brush and amazedly looked at his model who continued crying.

How true is the following Latin proverb: *Corruptio optimi pessima*, which translated, means, "The corruption of the best is the worst corruption."

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We live in an age of disillusionment, uncertainty and agony. Mankind is yearning after peace, liberty and safety. But he has not been able to attain them. There are some people who think that through diplomacy and statesmanship, treaties and alliances it is possible to bring about peace, concord and safety in the world. History proves that this method does not work at all. There are men who trust in inventive science; but it is very clear that science cannot solve the problem, on the contrary, it only complicates it.

What moral quality can science exercise and to what end? Nowadays, science furnishes us with the very instruments for our self-destruction. There are those who have trusted in education; but neither has education solved the problem. Education is great power; but still there remains the question, "What individual will use it and to what end?" There are many educated and intelligent men and nations, who instead of achieving peace and safety become the scourge of mankind. The world is "growing scientifically and educationally mature, yet falling from one collapse into another." There are also many people who think that science, technology and education are displacing religion and making it needless. But the contrary is true, the more people advance in science and education, the more they are in need of principles for life, ethical and spiritual values, and the image of God in their souls. It is not enough to train the mind, but **the Spirit** must also be trained. Mankind needs a spiritual regeneration.

There are few men who, like the last humble germ mentioned in the tradition, believe that peace and mutual understanding can be realized in the world, only when in millions of souls ethical and spiritual life is awakened, that is, when men feel and learn that they are creatures created in the likeness of God, and that they have His breath in them, and that they come from Him and are bound to return to Him.

Nowadays the great majority of mankind has forgotten that they are created in the image of God, and religion has ceased to play an important role in their lives. Down deep in men's hearts there is a spiritual vacuum.

The cause of this vacuum is that they neglect religious, ethical and spiritual forces and values which are the ultimate foundations of individuals or of nations. The Great Wall of China was a gigantic structure, but within a few years of its building it was breached, not by breaking it down, but by bribing the gate-keepers. What failed was character; the ethical and spiritual foundations which are indispensable to the existence of every country and society were forgotten. According to Arnold Toynbee, a civilization never collapses because of outside attacks, but through spiritual failure within.

We are indeed experts in constructing bridges and buildings, in making machines and sputniks, rather than in building character. We know more things about chemical elements than about our inner man. We try to change the outside world, without changing ourselves, our passions and prejudices, our inner world. We try to conquer countries, subdue nations, but we do not subdue our passions, our emotions, ourselves. Even Beethoven said, "O Lord give me strength to conquer myself." I mentioned the word, character. It is the mirror of ourselves, the reflection of our virtues and spiritual life. Remember what Horace Greeley said, "Fame is vapour; popularity an accident; riches take wings; those who cheer today will curse tomorrow; only one thing endures—character." Character is not sold in the market, you cannot buy it with money; you can have it only when you attain the likeness of God in yourself.

"God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him" (Gen. 1: 27). "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2: 7).

This nation possesses a noble spiritual heritage. It is our hearty wish that through it the image of God may be preserved in us and that His breath may fill us all with life anew, so that we may perform our duty towards our people and our country.

## **BLESS US, HOLY FATHER**

The welcoming speech delivered on the occasion of the visit of His Holiness Cyril VI,  
Patriarch of Alexandria, to the Theological College, October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1960.

Your Holiness, your Lordships, honored guests, my dear colleagues and students.

Today the Theological College of the Holy Trinity and all its affiliated institutions, are greatly honored by the visit of His Holiness, Anba Cyril Sixth, Pope and Patriarch of the ancient Holy See of Alexandria. Every student of church history knows well the great and important role which the See of Alexandria has had in Christendom, despite the most terrible persecutions and calamities which have befallen her. There was a time when her divines were the champions of orthodox faith in the whole Christian world. At this happy occasion when we feel the charming and inspiring presence of His Holiness, Cyril Sixth, we would like to mention only one of those divines, who bears the same name, i.e., St. Cyril, the illustrious Patriarch of Alexandria.

This great theologian presided over the Third Ecumenical Council at Ephesus, convened in 431 A.D., where his dogmatic formula, "*One is the Incarnate Nature of God the Word*", triumphed. By this statement he meant that the only-begotten Son of God, was incarnate and made perfect man so that in him the divinity and humanity were blended indivisibly, ineffably, and inconfusedly, in an harmonious union. For fifteen centuries the Church of Alexandria, and the other ancient oriental orthodox sister churches—the Syrian, the Armenian, and the Ethiopian—have tenaciously adhered to this Christological tenet. These churches have proclaimed that Christ is one, true God and true man, possessing perfectly the divine as well as the human natures, united in Him without confusion and without division or alteration, harmoniously and ineffably.

These oriental sister churches also accepted and became faithful to the dogmas and doctrines promulgated by the first three Ecumenical Councils, from 325 A.D. to 431 A.D., during which period the main Christian churches were of one accord as to the way in which dogmas should be interpreted.

Each one of these ancient oriental churches has often been threatened and persecuted by the infidels and other Christian churches; but they, through their undaunted spirit have been able to maintain their administrative independence, dogmatic individuality and orthodox faith in its purity and simplicity. It is to this spirit that these sister churches owe their existence, the preservation and perpetuation of their national ideals and aspirations, and their religious autocephaly. For us oriental Christians, our churches have been the source of our physical endurance, our religious and moral strength, the ground of our intellectual and cultural integrity and creativity.

These churches, the greatest heritage of our forefathers, need men of vision and determination, who when they put their hand to the plow will never look back, who skillfully and boldly can shape their course across the seas with the wind or against the wind. This Theological College was founded by His Imperial Majesty Haile Sellassie I, the architect of modern education in Ethiopia, in order that this kind of men could be prepared to strengthen and perpetuate the Church of Ethiopia. Now is the time to make the Theological College a real center of knowledge, learning, research and missionary activities, a second Alexandria, in the whole monophysite world. No sister church has the same facilities for higher theological learning as the Orthodox Church of Ethiopia. Africans must bring the gospel to the Africans. The Ethiopian Church should take the lead. The leadership and proper interpretation of Christianity for Africa should come from Her. This objective, then, can be realized only when this institution is able to prepare men of intellect, faith, and determination.

In Exodus we read that Moses told Joshua to fight with Amalek and then he took with him Aaron and Hur and went up to the top of a hill to pray. "And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword" (Exodus 17: 11-13). Thus the Israelites won a great victory. We earnestly believe that the leaders of our sister churches will be able to tend their flock faithfully "*in green pastures and beside the still waters*" only when their hands are held up by the future graduates of this and other sister theological colleges.

Your Holiness, you will find this college, its buildings, classrooms and the compound in a rather unattractive and poor condition. But, this is as yet only a beginning. We believe that by the help and assistance of His Imperial Majesty, His Beatitude Abuna Basileos and the Ethiopian Church authorities, new buildings will be constructed, the premises enlarged and set in order.

It is told that once upon a time, a venerable Patriarch visited a seminary in the Middle East. After talking to the students he asked them the following question:

"My dear seminarians, I love you from the bottom of my heart; ask whatever you want, and I am ready to give it to you."

All the students with one accord exclaimed, "*Our Holy Father, we would like to have your blessing.*"

And so, Holy Father, at this grand moment, we ask your blessings, in order that this institution might follow faithfully and unswervingly in the footsteps of our saints and martyrs, our Divines and Holy Patriarchs, who through and vicissitudes of centuries gave their lives for their churches.

## BLESS US, HOLY FATHER

Your Holiness, bless this institution and all its teachers and students, in order that the seeds which our forefathers planted, and our fathers cultivated, may through them, bring forth good fruit in due season.

Holy Father, give us your blessings, in order that this college in the future might send its graduates into the world to fight the battle for truth, for orthodox faith, and for goodwill toward all men and creeds.

Bless us Your Holiness, in order that the true and pure faith of our holy and illustrious fathers, our highly esteemed heritage, shall not only be preserved in our treasure houses, but shall, with a new missionary zeal and devotion, be proclaimed, preached, and disseminated to wavering and faltering souls, and to those who have not yet heard it.

Holy Father, the true successor of the great patriarch and theologian, St. Cyril of Alexandria, bless all our churches and their leaders, and our dear Emperor, Haile Sellassie I, in order that with more faith and determination, they can accomplish praiseworthy achievements for the glory of the All-Holy Trinity.

*Yaish gadasat el baba Kirolos el sadis, baba wa Batriark el Keraza el Markosiyeh.*

Long live His Holiness Cyril the Sixth, Pope and Patriarch of the Holy See of St. Mark.

## OUR HOLY MOTHER CHURCH

This and the succeeding addresses were given to the College students and members of the faculty in the Assembly Hall on different occasions.

Eastern Christianity is divided into two branches, Dyophysites and Monophysites. The Coptic, Ethiopian, Armenian and the Syrian (with the Malabar church in South India) churches belong to the latter group. These four sister churches retain autocephalous hierarchy and national peculiarities without abandoning their communion with each other. Throughout the vicissitudes of centuries, under adverse political circumstances, they have tenaciously preserved their apostolic faith, dogmatic individuality, administrative independence and national culture, through the power of the indwelling Spirit of God. It is to this spirit that they owe their existence, the preservation and perpetuation of their national ideals and aspirations, their homogeneity and religious autonomy, their intellectual and cultural creativity, which neither the fire of Mazdeism, nor the sword of Islam, nor the inhuman viciousness of barbaric hordes and nor any other civil or subversive power could destroy. This national-spiritual soul, their valuable heritage, was more powerful and enduring than all devouring Asiatic armies and other aggressive peoples, the glories of whom are blown to the winds or buried under the sands. It was this religio-national culture, taught and advocated by these sister churches which saved them from disintegration and destruction.

