
The Preacher's MAGAZINE

Volume 17

December, 1942

Number 12

The Star in the East

THE WISE MEN on their way to Bethlehem saw again that star, no longer a sign but a moving, guiding star, leading them to the manger-cradle, stopping above the lowly spot and pouring its rays about the newborn Christ, making glad their hearts and guiding them to His feet where they could pour out their offerings of love to the immortal King. . . .

He is the Star of the supernatural, . . . He is not the product of His age. He is not the result of His surroundings. He is a fountain of love opened out of the eternities to pour the streams of the infinite upon human hearts. He is the uncovering of the unseen glory, so that whosoever hath seen Him hath seen the Father. He is the unveiling of the light of immortality so that whosoever stands in that light shall be glorified. He is the going forth of the everlasting Father with all of His wisdom, power and love to lay hold of His child and bring him back to his Father's house.

He is the Star of liberty, liberty from serfdom and physical bondage. When that Star arose the great majority of men were slaves. It was thought that this was their normal condition. Throughout the Roman empire, in the forests of Germany and over the world men were slaves. Though the light of the blessed Jesus affected first the heart, yet it soon began to affect the outward condition of men. And though it took long ages to so overcome its paganism that it could work out, to any great extent, the purpose intended, yet gradually the slaves began to break their chains under its influence. Wider and wider its beams spread until there are but a few of the darker corners where its influence has not been felt. You cannot sail human slavery through an age of complete gospel light. . . .

Christ is essentially the Star of hope. Hope is one of the chief elements of a joyous life. "Hopeless" is one of the saddest words we know. Man is made to hope. His inheritance is largely one of hope. This place of his abode is the place of hope. Christ is the hope of a man. In his sin He bids him hope for triumph and victory. In affliction and sorrow He bids him hope for joy and blessing. From little childhood which He gathers in His arms and teaches love, and teaches to hope for His bright heaven, to old age He is the hope of men, creating in the hearts of those who love Him a sure hope of immortality.

We come today to the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. In His presence all earthly trappings of pomp and power are as nothing. The heavens open above Him and the music of eternity is near. We come today to join with the wise men in worship at His feet, to bring our offerings, not alone of gold, frankincense and myrrh. . . . We stand with joyful gratitude in His presence and expect eternal felicity with Him in heaven.—

DR. P. F. BRESEE,

The Preacher's Magazine

Published Monthly by the Nazarene Publishing House, 2923 Troost Avenue, Kansas City, Mo., maintained by and in the interest of the Church of the Nazarene.

Subscription Price: \$1.00 a year. Entered as second class matter at the Postoffice at Kansas City, Mo. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized December 30, 1925.

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The Preacher and Homiletics

By the Editor

A STAUNCH admirer of an erratic preacher once said, "Brother L— used to preach well arranged sermons, but he has left off all such formality, and now he just stands up there and gives out the truth as God gives it to him. He gives it out in great chunks, and gives it out with only such order as the Holy Ghost provides." Not having been fortunate enough to have heard the erratic preacher in question, I could not say whether the brother's description was correct or not. But I did venture to say that it seemed to me a pity that one who could follow a logical and orderly course in preaching should find it necessary to come down from this exalted plane to some sort of original chaos which could but remind one of the state in which the world was found before God commenced the organization of it in the days of creation week. The truth is, I could not bring myself to believe that any man who can preach in an orderly manner would deliberately forsake order for disorder. The demands of logic and order are native in the human intellect, and one who ignores these demands is flouting both man and his Creator.

In the former times homiletics was known as "Sacred Rhetoric." The thought was that it involved only the application of all the principles of thought and speech to the subject matter and delivery of preaching. And I judge the idea was quite true and applicable now as then. The preacher as a teacher must follow the approved methods of pedagogy. The preacher as a pleader is bound by the same rules as those which govern the lawyer. The preacher as an exhorter must regard the emotional responses of his hearers, just as the politician must do. His object is different, but the road which leads to his object is not different. This does not argue that a preacher may not have a measure of success without attending to the principles of orderly discourse, but it does argue that when he does thus succeed he

succeeds in spite of his aberrations, and not because of them.

The habit of always making the sermon skeleton prominent is a fault, and has been responsible for some of the disrepute into which homiletics as a science and art has sometimes fallen. Especially in these modern days when so large a number of the average congregation have at least been to high school, there is something wearisome about the practice of making ado about firstlies, secondlies and thirdlies, and sometimes the preacher gives the impression that the order is as inspired as the text upon which the theme is founded. But all this has to do with academics. Homiletics must be learned as a science, but as an art it must often disregard the science. But the disregarding of the science is a fault only when the preacher is not aware that he is so disregarding. Often a discourse is more effective if it begins with a story or illustration, although this is not in keeping with the books on preaching which preachers are urged to read. Often the text is better read at the close than at the beginning of the sermon. Often the argument is more effective if it is presented in cumulative, rather than in divided form. Sometimes the conclusion is better for being entirely omitted. But it is like the boy who asked his father to buy him a hat. The father objected on the ground that the boy did not wear a hat. But the boy claimed he must have a hat in order that he might do without wearing it. Likewise the preacher must know the rules of homiletics that he may know when he violates them and why he violates them. But even this violation of rules does not imply disorder. One may invert order without falling into disorder. He may even modify formal order without losing sight of order itself.

It is a fault for a preacher to become the victim of a certain form even to the point where his constant listeners learn to forecast his procedure. In other words, in form and order, as in other things, variety is better than monotony. Take the prophets as an example. There are those who claim that there were two Isaiahs. The one they think wrote the first thirty-nine chapters of the book known as Isaiah, and the other the remaining twenty-seven chapters. But no such explanation is necessary to account for the facts. The difference in the subject matter is sufficient to explain the difference in form and style. No preacher who is not a bookworm and a deadhead will cast his sermons into the same mold regardless of subject matter, occasion and purpose. That were as foolish a practice as that which the ancient Greeks accredited to the monster who made all guests fit the length of his bed, even though the practice required that some should be stretched and that others should be sawed off. It is not required that a preacher should preach just the same number of minutes every time he preaches. Let him vary from twenty to forty or forty-five minutes, depending on occasion, subject and interest, rather than to stretch sparse material to

thirty minutes and compress abundance to thirty in order to be uniform.

An accomplished young musician applied to a famous teacher for help. After hearing the pupil perform, the teacher said, "You play well now, but you do not know why you do it. I will teach you why you do it." This is about what we are saying about the preacher and homiletics. It will not do for a preacher to be "unhomiletical" and not know it. But it is perfectly legitimate for him to disregard or violate the rules of homiletics when he knows what these rules are, and when he has a good reason for violating them. Homiletics, like fire, is a splendid servant, but a tyrannical master.

And now for a few practical suggestions: (1) The formal training of prospective preachers should require thorough courses in homiletics and sermonizing, just as surely as it requires courses in pastoral theology and religious education. (2) Every preacher, whether he had homiletics in the time of his probation or not, should read a good book on the formal phases of this subject once each year. (3) The preacher should train himself to study the homiletics of every speaker he hears. After he has somewhat passed the novice stage of the practice, this critical study of speakers and their messages will not take away anything from the effectiveness of the message, but rather will add to its enjoyment and usefulness to the listening preacher. (4) Every preacher should read sermons—the sermons of other preachers. He should read sermons every week. He should read them either critically or sympathetically that he may keep alive his own homiletical instincts. (5) During the first ten years of his ministry, the preacher should write a sermon every week. He should write it whether he makes any use of it or not. Not many preachers can hold the interest of the people while he reads a sermon. Even the use of full notes is, I think, a bother. The extemporaneous method is, I think, by odds the most useful and effective method. But extemporaneous preaching requires careful preparation, and "Reading makes a full man, writing makes an exact man, speaking makes a ready man." (6) The wise preacher observes the results of his own style. If he finds that his method provides a better place to quit at some other place in the sermon than at the close, he will either revise his method or change his quitting time. I have known a preacher who habitually followed his theme (and the interest of his listeners) on out to a needle point where it was necessary to quit just from mere exhaustion. But there is nothing more important in preaching than the time and manner of quitting. It is possible to quit too soon. It is more likely that one will continue too long. But no one can tell you by the watch when it is time to quit. You must know that from the subject matter and the purpose and from the interest of the people. Every preacher has his adaptations, and he is wise if

he learns and observes them. There is no hard and fast "right way" to do it. The right way is an abstraction which must be modified by each preacher for himself, and even modified for each subject and each occasion.

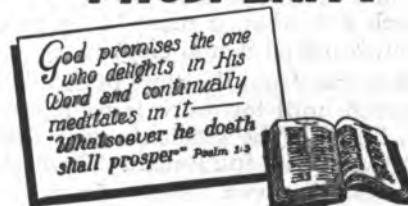
If it now seems to the reader that I have made the proposition difficult by turning all rules of thumb into principles, I can say only that the spirit is always more difficult than the letter, but it is also more important. Not many of us will be called to teach homiletics. We are called to preach the gospel, and it is preaching that interests us. We are justified in laying tribute to every factor which promises to make better and more effective preachers of us, and we are justified in revising every preaching statute when such revision promises to make us more able ministers of the New Testament. The standard of excellence is not some abstraction, but it is an eclectic composite which puts each one on the stretch to "beat himself."

The Calm Spirit

BY J. R. MILLER

The people in all lines of duty who do the most work are the calmest, most unhurried people in the community. Duties never wildly chase each other in their lives. One task never crowds another out, nor ever compels hurried, and therefore imperfect doing. The calm spirit works methodically, doing one thing at a time and doing it well; and it therefore works swiftly, though never appearing in haste. We need the peace of God in our heart just as really for the doing well of the little things of our secular life as for the doing of the greatest duties of Christ's kingdom. Our face ought to shine, and our spirit ought to be tranquil, and our eye ought to be clear, and our nerves ought to be steady, as we press through the tasks of our commonest day. Then we shall do them all well. We want heart peace, before we begin any day's duties, and we should wait at Christ's feet ere we go forth.—in *The Wesleyan Methodist*.

*The certain road
to PROSPERITY*



Thoughts on Holiness

Olive M. Winchester

The Holy Spirit Within the Human Heart

WITH the outpouring of the Spirit this third person of the Trinity became the efficient agent in all operations of grace within the heart of man. Jesus had told the disciples that it was expedient for them that He should go away, for if He did not, the Comforter would not come, but upon His departure He would send the Comforter who would dwell within their hearts. When Christ was here upon earth His power and influence were exerted upon His disciples, but in His bodily presence He could not become a motivating power within. The Holy Spirit without the limitations imposed by the human body can enter within and operate with the human heart as the center. Thus greater works can be wrought in the realm of grace. These are various in their nature.

BORN OF THE SPIRIT

Because of the emphasis of the fullness of the Spirit in entire sanctification, sometimes the operation of the Spirit in the first work of grace is lost sight of, but the Spirit is as truly active in one as in the other. In the first place there is the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. In the Gospel of John we read, "And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment." All our preaching would be ineffective if the Holy Spirit did not take the Word of God and apply it to the hearts of men. Can we conceive of the thought that the Holy Spirit applies the truth and then leaves the individual and does not continue until he becomes in deed and in truth the child of God? This does not seem to be logical or reasonable.

Along with the fact that it seems to be reasonable to expect the operation of the Holy Spirit in the heart in regeneration, there is a passage of scripture which we are inclined to feel indicates the fact. When Nicodemus was perplexed as Jesus was teaching him a lesson in spiritual realities, the cause of his perplexity being that he confused physical and spiritual being, Jesus told him very plainly, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," and further "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Here again the logic also would indicate the fact for if the birth is to be a spiritual birth which it is, then it must be that the Spirit operates in bringing it into existence.

