

The Old Hickory

Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Baby Robins

From my window I have a clear view of my neighbor's house, the corner of which has a downspout, and atop that a mother robin has made a nest for her young. For a while there were no young as she glued herself to that cradle, watching for dangers and warming those tiny blue eggs. Before I knew it, there was movement in the nest while mother was away gathering food. When she perched aside the rim positioning herself to deliver the goods, up popped four or five little heads, mouths wide open in anticipation of something from twelve-o'clock high. The faithful mother made her deposit and all was well. They are growing. It will not be long before they fly away.

Would that we were like those small robins with mouths wide open to receive nourishment! Peter said, "like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation," (1 Pet. 2:2). As the baby robins have a longing or desire for their mother's nourishment, and insist very emphatically that it be filled, Christians should crave after the metaphorical "milk," the word of God, with exactly the same intense desire.

Mother robin's prepared meals for her young have purpose. The robins must grow and take flight if they are to survive. God's purpose for the Christian's insistence for spiritual nourishment is "that by it you may grow in respect to salvation." How very important it is to grow! Peter brought the subject up again in his next letter: "but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 3:18a).

Baby robin's growth enables him to fly away. The Christian's growth enables him to "stand." Paul said, "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain." (1 Cor. 15:1-2).

Baby robin's successful flight from mother's nest enables the Creator's purposes to be realized in him. Growth, which enables the Christian to "stand firm against the schemes of the devil" (Eph. 6:11b), and to "stand firm in the faith" (1 Cor. 16:13), enables the Creator's purposes to be fulfilled in him: to "stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God" (Col. 4:12b). God's purpose for men is "that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus *and* with *it* eternal glory." (2 Tim. 2:10b).

Are our mouths wide open to receive nourishment from our God? Can we encourage you today, to receive God's word "so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation?" What can we do to help you grow, to stand, and to "obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus?"

- GFS

Moral Excellence

Would you hesitate to declare your important beliefs if they were unpopular? If standing for your convictions meant you would have to suffer,

would you be bold or silent? When it comes to faith in Christ, Christians ought to be willing to declare their faith. Christians ought not to be so afraid of the enemies of the cross that their faith remains undeclared.

Every day it seems I see or heard something that suggests to me that I really need alot of "arete".

The Greeks referred to this attitude of living by and declaring one's convictions, even if unpopular, as "arete". In the Bible, this word is translated into our English words "integrity", "virtue" and "moral excellence". It refers to strength of character; an active quality which requires courage and energy. The Lord tells us to grow in this characteristic, and it is listed right next to the word "faith (see 2 Pet. 1:5-11).

You see, God does not compromise when it comes to righteousness. He can be trusted absolutely because He never lies. Men and women may compromise their convictions under pressure or deny their faith under threat - but not the Lord! Remember the cross He faced! He would not compromise the truth.

Our nation is undergoing a sort of "culture war" and the result it seems is that worthy and honorable principles, ideals, attitudes and beliefs which were at one time more or less typical of most are now on the fringe. There is much in society today to pressure us to deny the Lord. If we refuse, we will be in the minority. We should no longer maintain the illusion that what was once typical still is yet today.

We are not born with this "arete", or integrity. We must develop it by choosing to live right before God and then following through on that decision. Like the apostles, for example. They had been arrested and stood before the judgment council. The crime? - they were teaching others about

Jesus. The council forbade them to do so ever again, and they answered, "We must obey God rather than men!" (Acts 5:29). That is moral excellence.

- Jon W. Quinn

The Anvil of God's Word

**Last eve I paused beside a blacksmith's door
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old Hammers worn with beating years of time.**

**"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"to wear and batter on these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he, and then with twinkling eyes,
"The anvil wears the hammers out you know."**

**"And so," I thought, "the anvil of God's Word
For ages skeptics' blows have beat upon,
Yet though the noise of falling blows was heard
The anvil is unmarred, the hammers gone."**

-- John Clifford

SUNDAY'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"Implanting Respect In Our Children!"* (text: 1 Pet. 2:17-20); Sunday evening: Jesus Christ: A Closer Look – *Heaven and Earth Will Pass Away!* (Mark 13:32-37).

SCHEDULE: Our Fall Gospel Meeting is scheduled for Sept. 18-23, with Eric Reynolds.

