

The Superintendent Changed His Mind

by Walter Lewis Wilson, M.D.

THE ROTARY Club in a Southern city had gathered for their noon luncheon in a downtown hotel. The chairman of the speaker's committee had requested me to give a message on some of my nature studies. It is always difficult to know just what to say to such a mixed group of men, since there are Jews, Catholics, Christians, atheists, modernists and men of no faith present. The message must be interesting and yet true. It must be instructive and also entertaining. It must not offend, and yet it must meet the need. The Holy Spirit knows the difficulty of such a situation, and readily and wisely handles it, when He is entrusted to guide the Lord's servant.

I began the message by asking the Rotarians whether they knew how many cogs there were on the wheel which is the emblem of their Club. None of them knew. They had seen the wheel at every meeting, they had worn it on the lapel of their coats, and had seen it on their literature, but none of them had taken the trouble to count the cogs. Their attention was called to the importance of being keen observers of the things we see as we pass through life, in order that we may be well instructed, and also be delightfully entertained.

In the audience was a gentleman of mature years who became quite interested, and moved his chair toward the speaker's table in order that he might not be disturbed by the folk at the back of the room. He seemed to be intent on getting every word that was spoken. I did not know the gentleman, but of course was quite pleased to see his deep interest.

Having called attention to the fact that there are twenty-four cogs on the rotary wheel, I spoke to them more fully about the number twelve; how God began the nation of Israel with twelve men, and at the end of the Old Testament, twelve prophets told the sad story of Israel's fall and doom. Twelve spies searched out the land of Canaan. Twelve loaves of bread lay on the shewbread tables, telling of God's complete supervision over time, and His sufficient provision for each tribe of His people. God began the New Testament Church with twelve men, and closes the Bible with Christians dwelling in a city that has twelve foundations and twelve gates. Twelve months of the year complete the circuit of the earth in its orbit.

The gentleman referred to was making notations of these facts and

figures, for evidently he had not thought along the lines of numerals, either in nature or in the Bible, and the matter was quite interesting to him.

Digressing from the use of the number twelve, I mentioned that watermelons usually have ten stripes on them, and oranges most frequently have ten sections in them. I called to their attention the fact that bananas have an even number on the first or the bottom row, with one less on each of the rows ascending. I also mentioned that on each stalk of wheat, rye, oats and barley, as well as on millet and other stalks that bear grain, there is always an even number of grains. On each cob of corn there is an even number of rows, and even number of grains and an even number of silks in the tassel. These facts were presented to support the statement that there is a living God in heaven, who made the things of earth in an orderly manner and in a way that is numerically perfect.

The attention which the men gave, and particularly this man who is the subject of our story, encouraged me to continue this line of truth. I remarked that God's gospel is constantly kept before us at each meal time. All the food that we eat is dead. We eat dead beef, dead fish, dead sheep, dead pigs and dead chickens. We eat dead beans, peas, cabbage, potatoes and other vegetables. The grain that we eat has been ground up and is dead, whether it be in oatmeal or flour. From eating these dead things we obtain life. How this miracle is performed, no one understands. In the same way we partake of the Son of God, who died for us (though now He is risen and living), and by receiving Him into our hearts we obtain eternal life. The comparison is perfect. This truth caused some very deep thinking on the part of quite a number of those Rotarian members. The man in front was in deep meditation, apparently reflecting on this analogy.

It seemed quite appropriate to bring in some of the wonders in connection with the origin of various things in nature. The origin of color was discussed. Who had decided that no human being should have blue hair, green eyebrows or pink whiskers? Why are bananas always yellow and strawberries always red? It must be that these phenomena are due to the decision of the living God. How did peaches get their peculiar odor, quite unlike any other thing that grows, and how is it that each animal has its own odor and no two are alike? This also must have been decided by the eternal God. How did taste originate? Bananas never taste like pork chops, and fish never taste like radishes. This, too, must be a product of the divine mind and hand.

This discussion changed to a consideration of the origin of the

alphabet. I mentioned that in all my travels and investigations, I had never found the origin of the alphabet, nor any clue as to how it was originated. Neither had I been able to find the person or the people who originated the multiplication table. God Himself must have arranged it, and in some mysterious way placed it in human hearts and minds. We do not know when nor how.

Again, the conversation was changed and I spoke of the miracles in nature. The miracle of the falling rain drop was mentioned, for God enables a drop of water to fall from great heights without doing damage to the tender leaf of the pansy, but if man drops water from a comparatively small distance, it tears the plants into pieces. God causes the limb of a tree to grow straight out from the trunk, as far as seventy-five feet, with a fiber anchorage in the tree of only twenty-one inches, or thereabouts. No human being can project any beam of timber such a distance with such a short and insufficient anchorage.

God causes water to expand and contract as other substances do, according to the rule that heat expands and cold contracts. However, when water reaches the temperature of thirty-four degrees Fahrenheit, it begins to expand quite contrary to all other substances, and continues to expand until it is considerably below zero. This is done in order that the rivers and lakes may not freeze solid to the bottom, and thus kill the fish and prevent melting in the summertime. God performs these miracles because He loves us, provides for our welfare and blessing, and demonstrates His wisdom and power.

The time to dismiss the meeting had come, and so I closed with a plea for the men to trust in this God of wisdom, to believe in His Son who came to save, and to accept the Scriptures as God's own, infallible Word. When the chairman dismissed the meeting, the first one to greet me was this interested gentleman, who had moved his chair to the front. He said to me, "Doctor, I came to the Rotary Club today an atheist and an evolutionist. My name is Mr. G—, and I am the superintendent of the public schools in this city. Since listening to your message, and considering its truthfulness and its logic, I am convinced that you are right. I am leaving this Rotary luncheon as a Christian, a believer in Jesus Christ, and a changed man. I can readily see that my theories concerning evolution were utterly false, and that only a living God and a loving God could and would do what you have described. Thank you very much for this wonderful revelation I have received today."

The facts presented did the work in his heart, and he was honest

enough to accept the evidence. His influence for God and for Christianity began to be felt at once in the school system of that city.

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