

JUST ONE OF SALEM'S

Sunday Sermons

(By Edwin Sherwood, Kimball School of Theology, Department of Biblical Interpretation.)

Text: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."—Revelation 2:7.

These words remind us of the first tragedy that occurred at the dawn of human history. Man, created in innocence was placed in a world filled with all good things for him to enjoy. Among the trees of Eden was the Tree of Life, and the word said, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat." The tree of life was thus included. We understand the tree of life as it grew in the primeval Eden to be a symbol of the life which is the privilege of mankind in their days of innocence—that fellowship with God, which is the food of the spirit on which to maintainance of the spiritual life depends.

But the joys of paradise could not be permanently possessed until character is acquired in the school of moral trial, and so to the liberties of Eden one and only one restriction was placed. Of one tree they were commanded not to eat, and were warned of death as the consequence of disobedience. The violation of that command brought death, with separation from God, for this is what spiritual death means, and exclusion henceforth from access to the tree of life. But amid the gathering shadows of that tragedy there appears a gleam of hope. It was declared that eternal enmity should be put between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. "He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Thus the race of men started on their career in history, a career blackened by countless tragedies, filled with sorrows and disappointments, with "the trail of the serpent" over all their endeavors. But amid all the gloom there was still the gleam of hope; the victory of the serpent was only for a time. Eventually the seed of the woman should bruise his head. Cheered by this hope the moral leaders of mankind strove to lead men upward, under God's guidance, to higher and better things.

Thus we all begun the world-wide and age-long conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, between the kingdom of God and the power of the devil, between the forces of right and the forces of wrong, between those agencies which make for the highest interests of man, and whereon the moral battle is fought, and those that make for his fields of life a son or a daughter of Eve resists temptation, chooses for God and righteousness and self-denial and self-sacrifice against the call to sin, there the serpent's head is being bruised.

The climax of this conflict occurred in the wilderness of Judea, when, after his baptism, the Son of God met the devil in single combat, not with carnal weapons, but with the spirit sword of the word of God—met him and vanquished him—"was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." And in the light of that victory he challenges every son of Adam to follow him—to follow him in the conflict with the seed of the serpent, and to share with him in the thrill of the victory that is to be won. And from his Father's throne above he sends down the message, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life."

This is a call to every one of us to enlist in this age-long battle with the seed of the serpent. Which shall we be—volunteers or sinkers? There will be no draft, for God will have none but volunteers in his army. He bids us fight to overcome, and to expect the victory. We are to overcome first on the field of our own souls. We are to bruise the serpent's head, as his seed appears in our own hearts. We are to put down our own self-will, our selfishness, our pride of heart, our love of pleasure for its own sake, our love of ease, our ambition for the empty baubles which the world can give, we are to make ourselves absolutely submissive to the will of our commander. Having thus overcome ourselves, we can then overcome the world. We can overcome its solicitations to evil, its persecutions and its sneers. We can fight the evil in the world for the sake of making the world a better world. It is part of the duty of the Christian soldier to put down those agencies in this world, which are debauching and demoralizing his fellow men. He must conquer the organized selfishness which is responsible for the confusion, the unrest, the enmities, the crimes, the oppressions with which this world is full. He must contribute his share toward leaving this world a better world than he found it. And above all the din of the conflict he still hears the voice of his great commander: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

This means that the victors in the moral battle of life, who have "fought the good fight," and have "overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony," who have held their part of the line, and have met and bruised the seed of the serpent; these shall be admitted to the privileges of paradise, from which the race of men by sin was banished. Of course we do not now mean a material paradise. We are not in this connection interested in the geographical location of the primitive Eden. But we mean the spiritual realities which the story of Eden presents in figure and symbol. And among the privileges there included is "to eat of the tree of life." We would not be so bold as to imagine that we can see to the depth of the meaning of this symbol. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." But it certainly must mean among other things the restoration to the fellowship of God, the heart to heart fellowship with the living God.

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which is the essence of eternal life. The depths of its significance can be faintly apprehended here in the pure joys of the heart which the child of God experiences when he conquers self and surrenders his life's all to God's service. But the fullness of its meaning will be seen, when "we shall know as we are known" in the great hereafter. Thank God I already know something of the tree of life. I have tasted of its fruit when the life of the eternal has thrilled through my soul in the uplifting joys of God's service. But I shall know more of it some day, for I expect my soul to keep on growing. And when earth's battles have been fought, and its victories won, and "I shall awake in his likeness," then shall I fully know in all its depths what it means "to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

Lecture Recital Program Gives Bright Numbers

The following program will be rendered in Ralph Thomas' lecture recital in the First M. E. church tonight at 8 p. m.:

- "Cotton for Cotton"..... Miss Mary Notson
- "A Home Made Fairy Tale"..... James Whitcomby Riley
- "America for Me"..... Henry Van Dyke
- "At the Glee Club Concert"..... Lindsay Bishop
- "A Letter"..... Robert Browning
- "My Star"..... Robert Browning
- "A Sonnet"..... Elizabeth B. Browning
- "Arena Scenes from Quo Vadis"..... Henry Sieniewicz
- Ralph Thomas
- "Offerings from St. Cecilia"..... Babette Evelyn DeLong
- "By the Waters of Minnetonka"..... Margaret Cook
- Scenes from "A School for Scandal"..... Richard Sheridan
- Lord Teasle, Ralph Thomas
- Lady Teasle, Mary Notson.

FULTON MARCHED AGAIN
San Francisco, April 13.—Fred Fulton has been matched to box Jack Thompson, negro, in Milwaukee, Or. on April 21, it was learned today. Thompson comes from Tulsa, Okla.

Cherrians And Shrine Club To Meet Tonight

The regular meeting of the Salem Cherrians, in which the Shrine club here will participate, will be held at the Commercial club this evening at eight o'clock. The entire entertainment program for the season, when the Elks and Shriners from all parts of the country will visit this city during convention time, will be arranged at this meeting. Plans for participation by the Cherrians in the Portland-Rose festival this year also will be made.

Preceding the meeting the Commercial club the Council of Nobles of the Cherrians will meet at The Spa. In this caucus tentative plans for the future will be made. Entertainment and refreshments will be features of the meeting tonight. All members of the organizations are urged to attend.

Fails To Report Smash; Arrested

Charged with failing to report an accident, Glen W. Porter, 22, of Auna ville, was arrested Monday by Constable Walter DeLong. When arraigned in Judge Unruh's court he pleaded guilty, and upon the recommendation of District Attorney Gehlbach sentence was continued.

Porter, it is alleged, on March 5 drove his auto into Kelly Mattison while he was riding a bicycle on State street. Young Mattison sustained injuries, and the bicycle was wrecked.

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just about balancing the number of jobs open in the city and surrounding country, the labor situation here is declared good, in the weekly report made by City Recorder Race for submission to the federal employment bureau at San Francisco. "There is plenty of work; and there is no short age of labor," the report states.

Last week, according to the report, 16 men and women were placed in jobs, as follows: one watchman, two in sawmills, one woman cook, four in shipyards, and eight in jobs around the city.

Five suits have been filed in the circuit court at Astoria by the state industrial accident commission against Clatsop county firms and individuals to recover amounts alleged to be due for fees.

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