The Church of Ethiopia, Our Holy Mother Church, being isolated for centuries, by divine providence has maintained its existence, its hierarchy and orthodox pristine faith. It is she alone, among the other national sister churches, which has been able to possess Christian rulers, and through them has continued to develop in an indigenous way, creating a national-religious culture. She and the state have worked together in all matters pertaining to the welfare of the people. She has the right to claim to be the largest national orthodox church.<sup>1</sup> Our Mother Church, because of her unity, sovereign status, and geographical position can play an important and decisive role in bringing more understanding and solidarity among her sisters churches and in disseminating the divine light to those who are yet in bewilderment, and also to those who are yet unreached.

The main duty of every student in the Theological College shall be to serve the Lord, and in this service to know and appreciate the greatness and the value of his Holy Mother Church, dedicating himself to God through his service to the church. No nobler idea than this can be conceived for any student of religion.

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<sup>1</sup> Ethiopian Christians number ten million, whereas the Armenians about five million, Copts two and half million and the Syrians one and half million.

In the Holy Mother Church of Ethiopia the faithful who gather together experience eternity in time. They come in contact with eternity, because the performance of the Divine Liturgy unites them with the assembly of those who have been glorified, the holy patriarchs, the saints and the martyrs who are ever present. Moreover, the souls in the same sanctuary, and in all the sanctuaries where the mysterious oblation is offered, in the presence of the Sublime, those who partake become united one with another in Christ. It is this unity and oneness, wrought through the Holy Mother Church, which has been the anchor of salvation and the ground of existence of the Ethiopian people.

In the history of art and architecture, literature and music, Ethiopia has its own valuable place. The colossal obelisks of Aksum have reached perfection in their technical skill, beautiful sculpturing and decoration. This exquisite architecture is exemplified in the church of Debra Damo, which is the most finished specimen of the old rectangular style in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian architects have been skillful masters, capable of creating remarkable works. The monuments which they have erected constitute the glory of this wonderful country.

The rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, their chapels and altars, naves and aisles, their interior decorations, their workmanship and designs, so beautifully executed, portray exquisitely the amazing skill and ingenuity, the indomitable will, patient toil and profound faith of their architects. The round churches, with their concentric circles, comprising the Kene Mahalet, the Makdas, and the Kedus Kedusan, have been for centuries the center of faith and inspiration to the Ethiopian people, who under the shadow of their crosses have found shelter, peace and security. Churches and monasteries erected on the lofty hills and mountains, standing in their majestic loneliness, full of charm and elaborately contrived, with their domes that rise conspicuously in the blue dome of the Creator, not only have filled generations with awe and inspiration, but have become centers of knowledge and learning, centers of faith, vision and determination.

Ethiopian literature, besides its original valuable writings, is famous for its translation, mostly prophetic and apocalyptic. Of these mention should be made of The Book of Enoch, the Ascension of Isaiah, The Book of Noah, Jubilees, Ezra and Baruch, etc., the originals of which have been lost. These Ethiopic texts have great importance for the study of apocalyptic literature. We might mention also the monastic Rules of Pachomius, the Kerillos—doctrinal writings of the Fathers of the Church. The Physiologus—a collection of information on animals and plants. Though these books exist in their original texts, but their Ethiopic versions have been expanded, and besides, they possess considerable value for textual criticism. It is not improbable that, if some of the Theological College students work patiently and assiduously, they can find in some churches and monasteries other valuable stores of ancient literature.

The Ethiopic manuscripts are noteworthy for their beautiful art of writing and illumination. Often the characters are magnificently shaped, and the initials sumptuously fashioned. The ornaments which adorn the manuscripts are exquisite. The manuscripts represent paintings on canvas, on walls and on vellum. The mural paintings—Biblical characters, angels, the Holy Trinity, saints, emperors—are picturesque. Those figures of men and of animals, and vegetal designs, with variety of colours so originally stylized, which adorn the manuscripts, are the creations of the Ethiopian mind, shaped and developed in a country of high mountains and deep valleys. Those illuminated manuscripts do not search for elegance, but for expression. They represent the realistic and the colorful sentiment of Ethiopia.

Ethiopian music has a richness of melody which is still in its primitive purity. It is neither European nor oriental, but possesses a character peculiar to itself. The airs are soft, and the melody comes from the heart. The Treasury of Hymns, compiled by Yared the Deacon, in the sixth century, grouped according to the seasons of the year, is characterized by beauty of melody and rhythm. Ethiopia possesses also a wealth of secular melody and verse, folk songs and dances, ballads and dirges, all full of rhyme and rhythm, clarity of expression, and all depicting the national ideals and aspirations of the Ethiopian people.

No full and extensive study of Ethiopian art and music, literature, rites and doctrine has yet been undertaken. We earnestly hope that this very important enterprise, shall be attempted mainly by the future graduates of the Theological College, who down deep in their hearts have determined to become the true representatives of Ethiopian national-religious culture.

We also believe, that you as the heirs of the wonderful legacy of the Holy Mother Church of Ethiopia, will become the exponents of truth, veracity, and faith in the motherland of Ethiopia and in the African continent, where there is no other Church which is more qualified than yours to propagate Christianity and to interpret the teachings of Christ to millions of Africans. The eyes of our sister churches, and other churches as well, are eagerly waiting upon the Holy Mother Church of Ethiopia to carry on fruitfully this indispensable and holy evangelical work.

Our religious institution is called the Theological College of the Holy Trinity, for it is situated close by the Holy Trinity Cathedral, under the shadow of its life-giving cross. The Christian cross stands for sacrifice, for giving life. The Ethiopian cross has the same length on all four of its arms, to signify that it gives life equally to all. That cross should have one thought and one meaning for the students of the Theological College—to serve, to serve devotedly, whole-heartedly, unswervingly, the Ethiopian people, the Holy Mother Church of Ethiopia, and the Lord God.

In that service and self-sacrifice shall lie the meaning of your future life.

## THE REAL VICTORY

*"For my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."*

(II Cor. 12: 9-10)

Some weeks ago, a student who had quarreled with one of his classmates, came to our Dean of Students and uttered the following words:

"I hit him on the nose, I won, I am victorious."

On this occasion I would like to speak to you about the significance of real victory.

Since creation man has always strived and is striving to defeat his fellow men. He has never desired to be vanquished; failure has been considered as the greatest dishonor. This innate desire of man has led him into a false conception of what real victory is.

Covetous, greedy and pretentious people have always pursued as their aim a victory which results in personal exaltation. Poets have sung and praised such victory; whereas they have composed eulogies about those who have failed and who have been defeated.

"Long live the victorious.

Woe to the defeated one."

Throughout ages this has been the cry of mankind, the order of events. But when we analyze various episodes of human history we often find out that whatever men have approved and glorified as victory, really has been a defeat. This has been true especially in the intellectual and moral realm of life.

Rome conquered Athens and assumed that she had defeated her. But after several years Athens overcame Rome with her great and remarkable intellect, forcing Rome to copy the models created by her. Rome was defeated by the intellectual, artistic and technological greatness of Athens. Her military victories vanished like a shadow. Romans preserved with great care the philosophy, literature and art of Greece, and strove to appropriate them for themselves. Thus, in civilization Rome was subdued by the Greeks. Defeated Greece became victorious.

Carthaginians, formerly, were a strong and rich people; their ships sailed to every part of the ancient world; their merchants were the most opulent of their day. For many years the military might of Carthage contended with Rome and at one time almost conquered her. But to human progress, Carthage left no lasting contribution and by and by she was blotted out. Political and military victories are temporal. The victorious men

of yesterday have become the defeated men of tomorrow. Conquests never last. Each conquest is a defeat.

For many people the crucifixion of Christ mean complete failure. Even His disciples believed so. King Herod was considered victorious, whereas John the Baptist was thought a failure, a defeated prophet. Apostles, martyrs, saints at the time of their martyrdom were regarded by people as vanquished and dishonored men. Those who persecuted them were convinced that they had won the victory. But these men who were thought to be defeated became heroes and were victorious in the truths which they upheld and vindicated, and the memory of those who were believed to be conquerors is effaced. We can mention several examples: People gave hemlock to Socrates to drink, stoned St. Stephen, beheaded St. Paul, refused a burial place for Mozart in their cemeteries. But, tell me, where are all these people who were convinced that they were heroes and conquerors, and who were acclaimed by the mob as victorious? Real victory rested in the hands of those who were thought to be defeated. Surely, Socrates lives because of his philosophy, St. Stephen because of his martyrdom, St. Paul because of his preachings and Mozart because of his music.

The history of this nation shows that she has been defeated in battles, her people persecuted and the country laid waste. "**The victorious**" enemies have turned back joyfully, deeply convinced that they have subdued and conquered this fortress of Christianity in Africa. But the vanquished with perseverance, zeal and determination, nobly and magnanimously have stayed undaunted and unconquered in their spirit, thought, purpose and moral stature. If they had been defeated in these, but had won military victories, they would have long ago perished and their memory been wiped out from the annals of mankind.

Even military critics affirm that a nation is not defeated in war unless she is thoroughly convinced and earnestly believes that she is defeated. This nation in her age-long misfortunes and hardships has always believed that she will never be conquered in her sacred calling, purpose and ideal.

Those people who possess vision and determination and who often endanger their lives, for the good and service of others, should not think of defeat. They die so that others might live; they perish for the truths which they have preached and disseminated. Therefore, are such men conquered? Never! They are the real victors in history, and by the blood which they have shed, by the aims and principles which they have upheld, they have been able to lead people to eternal light and truth.

Very often for men of high goals and ideals, life sometimes seems to be a series of failures; however, in reality the end results are often success and victory. The initial frustrations are because the higher one sets a goal, the more frequently he will fall short of its attainment; he will feel that he has failed when in fact he has done and accomplished much. The deeds

which he has achieved do not seem to him to be many or great, because his objectives were lofty and his horizon vast.