Thus it is that from the time of the first awakening to need until the work is completed in the heart the Spirit is the efficient agent; He carries on the process to its fulfillment. Then he crowns it with a witness given. This witness is not the

Spirit speaking externally, but the Spirit speaking within. He is in the heart renewing it in life and He makes His presence known.

THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT

The Apostle Paul writing to the Ephesians exhorted them, "Be filled with the Spirit." In regeneration while the Spirit is present in the heart, yet also there is the old sinful or carnal nature which is very evident at times, and in consequence we have the strife as depicted in Paul's Epistle to Galatians, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh." In such a state and condition there cannot be a fullness of the Spirit.

Before the heart can be filled with the Spirit, there must needs be a cleansing or purifying. The heart cannot be united until this state of strife ceases which is caused by a dual condition within. When this has taken place, concomitant with its occurrence the Holy Spirit takes full possession of the soul, filling it with His glorious presence. Thus we read of the Spirit being outpoured on the Day of Pentecost and recurrently thereafter; this outpouring was on believers and through it their hearts became the temple of the Holy Ghost.

For an outstanding illustration of the effect of this glorious fullness, we need only to look at the apostles. Before the day of Pentecost, how insensible they seemed to be to spiritual truth. "But when the Holy Ghost fell upon them what a glorious transformation," says Daniel Steele. It was as if meridian day had burst upon them from the obscurity of an eclipse. As with tongues of fire they spoke forth the wonders which, though they knew them before, they till now had not known. God had passed before them and proclaimed His name, shown them His glory. The Spirit had taken the all-glorious beams that blaze from the face of Christ and had carried them deep into their hearts. The chambers of their inner being had become all luminous, and every ray of light there glowed with a dissolving, melting warmth."

PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT

All the activities of the spiritual life are fostered by the Holy Spirit, but no other phase of Christian expression would seem to be more important than that of prayer. Here special help from the Holy Spirit is given.

The reason for this assistance is clearly stated in Scripture where it is said, "And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." If left unguided, we would be inclined to pray in the line of personal desires.

Looking at some of the promises of God they seem to be very inclusive such as "If you ask anything in my name, I will do it," but there is a law in prayer as well as in other phases of life; to ask anything is not free license, but is governed by the directing power of the Holy Spirit. We do not always know just what the ultimate good is, that for which we should pray, but the Spirit helpeth our infirmities.

Another way in which the Spirit helps is through intercession. Prayer, true prayer, is not the repetition of words; it has a hidden mystery. Prayer that accomplishes things must have the element of intercession; words may be few or they may be many, but in either case this particular element must be present. Herein where human weakness fails to measure up, the Holy Spirit supplies and prayer becomes effective. To explain this to one who has never experienced it, is difficult, but those who have understand. There have been those times in prayer when it seemed as if one prayed out and beyond oneself with spiritual intercession which he knew was not born from his being, but came from above. He knew that the Holy Spirit had helped.

One more passage of scripture brings out this thought and that is the one in James which states, "The effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much." The Greek word for these first two adjectives means inwrought. It is the prayer that is begotten within the soul. While this passage does not mention the agent by whom the prayer is inwrought, yet we know that He is none other than the Holy Spirit. He so guides us that when we pray in line with the will of God and with power and prevailing intercession. Such prayers are heard in the court of heaven and are answered upon the earth.

Thus we have considered three major phases of Christian experience wherein the Spirit operates in the heart. He comes to convict and when the right response is given He works within the heart a new created life and the sinner is born again. Then He comes in His fullness when the heart is cleansed from the inbeing of sin and fills the heart with wondrous glory. Finally in the living of this life, a continuing in the fullness of the Spirit, He helpeth our infirmities especially in guiding us in prayer, working in and through us so that the spirit of intercession prevails.

How much we have to be thankful for that this wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit has been bestowed upon us, and day by day He will guide and direct us along the pathway of Christian experience! Especially do we rejoice in His direction in our prayer life, and our hearts desire ever to pray in the spirit and not in the channel of human desire.

To discover the truth as it is in Jesus is the supreme gain in life; to communicate it to others the highest privilege.—SELECTED.

Results of Primitive Evangelism

WE ENTITLED this article as above, for the only effective method the writer has been able to discover to reach the unconverted today, was by reverting to the primitive methods used by the disciples and by Paul and his associates.

We held evening services as our usual revival meetings are held, but we coupled these services with intensive personal evangelism throughout the day. While it is true that the evangelist did not have much time to rest, and while it is true that the pastor was completely worn out at the end of the campaign, and while it is true that the lay-folks worked harder than ever before—it is also true that a greater evidence of God's blessings attended both the evening services and the daytime work.

Several things we learned; one was, never to argue a point of nonessential character with the one with whom we were dealing. Too often it is an effort to escape the moment of decision. It is also necessary to be able to make a sincere effort to anticipate the arguments and opposition—being continuously conscious of the Spirit's guidance and leadership will help—and to meet them before they are voiced.

Another thing we learned was to be honest and fair with the one being interviewed; never allow him to hide behind some human dodge or excuse. The excuse met most frequently was, "Well, yes, I should, but not now." Then we quoted scriptures urging the necessity of his choosing today, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve" . . . "Today, if ye hear his voice . . ." and tried to show him the folly of putting off a decision that should be made now, and tried to help him to see what he really was doing in trying to evade a matter that he agreed was of utmost importance.

Also, we learned to refuse to be put off by such evasions as, "Well, I will, when the feeling comes." We were once dealing with a man, and after bringing him to the point of acceptance, he tried that dodge, "I will just as soon as I have the feeling I should go." We asked him how old he was, and he answered, "Fifty-six." Then we said, "And you say you have been waiting fifty-six years for God to give you a certain feeling? Do you think God is just to withhold that feeling you are looking for, all this time? Isn't it possible there is a mistake somewhere?" Then we quoted the promise, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him. . ." We applied it like this: "A few minutes ago we knocked at your door, when you saw us, it was your privilege, and within your power, to welcome us in, or to bolt the door. Did you wait for a particular or

special feeling before you let us in, or did you immediately make the decision and open the door?" He saw the light, and before we left, he had given his heart to God.

The most difficult case that it was our privilege to win (one who now is an active worker in the church), was that of a young woman whose husband was not in sympathy with her becoming a Christian. We stood at the door of her home and pleaded and prayed with her, standing up the entire time, for over two hours. We found out later that she was afraid her husband would be-
mean her if she allowed us to come inside. Fortunately, we did not know this while we were dealing with her. Her difficulty lay in her refusal to accept the simple promises of God, and exercise faith in them. We used every approach we could think of, we prayed several times; and all that happened was more tears and weeping on her part.

Finally, in desperation, we made this proposition to her: "Would you believe God to save you for at least twenty-four hours? Would you live like a Christian should, pray and read your Bible, and if occasion arise, give your testimony? Then, if after twenty-four hours, you are not conscious of His abiding presence, we will return to pray with you some more." She agreed, and we left. The next day, exactly twenty-four hours later, we returned. She met us with a smile, and we knew! She had found the rest that comes from trusting.

A similar experience was ours in the most recent individual we won to Christ, just a few weeks ago. When we asked if she was a Christian, she said no, but she would like to be. In dealing with her, we found she had been trying to live a Christian life, but just did not know how to trust Christ. We dealt with her for more than an hour, constantly repeating promises, trying to show her that it was through grace, by faith, that we are saved. Finally she said, "Well, if that's how to become a Christian, I *will* believe Him." We dropped on our knees and prayed. The following Sunday morning she was in church—she had attended but twice before—and as she left the front door, she gripped my hand, and with heaven spread all over her countenance, said, "Oh, it's good to have all the doubts gone!"

Another lesson we learned was that many folks want to be saved, but just do not know how to be. When we asked if anyone ever had sat down and talked to them about how to become a Christian, too frequently the answer was something like this, "Oh, I've been invited to church and Sunday school and young people's services dozens of times, but *no one* ever has taken time to sit down and explain how to become saved."

A still further lesson we were taught was that it is so easy to win folks to Christ when they are approached with hearts full of compassionate love and they are alone. Often their reaction was one of almost childlike eagerness. Not once were we rebuffed or insulted.

In dealing with Catholics, we found that in asking them if they felt satisfied with their personal relationship with Christ, in the victory they had over sin in answer to their many prayers, that more often than not, they admitted these lacks. Not once implying or making derogatory statements, we used their new translation (which is very similar to Weymouth), and showed them the superior privileges of direct contact with God, and a real knowledge of sins forgiven. Often we were not able to lead them on to Christ, but we were successful often enough to keep us encouraged to keep trying.

In dealing with nominal Christians, a good approach was found to be, "Are you living close enough to God to get your prayers through?" The answer, often evasive, would open the door to definite dealing.

The war has made personal work easier. Folks are more willing to pour out their fears and concern when kindly and lovingly approached. One very successful approach was to suggest the necessity of their son, or brother, or husband having someone to pray for him, that God might watch over him; and making them to realize they were letting someone down when they were not praying for him. This had its appeal to several folks.

In picking up hitchhikers the approaches are numerous; especially for the soldier boy who is "thumbing" his way—make reference to the "halo of Jesus" referred to by MacArthur in a recent speech, to the godliness of the commanding officer on Malta—such opens the way to definite dealing with the soul. One can tactfully make anything a definite means of approach, if his heart is in it.

Success will attend the effort, but first comes the effort. Should one hesitate for fear—natural timidity or carnal fear—he will find that with the first approach that will largely disappear. If one will keep in tune with God, and feel a sincere interest in the individual's soul, that fear soon will be gone. Waiting on God will take care of that carnal fear.

The blessings that have attended us since inaugurating this plan are hard to mention; financial blessing, new people, new members, good will of the community—all have come since putting to work the primitive method of evangelism.

A group is functioning, each of whom has agreed to make at least one call a week. Coupling up is urged, and thus each team makes two calls a week. Plans are under way to have monthly gatherings of workers, giving results, the new converts being present that they may be encouraged and also learn how to do personal work. The best way to keep a young convert in the right path is to get him to go out with one of the group and learn the thrill of winning a soul for God.

As to running out of prospects on whom to call, this is hardly possible; for we have found that with each new convert a list of prospects is forth-

coming, for each one wants to have his own loved ones won to God. A case in point is that of one man who was saved, who had a family that was connected with him through marriage. He and I called on this home and won the wife that evening, then several evenings later the husband was won for God. Then this wife went out with a worker and called on several of her friends and won two of them. This can be continued until scores of people may be won.

The writer is convinced that this method is God's method; that it will work today, that it is absolutely essential for the increase of our membership, that it is absolutely essential to proper Christian growth, and that it is absolutely essential to maintain relationship with Christ, for "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away."

(THE END)

The Preacher's English

Leewin B. Williams

Common errors that someone has arranged in rhyme—not poetry.

You sometimes say, "For you and I"
Of which you should be very shy.
'Tis right to say, "For you and me."
Your platform speech keep error-free.
Again you say, "Let you and I,"
When you should say, "Let you and me."
"Who did you see?" too, is not right,
"Whom did you see?" is perfect quite.
"John and Joses makes a pair,"
"Make" is the word you should use there.
In your prayers and petitions you use the word
"might."
When "may" is the word which would always
be right.

These are but samples of errors not told
Which a friend could name, if he dared be so bold.
That you know better we all are quite sure—
Then why not speak in language more pure,
And cease to discredit your good education
In a way that quite baffles all explanation
Of boys, girls, and others who voice these objections?

"When a young man's thoughts turn to poetry"
—he usually makes a mess of it. He thinks all
that is necessary is to find words that rhyme. The
best poetry, such as found in the Bible and Milton's
Paradise Lost, does not have rhyming words. In fact,
rhyming is a modern invention. A stanza may rhyme
perfectly and not have any poetry in it. Before presenting
your poetic effusions to an editor for publication, it
would be well to study this subject in some good rhetoric.

