"No man can serve two masters". Matt. 6:24

"NEITHER SAINT NOR SINNER"

Calendar did not intend to place minister in any category. Sheer inadvertence - nevertheless, possibly speaks the truth in that minister is "Neither Saint nor Sinner". Perhaps we all are in same indefinite category.

Would not want to be categorised as a sinner; and certainly would not want placed among the saints. In fact, were we to have a choice we would rather fall into category of sinner than that of saint. This is the New Hypocrisy.

Have quoted those words by John Oxenham - most of us are not on the high way nor on the low. We are "in between on the misty flats" where "the rest drift to and fro". We are neither saints nor sinners.

Said Jesus, "No man can serve two masters". "Ye cannot serve God and mammon". How much religion have we?

Just Enough Religion The common criticism - "Religion is boring; it is dull". Critics have got that impression from somewhere - probably from us. From us, neither saints nor sinners who have just enough religion to be miserable and unhappy.

Dull ministers; dull sermons; dull services. Like story of minister who announced that "After the service there will be a meeting of the board (bored)". Along with that is the story of little boy sent to meet minister at the station. It was "indigestion". There are also Christian laymen who are dull, stale, flat, insipid, unattractive, miserable
"They carry idols upon beasts. They are a burden. They hire a goldsmith and make a god. They fall down and worship. They bear him on their shoulders and carry him.

Hearken unto me, House of Israel. Even to your old age I am God. Even to your grey hairs I will carry you. I have created and I will bear."
Picture a little overdrawn. Perhaps! Reminds us of Early Puritans. That was the trouble - just enough religion to make them miserable. Really not in position to criticize them; but were gloomy and inhibited. Killjoys. Some truth in Macaulay's gibe - they hated bear-baiting not because of pain inflicted on bear but because it gave pleasure to spectators. Had enough religion to keep them from world, flesh and devil; but not enough to make them happy. They were neither saints nor sinners - just miserable. And so are we. One hand we see happy pagans; on other hand, gloomy so-called Christians. Our trouble: We are trying to live in two worlds at same time - we are a battleground of conflicting desire. We have a suspicion the worldling is having better time than we. And he is! At least he has no conflicts; his heart is undivided. He is, as we say, integrated; though perhaps integrated on a low level. At least we envy him; he seems to be so carefree while we worry about saving our soul and the world. Trouble is we carry our religion; it is a burden. It should carry us. It should be wings not weights. Makes all the difference in the world. Isaiah describes that difference as he contrasts the inanimate gods of Babylon and the Living God of Israel.

Just Enough Religion To Be Decent

Many people who have just enough religion to meet tests of conventional respectability and decency. Let's draw a composite picture of him: generous, good neighbor, loyal to obligations, good parent, "a decent chap". Seldom comes to church. Leader in community enterprises. But manages to live without a
"Ah, yes, I know many a home which seems to maintain a high tone without any contact with the church or any open recognition of religion. But remember, those homes are sustained by the soil which the church seasoned. And I ask you, would you care to rear a family in a region where there was no church nor any of the refining influences generated by it."

The conventional, decent, respectable person may not go around to church - but he wants the church around.
vital relationship to church or religion. He creates quite a problem on basis of everyday living he is apparently as fine a person as the so-called Christian. Rather suspect that sometimes were we to choose between his company and that of some so-called Christians, we would take the companionship of the winsome, decent, pagan. Neither a saint nor a sinner.

But this needs to be said: decency not enough. Not enough for this reason - cannot guarantee the survival of decency itself. The best things in life perish if divorced from an eternal background. The virtues of decency, tolerance, kindness, loyalty, self-control, do not long survive without a background of spiritual reality. Says Sockman. Decency is not enough. It is dangerous. It is selfish. It gives nothing but takes all. It is a parasite. It thrives on the efforts of others.

Might also say that decency is surely not enough when the winds blow and storms come. Then there must be more than conventional respectability. There is a religion around that might be described as "Religion of the Brief Encounter". People say they believe in God though they do not come to church to worship the God they profess they believe in. They believe in God at funerals and weddings and baptisms. Religion based on emotion and when emotion evaporates little is left. Says Jesus, a wise man builds his house upon rock and in the day of storm and calamity, it abides in security. Life being what it is - we need more than decency.

Just Enough Religion To Change the World Neither saints nor sinners. But let us
despise the power of even a little religion. It can change a situation - indeed it can change the world. When men truly have been caught by and have caught the spirit of the Master, when men have dared to live on the level of triumphant religion, when men have been willing to suffer for Christ, then have great things happened.

And mark you, it takes only a little to make a great difference. Jesus spoke of it: "Ye are the salt of the earth"; "Ye are the light of the world". "The kingdom is like a mustard seed which is the smallest of seeds; but when it is grown..." "Kingdom is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal". Great movements have all been minority movements. Reformation started with a handful; Wesley started with just a few students; Jesus had twelve disciples.

Was said of early Christians "These men have turned the world upside down". Well - what are they saying of us? Saying he has just enough religion to be miserable; or he has just enough to be respectable; just enough to be conventional and innocuous. Or can they say of us that, saint or sinner, we have something - something that makes for power, for peace.