As long as a man lives he is not defeated unless he is convinced that he is defeated. Great leaders, prophets and reformers of mankind have died thinking that their labours have come to naught, their mission a failure and their cause lost, when in fact, after their death, their work has borne abundant fruit. The greatest tragedy in history has been that of Calvary. The Saviour who wanted to redeem Israel, met an infamous death. The last chapter of St. John's Gospel where the events are narrated which took place after Christ's death and resurrection, begins with the description of a failure. But that failure is a prelude to something far beyond any success hoped for. After the crucifixion, seven of the disciples who were bewildered and wondered what to do, resumed their former occupation as fishermen. They went forth and entered a ship, and spent the whole night catching fish. That night, the Gospel says, they caught nothing, "but when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore." And we know how, later, His presence brought to them great and unexpected success. The Great Master whose disciples thought that he had lost his cause, was victoriously standing on the seashore. It was that Master who said, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (St. John 16: 33).

The crucified Christ, the souls who have fainted at the foot of the Cross and those men who in all times have been persecuted, and who have suffered for their ideals and goals, have transformed history. In the history of mankind the strong fall; the strength is taken from them and given to the weak. The episode of Goliath and David is well known to everybody. Many who have appeared weak in history, in the long run, have made history and brought meaning to it. They have used their wits and have not bound themselves to the finite and transitory realm of things, but instead to a spiritual, immutable and an eternal order. St. Paul says, "For my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me . . . For when I am weak, then I am strong" (II Cor. 12: 9-10). The weak and despairing in the historical order, are the strong and victorious in the divine order.

Whatever is frivolous and vain, is soon annihilated and perishes, but whatever is morally great and spiritually profound lasts. The man of fortitude and character should strive for the realization of goals that have permanent value, although for many these goals in life are often not precious and essential mottos. If you are after glory and reputation, that is, if you want people to talk about you, and to have your name and picture advertised in papers, you can have all this, for by a little endeavour, cleverness and bribery it would not be difficult to find some men who will praise and applaud you. You will think that now you are a conqueror, you will even behave like a victorious general. Mark you, all these are illusions, because when you really understand the true meaning of life, you will be

convinced that all those applauses and praises will lead to failure, defeat and futility. If by your wealth, worldly glory and high position you think that you have become victorious, again you err, because wealth, glory and position are finite and transitory. Theoretically they do not belong to anyone. If you take possession of them you will believe that you shall always be happy, but soon you shall realize that like a bird they have taken wings and flown, and you have remained alone and wretched. People will praise you as long as your money will flow into their pockets. But think, is victory in such things?

Often we have a wrong opinion about victory. We confuse it with the show of rude, unjust and barbarous power. One day I was walking with a teacher in one of the suburbs of New York City. At the corner of a street some bustle and confusion occurred. We heard the following words from men running from the scene:

"Hurrah, we won the victory."

"What has happened," asked my friend to a passer by.

"A few wicked and vicious men robbed and injured an innocent and a helpless person, and ran away."

Such are many victories in history, the authors of which have been known as heroes.

In Armenian literature there is a story which illustrates the meaning of true victory. Once upon a time there lived a pretentious prince who had conquered many countries and subjugated their peoples. He was acclaimed by all men as a great conqueror. One day when he was besieging a city he noticed its huge graveyard. He entered and began to read some inscriptions on the tombs of victorious warriors. On one it was written:

Name and Surname; born . . . died . . . "*Lived not even a day.*" On another: General . . . "*Lived only a week.*" On a third one: Prince . . . "*Lived a year.*" The last inscription stated that the deceased victor had "*fully lived all the days of his life.*"

The victorious prince was very anxious to know that the meaning of these inscriptions. An old man was brought to him who for fifty years had been the guardian of the grave-yard. Upon the inquiry of the prince he gave the following answer:

"Since old times we have had a custom that in this city, when a citizen dies, the wise men gather together to pass judgment. They weigh only those deeds of the deceased which have been for the welfare and good of the people, and after counting those days they write their number on the tombstone. They never weight the deeds, the riches, the ranks, the wisdom and the victories attained for personal ends. Thus, the first man, although a conqueror, did not do any good for his people. So he did not live for the inhabitants of this city even for a single day. In like manner you should understand the other inscriptions. The one who "*fully lived all the days of his life*" was a real conqueror because he gave his life to the welfare and the good of the people. The only way to win victory in life is to serve others and

## THE REAL VICTORY

find entrance into their lives. Otherwise each conqueror is a failure and the greater the conqueror, the greater the failure.”

After hearing these words the pretentious prince, instead of waging war, disbanded his armies and returned home to become a true victor in the service of his people.

Man should always strive to attain victory for we must overcome evil, prejudice and ignorance. We must fight and be victorious in the struggle against injustice, falsehood and duplicity. We must overcome these vices, and the frivolous ideologies which pervert and debase our souls and corrupt our personal and national character.

Woe to him who is defeated in this worthy struggle.

But we must realize that this victory is often attained at the cost of personal defeat which is accomplished in overcoming evil with good, in the overflow of love towards all men, in accepting our mistakes and shortcomings, in listening to good advice, and in according to each person his due respect and honour.

Blessed are those who sow love where there is hatred; pardon, where there is injury; hope, where there is despair; joy, where there is sickness; self-sacrifice, where there is greed; and light, where there is darkness; for they are the souls who have won the real victory.

## WISDOM AND SPIRIT

*“And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain of the synagogue . . . disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke.”*

(Acts 6: 8-10)

Stephen, as you all know, was chosen and appointed deacon by the Twelve Apostles and disciples. He was “a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.” After his ordination he began to perform “great wonders and miracles among the people.” Upon this Jews who had come to Jerusalem from many places began violently to argue with him, but “they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.” The rest of the events which climaxed in his martyrdom is well known to you; I shall not dwell on that; I would like to emphasize two words which are ascribed to Stephen, **Wisdom** and **Spirit**.

Socrates, the Greek philosopher, did not want to call himself **wise**—*s?f ??* or *s?f ?st??*—because for him only God was wise. He asserted that the man who thought himself to be wise was self-conceited, if not ungodly. Socrates presented himself as *f ???s?f ??*—philosopher, that is lover of wisdom. The wisdom which he preached was essentially ethical; it was centered on the principles of virtuous character. But for Socrates virtue and knowledge were the same things. The man who was virtuous in character, was the enlightened and the learned man.

On this basis Plato established his ethical ideology, which contained the four essential virtues, **wisdom**, **fortitude**, **temperance** and **justice**. According to him, out of these, **wisdom** was the highest virtue, because it inspires and regulates man’s inner life. Aristotle, the disciple of Plato, discerned two kinds of wisdom:

a. *f ?????s??*—**practical wisdom**, that is, prudence, careful forethought.

b. *s?f ?a*—**speculative wisdom**, that is, supreme wisdom which can ascend to the origin of things, to the first principles.

By prudence a man in all the activities of life—those relating to professions, or to civil and purely ethical problems—can use the right rule. By *s?f ?a* a man is led to understand the supreme principles of the universe through knowledge and contemplative perception.

Those philosophers who came after Aristotle accepted and revered wisdom as the root of all virtues. Through wisdom man can know life’s true aim, “the telos”, and aspire to attain it. The conception of wisdom of these philosophers differed according to their particular teachings and precepts. The Stoics believed that the wise man was the supreme man without defect,

fault, offense and passion. He was the master of his acts and was solely responsible to himself. Always and in all circumstances of life the wise man was happy, because the source of his happiness is in himself.

When we proceed from the Greek thought to the Jewish conception of wisdom, which is expressed in the Holy Bible, we find out that wisdom is not a mere human sublimity, an exalted grandeur, but a religious and a divine reality.

Among the Jews the word wisdom is used also in the sense of skill and ingenuity, but in its real nature it is a virtue connected with God. The root of wisdom should be sought in religion. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God" (Psalm 14: 1), but the wise man professes God as the center of his thoughts, hopes and feasible plans. For the wise man the fear of God is not only "*the beginning*" of wisdom, but "*the crown*" and "*the root*" of wisdom.

"To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

"The fear of the Lord is the crown of wisdom."

"To fear the Lord is the root of wisdom."

(Sirach 1: 14, 18, 20)

The Book of Proverbs, after praising wisdom describes it as from everlasting and the first of divine creation: "For wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it. I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the forward mouth, do I hate. Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures. The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth" (8: 11-25).

In the Book of Sirach (chapter 24) wisdom is glorified as follows: "I came forth from the mouth of the most High and covered the earth like a mist . . . From eternity, in the beginning, he created me, and for eternity I shall not cease to exist . . . I grew tall like a cedar in Lebanon; and like rose plants in Jericho; like a beautiful olive tree in the field and like a plane tree I grew tall . . . like choice myrrh I spread a pleasant odor . . . like a terebinth I spread out my branches and my branches are glorious and graceful. Like a vine I caused loveliness to bud, and my blossoms became glorious and

abundant fruit . . . Those who eat me will hunger for more, and those who drink me will thirst for more . . .”

In the Wisdom of Solomon (chap. 7), wisdom is described as “the fashion of all things”, “a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty”, “a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God and an image of his goodness”. Wisdom “is more beautiful than the sun, and excels every constellation of the stars”.

When we consider the Christian view of wisdom expressed in the New Testament, we find a new characteristic over the Jewish thought.

According to St. Paul those who live by the spirit of Christ, and those who perform his commandments, have wisdom; they only can comprehend the hidden divine mysteries (I Cor. 2: 7). In Christ “are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2: 3). Wisdom is considered also as the fruit of the Holy Spirit, the supreme grace which is given by God from above, and which descends and rests upon the faithful, illumines their mind and strengthens their souls.

St. Stephen was filled with such supreme and true wisdom, and that is why “they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke.”

After presenting these elucidations and thoughts about the word wisdom, let me explain now the word **spirit**. The Jews who vehemently disputed with Stephen were not able to resist the **spirit** by which he spoke.

In Greek the term which corresponds to the word spirit is  $\rho\acute{\nu}\mu\alpha$ , which means the most essential part of man, his real essence, his inner self. Greeks identified the spirit with that part of the essence of man which bears divine nature. They definitely distinguished the terms  $\rho\acute{\nu}\mu\alpha$  (spirit),  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  (soul, breath) and  $\nu\acute{\omega}\tau\eta\varsigma$  (mind).