Words we stumble over when reading the Scriptures.
Be sure of the pronunciation of any unusual words
before attempting to read in public.

ABILENE—ab-i-LEE-nee, not ab-i-LENE.

AQUILA—AK-wee-luh.

ARCHELAUS—ar-kee-LAY-us, not ar-KEE-le-us.

ELISEUS—ELL-i-SEE-us, primary accent on SEE.

ITUREA—it-yoo-REE-uh.

JOTHAM—JOE-th'm.

SHADRACH—SHAY-drack, not SHAD-rack,

MESHACH—MEE-shack.

ABEDNEGO—uh-BED-nee-goe.

Insert the correct forms of pronouns in the following sentences before looking at the bottom for correct answers:

1. It was (we, us) who called.
2. I should go, if I were (him, he)
3. Mary and (her, she) went to church.
4. John and (me, I) will be there.
5. Either you or (me, I) ought to go.
6. This may be (she, her)
7. For (who, whom) did you call?
8. (Her, She) and I played a duet.
9. Tell (we, us) girls your plans.
10. (She, Her) and (I, me) have joined the class.
11. (We, Us) boys are going to school.

(Deduct 8 for each error and grade your paper.)

BONERS:
"Take care of yourself, dear," said the public speaker's wife as her husband set off for an open-air meeting.

"Yes, yes, I will," he answered.

"And remember," she added, still anxious, "don't stand with your bare head on the damp ground."

Geography has produced some amusing "boners."

The Tropic of Cancer is a rare disease.

In India a man in one cask can't marry a woman in another cask.

The Australians are very fond of the boomerang which carries its young in a bag outside its stomach.

The Music Teacher found these:

An interval in music is a period for refreshments.

Sotto voice means in a drunken voice.

Contralto is a "low" sort of music that only women can sing.

Jazz is the fashionable music today but soon, people say, we will return to composers.

Catarrh is a musical instrument, especially of Spain.

Answers to correct pronouns in exercise above:

1. we; 2. he; 3. she; 4. I; 5. I; 6. she; 7. whom; 8. She; 9. us; 10. She—I; 11. We.

Experience is the best teacher. And a real experience with God in saving and sanctifying power will erase all doubts regarding the great power of our God.—SELECTED.

He Couldn't Quite Make Up His Mind

A Wartime Parable

ONCE upon a time, there was a little preacher. He had a nice, everyday sort of church, with earnest, hard-working Christian people as its members. The preacher rather liked his people, though he was much more interested in his own pulpit efforts than in their usually dull personal problems.

Sometimes, if you had overheard the preacher and his wife talking together in private, you might have wondered—if you were cynically inclined—whether, for example, they did not resent old Mr. Brown's dying and having to have a funeral at the very time they had planned to take an interesting midwinter trip. It seemed strange they should not mention old Mrs. Brown, whose broken heart needed, desperately, every ounce of comfort even a minister somewhat inexperienced in comforting could bring to it. To be sure, they did not actually forget her. They went to call, and said the right things, and all that. Mrs. Brown, gentle soul, never knew how much they were wishing to be somewhere else, on their own more important errands.

You see what I mean, do you not? The little preacher was growing professional. He was losing—if he had ever had it—the mental attitude and the spiritual incentive essential in a *pastor*, concerned with the hopes and fears, the gains and losses, the moral and social and religious dilemmas of his flock.

He was deeply interested in the newest theories about war and peace, though he couldn't quite make up his mind which of them to adopt. He worked hard in his study and produced excellent sermons. They were not often sermons that touched the needs of his congregation in any vital spot. But they showed the preacher had read a lot. No new ideas, social or theological, or even economic and political, would catch *him* napping. His church was very proud of him.

Then came the war. New, desperate, honest-to-goodness problems descended upon the world and hit the little preacher's people as hard as any. The problems came *en masse*, not one by one as in peacetime.

John Atkins, financial and every other kind of mainstay of his family, was drafted into the army. His younger brother, whom he had wisely kept in bounds, began to go downhill fast; never came to Sunday school any more; ran the streets with a wild gang.

Bill King, deeply beloved, left his adoring sisters for perilous duty in the navy. Bill knew very little about dying. To think of its imminent possibility for himself just about paralyzed him. He almost broke down and talked to the preacher

about it before he went away. But, somehow, he never did. It did not seem natural to confide intimate little worries to a rather remote parson.

It was not long before Miss Sallie Harper, the organist, felt a definite call to serve her country in a hospital unit, and sailed away to parts unknown, leaving a proud but nervous and jittery father and mother, much in need of the stabilizing only religion can give.

Then Mrs. Wilbur Jones took a job. That seemed strange to the little preacher. Jones had always been prosperous and had been a good contributor to the church. Why should his wife work? The preacher had not taken time to find out that Mr. Jones' business was war-wrecked and his income rapidly falling away to nothing. Mr. Jones was deeply worried and terribly humiliated. But he had always striven for real Christian character, so he did not give up now. He was perilously near spiritual defeat more than once, but he fought well, even without help.

Almost as one person, the congregation began to cut down on summer vacations to help the war effort. They became air-raid wardens; spent hours as plane-spotters; labored lovingly at the Red Cross. But the little preacher could not quite make up his mind to modify *his* vacation. He was an intellectually tired man, you know. He had always had a month off, and he took it this year, just the same. He did not really approve of all this war excitement.

The little preacher still wrote excellent sermons—when he was not on vacation. He read the very best books. What with reading and composing, he was too busy to write personal letters to the boys and girls in service. This part of his "cure of souls" must await leisure—which never seemed to come.

Meanwhile, of course, John and Bill and Sallie and the rest were in increasing need of the fostering care of the church in which they had grown up. The women in the Society of Christian Service did their best—letters, gifts, snapshots, church bulletins, such things as mothers' love suggested. The young warriors deeply appreciated what the women did. But still they knew quite well that it did not meet their spiritual exigency. Only a man of God could really do that.

When they came home on leave, as many of them were able to do, the church service seemed oddly cold and far removed from life as they were beginning to know it. Oh, yes, the little preacher did pray publicly for them once in a while, though he never could quite decide whether or not so doing was in accord with his principles. The praying, therefore, was not very much to the point. He could not quite ask the Lord to give all-out help to military folks; he beat about the bush and did not ask for anything much.

Early in the war Sailor Bill King was killed, bravely executing a mission of extreme danger. The little preacher could not quite make up his mind what to say to Bill's stricken sisters, so he

carefully confined himself to glittering generalities, which, to the sisters' tear-dimmed eyes, did not glitter with a very Christlike light. Next month he heard that the girls were trying to assuage their bitter grief at spiritual seances. But it was conference time and he could not attend to the matters at once; he had important committee work, which took hours. Bill's sisters drifted sadly on, and, finally, came to the church services no more. The church—or was it the little preacher?—had failed them.

Well, there you have my parable, written by a church woman who carries a heavy burden in her heart these days. It is not a fabricated story; it is true, in all its essential implications; true, I mean, of many ministers, but, Heaven be praised, not of a majority. There is enough, however, of this half-pacifism, half-indecision to paralyze the real Christian values of dozens of our churches.

You see, I work daily with laymen and women, committed to unselfish and usually unpaid service of their country in this present crisis. I know the sad things their disillusioned eyes are seeing. Up to now, most of them have trusted the church. It is my mature judgment that they still can trust it, for the real truth is that *the church is quite able to make up its mind. Some of its preachers are not.* This is where all the trouble lies. The men who cannot quite decide what to do in a world aflame are failing their people and losing the biggest opportunity for Christian service that ever came to mortal men.—FLORENCE HOOPER in *Zions Herald*.

Eager to Believe the Best

Dr. Moffatt translates the familiar Corinthian phrase "Love believeth all things" to read "Love is always eager to believe the best." These words go to the very heart of one of our most common vices. Many in our day seem to be eager to believe the worst. They have an appetite for bad news, they rejoice at calamities befalling those they dislike, they have a ready ear for scandal, a delight in evil report, a malignant enjoyment at talebearing. Paul is here saying that a heart of love produces a "mind-set" to believe the best possible, as soon as possible and as long as possible. Such eagerness to believe the best possible actually creates the best possible in others. A young mother, undaunted by discouragement, believed the best for her son and Caruso was given to the world. In this day of racial and national hatreds it is so easy to believe the worst concerning the enemy. But love incarnate in the human heart ought to make us "eager to believe the best."—Editorial in *Arkansas Methodist*.

We do not win people to Christ by the logic of our arguments. They are won by love, if at all.—SELECTED.

The Flesh

C. W. Ruth

THE term *flesh* is used in the Scriptures with various shades of meaning. The failure to note this fact accounts for much confusion and controversy. As may be seen by the following references, the term *flesh* is used to designate

1. All humanity, "... all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth ... the end of all flesh is come before me" (Gen. 6:12, 13).

2. Every living creature, including humanity, beast and fowl, "All flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man" (Gen. 7:21).

3. All nationalities, "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17).

4. Your own individual family and kindred, "... that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh" (Isa. 58:7; Matt. 19:5; Gen. 29:14).

5. Human strength, "with him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God" (2 Chron. 32:8). "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord" (Jer. 17:5; Psalm 56:4).

6. The finer sensibilities, "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek. 36:26).

7. Illustrative of our own mystical union with Christ, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. 5:30).

8. Denoting human wisdom, "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood" (Gal. 1:16). "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17; 2 Cor. 1:12).

9. As food, "Can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people? ... He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea" (Psalm 78:20, 27).

10. Unholy desires and practices, "We all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3).

11. The human body, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not" (Phil. 1:21, 22). "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist" (1 John 4:2, 3).

12. Meaning the carnal mind, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. ... And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:17, 24).

It is obvious that they who use the term *flesh* as though it applied exclusively to the human body have never given careful thought to this matter. However, the points of controversy have to do mainly with the last two above mentioned references. They who use the term *flesh* exclusively as meaning the human body, and thus locate sin in the mortal physical body invariably (and consistently) argue that we cannot hope to be freed from sin until we die—seeing we cannot be rid of this “sinful body” until death sets us free. It is here where the deathbed theory of sanctification has its main argument and chief defense. And of course they who admit the premises cannot escape the conclusions. Certain it is, that we cannot be delivered from our physical body until our demise or translation; and if our physical bodies are “sinful” bodies, there can be no hope for us until death comes to our relief. But this teaching is both illogical and wholly unscriptural.

First, we would insist that sin does not reside in matter; that there is no more moral quality in the physical body than there is in flesh of the animal creation; and that nowhere in the Bible do we read of a “sinful body.” While the human body is spoken of as a “corruptible” body (1 Cor. 15:53, 54), and because it is corruptible, as “our vile body” (Phil. 3:21), it never is spoken of as a “sinful body.” If sin were located in our physical organism it might perhaps be remedied by the medical profession and removed by surgery. According to this theory, death would become our savior and would do for us what Christ could not do. Indeed, there would be no need of a savior; simply waiting until death would deliver us from sin. If dying would make the Christian free from sin, why would it not do the same for the sinner, seeing he dies in like manner? But the Scriptures speak of death as an enemy, and not as a savior, “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (1 Cor. 15:26).

Christ in His humiliation “was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:7, 8). He came “in the likeness of sinful flesh,” as “a sacrifice for sin” (marg., Rom. 8:3), and had a human body like unto our mortal bodies, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14). This is why He is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities,” and “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15.)

If there is sin in our mortal flesh, then His body was not like unto our body, and He could not have been tempted in all points as we are. He took upon Himself our nature—in a body like unto our body—but without our sinful propensities. Human nature as God made it, and as Christ exhibited it, is perfect, and sinless.

