

"Not Now, but Afterward"

Excerpts from Sermon by JAMES MCGINLAY, D.D.



JAMES MCGINLAY

"THEN cometh he to Simon Peter; and Peter saith unto him, Lord dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John 13:6, 7). . . .

"Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterward." (John 13:36.)

As a little boy, among the hills of my native Scotland, how I hated with all my heart the

words "not now, but afterwards." They seemed to mock me of a time that never arrived. When I became the proud possessor of a new suit of clothes, as soon as the box was delivered at the house, I would cut the string, tear off the paper, and remove the lid. To Mother I would say, "May I put the suit on now?" and she would reply, "Not now, but afterwards." When before meals, my boyish appetite craved food, I would say to Mother, "May I have a slice of bread and jam now?" She of necessity (for we were poor) would answer, "Not now, but afterwards."

On the way to the little school where I learned to read and write, there was a candy store, at which I often stopped. I would stand with my nose pressed against the window pane, gazing with longing eyes upon the candy, chocolate bars, and other delicacies which so seldom came my way. I watched the other children go in, make their purchases, and come out with that smug, complacent look upon their faces that only satisfaction gives. Then I would shove my hands down through the holes that once had been pockets, and to myself I would say, "Well, James, when you are a big man and making lots of money, you can come back, buy the whole store out, and never quit until you have devoured everything your eyes may behold, and for which you heart craves." Just then the school bell would clang, and as I turned away from the candy store window, I would heave a sigh and say, "Not now, but afterwards."

So we come to our text as it applies to our New Testament friend, Peter. My! I like Peter. He was a big preacher, because with all the blessing and honor attending his ministry, he remained human. I have met some of the major prophets of our day whose preaching and teaching thrilled me, but when I shook hands with them off the pulpit, I imagined I was holding five link sausages, or manipulating a pump on the farm at ten below zero weather. God give us preachers in the pulpit who are human beings out of it. That is exactly what Peter was. That is why his life is such a blessing to my soul. I get more thrill from Peter when he is down than I do from a great many of my contemporaries when they are up. In some respects he was like a little boy. Therefore, Jesus had to deal with him. He virtually said, "Peter, you cannot know everything now, you cannot go everywhere now; what I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Whither I go thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt know afterwards." In other words, "Peter, you must learn that for the Christian there is a

future as well as a present." If a mighty man of God like Peter had to learn this lesson, who are we to dare spurn its instruction? So, dear friends, upon the words "Not now, but afterwards," I should like you to establish a philosophy of life that will be a blessing after you have forgotten me.

First of all, we shall begin by noticing the practical application of the text to our meager knowledge of the Scripture. I believe the Bible from cover to cover. Its every word, verse and page are stamped with the hall mark of Deity. No one but God is its author. Holy men of old wrote only as they were moved by the Spirit of God. But I must confess that, while I believe the Bible, there are some truths in it "hard to be understood." For example, I know that my soul is saved. I am on my way to heaven. My name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. This imperishable and eternal boon is mine because Christ upon Calvary's Cross died in my stead. He finished the work of redemption. I believe the record, and, hallelujah, I am saved. But when some skeptic demands that I explain how Christ could die, "the just for the unjust" to bring men to God, and how His sacrificial death upon the tree could satisfy the demands of justice, I have to answer, "Great is the mystery of godliness, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." A mystery may be experienced, even though it cannot be explained. Yet, thank God, some day we shall understand. Down here we are mere children in the Kingdom, but we are on our way to a higher school, and by virtue of the superior curriculum already prepared for us, we shall know even as we are known, "Not now, but afterwards."

Then, these words explain to us why the righteous suffer and the ungodly apparently have a good time. Multitudes of God's people are sad and discouraged because God in His providence is apparently kinder to the devil's crowd than He is to His own. Here is a Christian who loves the Lord, serves the Lord and walks consistently along the straight and narrow pathway of spiritual integrity, yet he scarcely knows where next month's rent or tomorrow's breakfast is coming from. He has trouble with his children; he is physically incapacitated to perform the daily tasks of life; yet he believes that the very hairs of his head are all numbered; "God knoweth his down-sitting and his uprising, his going out and his coming in"; and "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord."

In the third place, our text is the best interpreter of world events. My! How difficult it is even as Christians to be happy as we see what occurs every day in this godless world around us. Honestly, when we see and think of the sorrow and heartache, the bloodshed, the famine and pestilence holding universal sway among the human race, we almost give up in despair. When we read our daily newspaper, there is scarcely a bright news item. The statesmen and reformers and educators are at their wits' end. They know not what a day will bring forth, but, thank God, we who believe the Bible know that all is well. God's beneficent purpose for the redemption of the world is so wrapped up with the destiny of nations that God cannot sit aloof in heaven much longer and allow men to do as they please. When we read the Word of God, we find that there is coming a day when they shall learn war no more.

