

RELIGIOUS BULLETIN

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More Reflections on the Prodigal Son

Hunger, the parable tells us, drove the Prodigal Son into the open arms of his father.

"How many hired servants there are in my father's house who have more bread than they can eat, and here am I perishing with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee; I am not worthy, now, to be called thy son; treat me as one of thy hired servants."

Begging forgiveness of his father is almost an afterthought. There is even a ring of insincerity about it. And we can half suspect that the son, knowing his father's love and generosity, was sure he would be welcomed, not as a servant, but as a son.

The motive that induced the Prodigal Son to return was imperfect and selfish, yet the father welcomed him.

What about imperfect contrition and selfish motives for prayers of petition?

"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." These are words of our Lord inviting us to come to Him to fulfill a need.

"Ask, and the gift will come; seek and you shall find; knock and the door shall be opened to you. Everyone that asks, will receive; that seeks, will find; that knocks, will have the door opened to him. If any one of yourselves is asked by his son for bread, will he give him a stone? If he is asked for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead? Why then, if you, evil as you are, know well enough how to give your children what is good for them, is not your Father in heaven much more ready to give wholesome gifts to those who ask Him?" There is no restriction to spiritual gifts; the only qualification is wholesome, something that is good for us.

"...whatever request you make of the Father in my name, I will grant, so that through the Son the Father may be glorified; every request you make of me in my own name, I myself will grant it to you." These words of our Lord, too, seem all-embracing.

True, Christ also said, with reference to concern about temporal matters: "Do not fret, then, asking, What are we to eat? or What are we to drink? or How shall we find clothing? It is for the heathen to busy themselves over such things; you have a Father in heaven who knows that you need them all. Make it your first care to find the kingdom of God and His approval, and all these things shall be yours without the asking."

There can be no contradiction. Our Lord makes His appeal broad enough to include everyone. Those still "of little faith" He entices by selfish motives -- like little children who love their parents for the good things the parents provide. The other approach is for those who have advanced to a higher state of perfection -- to the mature who can love their heavenly Father with an unselfish love.

"Fishers of men" Christ said the Apostles were to be, and He didn't restrict them in their use of bait.

The Prodigal Son returned through a selfish, imperfect motive. But once home, he remained.

A Warning

The dissemination of obscene literature is big business. It is being pushed, like dope. And the consequences of being hooked are at least as tragic and demoralizing.

These obscene books and magazines are easily available, and some students are playing the role of pushers, consciously or unconsciously, by bringing them to the campus. One of the slicker magazines parades its filth under the guise of sophistication, just the bait for college "men", especially the pseudo-intellectuals. And they are pseudo. No one honestly interested in intellectual growth has the time or inclination to clutter his mind with such refuse.

If you say that it doesn't bother you to see or read this stuff, you belong in one of three categories: 1) you've already sated yourself on more intimate, less frustrating experiences; 2) you're abnormal; or 3) you're kidding yourself.

We'd prefer to think that most campus victims belong in the third category. All they need is a little eye-opener to the consequences and a little honesty with themselves. The other two groups need more radical treatment.

So don't be a dupe or a dope for obscene literature.

In Your Charity

Please pray for the following. Deceased: father of William Lynch of Keenan; father of Don Cain of Breen-Phillips; father of Terry O'Brien of Breen-Phillips; grandmother of Al Kashinski of Alumni; grandfather of Bob Hagan of Breen-Phillips; uncle of Ronald Reid, Off-Campus; brother of the late Cardinal John F. O'Hara, C.S.C.; Ronald Kersting, '53; grandmother of Tom Miller, '62; Mr. and Mrs. Philip Bonelli and son (victims of a fire in Chicago), friends of Richard Carey of Zahm. Ill: another Bonelli son critically burned in the fire; brother of Joe Spieler of Dillon; Joseph M. Byrne, Jr., '15, University trustee; Mrs. Fred Snite.