All scholars tell us that there are two words in the Greek language which are translated “flesh” in our English language; the word *soma* meaning our physical body; and the word *sarx* which means “the sin principle” spoken of as the “carnal mind”; “the body of sin”; “our old man”; “sin that dwelleth in me.” Theologians speak of it as “an infection”; “original sin”; “inbred sin”; “the Adamic nature”; “depravity” and kindred terms. But this is a foreign something that has been injected into human nature, and not the result of God’s creative act; and seeing it is not any part of our essential selfhood it may be removed—cleansed away—provided there is sufficient virtue and efficacy in the blood of Christ to accomplish it, and we still continue to live in these mortal bodies, as God created them.

That “the flesh” spoken of in Galatians 5:16-24, does not refer to our physical bodies, is self-evident; from the fact that the same is to be “crucified.” Surely our mortal flesh is not “crucified”; nor can it refer to our transgressions and sins which we have committed, seeing they are not “crucified,” but pardoned and forgiven; nor was it removed when we were pardoned and regenerated, seeing it is yet an active principle in a person who has “the Spirit.” For “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot [may not, R. V.] do the things that ye would.” This could not apply to the sinner, as a sinner does not have “the Spirit.” But because this “sin principle” called “the flesh” does remain in them that have been truly regenerated, they soon discover their need of what Mr. Wesley termed “the second blessing properly so called,” by reason of this inward conflict and struggle.

It is evident that “the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord,” must take place subsequent to regeneration. While some object to the Wesleyan term and teaching of a “second blessing,” and utterly deny the possibility of being made holy in this life, it would seem to us that even if we were made holy in the hour and article of death (as they seem to believe), it would be a second work of grace—taking place subsequent to regeneration—and would take place in this life, or in this world—seeing we are not going to die in the next world. And even if it were to take place in death, the cleansing of the heart from sin would necessarily be by the blood of Jesus—seeing there is nothing in this world or any other world that can cleanse the heart from sin, but the blood of Jesus.

However, we know of no word in the Scriptures that promises cleansing from sin in death; nor do we understand why the blood of Christ would have more efficacy or power to cleanse a heart from sin tomorrow, when a man is dying, than today, while he is living. We do read, “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of

Jesus Christ his Son *cleanseth* [in the present tense] from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Then why not believe it, and receive it now, seeing it is so very important both in life and in death, and has been provided by Christ at such infinite cost?

The preacher must have a sincere faith, "I believe, therefore I speak," has always been the law of preaching. The preacher has no reason to speak unless he has found some truth and is willing to stake his life upon it. It is not a question of how much a man believes but how completely he believes. Unless we are thoroughly sold on what we believe, how can we hope to get our beliefs across to others? It is not our business to be continually uttering mere guesses about truth, but we should "speak that which we do know, and testify that we have seen."

Then it is not enough for the preacher to be sincere in what he believes; he must be correct. It is possible to be sincere and yet be wrong. It is our privilege to be sincere and to be correct also when it comes to the understanding of God's revealed truth.

The preacher also needs a fine ethical sense—a moral earnestness that applies the truth to his own life. He is a poor specimen of a doctor who will not take his own medicine. Certainly a preacher should never preach something that he does not practice. To do so is hypocrisy. He should be able to say, "Follow me, as I follow Christ." He must also have a holy discontent with himself. I doubt if any man has a right to say, "I have done my best; I have attained." We are not always aware of what the best is; therefore we need to keep forging forward. When we become satisfied with ourselves and with our accomplishments the death knell has already sounded, as far as our ministry is concerned.

We need better, loftier preachers in power and ability who can preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ" in such a manner that the "intellectuals" will be reached by it, and yet present it in such a simple, easily understood manner that the common people (children and all) will be moved by it. If we are not careful we will spread ourselves out in so many directions that we will become a Jack-of-all-trades but proficient in none.—W. W. KING, in *The Gospel Trumpet*.

ZEAL AND PERFECT LOVE—Let us not forget in our zeal for the truth, perfect love possessing hearts, that we do not become so zealous we shall neglect to let love keep our hearts. We are to be kept one as our heavenly Father and His Son are one, that the world may know we are the Lord's disciples.

Even if we do differ, beloved, and sometimes widely, let us recall we are to keep inviolate this oneness—that the world shall not fail to see esteem one for another.—SELECTED.

Lengthening the Cords

"Enlarge the place of thy tent . . . lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes" (Isa. 54: 2).

We want a larger faith. We want to lengthen the cords of our expectation and our spiritual vision. We want to see the new things which God has for us, and then to claim them with a faith that will not let them go. We want something more than the faith that clings to the Rock of Ages, even that faith that reaches out both its hands to the souls that are sinking around us. We want the faith that takes deliverance for others, that fights the battles of the Lord, that breaks down the walls of Jericho, that claims the salvation of men, that ventures on the hardest field and the most hopeless task, that dares the impossible, that sets its foot upon every yet unconquered land and claims the victory for God, nor rests until the battle is won.—A. B. SIMPSON.

The 1943 Preacher's Magazine

AS ANNOUNCED previously, considerable change will be made in THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE for the coming year. The purpose of the change is to give a better magazine, one that will serve better the purposes of preachers in every way.

Size—A sixty-four page magazine, small enough to fit into a man's coat pocket, but slightly larger than "digest size." This new size works out most advantageously on our presses, enabling us to print at least twenty-five per cent more material on the same number of pages than could be printed on the smaller size.

Content—Some of the very best writers and workers of the church will contribute articles, in addition to the excellent editorials by Dr. J. B. Chapman. Some of these contributors are: Dr. H. Orton Wiley, General Superintendent Emeritus J. W. Goodwin, Rev. Samuel Young, Dr. Olive M. Winchester, Dr. Albert Harper, Dr. C. B. Strang, Dr. J. Glenn Gould, Rev. Holland London, Dr. Ralph Earle, Jr., Dr. Lewis T. Corlett, and others. There will be a series of personal interviews with some of our leading men by Dr. Basil Miller.

Other departments will provide additional material of practical assistance to pastors and ministers in the various activities of their work. There will be sermon outlines and suggestions, but no preaching program as has been provided in recent years.

A Bimonthly Magazine—published six times a year. The subscription price is one dollar. We shall endeavor to give preachers the most for their dollar to be found in any similar magazine.—MANAGING EDITOR.

HOMILETICAL

A Preaching Program for December

Hugh C. Benner

Our Heavenly Father

TEXT—*Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him* (Psalm 103:13).

INTRODUCTORY

This is a day of great perplexity, heavy burdens, pressure and problems. The simple days are gone and in their place we face days of growing complexity. The people of God are not exempt from these common experiences of modern life but must meet them as others. The question is, How will we meet them? Will we meet them in much the same way as the godless, unregenerate world, or will we have a different reaction as Christians? There is a danger that in the midst of the promotional phases of our church work we shall forget this phase of Christian life and fail to give our people the help they need to face the trials and difficulties of these troubled times. We need to be reminded of God and of His relation to His people, for a clear realization of these facts will strengthen faith and courage.

This text suggests:

1. The relation of a father to his children. This is more than a legal relationship, but is close, warm and personal. This is outstanding as a symbol or illustration of the relation of God and His people.

2. This warm, personal relation is connected with "pity." This word is sometimes considered as expressing a mere sentimental, soft-hearted feeling, but it rather signifies care, sympathy and compassion for the injuries and needs of another and in the relation of a father and child, it carries with it the idea of a mature and balanced regard of a strong and loving parent for his child.

There are five fundamental elements in this relationship and we shall find in these the meaning of the relationship of our heavenly Father to His children.

I. UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHILD

It is a natural tendency that would cause us to think of God in terms of magnitude and surely He is "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity," who has declared, I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me . . . I form the light and create darkness . . . I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded" (see Isaiah 45).

But He is also the God of *details*. He knows all concerning the individual; He has a perfect understanding of each one of His children. It is a blessed truth that God knows and understands our background, our individual personality; He understands our peculiar problems and trials, such as bodily weakness, lack of opportunity, problems of youth, problems of old age; "He knoweth our frame." God understands our needs: "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." So when others fail to understand, we can know that God understands, even as a loving parent understands the child.

II. APPRECIATION OF THE EFFORTS OF THE CHILD

The true father sees the child through eyes of affection. The first step, though stumbling and faltering, seems perfection itself to the loving father. Those first attempts at words, while far from perfection, are valued more by the father than the most accurate speech of another. I heard a preacher tell of a young man in one of his pastorates who was mentally deficient and in the course of time became a real problem in the church, for the boy had^a that which so many competent people do not have—the desire to work in the church. Finally it was felt that the pastor must speak with the mother about the problem, but when he did, the mother's answer was this, "You don't know my boy. If you really knew him, you wouldn't feel as you do about him, for he is a wonderful boy." Her love looked past the deficiencies and failures and saw the heart of her boy and appreciated his imperfect efforts.

God is like that. He never is critical of sincere efforts; He gives full credit for *motive* and quality of service. This is clearly illustrated by the widow who came to the treasury and "threw in two mites," of whom Jesus said, "This poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury" (Mark 12:43). As a loving parent bears with the weakness and failure of the child, giving even special attention to that one which is most deficient, so God bears with the weakness of His children, giving special interest to the weaker and encouraging that one to try again.

III. SYMPATHY IN THE INJURIES OF LIFE

The child always finds in the true parent immediate and full sympathy in the disappointments and injuries of life. When others seem to care little, the father heart gives to the child a sense of sharing the trials and difficulties. So it is with our heavenly Father. Disappointments, sorrows, failure, losses and disillusionments will come, but we can always be sure that God knows and pities and understands. Often in the midst of such experiences, even well-meaning people will criticize and condemn, but God will comfort and help His children.

I can remember my father telling of such a situation in his earlier Christian experience. There were some years that brought a succession of troubles and sorrows. Disease and death had come to our home, taking from us a brother just older than I and a little later, our mother. A plague struck the stock on the farm and some of the crops failed. In the midst of these "deep waters," some of "Job's comforters" came to my father insisting that these bitter experiences were the result of God's disfavor. But in the face of these accusations, my father had the assurance that all was well between his soul and God and the sense of divine love and care held him steady. In the crushing injuries of life God did not fail, but brought my father through to victory and to a place of unique blessing to others.

IV. LOVE AND PERSONAL CARE

1. In this connection we need to stress the value of a love that is true enough to correct the child. "Whom he loveth, he chasteneth." True parental love is not wishy-washy, but has in it the element of definite expectation, based on reasonable standards and backed by the certainty of chastisement in case of failure to live up to those expectations. God's love is permeated with wisdom and He will not hesitate to use corrective measures when He knows we need them.

2. Also, God's love is extended toward those who stray. The most familiar picture of this is found in the story of the prodigal son. I remember the Late J. T. Little telling of how, after he was saved, he went to his

father to ask forgiveness for the things he had done to cause the father difficulty and heartache. When he had finished his confession, his father said, "Son, I have forgotten all about those things." There was in his heart such a love and forgiveness that he did not even carry the record in his memory. As God's people, we should bear to the hearts of the straying the message of His great forgiveness.

V. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CHILD

"Like as a father," God bears the responsibility for His children.

1. Sustenance. "My God shall supply all your need."
2. Protection. "The eternal God is thy refuge." During a vacation in Yosemite National Park I was hiking near the Vernal Falls when a sudden rainstorm came up the valley. With others I sought shelter under an overhanging cliff beneath which was quite a large cavelike space. Just ahead of the torrent of rain as it came rushing up the valley flew a little bird. Straight and swift he came and darted under the cliff where we stood. In a matter of seconds the storm struck, but the little bird had no fear, for over him was a great cliff of solid granite which no storm could affect. God will be for us that eternal "Rock of Ages" wherein we may hide from the storms of life in perfect security.

