

[From the papers of Dr. Gordon H. Clark. From the Home Evangel, Nov. 1946, Vol 7. No. 11]

Two Forms of Devotion

When we say that a man engages in daily devotions, we mean that he sets aside a certain time for Bible study and prayer. In trying to understand the meaning of the Bible, he attempts to see how it applies to his life. Suppose he is reading the Twenty-Third Psalm. It speaks of a shepherd leading his sheep in grassy meadows and along pleasant streams. It says the rod and the staff of the shepherd are a comfort to the sheep. And the Christian who reads this asks himself, "Do I recognize that Christ is my shepherd? What blessings has Christ given me that are like still waters and green pastures? And, when, as is sometimes the case, I must go through the valley of the shadow of death, am I afraid or do I really trust my Saviour?" It is thus that a Christian comes to understand such portions of the Bible; and it is this meditation and thought that we call devotions.

But there is something a little different from this that is also called devotion. When a good Christian woman teaches a Sunday School class week after week, and never allows her frequent aches and pains to keep her home, and when she never gives up although the children seem not to learn and are hard to handle, when she can always be depended on to do what she says she will do, then we say she shows devotion. Ministers and missionaries have shown great devotion by preaching the gospel in difficult places; some face malaria in the tropics; some have to combat germs, dirt and bugs in heathen lands; some in trying to win hostile savages have lost their lives. This is devotion.

Every Christian ought to engage in both of these forms of devotion. The one is practiced in secret, the other openly. But both are equally necessary. Do you neglect either one? Do you neglect both?

– G.H.C.