In the Jewish thought, on the other hand, spirit was considered to be that divine power which descends upon chosen people, fills them with superhuman strength, and empowers them to do great and miraculous deeds. In the Old Testament there are many examples which prove this. The spirit of God descends upon Sampson, fills him with fighting power and Samson kills one thousand men with the jaw of an ass. The spirit of God descends upon the judges and the kings and they being filled with It perform superhuman deeds. Prophets also are filled with the same spirit and prophecy. They, under the influence of the power of the divine spirit, are raised to a state of rapture, enchantment and ecstasy. The prophet Elijah, filled with the spirit of the Lord, was taken up to heaven. Ezekiel says that the spirit of God took him between the earth and heaven and in heavenly visions brought him back to Jerusalem. This divine spirit is not given to all men, but only to special and chosen persons; all men have  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  and  $\nu\acute{\omega}\tau\eta\varsigma$ , but few have  $\rho\acute{\nu}\mu\alpha$ .

When from the Jewish thought we proceed to the New Testament, we find out that *the Spirit* is a divine gift of the Heavenly Father. It is a gift of

grace which is bestowed to men from above. It is the indwelling of the divine wisdom and power in us. The gift of the Spirit, according to St. Paul is wisdom, knowledge and light. In I Cor. the apostle mentions those gifts: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will" (12: 7-11).

The Spirit is God's free love's revelation. By it the Christian grows and is strengthened. By it he communicates with God. By it the transcendental glorified Christ indwells among the faithful, who with a close relationship towards Him transcend space and time, and, though upon earth in the meantime, dwell in heaven.

The Spirit is the source of a new life; it renews our nature and reveals to us the divine secrets. To be filled with the Spirit means to be armed with heavenly grace, divine wisdom and power. Such a person is entirely transformed, he is reborn and becomes a new creature. St. Stephen was filled with such Spirit; in this sense he was filled also with wisdom.

In the apostolic age when any person was called to a spiritual office or service, he was filled with the spirit and wisdom of God, in order that prudently and discreetly he could guide his people to truth and perfect life.

St. Stephen became famous and victorious not because of his skill, activity, and eloquence, but because he was filled with the Divine Spirit, and consequently with the wisdom of the Spirit.

Wisdom and the Spirit, both are heavenly, given by God. Those who receive them receive supernatural power, spiritual boldness, courage, and sagacity. St. Stephen had this Spirit and wisdom of God, which descending from heaven can even clean the mouth of a child who does not know how to speak and endow him with clear vision (Isaiah chap. 6, Jeremiah chap. 1).

In these times of regeneration and enlightenment in Ethiopia and Africa, we need men of faith and knowledge, who can receive and spread the heavenly wisdom. They should be men with thought, which is clear, far reaching and profound, illumined, and wise. It is often believed that men learn wisdom from their mistakes, as a mariner may learn where the boulders are by striking them. This is an expensive and dangerous way of gaining knowledge. Wisdom is better to be shown before running aground than afterwards. With the multitude of the wise lies the welfare of this country and the church. Where shall people look for this multitude, if not among the future graduates of this institution?

We should, therefore, have wisdom; but not the traditional wisdom of the serpent—mean, deceitful, selfish and cunning, which cannot be a guide

in moral questions; but Holy Wisdom. The person who is armed with such wisdom possesses integrity, humility, courage, diligence—in short, all moral qualities needed for the successful pursuit of truth.

We should possess the gifts of the Spirit, but not like Simon the Sorcerer (Acts Chap. 8) who offered money to the apostles to purchase the gifts of the Holy Spirit so that he could exploit them, but like St. Stephen whom “They were not able to resist . . . the Spirit by which he spoke,” like St. Paul, the Apostle, who was fervent in the Holy Spirit, who radiated with wisdom to the end that the gospel was preached and disseminated, even in remote lands, to the hearts of men.

It is our sincere wish and prayer that our students might have this wisdom, this Spirit and serve wholeheartedly this church and nation, for the glory of the All-Holy Trinity.

## OUR BELOVED EMPRESS

*I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.*

(Psalm 118:17)

The Empress of Ethiopia, Her Imperial Majesty Itegue Menen, died on February 15<sup>th</sup> at the age of 71. She was the beloved mother of the Imperial Family and of the Ethiopian Nation.

She was born in 1891. In her youth she showed great interest and unusual proficiency in her studies. She married His Imperial Majesty Haile Sellassie I on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 1911. She was proclaimed as Queen on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1928. Two years later, when His Imperial Majesty ascended the throne, she was crowned as Empress of Ethiopia.

Her earthly life of three score and ten years has been full of religious, educational, social, patriotic, humanitarian and philanthropic deeds, which she has achieved for the betterment, welfare, preservation, and perpetuation of the Ethiopian Nation and Church.

The verse of the Psalmist, "I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord," truly symbolizes the life of Her Imperial Majesty, who declared the works of the Lord by her exemplary piety, devoutness, godliness, and sanctity, and by her religious enterprises. She became, *par excellence*, a real Christian mother leading her children and grandchildren to a higher and nobler spiritual life. She gave financial assistance to the construction of churches and monasteries all over the Empire.

Her Majesty declared the works of the Lord by her educational achievements. She devoted her time, effort and financial means for the education of women in the Empire. She contributed large sums for the erection of schools and other educational institutions. To mention only a few: she built the Itegue Menen Girl's School. She opened St. Paul's School to train the handicapped. She erected the Technical School in Dessie. She donated the land and the buildings which now house Princess Zenebe Worq School.

Her Majesty declared the works of the Lord by her social and patriotic deeds. She founded the Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association. During the Italian invasion she organized the Ethiopian women to aid the wounded in the battlefield, and to provide food supplies to the troops at the front. During the Ethiopian national cataclysm following the occupation, when everything was shaken and when there was nothing else to hold on to, she held on to her Lord. She shared all the misfortunes which befell this nation. She comforted and encouraged His Majesty and advised him on many occasions. Through her messages she brought solace to Ethiopians living in exile. She became their example of liberty, determination and courage. She went to Jerusalem and prayed at the Holy Places for the liberation of the

Fatherland. The most merciful Father heard her supplications; Ethiopia won its liberation.

Her Majesty declared the works of the Lord through her humanitarian and philanthropic achievements. She helped the needy and alleviated the sufferings of the distressed. She opened hospitals, clinics, and other welfare institutions with her own financial means. She built the orphanage near Medhane Alem Church; in the Kolfe area St. Paul's Hospital, in Addis Ababa the Empress Menen Handicraft School. She donated abundantly, eagerly, devotedly, according to the divine command; "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth."

Her Majesty declared the works of the Lord even when misfortune and sorrow struck her several times by the loss of some members of the Imperial Family. She never failed because of her strong will power and faith in the Almighty. Truly, she bore the patience and fortitude of Job. And lastly, while she fell sick and her mortal body became a natural prey to death, her mind and spirit already had started on a road that had no visible terminus, for she believed that spiritual life is the supreme marvel and treasure of creation. Even then, she could voice courageously: "I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord."

Everything in our life—beauty, wealth, material advantages—quickly and silently, like shadows, moves towards an **end**. This end is the focus or the limit where that which exists ceases to be. This is the **finis**, the epilogue in life. But the word, end, has another significance too. It is the aim and goal of our life and deeds. It is our **telos**. Our life moves towards the finis—termination and dissolution; but our life also moves towards its telos—purpose, end, completion, fulfillment. This double significance of end expresses the whole character of our life and reveals the main problem of human existence.

The souls that have grown in character, in strength and beauty, in goodness and truth, in spiritual life, the souls that have fought the good fight and finished the course and kept the faith, the souls that have declared the works of the Lord, their life is an unfinished symphony which has moved towards telos and has achieved it. For them death is only the evening of a beautiful day, and the grave is no longer an abyss, but a passage-way leading to eternity, where *la durée réelle* predominates; where their bodies put on incorruption and immortality and where their spirits expand and their life moves into new dimensions and meanings.

Life eternal is a life of fruition, that is, of fulfilled enjoyment. Our beloved Empress Itegue Menen strove after truth, beauty and goodness. She truly achieved her end, her telos. In heaven she shall rejoice at last in the complete possession of that fulfilled enjoyment. Man's chief end is to glorify God, to declare His works, and to enjoy Him forever. On earth Her Majesty sought this end; in heaven she will attain it. This thought should

## OUR BELOVED EMPRESS

bring to all of us solace in our distress, consolation in our agony, and meaning in our transitory life.

You as students of this college will express your respect and affection for Her Majesty, by emulating her virtues and her dedication to the church, and by following the path of her shining example in the preservation and perpetuation of this nation and church. Indeed, her memory will be hallowed by you through your undying love.

Her tomb, which lies in the Holy Trinity Church by which our institution is named, will not be a mere blind alley for you, but a thoroughfare, a symbol of greatness, nobility, love, goodness, dedication and service.

We beseech the Most Merciful Father to grant Her Majesty eternal light and rest and everlasting peace and joy; and to those who remain grace and courage to follow her good example, so that death shall not be a finis for them, but a telos, the fulfillment and expansion of life. May our passing days be full and rich in lofty, noble, great, magnanimous, and illustrious deeds and achievements, so that we, too, like Her Imperial Majesty, may live and declare the works of the Lord.

## PETER'S CONFESSION

*"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philip, he asked his disciples, saying, 'Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?' And they said, 'Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elijah and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' He saith unto them, 'But whom say ye that I am?' And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered and said unto him, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ."*

(Matthew 16: 13-20. See also  
Mark 8: 27-30 & Luke 9: 18-21)

After healing the blind man at Bethsaida, Jesus took his disciples to Caesarea Philippi on the extreme northern frontier of Palestine near the source of the Jordan. This town was reestablished by Philip, the Tetrarch, in 3-2 B.C. and named, Caesarea, in honour of Caesar Augustus. It came to be called Caesarea Philippi to distinguish it from other cities bearing this name. It had a temple for Augustus built by Herod the Great c. 20 B.C. Here where people worshipped side by side the forces of nature and the incarnation of political power, the divinity of our Lord was clearly professed.