3. Guidance. "I will guide thee." "He leadeth me."

4. Power. "He is able."

CONCLUSION

What does our heavenly Father ask in return?

1. Trust.
2. Obedience.
3. Love.

Characteristics of Carnality

SCRIPTURE READING—John 17:17-21; 1 Peter 1:15, 16; Luke 1:74, 75; 1 Corinthians 3:1-3.

TEXT—*And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ . . . for ye are yet carnal*" (1 Corinthians 1:1 and 3).

INTRODUCTION

The one basic barrier between personalities is sin. Only one force can separate a human soul from God: sin. Only one force can separate man from man: sin. Jesus Christ came to remove this barrier so that there might be unity between the soul and God as well as unity between soul and soul. In this latter human realm, it is not race, color culture, wealth or nationalism that separates humanity, for under the power of Jesus Christ these barriers disappear in "the unity of the Spirit." The experience of godly missionaries in every foreign field witness to this fact.

I. A TRAGIC SITUATION

The great lack of spiritual power and achievement in the church in the light of the provision and promises of God presents a tragic situation. On every hand are professing Christians who never become very strong or dependable, but are weak, wobbly, doubtful and frequently overcome by evil.

Three observations:

1. If the experience of multitudes of professing Christians represents the best God can do for a human heart, it surely is not very much.

2. If this limited experience is not God's best, then such individuals should be finding out what is causing the failure in spiritual things and what God's remedy is for the condition.

3. Having discovered the remedy, every Christian should feel an inescapable responsibility to enter into the full provision and will of God for victorious Christian living.

II. THE ROOT OF THE DIFFICULTY

This is clearly set forth in the verses in which our text is found: "babes in Christ," but "yet carnal." As "babes in Christ" they have a measure of spiritual life and are clearly not sinners, not worldlings, but "in Christ." At the same time they are "yet carnal," for although they are regenerated they still have in their hearts the principle of sin—that which a literal translation of Hebrews 12:1, so significantly terms, "the so easily besetting principle of sinfulness."

Right at this point is the crux of the situation. There are many who insist that this sin principle must continue in the heart of the converted until death. To follow this teaching is to be involved in these logical conclusions: (1) that this life can be no more than one of constant inner conflict; (2) that the Christian life cannot be "free from sin" and therefore will be one of constant condemnation, which is an Old Testament condition; and (3) that therefore, Christ is unable to do more than the law could do for a human heart.

III. GOD'S STANDARD AND PROVISION

In the face of all these ideas of the impossibility of heart purity and holiness before death, God's standard is stated clearly: "Be ye holy"; "Be ye therefore perfect"; "that we . . . might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, *all the days of our life*." The divine provision is fully as clear in the promise that, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"; also in Paul's prayer, "the very God of peace sanctify you wholly," followed by the clenching declaration, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thess. 5:23, 24).

Thus God has provided for an experience of spiritual strength and victory, but this is not achieved in conversion, for although the principle of holiness is lodged in the heart in regeneration and that principle must dominate if the heart is to maintain a right relationship with God, yet there is still remaining the "carnal mind" which "is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8: 7). Herein is the explanation of the experience of weak and wobbly Christians; herein is the barrier to complete spiritual victory and to effective Christian service.

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF CARNALITY

1. A starving force. Carnality fights against spiritual enlightenment. It is a force that militates against deep interest in the Word of God and in deeper Christian fellowship. Carnality encourages people to take their ease on prayer meeting night for at such a service they might be strengthened and nourished by prayer and testimony.

2. A separating force. Carnality tends to break connection and communion with God and with man. Jesus indicated this danger when, in His prayer, "Sanctify them," He also prayed, "that they all may be one." Carnality encourages willfulness, envy, jealousy and a critical spirit. Carnality encourages a pride that places a barrier between souls; that will not "esteem other better than himself." This carnal principle is the source of harsh judgment, evil speaking and tensions. Behind every "church split" is carnality in someone's heart.

3. A retarding force. Carnality tends to keep the Christian in spiritual infancy; makes people act like babies. (Paul said they *were* babies.) Such carnal hearts want a lot of attention, are tremendously interested in their rights, demand constant amusement. Dr. Steele once said, "The cradles are all full." With God calling the church to be a mighty spiritual army, carnality calls for ease and comfort, a light diet and plenty of play. This carnal force would make the church a glorified nursery. No wonder Paul urgently exhorted

the Ephesians to "be no more children . . . but . . . grow up" (Eph. 4:14, 15).

4. A weakening force. The carnal mind produces the "double minded man" that James describes. In the un-sanctified heart there is a division of interests, a split loyalty, that causes unrest and turmoil. It is this condition that makes the carnal heart easy prey to spiritual defeat, that keeps the pull of the world as an active force of potential danger.

CONCLUSION

Through the atonement of Jesus Christ on the cross, God has made provision for heart purity whereby this carnal sin principle can be eradicated from the heart. When the heart is cleansed and filled with the Holy Spirit, then the characteristics of the Spirit take the place of the carnal characteristics listed above. The sanctified heart loves the Word of God, prayer, fellowship and every possible form of spiritual enlightenment and enrichment. The Holy Spirit brings that humility, love, longsuffering, patience and charity that puts others before self. Such a heart is no longer childish and petulant, but assumes a place of strength and dependability in the kingdom; he has entered his spiritual majority. The entirely sanctified heart is a unified heart, with undivided interest and loyalty toward God and His will.

God Was in Christ

CHRISTMAS SERMON

TEXT—*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself* (2 Corinthians 5:19).

REFERENCES—Isaiah 55:8, 9; Matthew 1:23.

INTRODUCTION

This is a day of high-pressure promotional activity. In practically every field of human life every available means is used to further the interests of organizations, causes, inventions and programs. Our religious life has not escaped this trend.

I. THE COMING OF CHRIST

1. If it had been humanly planned. There is no doubt that if humanity had planned the situation for the coming of the Redeemer they would have included all the usual accompaniments of human show and pretense. To use modern terms and attitudes, we may imagine that there would have been the usual publicity, using every means to advertise the advent of such an important personage. Men of fame and influence would have been asked to serve as sponsors. Some kind of reception organization would have been set up. Troops in uniform, representatives of all the leading interests, parades, trumpet fanfares, "pomp and circumstance," all would have been joined to give the greater splendor to the occasion. Only the most spacious and beautiful palace would have been considered as a place to greet the coming King. Why? Because man's outlook is so completely and blindly materialistic. This is humanity's way, thought, idea, plan of operation. Sinful man feels that to make a showing, to create an impression, he has to use these means.

2. As it was divinely planned. In this is found an outstanding example of the truth of God's declaration through Isaiah, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." Jesus Christ came to earth with none of the accompaniments considered so important by humanity. The prophecies concerning Him were distorted or misunderstood. He came in utter humility, both as to ancestry and place—in the "Little Town of Bethlehem." When He came, it seemed that everyone that "rated" was carefully ignored, for while the high priest slept and while the Sanhedrin slumbered in their proud ignorance, angels announced

the "good tidings of great joy" to frightened shepherds, "keeping watch over their flocks by night." There was no place for Him in the palace, for there lived the king that would commit wholesale murder in his attempt to do away with the Holy Child. There was not even room at a humble hotel; He entered this world in a stable and was cradled first in a manger.

II. "GOD WAS IN CHRIST"

Beginning with all these conditions that appear to be extreme disadvantages, Jesus Christ continued thus throughout His life and ministry. Introduced by John the Baptist, He quietly began His brief years of special service. He never was given official approval, but rather, was criticized, rejected and finally hounded to His death by the leaders of the people. He never owned anything as far as we know. He left nothing tangible—no writings, no buildings, no monuments, no organization, no forms of worship—even the places most sacred to His followers are the subject of wide disagreement as to location. He largely passed over the high and the rich in His ministry, giving Himself without stint to the poor, the downtrodden, the suffering—and most of all, to *sinners*. Without any of the attitudes and activities and connections deemed so important by humanity, Jesus Christ established a kingdom that has reached around the world, crossing all barriers of language, race, nationalism and color. He could do this because He followed God's ways and God's thoughts. His was not the natural course, but the supernatural. "God was in Christ," and as God He was able to turn completely from material aids to achievement.

III. THE MEANING OF HIS COMING

1. Redemption. "Reconciling the world unto himself," gives the fundamental meaning of the coming of Jesus Christ. His mission involved more than a new code of behavior or a new religious philosophy; He came to meet the sin problem. In the pursuit of this mission, He gave himself on Calvary, providing "the double cure" for sin and is able to save to the uttermost.

2. In practical life. "They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." As Jesus Christ came to the close of His ministry He used the meaning of this prophetic name when He said to His disciples, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Along with the Great Commission came the Great Assurance. (a) "I am with you": His personal presence; (b) "always": under all conditions; (c) "unto the end of the world": for all time.

IV. OUR RESPONSIBILITY

God "hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." God is calling the church to:

1. Spiritual vision. Humanity tends toward dependence on material aids to worship, "atmosphere," psychology. Especially at this Christmas season it is easy to miss the essence of the spiritual significance.

2. A spiritual message. It is not enough that we celebrate the coming of Christ in an abstract way; not enough that we think in terms of theoretical redemption; not enough that we even rejoice in the benefits of redemption in our own hearts and lives; we have the responsibility of carrying the "good tidings of great joy" to those around us. In these tragic days the church must bear a definitely spiritual message; in these times when things material are proving to be of little real value, the church has a golden opportunity to proclaim the eternal truth that "God was in Christ," and that the same divine "Saviour which is Christ the Lord," lives today to redeem, to give us His fellowship and a sense of security in a world filled with turmoil and strife.

The Peace of God

TEXT—*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee* (Isaiah 26:3).

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7).

INTRODUCTION

The only final justification for the religion of Jesus Christ is to be found in its practical value for life, in meeting the fundamental needs of human beings. Our text represents a need of millions of people today, the call of hearts for peace in a world of discord and war.

This word peace signifies rest, repose, concord and harmony. Clearly, it is an inner condition, for God never has promised to give to us perfect external conditions, and the fact is that if we can secure inner peace, the existence of untoward outer circumstances ceases to be a major factor in experience.

It is also to be noted that the text does not deal with the experience of "peace with God," which is the result of a sinner being reconciled to Him, but rather with the idea of the "peace of God" which is an experience provided by a loving heavenly Father for His children. It should also be emphasized that this is not a promise to all indiscriminately, but is conditional, limited, exclusive, special and particular.

I. THE CONDITION: "WHOSE MIND IS STAYED ON THEE"

"Mind" here denotes "thought or imagination," but as such can be taken to signify the inner being, for the Word of God declares, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Thus this condition has to do with the attitude of the inner heart toward God. This involves the following:

1. Interest in God. There are plenty of professing Christians who have no consistent interest in God. If they think about Him, it is entirely accidental and comes as the result of a suggestion from some external sources. At certain times they evince a kind of formal interest, such as in a service of worship, but do not, of and for themselves, take an active interest in God and in the things of God. The mind that is stayed on God must be genuinely interested in Him.

2. Initiative toward God. There are altogether too many passive Christians. Forgetting that they have the power to take spiritual initiative, they apparently assume that God will do whatever is necessary for their spiritual welfare regardless of their attitude. But God never forces Himself on the attention of careless souls. He meets the need of the heart only when that heart seeks Him with earnestness and initiative.

3. Direction. This involves a deliberate, conscious turning away from every attitude, activity or association that would distract and influence the heart away from God and His will. At the same time, it implies the conscious cultivation of those attitudes, activities and associations that lead toward God. Our minds and hearts can be directed Godward. We have the power of concentration and need not be the victims of roving, undisciplined minds and of vagrant hearts.

