

“Once I Was A King”

By REV. DR. R. ANDERSON JARDINE

The Romance and Abdication of Edward VIII

Rev. Dr. R. Anderson Jardine, the courageous English minister who defied his church to follow his conscience in performing the marriage ceremony of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor in France, was one of the most dynamic speakers ever heard at the Golden Lotus Temple of All Religions at Encinitas. He spoke there on July 2nd as the guest of the Self-Realization Fellowship.

If I tried to tell you the whole story that I have to tell it would require a two-hour sitting so I shall have to just go right into the subject of this greatest romance that ever occurred in the history of the English nation and give you what you call in America the highlights.

I look forward to years ahead and I see many young lovers standing at the ruins of a chateau in France. Each young man is telling again the story of ONCE THERE WAS A KING who loved so greatly and so nobly and so purely that he sacrificed his throne for the love of a woman. That is history. I wonder how it is going to be written in the history books of the future. But we need not be afraid because already that history of the King is being written by Edward himself privately and in due course, if necessary, the true story of the abdication will be released to the world.

The Lion and the Mouse

Now I am a very small figure in comparison to Edward, but I used to read, as a little boy, how a lion once got caught in a net and couldn't get free, when a little mouse came along and gnawed at the net until the lion was freed. Edward was the lion and I am the mouse that came to help him get out of the entangling net.

Word had gone forth from the Bishop to the chaplains (our English clergymen are called chaplains) that Edward might approach them to perform a marriage ceremony for him, and that they were to refuse. One of the leading clergymen in Paris said this to the press, that he had not been approached by Edward to perform the ceremony but if he had been he would have refused. From the highest dignitaries, the Archbishop down to the ordinary clergymen, no one was supposed to perform that marriage. Later on the Bishop said that “Every one of his

clergymen had been true to him." But whether they had been true to God is for you to decide. One great cardinal once said, "I wish I had been as true to my God as I have been to my king."

How do I come into the picture? It happened like this. I had a large church in Darlington, seating from 800 to 1000 people. There was a splendid congregation, a beautiful choir, everything that made up a great church. And I had a very lovely vicarage. Not far from the church was a tent where I used to go for devotion and meditation.

I Upset the Plans

Coming down one morning to my breakfast table, I saw the newspaper headlines which said, "NO RELIGIOUS CEREMONY FOR THE DUKE." I am afraid I exploded. I said

something and my wife said, "What did you say, dear?" I replied, "I am not talking to you." I went to my study and took a pair of scissors and cut out that piece from the paper. I said, "We will see about that. We will just see whether they are going to do this to him."

I went out to my tent and meditated. I get my instructions from God. I never have taken my instructions from man. Straight to the Father Himself I went, and there I waited for my instructions--and I received them.

Post-Card invitation

So, I took a post-card and wrote, "Will you please convey to His Royal Highness my congratulations on his coming marriage. If the Duke really desires a religious marriage I am prepared to give it to him." I sent that message off to France to Mr. Herman Rogers. He read it and immediately rushed to the Duke and said, "Just read that." The Duke said, "Get in touch with Rev. Jardine at once."

Now after I had written that card to Mr. Rogers I got up and walked into the house. My wife was standing there and I said to her, "My dear, I am going to prophesy to you. Edward has received my card and they have had a consultation and he has ordered that a telegram be sent to me, and I want you to know that I am going to marry them in France." My wife said, "Don't be silly." I replied, "I know. It is settled."

That was on Saturday. On Sunday morning I was in my Children's Church. You know what a Children's Church is? It is where the children conduct the entire service themselves. I only give a five-minute talk and just see that everything is conducted in order. I came from the Children's Church and my wife said to me, "You don't know what has happened." I said, "I do. You have a telegram for me. I told you he would send me a telegram."