Our Lord asks for the rumours of his identity: "*Whom do men say that I the son of man am?*" (Matt. 16: 13). In Galilee at Antipas' court there was a superstitious rumour of John the Baptist's resurrection. Other men felt the messianic atmosphere and thought of Elijah, the precursor, or of Jeremiah, Israel's champion at a time of national crisis; the messianic age was associated, too, with the return of other prophets when goodwill, justice and peace would reign. But Jesus expects more from his disciples. Peter speaking for them makes an immediate reply, openly recognizing and acknowledging his messiahship, the deity of the Lord. He asserts something which was entirely different from what the people had said. Verse 20 suggests that it was a conviction which all disciples shared. The confession of Peter is the first and fundamental Christian confession of faith. It is very simple, yet rich and profound. It is a confession of Jesus Christ as a true man, as the promised messiah, and as the eternal living Son of God, hence as the God-man and Saviour of the world. In reply to this famous declaration, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,*" Jesus states

that the apostle's insight into who he is was not the result of his own cleverness or knowledge but was a revelation from God, "flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Jesus continues, "and I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Matthew is the only Gospel which mentions the passage in question. Surely, the author's intention was not to emphasize the primacy of Peter, but the confession of his faith. Any emphasis on the primacy of Peter is not confirmed in the New Testament. Such a view, on the contrary is countered, rather than supported, in the epistles, which were written earlier than Matthew. St. Paul in I Cor. 3: 11 declares that only Christ is the rock: "*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*". In Ephesians 2:20 when he mentions "*apostles and prophets*", he still insists that Jesus Christ is "*the chief corner stone.*"

We said that the primacy of Peter is not confirmed in the New Testament, but we can support the contrary view. We read in Acts (chap. 8) that as a result of Philip's preaching in Samaria many were converted. "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John" (Acts 8: 14). Here it is evident that Peter has a secondary position, for he is sent by others. Christ said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him," (John 13: 16), that is to say, the person is sent is not greater than the one who sends. The apostles did not send Peter alone, but along with John with equal authority. Is it not, therefore, inconceivable to accept Peter as the head of the apostles? Peter never considered himself above the rest of the apostles or their head; there is no reference to this even in the apostolic epistles. We should also remember that at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts chap. 15), it was St. James, not St. Peter, who presided.

The Roman Catholic Church dogmatically claims that the above mentioned passage in Matthew is literally true, and thus she makes it the validation for her temporal power, to wit, that Peter has preference over the other apostles, he is the head of the apostles and that the Christian Church is founded upon him. This would seem to be contrary to the real spirit of the Christian Church and her true faith and is also against common sense. The Christian Church has ranked all the apostles as equals without distinction.

The Church Fathers have taught that all the apostles received the same authority from Christ. In Matt. 18: 18 we read: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The fact is that these same words which were spoken to all disciples were spoken to Simon Peter in Matt. 16: 19. They were filled with the Holy Ghost in the Upper Chamber and courageously preached Christianity and became the pillars of the Church. The question of leadership and rank among the apostles was overruled when Christ said to

his disciples, "*Whosoever would be first among you, shall be your servant*" (Matt. 20: 27). All the apostles were equal, none was greater or lesser. When any question of greatness or primacy arose among them Christ dispelled that thought from their minds (Matt. 18: 1-5). If Peter had authority as head of the apostles, that is to say, supremacy over the other apostles, Christ would have given to Peter alone the authority to bind and to loose and not to all of them. The Great Master said to all his disciples without distinction, "*Receive ye The Holy Spirit*" (John 20: 22). He did not bestow less to some and more to others.

At the time of His Ascension Christ bestowed equal apostolic mission to all his disciples: "Go ye therefore, and teach all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28: 19-20). In all these it will be seen that not only is there no mention of supreme apostolic authority or primacy being bestowed on Peter, but also the pretension on the part of his disciples to be the first or the chief, was condemned by Christ.

Matthew mentions the request of the mother of the two sons of Zebedee that the one may sit on the right hand of Christ, and the other on the left hand, so that they may have a higher position over His other disciples. Christ denied this and said: "But to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but is shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father" (Matt. 20: 23). Hence if Christ Himself said that He could not bestow upon anyone of the apostles the privilege of having authority over any other, how could He have given primacy and apostolic leadership to Peter?

If we were to bring forth any verbatim proof from the Gospels, we would find that Peter is not called head of apostles, but on the contrary, "Satan": "But He [Christ] turned, and said unto Peter, 'Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men,'" (Matt. 16: 23). But without the least hesitation we feel that such word play is too ungraceful and admit that he became one of the true twelve apostles despite the fact that he had denied his Lord three times.

The Roman Church leaders often assert that Jesus had specially prayed for Simon Peter, "Whom He was to appoint the shepherd of His faithful flock and the founder of the Apostolic Order"; "That thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22: 32). These words addressed to Peter are nothing but the prediction of Peter's denial of Jesus. Christ says, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat" (Luke 22: 31). In fact Peter was the one to undergo temptation. It was he alone who denied the Lord and not the other apostles, therefore, Christ prayed for him so that his denial

would not be lasting. "But I made supplication for thee that thy faith fail not," says Christ. Peter had transgressed thrice. Christ does not say that the faith of all his disciples will be weakened and only Peter will remain steadfast in his faith, but in effect says, "Peter through thy denial thy faith shall waiver, but that denial shall not be permanent, and thou shalt not perish, but thou shalt repent and thy repentance shall be an example to thy brethren, who are stumbled by thy abjuration." In this sense does Christ say: "When once thou hast turned again thou establish thy brethren." Therefore, both the abjurer and the converted is Peter. Through his denial he had lost the sympathy of the disciples; even when the angel gave the glad tidings of the Resurrection, he left Peter out of the group of disciples and mentioned him after them (Mark 16: 7). Peter did thrice atone with his testimony of love his three denials. Thus Christ asks Peter three times: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Exceedingly embarrassed, Peter replies, "Lord, Thou knowest all things," to wit, "O Lord, you know my transgressions, unpardonable mistakes, you are merciful and forgiving, have mercy upon my miserable self, pardon my sins." There upon Christ says to him: "*Tend my sheep*," that is to say, "Be a good shepherd to my sheep and do not let them go astray." And thus Peter again receives apostolic and ministerial authority (John 21: 15-18).

Jesus had especially prayed for Peter, on account of his denials and the errors he had committed, and wanted Peter to repent so that his repentance might be constructive for his brethren and they might not stumble because of his denial. The Fathers of the Church have thus interpreted the above mentioned words, for thus they believed them and thus they preached them.

A further point of clarification is needed on Matt. 16: 18. "*Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church.*" What does this mean? Many volumes have been written dealing with the significance of this important verse. Excepting the verse Luke 22: 34, Christ always called Peter Simon. The name Peter meant rock (John 1: 40-42), hence Christ makes a metaphor out of the name Peter, given to Simon. The mother-tongue of Jesus and his disciples was Aramaic; the deliberate play on words in the Greek text in Matthew 16: 18 between the proper name **Petrus** meaning "Rock", and the common word **Petra** meaning "*a rock, a stone*", is even closer in Aramaic, where the same word Kephah served as a proper name (Cephas) and also means "A rock, a stone." Therefore, Jesus would have said to Peter: "Thou art Kephah, and on this Kephah I will build my church." In the Greek original, the words of Christ are thus: "Thou art Peter and on that Petra I will build my church." The Greek words Peter and Petra differ from each other according to gender and meaning. Petra is a feminine name hence it would not have been used for a male.

If Christ had meant to state that the Apostle Peter is the rock, in the next sentence He would have said, "upon thee" and not, "upon that rock,"

because when the sentence is changed from the second person to the third, the subject also changes in the sentence. "Upon that rock" means the faith confessed by Peter, that is, the profession of the divinity of Christ, to wit, "*Thou art the Christ, Son of the living God,*" and not Peter himself. This is the truth. The Fathers of the Church have believed in and explained it in this manner.

Moreover, the New Testament portrays Peter as hesitating and wavering: Cf. Matt. 14: 28-31; 26: 69-75; Acts 10: 13-15; Gal. 2: 11-14. It is generally suggested that Jesus gave Peter the name Rock to teach that he must be determined and firm.

\* \* \*

The Christian Church is built on Christ alone. He is "*The chief corner stone.*" He can use men like Peter, James or John, as stones in his church when they truly confess and believe that **He is the Son of the Living God.**

Yes, Christ is the Son of the Living God. If we follow Him, as the disciples learned to follow, we shall find the power in Him.

Empires and kingdoms of this world which were founded by strong and victorious men have failed. But the church, despite the threat of all demonic forces, stands indestructible, because it was founded by the Son of the Living God.

## "A MAN OF ETHIOPIA"

*"And the angel of the Lord spoke unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went; and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, 'Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.' And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Isaiah, and said, 'Understandest thou what thou readest?' And he said, 'How can I, except some man should guide me?' And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, 'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth.' The eunuch answered Philip, and said, 'I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man?' Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, 'See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?' And Philip said, 'If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were coming up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."*

(Acts 8: 26-39).

I would like to draw your attention to three points in the above passage.

1. "A man of Ethiopia . . . was returning and . . . read Isaiah the prophet."

This Ethiopian<sup>2</sup> was a eunuch; a man bodily wounded, humiliated to satisfy the cruel customs of his time, and above all to guarantee to his masters a perfect docility. But he was a man of high rank in Ethiopia, the treasurer of Candace, the queen-mother of the Ethiopians, and exercised a powerful influence.