4. Adjustment. Someone may say, "God does not change, so all I have to do is to get into proper adjustment toward Him and then forget about it." Surely, God does not change, but we must remember as surely that *our situation does change*. Therefore, we must give our attention to making the adjustments that become necessary by reason of the changes in our situation. It is fatal to take our relation toward God for granted. In using a telescope, one cannot focus it on a star and leave the instrument stationary, for if he does, the celestial object

will move out of the field of vision in a few moments. The star remains in an unchanged position, but the earth is constantly moving, therefore the telescope is equipped with a mechanism that compensates for the movement of the earth, keeping the object in the field. It is ever thus in Christian life. The adjustment toward God in a service of worship, surrounded with Christian people and with every encouragement to spiritual success, is one thing; but the adjustment toward God in the shop or office, under the pressure of business promotion or high speed production, surrounded with ungodly associates, is quite another thing. But God can help us to make those adjustments whereby, regardless of varying circumstances, our minds will be stayed on Him and He will be kept in the center of our spiritual "field of vision."

5. Communion. How very little of the immense possibilities of spiritual communion have been realized by God's people. The "stayed mind" will practice and enjoy communion with God, for this it is that keeps us with a sense of the reality of God and His presence in everyday life. The mind that is stayed on God will seek and relish communion with God's children.

II. THE BASIC ATTITUDE OF THE "STAYED MIND"

"Because he trusteth in thee."

1. Confidence in God. No mind or heart can consistently meet the above condition unless he has a deep and abiding confidence in God: confidence in His wisdom, mercy, love, will and power. This must be that kind of faith that trusts regardless of appearances; that believes God because He is God; that does not attempt to measure God by the narrow limitations of human knowledge, logic and power.

2. Such effective confidence has its final demonstration in full commitment. The fact is that there can be no complete faith without such unequivocal commitment. It is of more than passing significance that the terrible scene on Calvary closed, not with the note of triumph, but with those wonderful words of full commitment, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." When we think deeply into this final word from the cross, we realize that it represents an eternal truth that "faith is the victory," that in full commitment to God we make ourselves eligible to the full measure of God's provision for us.

III. THE PROMISE: "PERFECT PEACE"

Paul speaks of this as, "The peace of God which passeth all understanding."

1. "Passeth understanding." This means superiority in quality and supremacy in power. It is closely allied to the idea of "overflow," or "to pour out above measure." Hence the picture is that of God giving to the trustful heart a peace that is superior and supreme, poured out above all measure of need, beyond comprehension or the power to contain it.

2. "Shall keep your hearts and minds." This word keep means literally "to garrison." Also the phrase discussed just above may be taken to mean, "to hold over so as to protect." Thus this whole passage emphasizes the protection of the "peace of God." God wants to give to His people such inner rest, repose, concord and harmony, such assurance of His love and power, such a sense of His immediate presence with His own, that His peace shall be as a mighty garrison, as an impenetrable shield or protective refuge which no force of evil or external circumstance can break through to harm or imperil.

3. "Through Christ Jesus." All this comes to us through our Lord Jesus Christ. To His disciples, just before His atoning death, He said, "My peace I give unto you." G. Campbell Morgan translates it thus, "I will give you the peace that is mine." The very peace that filled the heart of

Jesus with eternal calm and assurance, will fill our hearts if we trust Him and keep fully committed to Him.

CONCLUSION

In the midst of the natural temptation of these days to fear and worry, to uncertainty and questioning, our great hope is in "the peace of God." Here is our covert, our garrison, our defense, our safety. Let us look to God, think on God, adjust to God, commune with God, trust in God, commit ourselves to God, knowing that if we meet the conditions, He will fulfill His promise of "perfect peace" through Jesus Christ.

Wounded in the House of Friends

TEXT—And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends (Zechariah 13:6).

INTRODUCTION

This is one of those Old Testament scriptures that suddenly flash with prophetic significance relative to Jesus Christ. However, we shall find an underlying truth that has a meaning for our own time.

I. THE IDEA OF THE TEXT

It is a picture of ingratitude, perfidy and treachery. A man has been invited to the house of friends. Evidently the visit was planned and as he went he had a right to expect kindness, a warm welcome and every friendly interest in his comfort and happiness. But instead of such solicitude, he is despised, betrayed, rejected and finally driven out wounded and bleeding. Instead of love, he found only bitterness; instead of care, he found only injury; instead of joy, he found only agony; instead of encouragement, he found only scorn and rejection.

II. THE FULFILLMENT IN JESUS CHRIST

His coming had been promised even from the Garden of Eden. Through the centuries all manner of types had pointed toward Him and every sacrifice gave its message of the coming Savior. Over and over the predictions of His coming were voiced by the holy prophets. Multitudes eagerly looked for Him as the hope of their hearts and the hope of the world. When He was born in Bethlehem His nativity was heralded by angels in an advent that fulfilled every detail of the prophecies in this regard. He came "to his own" with a ministry of unspeakable blessing. His blessed lips spoke with authority "the gracious words" of eternal life; His feet knew the hot weariness of Palestine's burning, dusty roads; His heart throbbed with divine love for all mankind; His hands wrought miracles of healing and encouragement. With such a ministry He came to "The House of Friends."

But the evil in the human heart could not bear the truth which rang through His messages. So instead of finding a welcome and a warm reception, He found only bitterness and rejection. He was betrayed, despised, bruised and tortured until He came to a shameful death on a cross at "a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of the skull." Truly, He was "wounded in the house of his friends."

III. THE DEEPEST HURT OF THE CROSS

The deepest hurt of the cross was not the physical suffering involved. It was not the attitude of those outsiders, such as Pilate and the Roman soldiers. The deepest hurt came to the heart of the Christ when those who should have welcomed and loved and stood by Him, failed and turned away. Even His disciples were caught in the tide of rejection and almost without exception "forsook him and fled." It was the hour in which He was compelled to bear the sins of the world in solitude. At the time of His baptism, the voice of God said, "This is my beloved Son, in

whom I am well pleased." At the Transfiguration, again there came a voice saying, "This is my beloved Son: hear him." But on Calvary there was no heavenly encouragement, no acclaiming voice; only that tragic silence that called forth from the lips of the dying Savior those words of infinite loneliness, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And in that hour of greatest need, not one of those who should have stood true, came to His aid.

IV. A TRUTH FOR OUR DAY

Someone may say, "This has nothing to do with us today." But it does, for every sin has a part in the Crucifixion; every attitude of rejection has its part in the Crucifixion. When we possess the truth of the gospel of Christ and yet choose sin, resist and reject Christ, we become partakers in the Crucifixion. Hebrews 6:6 speaks of those who "crucify . . . the Son of God afresh." While the truth of which we are speaking is not the immediate meaning of this scripture, yet it is properly implied. It is our sin that took Him to the cross. Especially tragic is the situation wherein one that has known the joy of salvation turns against Christ and His will. We often think of Jesus Christ as sensitive to the joy that comes to Him when men and women serve and love Him, but we must not forget that as the risen Lord, He is also sensitive to rejection, and such rejection is as the driving of the nails again, the hurling of the jibes anew, the offering of the "vinegar mixed with gall," the thrust of the spear again into a broken heart. Yes, today Jesus Christ is being "wounded in the house of his friends."

CONCLUSION

But as in the days of His ministry in the flesh, Jesus Christ continues to call in love to those who have not accepted Him. At Calvary, only one lone sinner, a thief, was wise enough to call on Christ for mercy. There is no doubt that if all who were a part of that terrible scene had called, they would have found instant forgiveness. And so today, even though we have had a part in His suffering, we can call on Him and find mercy and pardon.

The Road Home

SCRIPTURE READING—Luke 15:11-32.

INTRODUCTION

The Parable of the Prodigal Son is the last of three classic word pictures which, for simplicity, beauty of idea and depth of significance, are unsurpassed. They can be understood by a child but are divinely sublime in their meaning.

The Pharisees had accused Jesus of being a friend of sinners. The fact is that Jesus considered this a rare compliment, but took the time to show His critics the error of their supercilious attitude and to emphasize their appalling ignorance of the simplest principles of the kingdom of God. It was this situation that drew from the lips of our Lord the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost boy. It is the latter that we shall consider in this message.

I. THE DUAL INTERPRETATION

1. Historical. There was an immediate historical application of this parable. The prodigal son represented the vast body of weary, wretched, oppressed Jews, kept in ignorance, blindness and submission by the upper classes, principally the Pharisees. The father represented the loving heavenly Father who was merciful and longsuffering and whose will it was to help all without respect to social, political, financial or religious standing. The elder brother's part in the story was a "cartoon in words," a pointed and satirical barb directed toward the Pharisees.

2. Modern Meaning. This is the significance that is important for us, representing those who drift from a proper relation toward God, a group for which God has great love, solicitude and yearning that they might return to Him, a group for which God's people should be greatly concerned and burdened. For these, this parable shines as a clear ray of hope and encouragement in the darkness and disillusionment of a life being lived apart from God.

II. THE ROAD TO THE HOGPEN (Three Key Phrases)

1. "He took his journey." The son's departure from home was on his own volition and responsibility. He did not need to leave home; he made his own choice. Probably he desired "freedom," release from restraints that were not always appreciated. But in escaping from such legitimate restraints, he found himself in a bondage that is most tragic, the bondage to the sinful interests of his own heart.

No soul is compelled to turn away from God. If we do this, it is by our own volition and on our own responsibility. We cannot rightly blame conditions or the attitudes of others. We "take our journey." We *can* serve God if we will.

It is to be realized also, and especially by young people, that the moment that son stepped over the threshold of his father's home, he was on his way to the hogpen. What he thought was a journey toward freedom and happiness was in reality a journey toward poverty and degradation. He was leaving love, peace, plenty and security for the starvation and misery of the hogpen. At the end of selfish desire is always the hogpen.

2. "He wasted his substance." "Spent all." In other words, the prodigal son lived on his capital, wasted all his possessions. That which he should have invested, he squandered on unworthy pursuits. This is symbolic of those who, drifting from God, live on their moral capital, waste their spiritual opportunities and squander their physical and spiritual energies. Those spiritual possibilities and capacities that should have been invested in the kingdom of Christ they dissipate on selfish interests. Such a course cannot but be fatal to the welfare of the soul.

3. "No man gave unto him." There was plenty of food for the swine, but nothing for a hungry boy. It was then that he remembered the abundance back home, such an abundance that even the slaves had more than they could ever use.

Sin never fails to throw everything out of balance. The devil's promises of joy and plenty always fail, leaving the soul that is away from God in poverty and want. The best the devil can offer is as but the "husks that the swine did eat," compared to the abundance the soul enjoys in Jesus Christ. Yea, the lowliest servant in the kingdom of Christ has more than the prodigal at his best.

The fact is that this old world without God is only a "magnificent hogpen." I once heard an eastern preacher tell of traveling through the Green Mountains and coming to a valley from which he could see one of the most beautiful peaks in the whole range. Across the valley from the peak a farmer had built a large and lovely home from which, under normal conditions, a veritable "million dollar view" of valley and mountains could have been seen. But right in front of the home, completely cutting off the beauties of the landscape, that farmer had constructed a large barn and other buildings especially for raising pigs. Thus, by his senseless arrangement of buildings, his world, which could and should have been filled with beauty, had been turned into a hogpen. Multitudes of people have done this same thing in their lives.

III. THE ROAD HOME (Three Key Phrases)

1. "I perish." With all his money gone, without friends to care, engaged in an occupation of utter degradation in the eyes of a Jew, facing death by starvation, he came to realize that his powers were inadequate to relieve the situation. Gone was the sense of pride and self-sufficiency with which "he took his journey." The selfish life that he had thought would serve him, had become his master, and in humility he confessed his need.