If, perchance, there are within sound of my voice men and women who know not Christ, let me assure you that the words "Not now, but afterwards," speak no comfort to your souls. Now is the day of salvation. Behold, now is the accepted time, and God seeks to save you, not afterwards, but NOW. Therefore, won't you here and now appropriate by faith the finished work of Jesus Christ, our Lord, on Calvary's Cross? Accept Him as your Sav-

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A Plane for Indo-China

By REV. GORDON H. SMITH

Missionary aviation, while still in the pioneer stage, needs no further proof of its immense value. In Alaska, Borneo, Bolivia, Liberia and Mexico the speeding plane has cut travel of missionaries from months to minutes.

We used to watch the government Red Cross plane pick up some sick official or planter and whisk him to the hospital in the port city within an hour from our town of Banmethuot. It saved many lives. We saw private planes come and go and early dreamed of covering the vast distances with the Gospel by plane.

The dream is becoming a reality, for not only have I learned to fly on this furlough, but we are taking back with us a shiny new Stinson, 150 horsepower, carrying four people at 125 miles an hour, and capable of landing and getting into and out of the smallest places that any plane can go.

Landing Fields Available

The object of using the plane is not necessarily to do ordinary village itineration. That is better accomplished by car or on elephant back. But we expect to establish half a dozen new mission stations through our vast tribal area, which measures hundreds of miles from north to south, and also many outstations where the native workers are situated. At practically all of these strategic points there are landing fields already, and in order to take in supplies and personnel, encourage the workers, visit the numerous officials for permits to build, etc., we have long felt that the plane would be invaluable. Army maps of French Indo-China show sixty airfields marked in our area where we can land.

Pioneer work involves a variety of activities. Language and translation work is essential. Entering new territory and getting the work started takes time. Supervising Bible School work and a large district means that constant calls necessitate being on the go a great deal. The plane should make the missionary more efficient, save his strength for his numerous duties, and speed the Gospel to new tribes where it has never been preached.

Packing, Freight and Duty Still Needed

We give thanks to God for providing practically all of the money needed to buy the plane. The Christian and Missionary Alliance, under whose name the plane will be registered, has paid almost half, and the rest came from an interested friend, besides a few donors who have helped as well. The need is so great and so pressing that it is time we not only sing, "Speed the Light," but actually go ahead and do it. There is no time to lose. Word this week from the field says that the Seventh Day Adventists are planning on sending two missionaries to our station, to open a clinic. This would be a tragedy, for they never open pioneer areas, just follow the Christians of other societies. As we return to our work we feel we are presented with the greatest challenge we have ever known, and the difficulties are going to be formidable. We covet your earnest prayers that the Name of the Lord may be glorified among our tribespeople in the days to come.

THE ALLIANCE WEEKLY, the official publication of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, has a lot of helpful, instructive and inspiring reading for you, such as timely editorials and sermons, latest missionary information, an exposition of the Sunday School lessons, and daily readings. Price \$1.00 per year. Foreign, \$1.75.

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From the Mountains of Mindanao

By REV. E. F. GULBRANSON

In the mountains of Mindanao of the southern Philippine Islands at the base of Mount Apo, an inactive volcano, there lives a primitive tribal group called the Manobo. Their hearts were opened to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. Among those that believed there was a great grandmother more than 82 years old. The work of grace in her life was marvelous to see. The peace and joy of a sin-cleansed heart illuminated her wrinkled, wizened face.

She was a woman of some means and had had several servants. But her vicious temper had caused the death of them all. She dispatched them by the "squeeze" method—she choked them to death in a rage! But now, thank God, her life was marvelously transformed.

One day when she visited me on the porch of the missionary house where I was staying, I noticed a pleasant perfume about her. She noticed my sniffing and reached into her belt and drew out some dried flowers and sweet grasses. I realized that in the heart of this old heathen woman God had instilled a love for finer things which gave expression in the wearing of the perfume. Not being able to go to a drug store to purchase perfume, she went into the forest and gathered the sweet smelling flowers and dried them.

The Christian leaders in her village inaugurated a Scripture memorizing contest offering a prize to the first one who could memorize and correctly repeat twenty-five verses from the Scripture that had been translated into the Manobo language by the missionaries. Solimpango wanted to enter the contest along with the younger students but she could not read. But her daughter and son-in-law could, and by constant prodding the verses were read and re-read to her.

Who won the contest? Why, Solimpango, of course! And because the daughter and son-in-law had read the verses so many times to her, they won the second and third prizes. What a joy it is to the missionaries to know that the Gospel of Jesus Christ works in the lives of the great grandmothers, as well as the young people in the Southern Philippine Islands!



Mr. and Mrs. Smith and the Stinson VOYAGER which they are taking to Indo-China. It has a 150 H.P. 6 cylinder engine, can carry 4 passengers and 130 lbs. of luggage, cruising speed of 125 miles per hr. with a range of 500 miles. Takeoff and landing can be accomplished in less than 100 yards—altogether a practical plane for mission work.

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our, and rejoice with us in the blessed and glorious and eternal hope held out by our text, "Not now, but afterwards."

Not now, but in the coming years,

It may be in the better land,

We'll read the meaning of our tears,

And there, sometime, we'll understand.

Editor's note: Taken from book NOT NOW, BUT AFTERWARDS by Dr. James McGinlay on sale in the Bookroom at \$1.50.