In that telegram was the message that I was to get in touch with him immediately and arrange to go to France, which I did. And nobody was any the wiser except my wife and my family and right now I take my hat off to the women because I found they could keep a secret. No one knew of this secret until it came out later in the papers, that I was to perform the Duke's marriage ceremony.

Both the Duke and Mrs. Warfield desired a religious ceremony, and God, who sees the heart, fulfills its righteous desires. From all over the world I received letters from every nation under the sun except the Eskimo and I am sure he sent one but it got lost in an iceberg. There were letters from people who said, "Mr. Jardine, we were praying that God would find a man to conduct that ceremony and God found him."

“Why Does the Church Refuse to Marry Us?”

The first question that the Duke asked me was a difficult question. He was seated at a table writing, acknowledging the good wishes that were sent to him. He was wearing a pair of shorts and he said, “You have caught me in this dress.” Then he said, “Mr. Jardine, will you tell me why the Church will not give us a religious ceremony, seeing that we both are Christians?” What would you have said to that? He was the ex-King and he was asking one of his humble servants why the church would not give him a religious ceremony. I couldn’t reply. And he went on to say, “The church is too busy with politics to fulfil its mission. Its mission is to save souls.” Those were the words of Edward VIII.

Why did I interfere and go against the wishes of the Government and against the Church? I don’t believe that 99 out of 100 people understand the true situation. In the first place, I was guarding Edward’s honor and good name. He had been refused a religious ceremony. He was going to be married in a civil ceremony and then going from France into Austria for his honeymoon.

Austrian Peasants’ Attitude

After the marriage the Baroness of Rothschild came to me and said, “You don’t know what good you have done for this couple.”

Now I know the Austrian peasant. They are very religious persons, who believe if a person is married at a civil ceremony and not by the Church they are living in sin. Had Edward gone to Austria without the blessing of the church the Austrian would have said, They are not married; they are not blessed by God. Do you see what situation the bigotry and hypocrisy of the Church were putting Edward and Wallis into? Time will prove that the British Government and the Church will regret that they were unwilling for a religious ceremony to be performed. Only the other day in England there went up a cry from the people: “We want Edward back in London.”

Octavian Society

I belong to a Society called the Octavian. Immediately after the ceremony this Society got together in London and I was made a life member of it. There was a meeting held at the hotel, at which I was guest speaker. There were 350 people present. A week ago I received a letter from my daughter. She said, “Father, the Society has grown until it has 50,000 members. From 350 people it has grown to 50,000 banded together to defend the name of the Duke of Windsor.” Does that look like a waning of the popularity of the Duke? It speaks eloquently of the man who still has that wonderful hold on the hearts of the people.

A rather amusing thing occurred just the day before I performed the marriage ceremony. One reporter came to me and said, “You have received a telegram from the Bishop telling you not to perform the ceremony.” I said, “I have not received such a telegram.” He said, “But we went to the Bishop and he told us the contents of the telegram.” I replied, “You can go back to the Bishop and tell him that I have not received his telegram. Even if he sent one hundred telegrams I am still going to do what I feel is right.”

The Missing Telegram

What happened to that telegram? 2000 telegrams had arrived at the chateau. The Duke had them all piled up on a gold plate taking a photograph of them. Right in the middle of that pile was the Bishop’s telegram to me. When Edward was in Austria reading over those telegrams he found the one the Bishop had sent and he was so much amused that he sent this wire back to me saying I would be “pleased

to receive it." So, that is what became of the Bishop's telegram to me. It didn't reach its objective.

Why did Edward abdicate? You get the story over here that the reason was that he was marrying an American woman who had been twice divorced. Don't you believe it. When one has something that he wants to "put over" he has to have a "peg to hang the hat on." And unfortunately this marriage plan of Edward's occurred at a time when it was very convenient to make it the peg on which to hang the hat.