It is a wonderful blessing from God that brings to a soul the true situation in his life, that reveals the utter failure of sin to satisfy and the inadequacy of human resources to meet the deeper human needs. Every sinner, every backslider should fervently thank God for conviction. Only as we realize our terrible poverty will we confess our need before God.

2. "I will arise and go to my father." In this phrase are decision and action. "He arose, and came to his father." Confession, by itself, is not enough; there must be decisive action. Weary, disillusioned, famishing, heartsick, footsore, he went. He was on "the road home" because he put determination, decision and action behind his sense of need. And as he went, the father came. We cannot move faster than God will move if we want to come home to Him. His love, like the father's love, reaches even to the hogpen. That father owed the son *nothing*, for the son had taken his "portion of the goods." But love is like that: it does not ask, "How much do I owe?" but rather, "How much can I give?"

3. "I have sinned." I know the idea of sin is outmoded in some quarters, but "sin" still gives the most satisfying explanation of the way people act and of their most fundamental need. Jesus based His whole life, sacrifice and ministry on the fact of sin and until the sin problem is settled, no other problem is properly settled. It was this confession that gave the father his chance to forgive. The son had a long speech that he was planning to make, but so far as the record reveals the situation, the son never finished his statement, but found himself forgiven and restored almost before he had asked. There is no indication of blame or scolding, no harsh criticism or condemnation, no probation or question; he was *home* and all the joys and privileges of home were his immediately: peace, plenty, security, love and his father's blessing.

Such has ever been God's way of dealing with sinners. Jesus Christ declared that He came "not to condemn the world," and the contrite heart that comes to God confessing his sin can expect to find love and mercy and forgiveness. People may criticize and condemn, people may question and temporize, but God will restore and make the soul to feel that he is "back home," where there is eternal love, protection, peace, plenty and security.

The Royal Road to Bethlehem

(Christmas Sunday Evening)

TEXT—*Let us now go even unto Bethlehem* (Luke 2:15)

INTRODUCTION

The world has known some great and wonderful cities and today there are large aggregations of people in our great cities and we often think in terms of pride concerning these. But human records should have taught us that size, pretension, or wealth do not constitute the measure of true meaning in any phase of life. In fact, the value of great cities is open to serious question when all the accompanying liabilities are considered.

I. PERSONALITY AND ULTIMATE MEANING

Personality determines the ultimate meaning and value of anything. Herein is found the reason why the central

point in history is not one of the great capitals or commercial cities: not Babylon or Nineveh, not Athens or Alexandria, not Rome, Paris, Berlin, New York or London, not even Jerusalem. The central point is Bethlehem, for never have so many hearts turned in love and loyalty to any city as to the "City of David." Bethlehem is the center of human interest for nothing in all history has so widely affected the human race, actually and potentially, as the birth of Jesus Christ.

"All roads lead to Rome," was once the proud boast of the Romans, but truer than that, "all roads lead to Bethlehem." "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

Thus, the road to Bethlehem is a royal road, for the importance of a road is not measured by the city to which it leads, but the *personality* to whom it leads. The road to Bethlehem leads to the King of kings: it is truly "The Royal Road to Bethlehem." As we travel this road, we turn from the display and pretense of the great cities, for the meaning of Bethlehem is not external, but inner and spiritual.

II. THE ROYAL ROAD TO BETHLEHEM

1. A Way of Faith. The prophets and saints of ancient times traveled this road, for by faith they were assured of the coming of the Savior and gave such clear prophetic testimony that their prophecies read more like a historical record than a prediction of things yet to come. And while the Nativity is now in the past, we too can travel the way of faith and sense the same assurance. This is a day filled with terrors and insecurity, but by faith in Jesus Christ we can know the certainties of the Prince of Peace in our hearts. Over against unbelief on the one hand and ignorant superstition on the other, is that genuine, solid, heart-warming, comforting faith that connects the soul with eternal verities.

2. A Way of Hope. The failure of humanity never was more apparent than today. The truth and effectiveness of the fundamental teachings of Christ never were more certain. In Jesus Christ is the answer for the bewildered, the troubled, the sorrowing. He came to Bethlehem to "bind up the brokenhearted . . . to comfort all that mourn." It is not merely that He suggests a new way of life, but that He is able to change the heart and give eternal hope where there has been but the blackness of despair. He is "the bright and morning star," shedding His beams of hope into the darkness of sinful hearts.

3. The Way of Brotherhood. Love for Christ makes all akin, for He has revealed to the world the worth of every human personality. In Him there is the greatest leveling power in the world. It was this that brought together into the narrative of His coming, both wise men and shepherds; it was to signify this that the Most High was born in a stable and cradled in a manger. Mary, in her rapturous Magnificat, expressed this idea, declared in varying forms in the Old Testament, when she said, "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree" (Luke 1:52).

4. The Way of Peace. As we travel the "Royal Road to Bethlehem," we find that peace comes by *surrender* to the Prince of Peace. Happiness comes not by the route of self-assertion. The "King's Highway" in olden times was not so much a definite roadway as the *right of passage*. Thus if we travel to Bethlehem, we shall go God's way and fit into God's plan. In all reverence, it was just that attitude that brought Jesus Christ to Bethlehem. And as we go God's way, we find a blessed sense of relief from

strain, for he who knows all is our Guide, pledged to bring us to life eternal.

5. The Way of Joy. The angel's message to the shepherds began thus, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy." The "Royal Road to Bethlehem" is not a way of "long-faced" religion wherein we are compelled to live according to a code that is a constant source of difficulty. In this way is the joy of redemption, the joy of Christ's presence, the joy of Christian service, the joy of Christian stewardship, (yes, of tithing!) the joy of investing our lives in that which has eternal meaning and eternal rewards.

6. The Way of Glory. The prophet declared, "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed," and again, "The people that sat in darkness have seen a great light." When Christ was born, "The glory of the Lord shone round about" and that is symbolic of the manifestation of His presence that is given to those who love Him and serve Him.

III. "LET US NOW GO EVEN UNTO BETHLEHEM"

In a spiritual sense we, like the shepherds, can travel "The Royal Road to Bethlehem." At this Christmas season we can know anew the joyous rewards of simple faith and sincere worship. Never has this poor, sin-cursed world needed the blessings of this "Royal Road" as now and it is our privilege to point, by our testimony and life, to the "Savior which is Christ the Lord."

(Quotations from "O Little Town of Bethlehem" may be used effectively in conclusion.)

At the Stroke of Twelve or The Midnight Cry

SCRIPTURE READING—Matthew 25:1-13.

TEXT—*And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him* (Matthew 25:6).

INTRODUCTION

There is a vast field of prophecy relating to the return of Christ and the end of the age; in fact, the return of Christ is more directly taught, in some ways, than was His first advent, because we have extended portions of the Gospels which give the words of Jesus Christ himself on the subject. At the same time it is well to remember that it is not far to the point of unadulterated speculation when we try to be dogmatic as to details of interpretation. So, with the above scripture and kindred scriptures, we shall deal with those matters that are clearly implied relative to the return of the Lord.

I. THE CERTAINTY OF CHRIST'S RETURN

Peter declared, "The day of the Lord will come." In spite of "scoffers walking after their own lusts," in spite of those who "willingly are ignorant," who disregard the judgments of God on sin and unbelief, "The day of the Lord will come." The prophets foretold this event, Jesus Christ declared it, angels promised it, the saints of all ages have believed it. His return is as sure as His first coming. "The Lord is not slack . . . but is longsuffering." So the fundamental consideration is this, that Jesus Christ will return. Let sinners remember this; let the church remember this; for Jesus Christ lives and will fulfill every "jot and tittle" of every prophecy relating to His Second Advent.

II. THE UNCERTAINTY RELATIVE TO CHRIST'S RETURN

Along with the certainty of Christ's return, we must recognize a great element of uncertainty. The fact is certain, but the time is uncertain. Some years ago an imaginative article was written on, "The Seven Last Days," dealing with the possible situation which might exist if it were known that Jesus Christ would return in seven

days. The author pictured the rejoicing of a godly mother over the prospect of reunion with her son who had passed away years before; the sudden repentance of a sinful woman; the confusion of a group of important business executives in conference, who, when they were informed of the coming crisis, were thrown into utter confusion and when called to prayer, could voice only their childhood prayers. The idea was intriguing, but the situation was completely impossible, for the Word of God declares, "Ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh" (Matt. 25:13); and again, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. 24:36). This element of uncertainty as to time is so complete that there is *no time* concerning which we can say that He will not come. God, in His wisdom, has so invested the return of Christ with uncertainty that none might be presumptuous and careless; that our only safety should be in obedience to His injunction, "Be ye also ready."

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRIST'S RETURN

1. Suddenness and surprise. "At midnight, a cry." This is a dramatic picture of a startling realization that the bridegroom had arrived. We need to consider that there was a definite time when the prophecies concerning Christ's first coming ceased to be unfulfilled, but were actual events. Just so, there will come that time wherein the prophecies relating to His return will be actualized. And it will be sudden, startling, for this is the consistent characterization of the Second Coming: "As a thief in the night"; "Behold I come quickly."

2. A sudden test. This element of testing is fundamental in the parable of the ten virgins. We are reminded of the unreliability of outward appearances, for the difference was to be found in that which probably was a secret from all the others until the test came, and in that testing time, the lack of the foolish virgins was automatically revealed. Also, in this test there was individual responsibility. The wise were not made responsible for the lack of the foolish; the bridegroom was not held accountable for their inadequate preparation; the foolish clearly *could* have been prepared; and there was no transfer of preparation permitted.

3. Finality in the test. One of the most difficult things to impress upon a human being is the fact that matters will come to a final determination. We tend to feel that while this may be true for others, it will not hold for us. But in dealing with God, there is a final crisis coming, a final test, a final time of determination. For the foolish virgins, the coming of the bridegroom marked:

a. The end of ease. Multitudes live in false security, acting as if they never would have to deal with God. But that sense of ease will end abruptly when Christ returns.

b. The end of carelessness. When the bridegroom came, those that had failed in their responsibility were frantic in their interest. There is coming a time when men will be interested in God and will make a futile effort to find Him.

c. The end of opportunity. As tragic as it is, there will come a time when men cannot turn to God. Jesus Christ taught this consistently. It is as Tennyson wrote of King Arthur and his unfaithful queen, Guinevere. There was forgiveness in the noble heart of the king, but she had so betrayed her trust and had so failed in her responsibility that there was no return to their earlier situation. The parable says, "The door was shut," and their efforts to gain admittance were unavailing.

4. Just two groups. There were just two groups when the bridegroom came: the prepared and the unprepared. There were just the same two groups at the end of the

parable. God has so arranged His judgment for sin that there is no neutral zone, no middle ground, no point of compromise. Throughout the Scriptures, the final consummation of human affairs divides all humanity into just two groups. It is either saint or sinner, inside or outside, right or left, holy or unholy, "ye blessed" or "ye cursed," heaven or hell. And every one of us is in one or the other of those two categories *now*.

CONCLUSION

Midnight is coming. Just as we are facing the close of a year, when "At the Stroke of Twelve" a crisis of time will come, so in God's plans and calendar there is coming a definite and final crisis. For decades godly scholars have been warning the world concerning the imminent return of the Lord. If there has been such an awakening as has come on the basis of events prior to the last decade, how much more should we be concerned and alive to this issue who live in these days of such rapid acceleration of events and developments. It is impossible to see how our present situation can continue without bringing the world to a crisis of crises. Even leading authorities on world conditions, many of them without any interest in Christ, have declared their feeling that we are approaching the end of this era. Years ago, Albert Shaw asserted that the road which the nations were traveling was clearly marked, "Chaos." H. G. Wells, likewise years ago, declared that it seemed to him as if a black curtain were being drawn over the bright hopes of the twentieth century.

