

The Leaves Must Fall

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Our modern mind is directed to the emphasis on youth, a movement which gathers momentum every day in our national life. In fact, the welfare of youth is always the talk in the home, in the classroom and in the pulpit. Today, men seem to desire welfare, not virtue nor knowledge and neither justice nor welfare is the key word of our time — the principal object of government — indeed of all society, especially the youths: they must get what they want — not what they ought to have.

It is tragic to learn that welfare is usually defined in material terms — for happiness and money become important not because it has value to purchase but because it gives the possessor a sense of power that he must be worth something, since he has something of worth. In our green years, the desire for possession continues until in our disturbing age it becomes a passion and that desire is shown in the excesses of youth until a substitute is sought in the unlimited desire for things.

Money then becomes the scale and measure of everything. It determines the worth of every man rather than his virtue even after his flesh becomes jaded and man, if short of cash, becomes low in everybody's expectation in spite of his sublimest dedication to truth — it is not uncommon to hear nowadays that "the heart of the modern man points not to eternal

hills, but to golden mountains". Wealth becomes a kind of god and therefore an object of worship. But when a man begins to know himself and be of his senses — when reality confronts him without the mask it was in youth — he will no doubt use that wealth for charity, a noble purpose, as an exchange for spiritual and heavenly reward. He then becomes a moral man for his acts will be in accord with the laws and customs of society and his manners and morals will reach a peak of refinement that serves as the accepted standard of behaviour these days.

It is not strange that the President of the United States takes his oath upon the Bible for that great nation was founded upon the fervor and zeal of religious faith — the spirit which drove the first pilgrims to Jamestown and those founding fathers were imbued not for the purpose of material wealth but with a burning faith in God. They were convinced of the truth that God governs the affairs of men for if that was not the case, those early Americans would not have succeeded better in their settlement "than the builders of Babel". Molested of their religious freedom and victims of oppression, they felt that the terrors of the wilderness were nothing compared to the persecutions they had experienced in the Old World. Such

beautiful conduct has grown historically on a religious soil in the morality of justice, of honesty and regard for and respect of the right of others. To them, experience was, indeed, a great teacher.

One's limitation is always an occasion for sorrow when we see that not all dreams and hopes come true though for a generation we have been emphasizing materials for our welfare. We began to realize that now is the time for our bidding. You may ascend mountains, descend valleys, enter legislative halls and listen to judicial proceedings but your search for gold is in vain until you enter a church to hear the soul-elevating and soul-searching gospel — "faith in God". Faith is not something we stumble upon by accident. It is the projection of reason beyond the limits of our knowledge and believing God at His word. What good is it to be wealthy and with all the material things we have, if we are spiritually bankrupt? That, I believe, is not happiness.

Youth, manhood and age! These are the three stages we bear in life. Youth seeks forward in hope, expectation and promise when life is brightly colored and bubbles like pink champagne. Manhood grieves over reality of what life will be when the arts flourished in an atmosphere of fastidious taste. Age matures in the shabbiness of customs when one sees "the tinsel instead of gold" and when you can no longer see beauty upon "conception of Orpheus" and the time when every breath in life should be done in the strictest protocol; when one sticks to his stern code to the end although not everybody's taste is that fastidious. There is no guaranty that we will not pass these stages but if we ever pass on

them, then there shall we be revealed as we stand naked before God. If we are not dressed with virtue, we will feel ashamed as Adam and Eve felt when they hid after their sin and "as all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," then we must confess our spiritual failure with a deep genuine repentance that we may be forgiven for God does not allow Himself to be challenged with impunity.

The leaves must fall as the years of splendor will, in due time, be gone. Where are the Hapsburgs, the Romanoffs and the Bourbons now when only half a century ago their faces were very dominant in the socials of Europe as its famous rulers? Men must search for a creed to believe, a song to sing and a leader to follow as we recall their charms and pageantry and the fateful forces that drove them to their end. To those rulers, that was their good fortune although caused by the sin of the age. Let us be humble as God is even at the end of the day of our life. There is no virtuous man who has not some vice, no bad man who has not some virtue. Nobody but us can plead for our case and we can not say we were not in our right minds when we did wrong. It will only be the voice of conscience which will reveal us what we really are and it is not us who will vote for and decide our own destiny.

May we not be like that pretentious Spaniard, a self-ordained "Comandante" and "Caballero del Orden de Santiago", who, said a noted historian in 1663, while taking his ease and smoking a cigar on a bench in Bagumpayan met Don Diego de Salcedo, the governor-general who

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bor; they were also taught to hate their enemy. But the love Jesus taught and practiced is "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44). This is a very hard teaching because people have been used to "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," and secondly, this is a new teaching and people are not open to new teachings. Thirdly, people say, (even among Christians who may be Masons) they are still human, so they have to retaliate. When Jesus was persecuted and was subjected to many humiliations, instead of retaliating, he said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Previous to his persecutions, he taught us to pray, "Forgive us our sins (debts), as we forgive those who have committed sins against us."

It is the hard things and the new ones, particularly this new teaching of Jesus concerning love that makes this world of ours better. One whose love has no bounds, no limitations, and complies with this new teaching becomes the child of God. As a child he inherits His blessings — His Kingdom of peace and love and the security of eternal life.

Jesus challenges us to make use of the light we received from the Father. Any good thing that we acquire if we do not make use of it will deteriorate. The light of the Scriptures is imparted to us for good — to make men love each other, to hasten the coming of the Kingdom of God in the world. We are challenged to make use of this opportunity here and now while we have all the facilities, the materials and all the times we need because time will come when we shall be no more.

was walking alone *incognito* and dressed only in the rough garb of a mariner was confronted by him with the rank he (governor-general) held, as distinctions of rank were sharp in those days. When the gallant but humble governor-general replied that he was neither a simple *alferez*, a *capitan*, a *commandante*, a *general* or a *maestro de campo*, the said Spaniard was quick on his feet and throwing away his cigar, saluted and exclaimed, "Pardon me, you must be his Excellency, himself". Salcedo, standing erect and unimpressed, said "Sir, you possess none of our Castilian courtesy and God Almighty and the king together cannot make you a gentleman, Good day". Such words are full of sense as they came from the wrinkles of age and what one learned in youth endures like the engraving upon a rock.

And may I add — Be your true self, not the self you think you are for *the leaves must fall* like the house of cards notwithstanding the good life — spacious, opulent and unhurried. But such should not be a source of contempt and neither of hatred for the descendants of that haughty Spaniard unwittingly directed the course of religious history, as an ancient Spanish historian, Amador de los Rios, said "ten tribes of Israel who settled at Toledo built the most beautiful synagogue, the Great Aljame that had been theirs since the Temple of Solomon" — a dazzling climax reached by Spain's royal splendor of the age long before our evangelization by her early conquistadores who, centuries later, in our state of darkness brought us "the first light" — "la primera luz" in Freemasonry.