Despite the fact that the Ethiopian was a great palace official, a wealthy and powerful man, he was very much interested in religion. Probably,

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<sup>2</sup> Here we are not taking into consideration textual criticism which considers Ethiopians as Nubians, who lived between Assuan and Khartoum.

when he was in Ethiopia, he had heard from the Jews about God and the temple of Jerusalem. So, from that far country, the minister of finance had made a pilgrimage to the Holy City with the deep hope and conviction that there he would find the Truth, God.

No doubt, while in Jerusalem, the eunuch had visited the temple, attended the sumptuous ceremonies and heard theological discussions between the Sadducees and the Pharisees. But all these had not satisfied him, for he was seeking the ultimate Truth, and not being able to find a satisfactory answer, he turned to the Holy Scriptures, to the fifty-third chapter of the prophet Isaiah, where the prophecy of the Suffering Servant is told, who was led like a lamb to the slaughter. This passage, more than any other in the Old Testament, colors our Lord's language about His life and mission. But the minister of Candace does not understand the passage, for the Bible is not a collection of precepts with automatic responses, but the key to Truth which can be comprehended by guidance and deep meditation.

This Ethiopian was a man who was seeking diligently, sincerely, and honestly something more than he had ever known before, and yet not understanding what it all meant. Philip found in him a listening ear, a receptive frame of mind. The modesty and thirst for instruction of this prominent Ethiopian minister is very remarkable.

Eusebius speaks of him as the first Gentile convert, and as the first fruits of the faithful in the whole world. Irenaeus hints that he has preached the gospel to the Ethiopians, by which the prophecy of Psalm 68: 31, was fulfilled: “Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.” Later traditions speak of Candace as baptized by him.

2. The Spirit said unto Philip, “Go near and join thyself . . .” Philip is the second person in this narration. He is a typical representative of the early Christian Church. He was “full of the Spirit and of wisdom” and was elected deacon in the Jerusalem Church. Philip and his six comrades were elected and appointed by the apostles to look after the daily distribution in which their widows were overlooked. Their principal task was to prevent the Jewish elements among the Christians of Jerusalem, from oppressing the believers of different origins under the pretext that they were recently converted into the new faith and therefore, that they were an inferior race.

Philip was directed by the Holy Spirit to leave Jerusalem and to go southward by the desert route. The Christian teacher or the missionary has to place himself continually under divine direction. He has to go forward and preach. So, as Philip traveled he met the Ethiopian journeying by chariot. He climbed into the chariot where the eunuch was sitting, and opening his mouth, began to explain the passage which the Ethiopian was reading, “and preached unto him Jesus.”

3. “Understandest thou what thou readest? . . . How can I, except some one should guide me?”

## “A MAN OF ETHIOPIA”

The eunuch from Ethiopia had an existential question in his mind. Philip had the answer to the question. This is the main reason for their meeting each other. Upon the demand of the Ethiopian minister Philip explains the text of the Prophet Isaiah. There wasn't any theological, philosophical or philological question to explain. Philip had to convey the good news, the tidings which had brought joy to the world, and which the Ethiopian himself was unable to find. After he understood the meaning of the passage he asked to be baptized. He descended into water, which was the visible expression of his faith, the certitude of a spiritual transformation.

There are two ways to disseminate our ideas and beliefs. The first is to live them ourselves, to practice what we preach. The way to attract people to a cause which we think is worth everything in life is to demonstrate it ourselves. To spread our Christian belief is to live it. The early Christians drew the heathen to themselves because they had something which the heathen recognized as supremely worthwhile. In the second century, Tertullian wrote, "See how these Christians love one another." This is the reason why Christianity spread.

The other way to spread our convictions and belief is to talk about it, by passing the fire from one person to another, by persuasion. When people saw the early Christians they said, "Look at them!" and the exclamation was followed by, "Listen to them!" When Philip climbed into the chariot where the eunuch was sitting, he opened his mouth and began to explain the meaning of the Scriptures. He preached about Jesus. Have we ever sat down with our contemporaries and talked about our Christian faith?

Your ultimate aim as a seminarian should be to live the Christian faith and to disseminate it everywhere. If you do not prepare yourself for this noble cause, you are not in harmony with the aim of this institution. The civilization of this country is based on its moral and religious principles. The wise student, the earnest student, the student of courage, conviction and vision strives to spread those principles. Indeed, I cannot understand how any seminarian can be content to end his life without contributing to his church and country more than he has received therefrom.

Nineteen centuries ago the Ethiopian eunuch discovered the Truth. Your forefather shed their blood to maintain, preserve and perpetuate the same Truth not only in Ethiopia, but all over the African Continent.

God, in his inscrutable providence will help you.

## WHAT DOES LEISURE MEAN?

The new generation all over the world is being faced by a grave crisis. It is the increase of leisure time which has grown to great magnitude among the American people, and which is becoming a perilous threat to all mankind. Eric Sevareid states that the most dangerous threat to American Society is the *rise of leisure*, and the fact that those who have the most leisure are the least equipped to make use of it.

In the old days leisure was a privilege shared by very few, by an aristocratic élite. It was a fringe benefit in human life, but now it is becoming the center of life, the heart of man's daily existence, threatening to replace work as the basis of culture. This revolution in leisure is creating a dangerous situation in man's life.

The new African generation is being very much influenced by the American conception of leisure, which means having an abundance of good time, free time. We can liken this new situation, as Russell Lynes does, to a "primitive society that has known only stone tools and then suddenly is presented with mechanized farm equipment. Its work is quickly done, its fields are tilled by a few men with a few machines, while others stand around and watch. It seems the millennium has arrived. Then the watchers grow restless, feel distrustful, and they have to change their tribal rites, revamp their moral codes and their social customs, or else fly apart as a community," (*The Pressures of Leisure*, p. 1).

Before we consider leisure in its relation or relevance to morality, religion and theology, we would like to define the meaning of leisure. The etymological derivation of the word is interesting. In Greek the word for leisure is **skole**, and in Latin **scola**, from which the English word "school" is derived. Therefore, leisure in this sense is an aspect of the learning process. To have leisure means to have the spirit of learning and to discover ones own self. Robert Lee says, "Leisure provides the climate for the growth of man's whole being—for contemplation of man's ultimate concerns, for activities which enrich the mind, strengthen the body, and restore the soul. Like education, leisure takes discipline, training, cultivation of habits and tastes, discriminating judgments. It is not something one drifts into. Leisure is the time for discovery—or better, self-discovery . . . . Rather, it is the freeing of the mind from immediate habitual concerns to a consideration of ultimate concern. It is a time for rediscovering the meaning and purpose of life, for seeing the pursuit of living in its wholeness. Leisure is the occasion for the development of broader and deeper perspective and for renewing the mind, body and spirit," (*Theology Today*, April 1962, "Religion and Leisure", p. 43).

Leisure, therefore, does not mean spare or left over time, idle time, a holiday or a vacation. It is the edification of our total being. It implies something that must be earned. As Joseph Piper points out, leisure is "the

*occasion and the capacity for steeping oneself in the whole of creation."* Leisure thus embraces the whole individual, his mind, body and soul.

Our age is characterized by boredom, inner impoverishment and emptiness of the individual. This situation arises from the fact that his time is without content; it is unfulfilled time. Modern man is drifting along in bewilderment by chance and by circumstances, and thus he is unable to cope with leisure. Robert M. MacIver describes this situation as follows: "Back in the days when unremitting toil was the lot of all but the very few and leisure still a hopeless yearning, hard and painful as life was, it still felt real. People were in rapport with the small bit of reality allotted to them, the sense of the earth, the tang of the changing seasons, the consciousness of the eternal ongoing of birth and death. Now, when so many have leisure, they become detached from themselves, not merely from the earth. From all the widened horizons of our greater world a thousand voices call us to come near, to understand, and to enjoy, but our ears are not trained to hear them. The leisure is ours but not the skill to use it. So leisure becomes a void, and from the ensuing restlessness men take refuge in delusive excitations or fictitious visions, returning to their own earth no more" (*The Pursuit of Happiness*, pp. 54-55).

Many people who retire spend their time in leisure pursuits—perhaps hunting or fishing, or playing golf. But often they become disillusioned "and find their days of retirement a terrible burden to bear." When leisure is devoid of meaning life becomes dreadful and instead of men killing time, time kills men. Retirement without work is death. To indulge in idleness means to negate life; to toil and sweat means to bring meaning to life. Work is so identical with life that when it ceases, life too comes to a halt. Work brings us great joy, and in that joy we find an abiding joy.

Religion has been the source of leisure pursuits. Holidays which originated as "*holy days*" are the main source of leisure. Feast days and saint's days, of which the church has a great number, are days of religious festivities, occasions for the faithful to enjoy the blessings of God. But, now these great occasions have become leisure days, characterized by emptiness and meaningless. Even Sundays are losing their original significance and are passing from a holy day to a holiday.

According to the Bible, God is the Lord of all time. That is why Christianity takes time very seriously. Time is the gift of God. Therefore, idleness, killing time or abusing it is to deny God and reject Christ. We can kill time, but time will not die; at the end we shall become its victim. We can redeem time from insignificance when we find meaning and purpose in leisure pursuits. Leisure is not left over time, nor "is it merely filling up time with a succession of activities;" rather it is fulfilled time, time redeemed from insignificance and meaninglessness.

Another point to consider about leisure lies in Christian thinking about creation. In the first chapter of Genesis we read: "In the beginning God

created the heavens and the earth . . . . And God saw everything that he made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day . . . . And on the seventh day God finished his work . . . . So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation." The fifth commandment states: "Six days you shall labour, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and sea and all that is in them, and rested the Seventh day" (Exodus 20: 8-11).

The doctrine of creation first points to the significance of human life. "It suggests that life's fulfillment is not to be identified completely with work, but that leisure (or rest) is an indispensable ingredient in the rhythm of work and rest and worship" (Robert Lee, *op. cit.* p. 54). "Man's work, like his creator's is crowned with his rest, and his chief end is not to labour but to enjoy God forever." (Alan Richardson, *The Biblical Doctrine of Work*, p. 53). That enjoyment signifies growth in spirit.

