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Get Hep to Self!

Down in the back woods of Alabama the other day a man who had never seen a looking glass found a pocket mirror that someone had dropped from an airplane. He took one look at it and exclaimed, "A picture of my dear old grandpap!"

A few days later his wife came upon the glass when mending her husband's coat. "Ah," she said, as she gazed upon it, "a picture of a woman, and what a terrible looking old hag she is!"

That's about as near as the average man comes to knowing himself. When he listens to a sermon in which his faults are minutely pointed out, he says to himself: "What a picture of old McGutzky! How that smacks Twaddlebury between the eyes!" But he never applies the words to himself.

The attitude of everyone when listening to a sermon or reading a book ought to be: "What is there in this for me?" "Can I apply this with profit to my own life?"

Human nature is a funny thing. Every student on the campus can do a good job at pruning and remodeling his neighbor's character. He knows just what's wrong. He knows, too, all about running dining halls, about teaching classes, about administering discipline. But he can't correct himself of the puniest fault because he doesn't really know himself.

You know the type that appears very humble. He says a lot of hard things about himself in the presence of others. He blames himself for this fault and that. But if one of his companions says the same things about him, he's ready to fight!

You know the type that thinks he's masculine. He prides himself on his punch and virility. But if he gets a pebble in his shoe he wants to run off to some other school where they sport cement sidewalks. He can't draw himself out of the sheets in the morning. He can't control his profane tongue. He can't put a man's-sized day in on his studies.

If we really knew ourselves the battle would be more than half over. If we could take ourselves apart like a watch and find the flat wheels, the broken cogs, and the weak springs, we could do some intelligent repair work.

When King David stole the beautiful wife of a poor man, Urias, and instructed his general to put this man in the front trenches of the army where he would be killed, God wanted to show David a picture of his own heart. So He sent Nathan, the prophet, to David. And this is the way Nathan put the thing up to David:

There were two men in a city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had many sheep and oxen. The poor man had nothing at all except one little ewe lamb which he had carefully fed and brought up in his house with all his children. The ewe lamb ate of the poor man's bread and drank of the poor man's cup and slept in the poor man's bosom. It was to him as a daughter.

One day a stranger came to visit the rich man. And the rich man prepared a great feast for the stranger. But instead of laying hand upon his own sheep and oxen, he took the poor man's ewe and dressed it up for the banquet.

After hearing Nathan's story, David became exceedingly angry. "As the Lord liveth," he said, "the rich man who did this thing is a child of death! He shall restore that ewe fourfold because he did this thing and had no pity!" And Nathan replied simply, "Thou art the man!"

If we turn our critical attention upon ourselves, instead of upon the other fellow, we'll soon be saying often, "I am the man!"