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SERMON

BY

J. W. H. Haines

Text, Luke 2:52

Subject, Character

Luke 2:52.

"Jesus advanced in wisdom
and in stature and in
favor with God and man"

Jesus was a perfect
character - yet He grew,
as all perfect characters
do, in wisdom, in stature
and in favor with God
and man. This is the
way every character ought
to grow - mentally, physically,
and spiritually.

The word character comes to us
from the French, who had
taken it over from the Latin
who in turn had accepted
the word from ^{the} Greek's Kappa...

meaning to engrave. Character is then an engraving, a picture literally cut into something, and that something is the soul. The soul of man is the canvas on which time, using our experiences, develops a picture, which we call character. The picture is not fully completed even at death.

The development proceeds by two forces, the inside power of nature which shapes the personality into a cold or a warm, into a deliberate or reckless

best of mind. Then there ⁽²⁾
is the exterior powers at
work in the formation of
character. These shape
the personality into a negative
or positive, into what we
call a disagreeable and an
agreeable person; a de-
grading or an elevating
life, according to how
the natural forces of the
soul react to the un-
expected experiences
of the physical world
in which we live.

In general character
is a combination of
endued and acquired
qualities distinguishing

and individual or a
race. (For example, the char-
acter of the present generation
of Porto Ricans is an intelli-
gent restlessness according
to law, that of the previous
generation was ignorant
submission to authority.

The character of the people
as a people has changed
and is changing and
we trust will change with
the years, as is that of
any progressive people.

Character is what we are, repu-
tation is what others think
we are. Character is marred
by wrong thinking and wrong
doing, reputation by

(3)

standers and lies.
Character comes out victorious
over slanders and lies
while reputation may be
ruined by a mere suspicion.
A reputation may endure
long after a character
has been destroyed by
unknown (to others) acts
of wrong. Your reputation
may survive many
transgressions and personal
sins, but ^{your} character
cannot. ~~survive~~ You
need do no evil to lose
a mere suspicion ^{often does the work.}
your reputation. While
your character is destroyed
and can be destroyed only
by you, yourself. You

see new visions, new heights to scale and you decide to climb, to overcome the precipitous and fatiguing path of stones to reach the higher plane. Or you see the easy level path, apparently level with carpets of grass and requiring no effort to walk and you decide to go down that path to a shady and finally a dark ending. In both cases you are the one to decide, to choose, which way you go. You have to go up or down. There is no fixed character. You

Character is changing for ⁽⁴⁾
the better or for the worse
all the time. We cannot
appreciate the mathematical
measurement of a moment.
If we could we could see the
grass growing. Character
develops so gradually
we cannot see it grow
except by comparison.
A girl affirmed that
her character was the
same as it was six
years ago. Many think
their characters are
what they were years
ago. You have to com-
pare your life not with
others but with your

own life in the past, to estimate its growth.

The Prodigal Son with a sack of ^{husks} algarobos on his back recalls his early days at home. It is true he thought first of this good food in his father's home. But he also recalled his character at home. He was then pure and clean. Now he is an outcast. "I will go and say I have sinned." The Prodigal wept in sorrow as he compared his present with the past and reviewed the years in which he chose to do his own will, to follow his own desire.

He was like the student who said ~~he~~ "I like any thing that does not go against my ideas". But the trouble lay right there, the prodigals' ideas were all wrong.

Great characters on reviewing ^{ing} their character are both happy and humiliated, happy to see how they have been kept and developed for greater service to man and God, but humiliated by their failure to accept all the means that were theirs for the development of their lives.

No one but ^{yourself and} God knows your true character. Judas

Iscaariot was considered a man
of good character. ^{He enjoyed and had acquired a} He was made
^{splendid reputation.} the treasurer of the 12^{apostles}. Only
Jesus and Judas knew that
he was a thief from the beginning.
Judas failed to react rightly to
the precepts and advice of
Jesus. He followed Jesus
but held to his own way
of doing things. He per-
sisted in having his own
way even to the last
when all discouraged he
sought out a tree and
hanged himself. In a physical
way Judas typifies what
happens spiritually to
a great many people.
They want no laws, they

persist in doing as and (6)
how they ^{please,} desire. At the
end of their lives they
are discouraged and
spiritually hang themselves.

