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CHAPTER

1

The Size of the Soul

Persons out of Christ often try to comfort themselves with the remembrance that they have never in their lives committed any really great sin. Little trifling acts of wrongdoing perhaps, but nothing of any consequence, so surely God will overlook their rather insignificant transgressions when He settles their accounts.

In the first place, a man's status before God is decided not by the number and enormity of his sins but by whether those sins have or have not been forgiven, whether he is on God's side or the side of the devil.

The soldier who mutinies is held responsible for his mutiny even if he does nothing more than stand up and let himself be counted among the rebels. His crime lies in his break with his superiors and his willingness to go along with the enemies of his country. That he performs no extraordinary feats of violence may mean no more than that he is an ordi-

nary fellow incapable of great deeds of any sort for or against his country.

Sins of great magnitude may indicate an energy of soul which if turned in a right direction can lead far up the way toward spiritual perfection. Conversely, there is a meanness of soul that inhibits and restricts the scope and intensity of even the most common activities. When such a soul is converted, it may be only to mediocrity.

On his own testimony Paul before his conversion was a great sinner (1 Timothy 1:15). He persecuted Christians with great violence and wrought havoc with the followers of Christ. After his spectacular about-face he turned his magnificent equipment over to the Lord and the whole world knows the result. The same energy of soul that had made him a dangerous enemy of the Christian faith made him a powerful advocate of that faith once his eyes had been opened.

From this we may learn that feebleness and timidity are not to be confused with righteousness. To sin but weakly is not the same as to do good. Lack of moral energy may prevent a man from enjoying himself in sin, but he is in sin nevertheless. His weak effort at neutrality does not deceive God who knows the secrets of every man's heart.

The size of a man's soul is likely to determine his success or failure in the rough, competitive world of the 20th century. And after his conversion to Christ, it will go far to determine his usefulness in the kingdom of God. Undoubtedly there are many genuine

Christians who are not doing much for their fellow men nor for the Church into which they were born by the miracle of the Spirit's regeneration. Such as these need to hear the words of Christ, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8). The only hope for a restricted heart is the mighty inworking of the Spirit. He can enlarge the mansion of the soul; but only He can do it.