

PURE RELIGION

Out of the Depths of Despair

The following experience was recorded by Bishop Jesse M. Drury who was the first storehouse keeper in the Church Welfare Program, serving faithfully from 1932 to 1959.

One Saturday morning after a heavy rainstorm, a young woman came into my office asking to see me. Having an order for food and clothing, she still seemed somewhat depressed. I sent out to the clothing department for the supervisor, feeling that the woman needed an extra bit of help. She was thrilled with some of the articles of clothing—among them, a nice coat. She came back into the office to again ask if she might have it. I could not help but notice the neatness of her appearance and the well-cultured tone of her voice. She appeared to have been a person of means and her present condition of destitution was very new to her. Going into some detail, I explained about the articles of food and clothing which her bishop had ordered for her. She seemed well pleased with what she selected.

I watched her as she left, following her out on the loading platform. She was aware of my presence and turned to me. There were tears streaming down her face, but her countenance was one of radiant happiness. For the first time in many days, she could see the beauties of the world. I could see by her expression that a great burden had been lifted from her shoulders. Life was more than a mere struggle: It was worth living! She smiled as she said: “It is a beautiful day; isn’t it good to be alive?”



I don’t believe I ever felt a deeper appreciation of life than I did in that moment I listened to her. She smiled again as she left, and I went back to my office.

A few minutes later the bishop phoned me to see if she had come. When I told him she had already been here and related my contact with her, he seemed very pleased and then told me about her.

Only last night the girl had contemplated suicide. Then she knelt down by her bedside and prayed to the Lord. She was so impressed to go to the bishop that she went to his home immediately. He received her kindly and during the course of the conversation, she opened up her heart to him and told him of her misfortune. The bishop told her that the Church had a Welfare Plan that took care of the needs of its people. No one need go without the necessities of life.

After this little talk with the bishop, she felt somewhat lifted from this mood of depression and began to plan about her immediate future. She had a job to go to next week and felt that if she could get aid to care for her until then, she would be able to make out all right.

It is strange how little acts of kindness which we sometimes unknowingly render in the course of our duties have such far-reaching results and touch someone’s soul which is craving for a kind deed or sympathetic word.

(Jesse M. Drury, *For these My Brethren*, reprinted in *Pure Religion*, by Glen L. Rudd.)