Jesus was a tiny
baby, then a boy with all
the potentialities of a
human being of clean
pure parentage. He
increased, advanced,
grew into a man of
perfect character, perfect
in intellectual development
wisdom; perfect in physical
completeness - stature, and
perfect in spiritual grace -
in favor with God and man,
in the same way every

young person ought to grow, and
what ~~any~~ ^{he} can do if he watches
where he goes, what he does
and ^{what he} thinks. This is what
Peter meant when he said
"make it your whole concern
to furnish your faith with
resolution, resolution with
intelligence, intelligence
with ~~piety~~ self-control, &c -
with ~~steadfastness~~, s- with
piety, piety with brotherliness,
br- with Christian love. For
as these qualities exist and
increase with you, they render
you active and fruitful in
the knowledge of our Lord J. C." # Pet 1:6-8
moffett's translation

~~you~~ Remember this - it
takes years to produce a

really great character. (7)
It is ^{the} steadily doing in a
noble way your every day
duties as a child of God.

That is the pathway to real
greatness. ^{The winner} It is the one
who realizes the value of

small and even trivial
^{if these things are good or refuses to do them}
things and does them ^{if these things}
^{It is the little, insignificant thing that builds up or}
^{destroys a character.} ^{are wrong}
it we eat, drink and

be merry is the creed of
some. When we are old
we will think of higher and
better things. They will
then, think of them but
they will not then be able
to attain these higher things.
It is too late. Their wings
for soaring high have

been broken. They have to con-
tent themselves with a lower
place in life. In saying
this I do not forget the
^{enabling} grace and mercy of God.
God stands ready to lift
a man up and make
use of whatever qualities
he may have. Samuel
Hadley was of noble birth.
He cut loose and went
down to the depths of a drunkard
and gambler. God saved
him. But Hadley could
be used by God only among
the down and out brims.
His ancestor Jonathan
Edwards preached to the
most select of the intel-

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lectual, was made
President of Princeton and
is now recognized as
the greatest metaphysicist
of his age. Right thinking
and doing made Edwards
a great character in God's
Kingdom. Wrong thinking
and doing limited God's
ability to do ^{the same} in and
for ~~man~~. ^{Saul H. Hadley} Your character
is what you make it.

A character is not formed
by dreaming. It is made
by deliberate, clear thinking.
Laws and rules must be
followed. No character
like that of Jesus Christ
can be developed without

following, obeying well defined laws.

Some say that ~~the~~ character is an indefinite thing and is developed unconsciously, that no laws can govern its development. A river does that very thing. The richer the land, the more crooked is its course and the most wasteful and destructive its waters. It is when the engineers harness the waters of the Niagara and force them through tubes according to laws, it is then its waters generate light and power. A character that

grows up without definite^{ly} effort to obey rules and laws will become a failure. You cannot become a musician, an artist, a scientist or a teacher without following ~~out~~ laws and getting someone to help you to attain. You cannot become a good character unless you obey the rules governing character. ~~The purpose~~ that Jesus said "I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me". Jno. 6:38.

Obedience is the first step toward character building. The 2^d step is to set

your affections on things
above, ~~not~~ high, not on the
things of the earth." This
does not mean that you
are not to prize highly the
things of this world. It does
mean that the spiritual
things are to be above all
other things. Affections
set on God make you more
appreciative of the things
of this earth - His creation.
The soul is the ~~subject~~ on
which life is engraved, the
result of which we call
character. When we allow
God to take the experiences
of our lives into His hand,
the trials and troubles, -

that would otherwise (10)
~~be~~ bear gashes and cuts,
bring out characters
in God's likeness and
in ^{God's} beauty. A likeness
to God is what we
desire, above all else.
The ideal character is
the one whose life was
made perfect through
the things he suffered.
If we want to grow into a
perfect character we must
^{watch our model}
like the painter who from
time to time looks again
at the primal colors, so
we too must keep our
vision of right corrected
by comparing, measuring

our lives by the life
of Jesus.

Our characters are changed
to higher characters by
measuring ourselves
by our model, Jesus
Christ and shaping our
lives by His example
To grow physically, mentally
and spiritually into a per-
fect man, should be the
aim of every true follower
of Jesus. Jesus grew,
"advanced in wisdom
and in stature and in
favor with God and man."
This should be our aim - to
grow like Jesus.