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Pittsfield, Unity Church, 1905-1919

The Compelling Power of the Christ Like Life [Notes]

Earl Clement Davis

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The Compelling Power of the Christ Like Life [Version 1]¹

Earl Clement Davis

No $Date^2$

There seems to be a sort of popular superstition that the living of such a life as may be called a Christ-like life, relegates one to a world of uninteresting things, that all the fun of life, all its romance, its compelling values, its absorbing passions are to be found in what [is] commonly spoken of as the worldly life, or the life of pleasure, that the life of the sinner, so-called, is the life of fun, and joy. But on the other hand the life of the religious person is one devoid of romance, of compelling values. It is negative.

There are certain valid {???} from this popular delusion, but delusion it is.

The reasons why this popular superstition exists are not far to see. There is also a popular superstition that religion is a sort of mechanical contrivance by which we may escape the consequences of our delicious sins, and continue to enjoy throughout eternity a sort of celestial pleasure life. This popular conception of religion is the result of false teaching in the churches.

Religion is the search for the abiding worthwhile values of life, the quest for its greatest opportunities.

¹ As the materials from Earl C. Davis came down to me, many sermons were pinned together with a straight pin in the upperleft corner. So it was with this set of notes, and when I started working with them, I expected a beginning-to-end sermon as I had found with other notes pinned together in this way. In fact, it is clear that this sermon was not completed. In these notes are five different beginnings. Furthermore, the notes as they were pinned together were almost certainly out of order, with the last page of what I call, "Version 3" out of place. Here I provide a transcription of all versions with the pages in the right order.

² While this sermon-or notes for a sermon-is not dated, almost certainly it is from the period 1905-06 when Earl Davis handwrote his sermons. In addition to the hand-writing, the paper is consistent with other datable sermons from that time.

I have referred to the religious life in terms of the Christ-like life. What is it? Meaning of <u>Christ the Word</u>. Why was Jesus so-called? What was his life? What is it in terms of some of its striking illustrations? In affairs: M. H. Baldwin Science: Letters: Statesmanship: Use commonplace illustrations The Compelling Power of the Christ Like Life [Version 2]

Earl Clement Davis

No Date

According to John, Jesus said of his mission that he came that people might have life, and life more abundant. Over against this declaration, there appears the popular superstition that anyone who proposes to lead a Christ-like life is taking upon himself the obligations to empty his life of all that is interesting, and joyful. In other words there is a popular superstition to the effect that afterall the real pleasure, the real romance, the real fun of life is not to be found in living what may be called a Christlike life, but rather is to be found in living what is commonly called the life of pleasure. To illustrate, according to this popular superstition, the really happy enjoyable life is to be found in following the desires and passions of life, so-called. To go on a good time, is to cast aside all restraints and {???}, and to follow the life of worldly pleasure, to be lost in the mazes of the underworld. In short the life of lust, and sensation is the life where the greatest pleasure, the greatest satisfactions, the greatest joy is to be found. To that kind of a life we would all give ourselves were it not for the fact that we have been told by the Church that while such a life may be pleasing to us, yet in the sight of God such a life is a life of sin, hateful to God, and that God will punish us if we follow that kind of life.

Therefore, continues this popular superstition, in order to escape this displeasure of God, we become Christian, deprive ourselves of all the pleasures that we really enjoy because we fear some kind of punishment from God, and hope that somehow God will reward us for living a sad gloomy, empty life here, by giving us a life The Compelling Power of the Christ Like Life [Version 3]

Earl Clement Davis

No Date

As we sit here this morning there is traveling across the Atlantic a shipload of human derelicts from all grades of {???} society, who have been gathered from the underworld of Paris, and other European cities. Men and women, some from homes of {???} and refinement, educated and well-cared for. Some reckless travelers, others people simply the victims of misfortune. What is their story? Drawn to Europe by either the glamour of the war or the call of service of one kind or another, they have been traveling the broad and gaudy highway of a life of unbridled pleasure seeking. The result is unsustainable, hopeless, friendless, characterless, reduced at to the last extremity, living amid the sins of human kind, they have been befriended by societies organized to take care of them. Their passage across is paid, their food is provided, and arrangements of [sic] [have] been made with friendly societies here to care for them after they have landed in New York.

You can see the {???} of the same sort of people in almost every newspaper that you read. Here and there amid the daily records of life, there leaps to the point some tragic story of a disillusioned life. But the smallest fraction of all ever gets into the daily news.

We find them, young and old, in all the walks of life, in churches and out. Who are they? What are they?

They are the people who for one reason or another take it for granted that a life of self-indulgence, or selfish seeking after The Compelling Power of the Christ Like Life [Version 4]

Earl Clement Davis

No Date

Our of the extra-ordinary developments of the 19th century, which has been called the lofty and relentless century, there are slowly emerging two great basic faiths.

The Compelling Power of the Christ Like Life [Version 5]

Earl Clement Davis

No Date

Sinner, saint, and hypocrite are three words which are commonly used. In the rough we may describe a sinner as one whose main interests are concerned with what he can get out of life. In the sinner happens to be of weak personality.