A second meaning of the doctrine of creation is that there is a time set aside, a time for man to find his rest in God. This is the significance of Christ's invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls," (Matt. 11: 28-29). Rest means the fullness of joy in God's works.

Leisure concerns man's entire life. Just as God rested on the seventh day and saw that, "*the work which he had made was good*," so also leisure leads man to evaluate the totality of his own life. Such self-examination leads man to self-understanding.

Socrates said, "*The unexamined life is not worth living.*" This is true because unexamined life is an un-lived life. Leisure provides the occasion for self-examination, which does not mean retreat into an inner private world, or a removal from communal and social concerns. Leisure leads to deeper involvement and more responsible decision making.

We, the Christian young generation, should take time very seriously because God has chosen to incarnate himself in time, in history. God has taken our time seriously. Therefore, leisure is not empty time, but fulfilled, redeemed and responsible time. If time for the modern man is becoming filled with increased opportunities for leisure, then leisure must receive more serious regard for self-discovery.

Mortimer Adler has said, "The good life depends on labour, but it consists of leisure." Leisure is the life of learning, it is continuous growth and renewal of the whole life—mind, body and spirit. It is a free gift open to all men everywhere and in all times.

## THE ROLE OF FASTING IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

We are in Lent, therefore, it is fitting that I speak to you about the role of fasting in our spiritual life. First I would like to take a historical glance.

From old times, among the Jews as also among many other peoples, fasting was a religious custom and was primarily observed on the following occasions:

1. **On the occasion of an exceptional religious activity or mission.** Moses, the great leader of Israel, fasted forty days and forty nights on Mount Sinai before he received the ten commandments; "he did neither eat bread, nor drink water" (Exodus 34: 28). The same was done by the Prophet Daniel when he prepared himself for a divine revelation: "And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes," (Daniel 9: 3. See also 10: 2).

2. **On the occasion of sorrow when it was desired to express mourning.** King David and the men that were with him mourned, and wept and fasted for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord, because they were fallen by the sword (II Samuel 1: 12).

3. **On the occasion of repentance as an act of humility, contrition and self denial.** When King Ahab repented for the sins which he had committed he tore his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh and fasted (I Kings 21: 27).

In the Old Testament, special circumstances are mentioned for fasting. King David fasted and lay all night upon the earth for the sickness of his child (II Samuel 12: 16). When Prophet Nehemiah saw the wall of Jerusalem broken down and the gates burned with fire, he mourned and fasted (Nehemiah 1: 4). The people of Israel has done the same during distress and calamities (II Chron. 20: 3; I Mac. 3: 47).

After the return of the Jews from the captivity, they began to observe the anniversaries of the misfortunes which had befallen them, as fast days (Zechariah 7: 5) and as a means of consciousness of their sins (Nehemiah 9: 1 cf. I Chron. 21: 9). While fasting they used to tear their clothes and put ashes on their heads.

In ancient times all races and peoples generally believed that through foods evil forces entered into the body, and therefore fasting was necessary to keep the body from their influence. In mysterious cults, before the rite of initiation, fasting was considered indispensable.

Fasting was introduced into Christianity through Judaism. Christ was not against this Jewish custom, but through it he condemned the vain-glory and ostentation of the Pharisees (Matt. 6: 16-18). The Jews fasted Monday and Thursday. No special days were fixed for the Christians. Gentile Christians fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays.

At the time of St. Paul there wasn't a general custom for fasting (Romans 14: 5-6). In the second century, according to Tertullian (*De*

*Oratione*, XVIII) fasting was voluntary. Afterwards it became obligatory, but people were left free to fast for a long or short period.

In principle Christian fasting was founded on Christ's Passion. The commemoration of Christ's death which was performed on Friday seems to be quite an old custom. Wednesday's fast at first was not connected to a certain motive. Subsequently, it was associated with the memory of the Lord's betrayal, and also with the plot which the Jews conspired against Jesus.

Generally, from old times fasting was accepted by the Christians as a sign of piety. Like prayer and charity, it was regarded as pleasing and gratifying. Persecutions and misfortunes were often causes for Christians to abstain from food and drinks. In general, in such circumstances, bishops assigned a fasting day for the faithful.

The old belief, according to which evil forces entered into the body through foods and drinks, had its role and influence on the Christian Church also. This can explain the fasts which were practiced before religious ceremonies and feasts, and through which the body could remain clean and unspotted and could be worthy to receive Holy Communion and be strengthened with it.

In the Christian churches, through the centuries fasting became a general practice and was connected with special sacraments and feasts. Thus, from the beginning, before absolution and ordination fasting was necessary. Paul and Barnabas fasted before being ordained (Acts 13: 2). According to *The teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (VII. 4), before baptism the minister and the catechumen had to fast and the faithful received communion after fasting. According to the information given by Hippolytus, before receiving communion, fasting became a rule in the third century. No Christian could receive Holy Communion, if he had tasted food. This rule was rigorously observed in the fourth and fifth centuries at the time of Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Naziansus and Augustine. From such customs developed fasting before great feasts, especially before Easter.

Easter was the oldest feast which filled the faithful with great hope, joy, and happiness. Therefore, the Christian Church considered it proper to assign a fast for it. Already, in the second century, this custom was in vogue. According to Tertullian, fasting was for six days, that is the Holy Week. In the fourth century when Christians were severely persecuted, forty days of fasting prior to Easter was established following the forty-day fasts of Christ (Matt. 4: 2), Moses (Exod. 34: 28) and Elijah (I Kings 19: 8).

In the fourth century forty days of fasting was not required from all the Christians. According to John Chrysostom (*Hom. XVI ad popul Antiochen*) many Christians fasted for only two or three weeks. Generally, fasting consisted of abstaining from foods from morning till evening, or taking very light food once a day. In the first centuries, only bread, water and salt were

allowed; later fruits and eggs also were tolerated. At this time, fasting is described by an Armenian divine as follows:

"As to the reducing of foods . . . some are contented only with vegetables, some solely with cereal, some only with a little bread, and some with more, some add to this, also, simple buttermilk. There are some who refrain only from drinking wine, some from drinking buttermilk. And there are some who abstain from feasts and openly reject and give up the delicate and delicious foods; they are contented only with one kind of food or with a little nourishment which keeps [the body] alive. . . . One should eat little, drink little, sleep little, and pray continuously."

It was possible to dissolve the fast when the person was an infant, or an old or sick man. In these circumstances the church instructed that light foods were to be used.

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This mere glance over the history of fasting indicates that Lent is, first of all, a season in which the spiritual life is realized through devotion and ennobling of the soul. In Ethiopia it is a custom for people to cultivate the land of their governors for a few days during the year without remuneration. The purpose is to render a yearly service to their lords. This period is called Kudad. The term for the Lenten season is Kudade. Allegorically it means the period allocated to the service of God. During this period the faithful serve God by depriving themselves of bodily pleasures and enjoyment, through fasting, giving alms, meditating, praying, and in other ways ennobling the soul.

Lent is a summons to holiness; an admonition to lift up man from life's trivialities, bodily weaknesses, vices and earthly transitoriness and to achieve a more intimate relationship with divine presence. It is a means of repentance, contrition, self-concentration, cogitation and prayer, by which the creature ardently surrenders himself to divine renewing power.

To reach that lofty life, it is necessary that temperance and restraint be put on bodily pleasures and needs. The necessities of body be reduced to their minimum to make room for spiritual gain and fervent living. In such wise, the person being alleviated of the exigencies of his finite body, devotes himself to prayer and meditation. When Moses was getting ready to receive with divine inspiration and lucidity the Tablets of Law for his people, he fasted for forty days to lesson the needs of his corporeal life and revived the ardor of his soul.

Secondly, Lent is a period when our soul is accustomed to dominate over our bodily needs and proclivities. The soul, in its own ability, is taught to rule over bodily lusts and longings. Thus, the soul is strengthened and in general, more successfully effectuates its moral values. The soul passes through a special period of training and creates in itself a permanent self-

government. The will also is strengthened and becomes more fruitful in devising the way of life. When the Prophets, St. John the Baptist, our Lord Jesus Christ, saints and great religious thinkers were undertaking religious and social tasks that required vigour of will and spirit, they fasted for a period to train and strengthen themselves.

Thirdly, Lent gives us an opportunity for self-examination; we reappraise ourselves, our lives, by reconsidering our faults and shortcomings, then with a spiritual zeal, we prepare ourselves for a new and better life. We cannot rectify our lives until objectively we do see and examine ourselves. Man must see his own real image in order to strive to make the inner changes which will reconstruct in him the likeness of God, which was obliterated. This was the reason why at the eve of the feasts, through which the divine joy was to be shared entirely with a clean heart, men in a period of repentance examined their own lives in order to present them cleansed in body and soul. Yet, fasting is also a call for serious reflection, not as much for our earthly life, as for the vexatious problems of life to come. Let us ask ourselves:

Do I have an upright conduct?

Is the general tendency of my life right?

What shall my end, my telos be?

Shall I perish as though I had not been born, or shall I live forever?

Any person who asks himself these vital and supremely serious questions, ponders upon the significance of his terrestrial life and upon his life hereafter. Is he ready to face the life to come? This is the most essential problem for every man. But alas, nowadays, mankind seems to be indifferent to the most important question which concerns the ultimate meaning of his existence. Unfortunately, man is overwhelmed by earthly, finite and transitory problems. He wants to find a solution for them and to discover a means to warrant and perpetuate his existence upon this world. But, man does not think that to live this life better nor to face victoriously the life hereafter, which is the only way, is the way of *virtue*. Yet to return to virtue, from the path of which we have gone astray, the only means is repentance.

We eagerly believe that we will be saved when we heartily repent for the faults and sins which we have committed, and in that repentance we are given the strength to attain the path of virtue. This is essentially the role of fasting.