Casting the First Stone

I was speaking in Oakland and a woman kept interrupting. Afterward she came to me and said, "Do you know that you aided a woman to commit adultery?" To this I said, "Do you mind my asking you a question? Did you ever commit sin?" "Oh, yes." "Well, it says in the Bible that he that is without sin, let him cast the first stone. You are not eligible, my friend." She just turned on her heel and left as if I had a plague.

Many people quote, "Whomsoever God has joined together, let no man put asunder." But the Bible does not say that. It says, "Whatsoever God hath joined together . . ." There is a great difference. I ask them, "Had you ever been indiscreet in your life before you were married?" They say, Yes. Then I say, "He that is joined to a harlot is one flesh--one body." It hits them straight between the eyes. I have performed a great many marriages at my church. More perhaps than any other clergyman. And I can tell you that all the marriages were not made in Heaven.

Victim of Conspiracy

What was the reason for Edward's abdication? He was the victim of a religious and political conspiracy to get rid of him. There is no one who can deny that fact when one gets to know what was going on behind the scenes. It is terrible when the political and religious factions get together to victimize anybody. What happened? It seems they had created a Frankenstein and when it began to walk they didn't know what to do with it. They had made a democrat of democrats.

Edward was the man who had made the royal family so popular, a man with a heart big enough to take in all nations, and a heart big enough to take in all peoples. As he said one day when somebody was telling him something about his sister's husband, Lord Lascelles, "Well, the Lascelles get royaler and royaler while I get commoner and commoner." And through that divine commonness he was getting into the very hearts of the people. He was not content to be a rubber stamp. There were certain things he was going to do for the common people and in his attempt to do those things he aroused a section of the established Church.

I say a section because the Church is divided into two sections. The Anglo-Catholic party was against the Duke, along with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the man who "Fired the shot," Dr. Blunt. When Dr. Blunt was in Canada and I was in Niagara Falls I couldn't get a hall or a church where I could speak. I was booked to speak there but the Church intervened to stop it. They will not let me speak anywhere in the Church. Both the Bishop of New York and the Bishop of Long Island were ordered to close their pulpits to me even before I landed in America.

But one Bishop came to me and said, "I want you to come to my church to speak." I went to his church. We had a glorious time, and I was to have spoken the following week. I waited and when the next Saturday arrived, just as I had expected, a nice letter came to me to say that he was very sorry. He would have to make other arrangements.

I was visiting at the Rotarian Church and the minister said, "Mr. Jardine, what are you going to do after this?" I said, "I will go to California." He said, "Why don't you stay here and talk? You can lecture here." "Does your vicar know?" I asked, He said, "That doesn't matter. Anything I say goes." To this I replied, "Go phone him." He did this, and when he came back, as the saying in America goes, was his face red! "Let's just skip it," he said.

But to come back to the story, the Duke got that Anglo-Catholic section against him. I thought that that medieval spirit of the church had gone, but it still remains to hound the man who dares to do what God and his conscience tells him to do.

The next party against the Duke is that old die-hard Conservative Party of England. Edward aroused these old die-hards, and mine owners. When Edward was hitting this old doe-hard party, he was hitting the vested interests. He had ideas of better housing of the poor and clearing out the slums. Up to the very last moment, I believe, before Edward left England, he was completing those plans of his. If any man has the interest of the people in his heart that man is Edward.

When Edward went to Wales and saw mining conditions he said, "I am going to see that something is done about it." The moment he uttered those words it was fatal. Why? Because he had aroused the animosity of the vested interests that had royalties from those mines.

Mining Conditions

If you could see those places where they live, in Glamorganshire. It was terrible! My heart bled when I walked down its streets. And Edward was coming there. Hundreds of men were out of work. They weren't even expected to pay their rent. They were out of work, not because there was no coal to mine, but to keep the price of coal up. So the mines were closed and hundreds of men were thrown out of work to keep the prices of coal up. Who cares whether the people have any money to pay for their rent or food? The Duke sat by me hours and hours talking about this. If ever there is a man who has a remedy for these ills, it is Edward. I was surprised. He amazed me with his knowledge.