If we have the right thing, then wherever we are we shall be changing the world - changing the shop, changing the school, and changing the home. We can't have a changed society unless we have changed persons. To believe we can change the world without changing human nature is absurd. For "No man can serve two masters..."
"To every man there openeth
A Way and Ways and a Way.
And the high soul climbs the high way,
And the low soul gropes the low.
And in between on the misty flats,
The rest drift to and fro.
But to every man there openeth
A high way and a low.
And every man decideth
The way his soul shall go".

Oxenham

My grandfather was a preacher. He was
not so fiery as my father in his preach-
ing. He once dreamed he was preaching
to his congregation. He awoke and found
it was true".
Fa ther

Fa ther, the most significant word in the entire Lord’s Prayer. Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Father of whoever, in the spirit of a child, places himself at the side of Jesus and says, “Our Father.” Christ is the Only Begotten Son. We are children by adoption. But as such we are heirs of heaven, joint-heirs with Christ, brothers before the Father.

How little we take advantage of the fact that the almighty God is our Father. His only begotten Son set a pattern for us of what this glorious Father-and-child relationship at its best may be. Involved are three basic elements: love, trust, obedience.

Jesus and the Father are One: One in essence, One in spirit, One in the loving purpose to save mankind. Into this loving fellowship sinful man enters through faith in Christ.

In the great crises of life the Son laid all matters before His Father in prayer. Confidently He could say, “I know that Thou hearest me”; “Thou hast heard me.”—The Father’s child lifts up his eyes, “I know Thou carest for me; where Thou leadest I will follow.”

“Thy will, not mine, be done” was a foundation principle of Jesus’ life. It led to the Cross and death, but it attained victory, eternal life, the Crown of Glory. All his life the Father’s child struggles to set aside his own and accept his Father’s will. He knows the way may be hard, but at the end there is life and glory with his Brother, Jesus Christ.

Dear Father in Christ, grant us the joy and peace vouchsafed Thy loving, trusting, obedient children.

A.P.H. Litho No. 751
FREMONT STREET METHODIST CHURCH  
Gloversville, New York  
Fred Clarke, Minister  
Marjorie Gensemer  
Minister of Music  
Grace L. Gifford  
Church Secretary

ORDER OF MORNING WORSHIP

ORGAN PRELUDE - "B Minor Chorale"  
Franck

INTROIT - "To God on high be thanks and praise"  
Decius

INVOCATION - By the minister

HYMN 20 - "We gather together"  
Kremser

SURSUM CORDA:

Minister: The Lord be with you.  
People: And with thy spirit.  
Minister: Lift up your hearts.  
People: We lift them up unto the Lord.  
Minister: Let us give thanks unto the Lord.  
People: It is meet and right so to do.

DOXOLOGY - To be sung by all

* RESPONSIVE READING - 13th Sunday - page 578

GLORIA PATRI :: APOSTLES' CREED

* SCRIPTURE LESSON - Matthew 7

ANTHEM - "Sanctus"  
The Fremont Choir

PASTORAL PRAYER :: LORD'S PRAYER

OFFERTORY ANTHEM - "Sheep and Lambs my safely graze"  
The Fremont Choir  
Bach

HYMN 80 - "O my soul, bless God, the Father"  
Stuttgart

SERMON - "NEITHER SAINT NOR SINNER"  
The minister

HYMN 267 - "Rise up, O men of God"  
Festal Song

Benediction :: CHORAL AMEN

ORGAN POSTLUDE - "Chorale Improvisation"  
Bach

* Interval for Ushering

A CORDIAL WELCOME IS EXTENDED TO ALL VISITORS TODAY

MAY 4, 1947 - CALENDAR FOR TODAY

10:30 Morning Worship and sermon - "Neither Saint Nor Sinner". Anthems by the Fremont Choir.
10:30 Church-time Cherub Hour for small children.
11:00 Primary and Junior Church.
11:55 Church School; everyone invited.
3:00 Rehearsal in First Methodist Church for United Youth Choir Festival to be held Mother's Day.
6:00 Youth Fellowship. Leader, Mr. Clarke. Following the meeting the group will go visiting.
7:30 Union Evening Worship in the St. James Lutheran Church with the Rev. Martyn D. Keeler preaching.

Flowers today are in memory of Louisa Fear and are given by her granddaughters, Ruth and Gloria Foster and Corrine Stevens.

THROUGH THE WEEK AT FREMONT

MON. 7:30 Boy Scouts meet at the church.

8:00 Training session for scouts.

TUES. 6:30 FAMILY NIGHT under auspices of W.S.C.S. - Covered Dish supper. Sound film, "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer". This occasion is for the whole family. Lots of fun!

WED. 2:30 School of Religion; grades 4, 5 and 6.

7:45 Mid-week Service under the minister.

THURS. 8:00 Venner Class meets with Harry Hutton.

FRI. 11:00 and 1:00 School of Religion; grades 7 - 9.

THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Fremont Choir - Tuesday, 7:30 P.M.

Youth Choir - Wednesday, 7:00 P.M.

Chapel Choir - Friday, 3:30 P.M.

Carol Choir - Saturday, 9:30 A.M.

MOTHER'S DAY will be observed in this church next Sunday.

ANNUAL SPRING CONCERT by the choirs and pupils of Miss Marjorie Gensemer will be held May 27th at 8 o'clock.