Perhaps to many people these words shall sound strange and absurd, and to some an anachronism. Let us not deceive ourselves. At present in this Atomic Age, when mankind is in travail, from all parts of the world intelligent and wise men are crying, "We are on the abyss of destruction; we want salvation." The gospel declares, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," (Luke 13: 5). Medicine cures the body; repentance and contrition heal the souls afflicted by distress and agony. How true, realistic and

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remorseful are the words of the Prodigal Son, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee." That is the utterance of a penitent soul which has been renewed, regenerated and purified. We too, can utter the same words if we are reborn, regenerated from within, transformed like the Prodigal Son. We heartily wish that during the Lenten season, through confession, contrition and repentance many might hear the words of the heavenly Father: "*My son was lost and is found*" (Luke 15: 24).

## THE TWO BUILDERS

*"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."*

(Matt. 7: 24-27)

These closing words concerning the parable of the two builders, are the climax of Christ's most famous Sermon on the Mount. The wise and the foolish man undertook to build houses; both resolutely set to work and finished their buildings. If one had looked at the two houses they would have seemed equally complete, and yet there was a great difference between the two. One had a deep-hidden rock as its foundation, the other had no foundation. It was built on sand.

Of the two builders, one was a thoughtful man, the other thoughtless; one substantial, the other superficial; one earnest and sincere, the other content with an unexamined life; one deliberately planned and built for the future; the other thoughtlessly planned and built only for the present. In due time the first builder rejoiced as he saw the edifice outlive the storm, while the other gazed in dismay at the total destruction of his house.

The wise man had to spend much time and labour in underground work. Luke says that he dug deep and laid his house's foundation on a rock. Certainly, such an edifice costs more to build, but it will be worth the cost because it will last. The thoughtless man built his house more quickly; but all haste is not good speed. Something built too quickly cannot be well constructed and lasting. Walls that have no foundation, will eventually gape wide, crack, and the collapse.

In Luke this parable begins with the words, "Whosoever cometh to me . . ." Christ is the Great Architect, the designer of the house of character. Our lives can stand only as they are grounded in the truth of Him who is the foundation (I Cor 3: 11), the rock. The wise man struggles hard to reach the depths where the truth is found to provide the foundation for his life.

Likewise, Christ is the builder: "Whosoever . . . heareth my sayings, and doeth them." It is not enough to hear Christ's message, understand it, remember it, talk about it and defend it. We must hear and **do** it. Our Lord indicates that the wise man is the one who not only hears, but **does**. It is not the hearer, but the **doer** of the Word that is blessed. The thoughtful

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man listens to Christ and ever tries to fulfill the truth received. He then becomes strong and immovable, for the truth is inwrought in him. Day by day he grows in character and spirit, and day by day the edifice of his is built. In his sermon Christ shows us the stones which we should build into the structure of our character—purity, courage, sincerity, benevolence, a passion for righteousness.

The frank realism found in the story of the two builders is that every house must be tested. Seasons follow one another. The winter storms will follow the calm breezes of the fall. In the rhythms of life none will escape testing. No man will escape testing, or the claims of responsibility. Unless you have a good foundation to begin with which is laid in true sincerity, sacrifice and faith, you shall not succeed in the future. The thoughtful man provides for himself, and for others, a refuge in the time of storm. His house stands, whereas the foolish man builds on surface values and his building is soon destroyed. Christ is the rock of eternity. Everything besides Him is sand.

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Our age is characterized by marvelous scientific and technological achievements. Man, the creature of God, is striving to conquer space, the planets and even the stars, and thus is hoping to become the master of the universe. Yet, despite all of his achievements man is living in anxiety because he is concerned lest these very achievements result in his total annihilation. What will man's destiny be if he cannot sue his new discoveries for his own good? If knowingly or unknowingly they are deviated from their aim, mankind will be blasted to perdition.

Let us not be misunderstood. We do not mean that mankind has not had anxieties in the past. As Arnold Toynbee, in his monumental work "*A Study of History*", points out, man has always had epochs of anguish and struggle. Therefore, in this age we cannot expect to be exempted from them. But today, those fears are more vigorous and dreadful.

Why?

The real cause is man's lack of religion and depth of spiritual life. Some people might object to this because they will assert that at present more effort and energy are spent in achieving religious and benevolent aims, than was spent in the past. This might be true, but generally in all this effort, the spirit, which is the ground of our life and which leads us to God, is lacking. Others might also disapprove of our notion declaring that a deeper religious experience is accompanying the closer contact which is found between the nations and peoples of the world today. The same situation also applies to Christian churches and denominations. Though differing totally in their traditions, rites, government and dogmas, many of them are characterized by the readiness to enter into dialogue. Leaders of these

churches and denominations meet in conversation, not for a clashing of ideas, but for mutual understanding and cooperation, and because of a common quest for unity. In the lives of nations and churches, attempts at unity and understanding are yet superstructures upon which it would not be possible to lay a foundation for religion and faith.

The climax of the Sermon on the Mount according to St. Luke, is as follows: "Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like. He is like a man which built an house, and dug deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great," (Luke 6: 47-49). Man in this era is in agony and distress because he has not built his life upon Christ, who alone is the foundation. Present day man is not laying his foundation in the depths upon the rock, but in the shallows, "upon the earth." Man's present anxiety, anguish and the fear of insecurity will disappear only when he seeks no other foundation, rock or refuge "than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3: 11). In the Old Testament God is the Rock which strengthens and keeps Israel. He delivers Israel from all perils and tribulation. In the New Testament that Rock is Christ. He is the ground of our existence. He will keep and save mankind. It is absolutely of no use to seek any other basis of life.

The Ethiopian nation, like the rest of mankind, is faced with these same problems. The Holy Orthodox Church of Ethiopia, the ground of our existence through the vicissitudes of the centuries in Ethiopia today confronts many problems and difficulties. The question which many people often ask, is, "How many young men in the present generation are truly and sincerely attached to the traditions and the faith of their forefathers?" How many of our young people are wise builders? Do those who speak for the Church and defend it actually build their lives and activities upon it? At Lalibela, our forefathers cared churches out of rock. But even more than that they lived and preserved their culture, their faith and dogmatic individuality, because they were thoughtful builders and built their house "upon the rock," which was Jesus Christ and not "upon the sand." That rock must also be the foundation for our divine faith, our holy church. But if we try to build our house upon other foundations—superficial knowledge, indifference, complacency—it will surely fall down, because it is built "upon the sand."

I remember seeing an interesting play during the Second World War. One of the scenes depicted some distinguished rich people assembled around a table making plans to secure world safety and peace with their wealth. But an invisible hand wrote on the wall, "*No foundation*," meaning that all such schemes and decisions based upon wealth alone, are without

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foundation and are doomed to failure. Later around the same table groups of scientists, diplomats and military men came one after another, all with the aim of bringing to mankind safety, peace and happiness by their knowledge, diplomacy and military strength. The same hand again inscribed on the wall, "No foundation."

History validates this play. Empires, kingdoms, leagues and nations collapse not necessarily because of political structure, but because of the inadequacy of ethical and spiritual foundations undergirding them. Without Christ no lasting building can be erected on any other foundations no matter how wise and skillful are the builders, because Christ alone is the only true foundation, the rock which sustains our life. The Holy Scripture says, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." Without Christ man cannot be saved from the anxieties which upset him. Without the "Living Stone" (I Peter 2: 4), who is the Christ, no safety, peace and happiness can be achieved among nations and peoples. Without the concurring aid of Christ, no nation will succeed in the building of the world any better than the builders of Babel.

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This College should be an institution for the spiritual strengthening of souls—souls who dig down into the hidden depths and lay their foundation on rock; souls who possess earnestness of purpose, eagerness of desire, integrity of character and spiritual insight. To achieve this, our students must learn the meaning of the parable of the two builders which teaches us that first, we must **hear** the words of our Lord, second, we must **dig** into their significance, and third, we must **do** them.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



His Grace Terenig Poladian, a Bishop of the Armenian Orthodox Church, has, since 1960, served on loan to the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, as Dean of the Theological College of The Holy Trinity. In addition to the present book, Bishop Poladian has authored several volumes of theological and historical interest in English and in Armenian. He has also served as editor of two Armenian periodicals.

A Lebanese citizen, born January 1, 1914, in Kessab, Syria, he studied at Aleppo College in Syria and at the Armenian Theological Seminary in Antelias (Beirut), Lebanon, before going to the United States for graduate work in 1938. There he earned advanced degrees in theology, church history and education, from General Theological Seminary, Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University, before being awarded the Ph.D. degree from New York University in 1944.

Bishop Poladian's career has been devoted almost entirely to the field of Christian education. Prior to his study in America he was Director of Najarian School in Kessab, Syria and a teacher in the Armenian Theological Seminary. Upon the completion of his academic training he returned to Beirut where he served as Dean of the Seminary for about twelve years. In the midst of his career, His Grace, who was consecrated Bishop at the age of thirty three, has maintained a wide interest in the affairs of his Church. He has traveled widely as pastor to various Armenian Communities in America, Europe, Africa and the Far East, and has served as representative to various conferences of the World Council of Churches.

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS OF THE AUTHOR

- THE PROFESSION OF FAITH OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH.
- THE NESTORIAN AND CHALCEDONIAN CONTROVERSIES AS TREATED IN THE ARMENIAN ACCOUNTS.
- A COLLECTION OF PRAYERS FROM THE ANCIENT ARMENIAN BOOK OF OFFICE AND DIVINE LITURGY.
- THE EDUCATIONAL ROLE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH.
- AN ARMENIAN ACCOUNT OF ISLAM.
- GREGORY OF TATHEV AGAINST THE MANICHEES.
- THE SACRAMENTS OF THE HOLY APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF ARMENIA.
- EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE.
- THE PROPOSED ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF POPE JOHN XXIII AND THE QUESTION OF THE UNION OF CHURCHES
- THE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF MALABAR
- A COLLECTION OF ARMENIAN MANUSCRIPTS DATING FROM THE SIXTH TO EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.
- A COLLECTION OF ANCIENT AND MODERN ARMENIAN ART.