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## C H R I S T I A N      D I S C I P L E S H I P

### I N T R O D U C T I O N

What is the essence of Christian Discipleship? Is it a matter of discipline, of asceticism, of giving away all our money? Or is it a matter rather of translating into our experience the fundamental significance of the Hellenic 'Know thyself' and 'In nothing too much'?

On the question of what to do with our money, Mr. Roy Coad has many perceptive things to say in his contribution. We need to recognise that in Christian conscience we must provide things needful in the sight of all, in Christian commitment we must provide for the needs of Christ's Church, and we may then know in Christian conviction - a conviction that will have practical consequences - that God supplies all our need. Perhaps we need to learn the simple lesson of taking gratefully what He gives?

The other two approaches to discipleship - self-knowledge or sweet reasonableness - would present us with a two-fold view of the call by which alone we come to discipleship at all. Are we to concentrate on the didactics or the dynamics? We preach for souls but we preach to minds. The negro preacher's method is suggestive: 'Well, fust ah splanify, den ah argufy, and den ah puts in de arousements.' What are we arousing? Mr. Dibbons' article will make us think again. How are we doing it? Mr. Martin's observations will give us further occasion for thought. Do we 'splanify' the gospel as a chance to get everything you ever hoped for or a challenge to give everything you ever possess? Again, our appreciation of the total identity of man - the proper understanding of the 'soul' - must issue in dynamic; if at some time in our preaching deep calls to deep we may have begun to establish the communication without which the technical points Mr. Dennett so rightly emphasises (see the Members' Section) will fall pretty flat.

Meanwhile, the psychological hedonists are telling us that we and those who heed our message act only from motives of self-interest; we all have built-in 'Hidden Persuaders'. If this is so, it gives the lie to all our preaching, chance or challenge, 'Come'

or 'Follow', for evidently

They who fain would serve Him best  
Are conscious least of wrong within.

Mr. Martin's article gives us guidance on the dangers of our task as proclaimers of 'a full and free salvation' but also gives us an assessment of psychological hedonism.

If we can begin to find our true selves and to fulfil our proper duty, we may experience afresh the wonder of

'... coming to ourselves  
When, Lord, we come to Thee'

and those to whom we witness may begin to see the true Christian manhood we have so sadly left behind:

'... as we are Thy children true  
We are more truly men.'

There are many lessons to be learned, and perhaps the most helpful view of discipleship is that which regards it as a process of learning; here Mr. Dibbons' article can again give us guidance and Mr. Coad's will help us a great deal. We must be careful that we do not give others the impression that this learning is a matter of putting on the L-plates and holding on for dear life. Too easily we let men think Christianity is primarily careful living. Yet if self-knowledge can reach higher than the egocentricity of humanism, moderation can rise to more than a state of perpetual caution, discipline can be ennobled with truly Christian ideals, and our gospel can be preached out of full manhood, we may hope to make an impact on our generation.

K.N.S. Counter.

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There is no benediction on those who present the gospel insipidly; nor does God mean any Christian to be a sanctimonious bore.

A.M. Hunter on Col.4:6.