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Eulogy: Charles A. Reynard

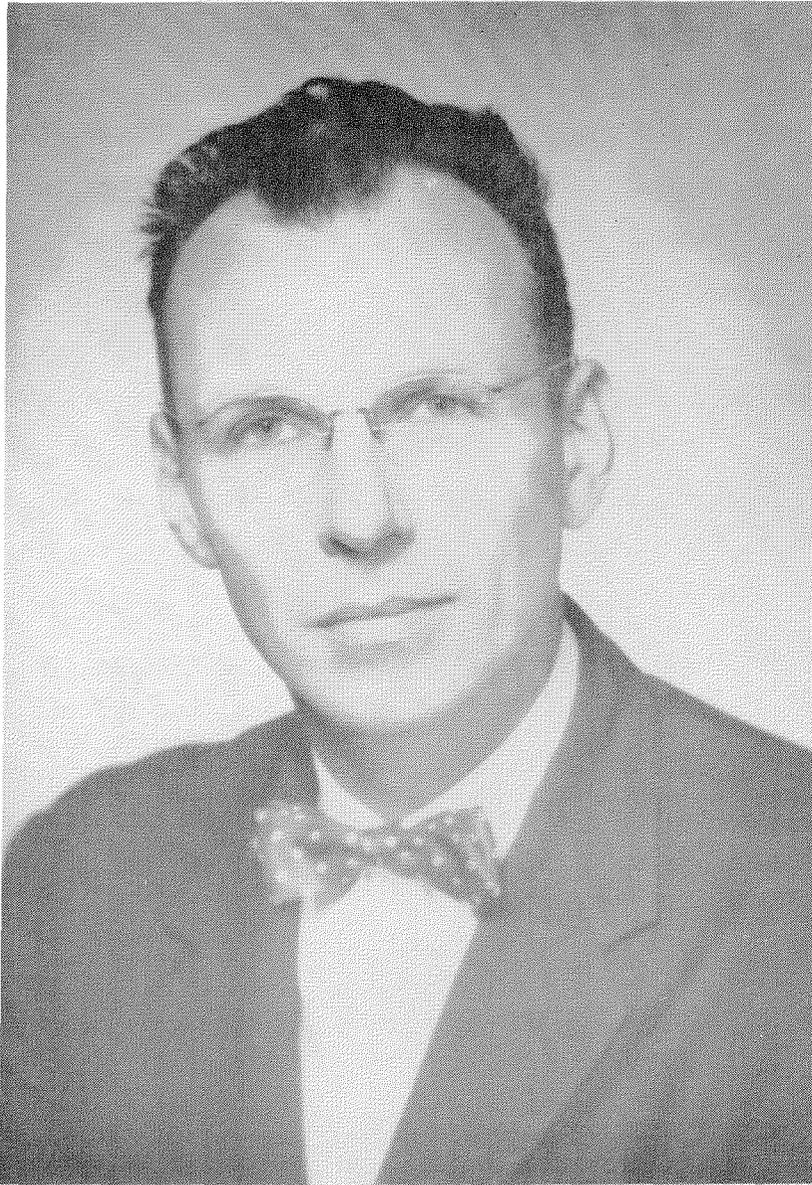
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Charles A. Reynard

1913 - 1959

Eulogy

Charles A. Reynard

Delivered at the funeral services

by The Reverend William E. Trice

No one was better qualified to live than Charles Reynard; for the same reasons, no one was better qualified to die. He respected, studied, and taught the law of the land; but he lived, demonstrated, and practiced the way of the spirit. He discovered and harmonized the laws written in books with the law written in the heart. He understood and helped to establish the statutes on labor; but he knew equally well the unwritten code of love. He was motivated by a deeply felt passion for social justice, which was equalled only by his capacity for compassion. All of us delighted in his penetrating sense of humor, based on insight and expressed in charity, which could cause us to laugh at him, at ourselves, or at situations with profit and without bitterness or the blight of cynicism.

The presence here of an honor guard of students selected from among themselves testifies to the regard in which they held this teacher. The response of his colleagues on the faculty to the needs of his family, and their open and sincere sense of shock and loss speak with more eloquence than my words could ever indicate. The impressions received from him and from the Law School which are now carried by countless practicing attorneys can never be known, perhaps even by those men themselves.

In the field of arbitration he was in constant demand. His professional attainments here are already a matter of public record. Let it only be noted that an arbitrator — who alone holds the power of final judgment — must have the full confidence of *both* sides in a disagreement. As I wrote a letter recommending him for membership in the National Academy of Arbiters, I knew (what the constant demands upon him in this field have proved) that he could search in impartiality for truth and equity.

For those of us who realize that our claim to celestial position may be in question due to the hours we have (or haven't) worked for the Kingdom and to the quality and consistency of our en-

deavors, it is comforting to know that a sympathetic arbitrator has gone on before to represent us in High Places.

Un-numbered hours of this man's life went into the anonymous counselling of persons troubled with problems which they alone could not lick. Except as some here today testify in the silence of their hearts and as is written into the final accounting of the universe, none shall ever know the full measure of this devotion; we can only give thanks to God that it has been.

To leave the impression that this friend was primarily a gentle man of academic pursuits and wayside compassions would be to distort the real Charles Reynard. Actually he revelled in the arena of practical politics, understood its maneuverings, and acknowledged its compromises. Indeed, if heaven is not divided between Republicans and Democrats (but with the proper ratio from his viewpoint) Charles Reynard is a disappointed man. Surely an understanding Lord will allow him a few pointed political barbs to prevent dullness in Eternal Places.

The Reynard family life, if I may speak briefly of so private an affair, has, in these last years, been a treasure both for those within the family circle and for those privileged to observe it. During this time he left little to be desired as husband and father, which must surely reflect his upbringing as a son. Like all other lasting treasures, this experience is laid up where neither "moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

My knowledge of his relationship to the church is limited to the past eight years. Seldom has one man contributed so much in so short a time. His was a pragmatic faith. He respected the creeds of Christendom and fulfilled the obligations of church membership but, above all, he believed his faith was true because it worked. It worked for him; and he helped it to work and saw it at work in the lives of others. There was no secret about his philosophy which we shared, although he chided me for forgetting parts of it at times. It is best expressed in this anonymous prayer:

"Give me the courage to change the things that can
be changed,
Patience to endure the things that cannot be
changed,
And the wisdom to know the difference."

As Chairman of the Official Board of the University Methodist Church, pioneer in the Men's Bible Class, program chairman of the Men's Club, his contributions are significant and permanent. He could and he did stand for his honest convictions, unchanged by praise or approval, blame or criticism. Many of us remember with pride that he publicly identified himself as "A Christian and a Methodist." Those who marvelled at his calmness in chaos and crisis and his unruffled response to irritation may now know his secret. Long ago, he had looked death squarely in the face and was not afraid. He learned what all who live in contentment must learn: to live with the reality of death and thereby love life all the more.

We have not gathered here to minimize the reality of the sorrow and tragedy of untimely death. Nor is this the time for optimistic whistling in cosmic darkness. It is the time to affirm that the things I have said are true; and that about the indestructibility of so genuine a personality there lingers no question in my mind or heart.

It is revealing, in many ways, that the last thing he did on his early morning return from this recent trip was to review his notes for the morning's lecture, and that his last words were, "Well, I think I'm ready for tomorrow." Well, that's what I think, too. Charlie Reynard was ready for God's tomorrow.