

DISCIPLESHIP

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by

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This book is dedicated to my friend

RICHARD SOLOMON

whose life and service have done so much to extend the Kingdom of God at home and abroad, in gratitude for the privilege of his friendship and in token of my affection and esteem.

FOREWORD

(By the Rev. G. E. Hickman Johnson, Secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society, and President of the Summer School, at which these lectures were delivered.)

THE following addresses were delivered by Mr. Weatherhead during the morning devotional hour at the Methodist Whit-week Missionary Summer School. At the close of the school, there was a unanimous request that they might be printed for the benefit of a wider public.

For a long while it has been apparent that the central problem of world evangelism is not concerned so much with the younger churches overseas as with the older churches at the home base. Only a small section of the home Church has an urge to export its religion, and of late the opportunities and calls for expansion overseas have outrun the spiritual experience and, therefore, the missionary response of the Church at home.

The explanation of the situation seems to be that for a vast number of church-attending Christians in this country religion has not been a real, live thing in their minds and hearts; so in all honesty they have not been able to recommend it

to people of other faiths in other lands: they have had neither reason nor right to be missionary supporters.

Thanks be to God, a change is now taking place throughout the land. Real religion is reviving; in groups of various sorts and names the fundamental truths of the historic Christian faith are being experienced and are changing multitudes of lives. The acid test of all such groups surely is the desire to be missionary. In so far as the group seeks to express its experience of God by communicating it to others, the members will grow in grace; in so far as it is non-evangelistic and self-centred it will lose what experience it may have and peter out. And rightly so: "He that loveth his soul shall lose it."

Nothing more need be added to explain how Mr. Weatherhead came to speak on "DISCIPLESHIP" at a Missionary School. Suffice it to say that within the confines of the school's three hundred members and the seven days which limited the gathering, the convictions stated above received abundant confirmation.

Apathetic Christians (if the phraseology may be allowed to pass), who for various odd reasons had been induced to come to Swanwick, found their indifference wilt and their defences go down before the ruthless logic, the deep psychology, and the irresistible power with which Mr. Weatherhead presented the simple gospel. At last Christianity meant something real to them and their surrender to Him who is its centre was

complete. Immediately they became missionaries. Some of them are likely, in due course, to go overseas; more will stay at home, but they will all be missionaries. It is with the prayer that the printed word may do for a much larger public what the spoken word did for the school at Swanwick that this foreword of grateful commendation is written.

G. E. HICKMAN JOHNSON.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE following pages contain the substance of a series of addresses given to some three hundred young people gathered at the Missionary School at Swanwick during Whit-week 1933. In yielding to the request that they should be printed, it is essential to ask the reader to bear in mind that they were spoken addresses and when they were given it was not contemplated that they would be printed. I am greatly indebted to Miss E. Spencer, of the Methodist Mission House staff, who was good enough to take them down in shorthand and then type them out for me. This work of hers has been the basis on which I have worked in re-writing them, though here and there material has been added and ideas more fully worked out.

I want to acknowledge also with deep gratitude my debt to my beloved father-in-law, the Rev. Arthur Triggs, who once more with characteristic ability and thoroughness has read the proofs and made suggestions which I have adopted with avidity.

A further apology is essential in that some of the matter in the following pages appears in different form elsewhere in various writings of mine. Naturally, when speaking on certain

subjects again and again, one can hardly avoid expressing a point of view in similar terms, and to cut out what may have appeared in other writings would make this little book an incorrect record of what was said. For instance, a list of things which often stand between the soul and God is incorporated in the first address from Chapter VII of my last book "How can I Find God?"

The words which form the chapter headings are words which are being very much emphasized at present by the Oxford Group Movement to which I, personally, owe a great debt. Yet this book is not a book on the Oxford Group Movement. In the lectures given, no reference was made to it. I am sure that movement does not desire to patent, as it were, these special words which are the keynotes of any real revival of religion. Such a revival is now gloriously happening in many parts of the country through the medium of not only the Oxford Group, but the Cambridge Group Movement and the Methodist Fellowship Group, and in many other ways also. For myself, I believe that we are at the beginning of a revival which may become as important as that linked with the names of John and Charles Wesley, in which the Methodist Church was born. The following talks seek to relate these keywords to our lives without discussing the technique of any particular movement.

The questions which the members of the Whit-week School discussed each day are printed at the

end of the book in the hope that groups all over the country may find them helpful in their discussions. Perhaps I may just add that it seems to me important that the work of the groups should not be a discussion of a subject of merely theological interest, but should be brought down to the practical issues of daily life. Group work does *not* realize its full possibility if purely intellectual problems are solved, or, what often happens, lifted up and put down in another place. The intellectual background of our religious experience is very important. But the ideal of Group Fellowship is that each member should find help in the difficult business of living, and in the back of everyone's mind there should be one fundamental question: "How can I find or deepen the experience of Christ which is offered in the New Testament, and how can I pass it on?"

LESLIE D. WEATHERHEAD.

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CHAPTER I
SURRENDER

“The crisis of self-surrender has always been, and must always be, regarded as the vital turning point of the religious life.”

WILLIAM JAMES.