The Visit to the Slums

Then Edward visited Glasgow. Before he went there everyone was told to clean house because the King might stop to inquire about conditions. They arranged Edward's program in Glasgow. But Edward disappeared. He went down to see the slums. I have seen them, men, women and children living huddled together. Edward was going down to see those conditions.

I know what happened in one of those slums. Edward went to one house where there was a woman and her son. He talked with the woman who recognized him and said, "You are the King, aren't you?" And the little boy said, "You ain't the King. You ain't got a crown on." They were talking and getting right down to the root of their life (Edward doesn't ask foolish questions. He asks questions that bring out what he want to know). While he was questioning this woman about the cost of rent and sugar and so on, a voice from upstairs cried out, "Who is it you have down there?" The woman said, "You would be surprised." Edward went upstairs and there he saw an old ex-service man lying on the bed. As soon as he saw Edward he knew him and started to get up. Edward said, "No, don't get up." He sat down to talk to this ex-soldier.

All this time his party was looking for Edward. When Edward returned and went to see the beautiful ship Queen Mary and walked around its deck, exploring its

luxurious furnishing and so on, he looked at the people and said, "How can you? How can you build a ship like this when all these people are suffering?"

You see what he had done? He had criticized the Government. Here was a king busy with the problems of his subjects while Parliament put thousands of pounds into the building of a luxury ship at a time when men, women and children were starving.

"What Will He Do Next?"

Do you wonder that they wanted Edward out of the way? They were asking, "What will he do next?" And very conveniently, when the time was ripe to strike (if you know the exact time to strike and the convenient time to do a thing, it works most effectively) they timed this little event in England right up to the very coronation. Everything was perfectly timed. Then they struck. They gave the man ten days to undo twenty-five years' service--ten days in which he had to make a decision. Mrs. Warfield left the country and told Edward to decide for himself what he wanted to do.

Ten days in which the greatest Parliament was not to speak of the decision that was about to be made. Twice an attempt was made in Parliament to discuss Edward's situation but the speakers were told to "sit down." What did they discuss during those ten days? They discussed lunacy bills and all kinds of things but not once did they say, "We have to discuss this question because not only does it affect the people of this nation but the whole Empire." One man got up in Parliament and said "Why doesn't he decide? We are losing our greatest trade now." You know what the greatest trade was? The selling of Coronation souvenirs. These included cups, busts and so on. The moment Edward abdicated every cup and stamp bearing his names were bought up. Instead of ruining the trade Edward simply made people long to get those souvenirs.

Where was the head of the Church all this time? The greatest friend of the Queen Mother? A man who said he was the best friend that George VI had? During those ten days the Archbishop of Canterbury never went near Edward. He said, "It might do more harm than good."

No Help From the Church

Now I have been a pastor for 45 years. I have worked in the slums for years and once when I was walking down the street I saw a woman who was on fire. I didn't say, "I had better not go in there; it might do more harm than good." I went in and tried to help her. I did what I could. She died, but I did what I could to help her. And the people said, "That is the kind of work we expect our parson to do."

And here was a man who had prayed for Edward for twenty-five years in the Church. We prayed for him when he became King and his father's name was taken out of the prayer book and his name put in. The church which prayed for him day and night for twenty-five years turned its back on him. That is shame! Shame! And the Archbishop of Canterbury never went near him. A second reason that he gave for not going was that he was a very good friend of his father. I should expect the father's friend who loved him so much to do something for the son who needed help.

Radio Criticism

That was bad enough. Edward left England as an exile and as soon as his back was turned the Archbishop went on the radio. In England we have a dictatorship over the radio. No one can go on the radio unless the B. B. C. allow him to do

so. They would never allow Edward or me to go on. When the Duke spoke recently on peace they wouldn't allow his speech to be broadcast in England. The moment Edward left the country the Archbishop deliberately kicked him in the back, talked against his companions and the people he went with. Immediately the Archbishop dropped in the estimation of the world.

