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UA1B3/5 That Other Thing

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“That Other Thing”

“For to what end, think you, are ears of corn produced? Is it not that they may become dry and parched? And the reason they are parched, is that they may be reaped? For it is not to exist for themselves alone that they came into the world. If, then, they had perception would it be proper for them to pray that they should never be reaped? Since never to be reaped is for ears of corn a curse. So understand that for men it is a curse not to die, just as not to be ripened and not to be reaped.”

It occurred to me that it would not be inappropriate to use this classic parable from the teachings of Epictetus; since in him, above all the philosophers, either ancient or modern, Dr. Cherry seemed to have the deepest interest. This partiality was shown by the frequency of his references to Epictetus, both in his conversations and public speeches.

This parable when applied to the life of Dr. Cherry is a peculiarly fitting similitude, if we can forget that the stalk of corn, as we know it, is not a particularly strong or enduring plant.

Dr. Cherry was privileged to live and serve his day and generation for a much longer period than is allotted to the average individual. With a stoic indifference to his own physical comfort, and self-aggrandisement, he worked with all but a superhuman power and effectiveness to realize his ideals. These ideals were possibilities, sensed with the confidence of a seer. College Heights is sometimes referred to as “Cherry’s Dream Come True.” But what one sees and feels on this hill are not such things as dreams are made of. These ideals realized are “made of sterner stuff.”

In his philosophy Dr. Cherry was neither a Pyrrhonist, Epicurean, nor a Stoic. He was above all, a Christian without prejudices. His broad sympathies, his comprehensive understanding, his discriminating sense of justice enabled him to appreciate and indorse the wise, the good, and the true in any faith or philosophy.

Educating himself by wrestling with the problems of his life as they presented themselves to him, many of which were self-imposed, he moved onward and upward with a continuity of effort rare in human experience. With his feet on the ground, his hopes and aspirations in the skies, he strove, with confidence, toward the accomplishment of his lofty purpose, and on to his destiny.

The token of the parched, or matured fruit, of Dr. Cherry’s strenuous life, is in evidence all about us. These strikingly beautiful buildings crowning and skirting this hill are lasting monuments and constant reminders of the strength, industry, fidelity and genius of the founder of “The Western Kentucky State Teachers College.”

As important and interesting as all this may seem, there is yet something more potent and significant than monumental buildings, a beautiful campus, or enchanting views. The embodies “Spirit of the Institution” is by far the most valuable asset in our heritage from the past. To preserve and nourish this intangible guiding force in the life of the institution is a delicate and difficult responsibility.

There is in every human life subtle, unexplained, and probably inexplicable mysteries, that lie outside, or near the limits of all human ken.

The effort to explore one’s own inner life, or an attempt to probe the inner life of another resolves itself into the more chas of phantoms, vaguely silhouetted on the extreme margin of our consciousness; shadows indistinctly seen and felt.
When one in a seriously contemplative mood, dares to cut himself loose from the sensible universe, freeing his mind, heart and soul, as nearly as possible, from the incubus of tangible realities, he has at least a chance to enter a world of new and challenging suggestions that may require more than ordinary courage to contemplate.

It may be, as many philosophers believe, that in this partially explored region of consciousness may yet be found the most significant realities of life. In this field we are told we may reasonably hope to gain some knowledge of the import of the puzzling facts of personality.

After more than forty years of intimate and friendly association with Dr. Cherry, I am not prepared to assert that I understand him. To do so would be to assert my own superiority; thus doing violence to my moral and intellectual integrity.

As most of you know, Dr. Cherry, fortunately for him and for us, prescribed no limits to his hours of work. Neither his genius nor his restless spirit would let him be content to confine himself to the ordinary routine of duties actually demanded by his official position. Had he so restricted himself we would have been deprived of most that is significant or unique in “The Western Kentucky State Teachers College.”

The center of his world of light and life was “College Heights.” The exalted center of life and light, with its beautiful panoramic setting, was his joy, his hope and his inspiration. He would allow no prescribed limits to the life or light radiating from this center, nor must there be any prescriptives to be denied these blessings.

In Dr. Cherry’s detached hours of intensive study and meditation we may easily believe that there appeared in the fringes of his consciousness a medley of sensations and ideas of which he was, probably, only vaguely conscious; such ideas being mere ghosts of real conscious experiences.

These continuous kaleidoscopic mental disturbances were an ever present stimulant to his alert, eager and active mind, involving him in speculative investigations. One practical result of his study being a conviction that there are too many unused and unrecognized latent potentialities in the minds and hearts of average men and women. Avoiding involved, meaningless terminologies he called this state of mind with its inferences “That Other Thing.”

“That Other Thing” may well be considered the “Summum Bonum” for which men have striven across the centuries. It may connote, also the fabled rainbow of promise with its pot of gold. The rainbow being reflected from the mist that beclouds our mental vision when we attempt to grasp the ultimate good, or any of the golden nuggets of essential truths; many of which doubtless lie within the possible grasp of those who are willing to pay the price.

Dr. Cherry probably would include in the scope of “That Other Thing” his faith in the direct control of mind over matter. He asserted, “One may be sure he has hit the target when, or before he pulls the trigger.” “One can not die while struggling to land a five pound bass.”

Some in this audience can recall that oft repeated war cry expressed in the slogan, “Ring the Rising Bell in the Human Soul.”

In his plea for self assertion and self realization Dr. Cherry threw the weight and energy of his splendid personality.
Whatever may have been the course of his power, Dr. Cherry, when at or near his best; and when in notion gave convincing evidence that he possessed in a large measure the essential qualities of a great man with a great mind. He had high-resolve, strength, persistence, conviction and courage. It was his privilege, as it was his pleasure, to expend forty-five of his seventy-three years in nurturing, fertilizing and cultivating this humanized and humanizing educational plant.

Something of his spirit must have gone into every brick and stone and hod of mortar in these buildings, as well as into every tree, shrub and flower on the campus.

The virile, sane, exacting and aggressive quality of the Cherry spirit that permeates the atmosphere of College Heights is free from maudlin sentimentality. He built few, if any more fancied “Castles in the Air.” His dreams were the results of controlled, concentrated mental efforts to grasp stern realities.

I think he would have you approach his shrine with head erect, with a firm step and a stout heart and listen to his voice in admonition, possibly in the language of an old Greek philosopher’s farewell salutation to his friend: “Be Strong.”