These are the reasons why Edward was forced to abdicate. He left because he was a victim of a political and religious conspiracy.

The Charm of the Duchess

American women will want to know something about the Duchess. She is one of those people who come into the world with a charm and a personality that other people don't seem to possess. With a slim, girlish figure, not a beautiful woman but a striking one, she has a charm and a personality that I have never met in anybody else. Her lineage is good. I believe she would have made a very fine Queen. I believe that if they had been wise enough to allow that marriage to go on it would have done more to unite these two countries than anything in the world.

The night before the wedding there was a gathering at the chateau. The Duke was sitting with me. The Duchess beckoned to the Duke and he rose and went to the door. Then he beckoned to me to follow him. I went outside and they both began to thank me for what I had done and for what I was going to do for them.

Her Influence for Good

The three of us were near tears. I said, "Now look here, if you go on like this you will have me blubbering like a kid." Then in a minute all the indignities and persecutions came into the mind of the ex-King and he said, "Mr. Jardine, I have suffered." "My God", he said, "I could have answered them." And the Duchess put her hand on his shoulder and said, "My dear, that is not the spirit." He looked at her and he looked at me and he said, "You are right. That is not the spirit."

Wasn't that lovely? Do you know anything finer than that marvelous influence she has over him for good? And I want to tell you that today they are more in love than ever. They simply idolize each other.

That is Edward. But what is the future of Edward? I have told him that God has a great work for him to do, if he will yield himself entirely to God. I told him that God saw he was too great for one kingdom and that He wanted him free for the world, and that he is destined, if he will follow the lead of the Almighty God, to be the greatest man of peace that the world has ever seen. He didn't reply to that. I know he got it and I know it has influenced him. Because you see just the other day he spoke on peace.

The Ideal Prince of Peace

There is no man today who can solve the war question as Edward can. There is no man who can act as a mediator except him. Here is a man who is an exile and who has no country. He loves everybody. He is friendly with everybody. Put him at the head of a peace table and let him talk. Let him show the way. Things will be different. That is why God set him free from the throne of England to make him a mediator of peace in the world. God knows we need it. He is friends with Hitler and Mussolini and America and with his own brothers at home.

His Compassion

Why is he so beloved? Once he was invited to go to a private hospital. In that

hospital there were thirty-seven men-- all war wrecks. He was taken into a very large room and spoke to the men. Then he said, "You told me there were thirty-seven men in this hospital. Well, there are eight men missing. Where are they?" He was told they were in another room but they were so badly disfigured that it would be embarrassing to go in. He said, "Embarrassing to them or to me?"

They took him into another room and he sat down and talked with the men and thanked them for what they did and then he walked to the door and he said, "Eight men. Let me see. There are just seven here. Where is the eighth man? "We don't want you to see him." "Why?" "Because he is battered about so much. We wouldn't like you to see him. Besides it would be useless if you did because he is deaf, blind, dumb, just waiting for death." He said, "I am going to see that man. Take me to him." And so Edward was taken in to a private room. And when the King saw the man lying there, he turned as white as a sheet. He never saw such a wreck of man in his life.

Tribute to the Soldier

Edward stood there and looked down at the man wondering, "How can I tell this man that I am here and that I love him? He can't see me or hear me or speak to me and he is practically paralyzed." Then Edward solved it. He knelt down there and put his arms around this man's neck and kissed him on the cheek. Just a flicker went through that man's body. The man knew there was somebody in that room who loved him. Then Edward got up and looked at the man and walked to the door and stood there just lost in thought; then he quietly said to himself more than to anybody else, "That man's body was broken for me."

I wonder how many of us during the Great War had the grace of God to think a thought as great as that? That is Edward. The Peace Prince. The greatest man that the royal family has ever produced. The greatest loss to the British Empire.