But while conditions are unpromising and there is no hope in humanity, we can be prepared for the coming of the Bridegroom. "Behold, the bridegroom cometh," can bring to us great joy and comfort. "God is still on the throne," and those who obey Him and love Him will know the rapture of His words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father."

ILLUSTRATIONS

Basil Miller

A Sunday School Record

"For fifty years," said Newton Mabee, Petersboro, Ontario, "I have attended Sunday school and I have not missed over twenty-times during those years. And those times were from sickness. I am now eighty-three years old, and am going back to live at Petersboro where I started in Sunday school more than fifty years ago."

A Cake of Soap

"And how did you get this cake of soap from the Walker House, Bellville, if you were not in Canada?" asked Mr. Gardner, of the provincial police of Ontario.

This question was asked a man named Vermillion of Ontario, California, and was the ending of a long trail that led from the body of a murdered woman found in her yard in Trenton, Ontario. She had been killed with a hatchet, her brains literally cut out. That hatchet had been found thrown away in the shrubbery. And then began a many-thousand mile trek from city to city and finally in California where Vermillion was questioned.

The police, when they began to investigate the murder, first located the dead woman's relatives, and they found she had a son in Ontario, California. On investigation they found the son had a watertight alibi, as they

supposed. But on searching through his bags they found a cake of soap from the Walker House in Bellville, only a short distance from Trenton.

"And how did you get this soap, if you were not in Canada?" This was the question the police drilled into the consciousness of Vermillion.

Finally from that cake of soap the murderer's trail was outlined from the time he bought a ticket in California on an air-liner until he landed in Toronto, where he bought a hatchet from a hardware store. Links in the chain were the porter on a train from Toronto, a taxi driver who drove Vermillion and the identified blood-stained hatchet.

It was a foolproof crime with a perfect alibi but a cake of soap slipped it up.

I was eating in the Belmont Restaurant, Bellville, Toronto, with Rev. Earl Whitmore, pastor at Trenton, District Superintendent Cantrell, W. W. Mallory, Bellville pastor, and Bob Clifford, pianist, when a man came into the restaurant and spoke to Earl.

"That man," said Earl on returning to his chair, "was on the jury which convicted Vermillion. His father died during the trial and they would not permit him to attend the funeral. They convicted Vermillion of the crime on the evidence of that soap cake and hanged him here in Bellville."

"Be sure your sin will find you out," say the Scriptures.

The perfect crime has not yet been executed but the divine justice of God can break it.

The Man With No Sunrise

Said Emerson of Gibbons, the historian, "There is a man who has no sunrise."

Without the heavenly sunrise there is nothing in the soul of man to which one can look forward. When the sun of heaven rises in the soul all of the tomorrows are wreathed with beauty and nobility. Only the men with these spiritual sunrises have been able to conquer fear and overcome the world. With such a sunrise man is not afraid whatever betides.

Praying for Rain

"Scientifically it is impossible for it to rain within the next forty-eight hours," read the telegram from the government meteorologist.

Yet in Australia that was the very time the entire nation had set as the hour of prayer for rain. Throughout the entire land up went the clamor, "Let us pray for rain."

It had not rained for three years and in some sections no heavenly water had fallen for six years. Typhoid fever was raging and sickness ran rampant throughout the nation.

"I was hot-headed and zealous for my Lord, strong in faith," says Lionel B. Fletcher, who at the time was working in a newspaper office in Australia. "Many men in my office knew that I had been to one of the prayer meetings for rain that day and they teased me. They pushed the official telegram under my nose."

"It is scientifically impossible for rain to fall now," they sneered. "There is no moisture to condense and fall as rain in the next forty-eight hours."

Said Fletcher, "If it is impossible for rain to fall, then it won't matter to you if God just sends one shower to let His people know that He hears, while He withholds the heavy rain until His own time."

Said the office men, "Yes, but it can't come."

Returned Fletcher, "It will come and you will have to withdraw those sneers."

At two a.m. when Fletcher left the office to go home the air was powdery dry and the stars hung like globes of fire and the atmosphere breathed of sulphur.

"I saw the tents in the hospital grounds where hundreds of typhoid patients had been cared for. When I got home I awoke my wife and told her that there was no sign of rain. She got out of bed and we prayed as if our hearts would break. At three a.m. I went to sleep."

Then at seven in the morning Fletcher's wife cried out, "Listen! Listen to the rain! Oh, thank God! It is raining."

Fletcher jumped out of bed and listened as the rain pattered on the galvanized iron roof and watched it run down the gutters to their tanks.

"That," says Fletcher looking back to the hour of answered prayer from a distance of thirty-eight years, "was in 1902 in the state of Queensland. It did not break the drought, nor did it rain long just then. But it rained, even when the greatest weather scientist of the country said, 'Rain is impossible.'"

Said the newspaper skeptics, "We don't understand it, but the impossible happened."

There is an easier answer—God answered prayer!

The Guardian Angel

The battle of Vimy Ridge in World War No. 1 was raging. The English had been beaten back from their strongholds, and victory for Germany appeared evident.

Suddenly firing on both sides ceased.

"Look!" broke from a thousand throats on the English side.

"Look!" cried the German soldiers, pointing high into the sky.

"And there," relates a soldier who was in that battle, "I looked in the sky and saw the Guardian Angel stand with drawn sword. We waited. There was no firing on either side."

That pause was just long enough for the English to reinforce their lines and when the battle was resumed it went to the English who that day were victorious.

"How do you explain it?" I asked the soldier as we rode through Arizona on the Californian.

"There is no explanation to it, except that God did it!"

There is victory through following the Man with the drawn sword. Joshua won his battles through following Him and no less shall we.

The Answered Prayer

"I have faith God will save my husband," said an elderly lady in a Huntington, Indiana, revival.

"Yes, sister, but—" began the revivalist, Holland London, after the good sister had shouted up and down the aisles night after night and the old man had not even attended the services.

Her husband was sixty-seven years old and for fifteen years had not even been inside a church, hence the sister had nothing but pure faith to hang her knowledge on.

She said, "Praise God he's going to get saved." When the preacher was a little disturbed about the constant remarks the woman was making about her husband being saved in "this revival," and the folks were beginning to make remarks about her, the preacher tried to smooth it over with the good sister as much as possible.

She returned, "But I know more about it than you. I have heard from a higher power." And of course there was little else the preacher could say.

The last Wednesday of the revival the old man came into the services, and of course his wife had a shouting spell. Two nights later he came back and as the evangelist

started to preach, the man said, "I want to get saved," and headed for the altar.

He was converted that Friday night and when he stood on the platform and gave his testimony and thanked God for a praying wife, seventy-five people went to the altar seeking the Lord.

Yes, we can still pray through and hear from God. He is still in this business of sending from the skies the answers to our petitions. Ask and ye shall receive, if ye ask in faith believing.

The Wall Motto

On the wall of the early home of David Livingstone at Blantyre, Scotland, there is a motto, which was one of Livingstone's statements.

"I will value nothing that I possess except in its relation to the kingdom of Jesus Christ."

This was the rule by which he lived. He turned his back upon England and lived in the heart of jungle Africa that others might hear Christ's story and be saved.

He split the heart of Africa in two, going first to the West Coast and then he turned around and recrossed his steps to the interior of Africa and then on to the East Coast. The record of his last journey is bathed in heaven. He literally lived with God and died on His knees.

The Price of Going

"I'm glad I went to Peru," said Mrs. Bicker, whose husband was killed in action on the Peruvian front.

I thought of the great sacrifice she had made. All the plans for her life were swept away with that accident which killed her husband and a native preacher. Yet, so deep her consecration, she could say, "I'm glad I went."

Then she added, "I'm glad my husband went."

After all this is the test of our spiritual loyalty to Christ and the kingdom. We must be willing to lay down our lives in the cause of the Master. We are called to this deep consecration. It is too easy to say, "Let the missionaries do the sacrificing . . . I'm satisfied at home." The sacrifice Christ requires of one He requires in kind of all.

Why the Churches Are Empty

I find in my notes which I gather during the year for these illustrations the jottings of a sermon or talk on "Why the Churches Are Empty." Meeting hundreds of ministers from various denominations yearly, their one clamor is, "The churches are empty. Why don't the people come like they used to?"

Last year my writing took me East to visit editors, publishers and agents five times, and on these trips I contacted the leading publishers and editors of the nation. Their clamor was, "What can be done about filling the churches? They're empty, you know." Only nineteen per cent of the people of Indiana, for instance, were in church last year. I stopped at a Canadian city, New Market, last winter and a lady from one of the larger churches in the city told me that in that beautiful town of several thousand there were only about six hundred attending all the combined Sunday schools.

Yes, the churches are empty and for a cause. Said Fulton Oursler, in a *Liberty* editorial, "For a time it looked like the preachers' doubts would empty the churches." And this is one of the basic reasons for the empty pews. Think this through.

The churches are empty because:

They do not challenge the mind.

They do not move the spirit.

The preacher has become a second-rate political economist instead of a dynamic messenger of God.

A Titanic Providence

"Two men," relates a friend who had carefully examined the record of the *Titanic's* sinking, "were sucked to the bottom of the ocean with the ship when she went down. Suddenly a large air bubble enveloped them, and they were thrown to the surface and rescued."

"Can you vouch for this amazing fact?" I asked.

"Yes, and they were later rescued."

There is no accounting for such a providence. Call it an accident, a happen-so, but I prefer to call it a divine providence. There were several preachers who *missed that boat*. Carradine was to have sailed on it, but changed his plans at the last moment. Ed Roberts had his berth on it but because of a coal strike in Scotland he changed his plans and sailed on a slower, though as we know now, a far surer boat. John R. Mott planned to return to America on it, but at the last moment an unforeseen engagement caused him to delay his sailing.

Accidents? Someone asks.

No—providences! God was in it.

Truth Driven Home

"Your sermon did it," said a young lady to Rev. E. E. Hale, then Superintendent of the Kansas City District. "You recall the night you preached so strenuously?"

"Yes, I remember that night in the meeting. I felt that you were on the verge of making a great decision."

"I felt like I was on the verge of hell," said the girl. "And when I went to the altar and was saved, I could not thank God enough for that particular sermon and the way you preached it with all your soul."

I asked the preacher, "Did you feel any peculiar constraining influences?"

"God certainly held me to the truth that night when the girl was saved."

"What happened to the girl?"

"She had to move away from that town and when she landed in another city she started a Sunday school class of five girls. God got hold of her life and soul and now she has 140 girls in that class. She wrote me recently and said, 'Your sermon did it.'"

Thank God for preachers who will walk close enough to God that He can urge them when souls are in the balance and they can feel His peculiar leadings.

Churches and Democracy

Said Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Owen J. Roberts:

"In earlier years democracy was sounder because the church was stronger.

"Many of our most difficult problems would be solved if workers and employers were members of the church.

"In this period when men have loosened the cords that bound them into the church, the ministry has suffered and in the slackness of the tide of religion, business and industry have been permitted to lead away our best young men.

"In all great crises men have turned to the religion of Jesus Christ. It is my hope that out of this world crisis there will come a turn of men to the Church."

And on the heels of this statement comes the report of the Gallup polls which show that last year out of an adult population of 80,000,000 in the United States 43,000,000 engaged at least once during the year's time in some form of religious gambling. Twenty-four per cent of those betting took part in church lotteries.

Head to Tail

"They stood head to tail, seventeen elephants in all, and as they marched down the street," said the semi-blind Harding, "I counted them, seventeen in all, and the amazing thing about it all was the fact that all seventeen of those clumsy, lumbering brutes were led by one spindle-legged, turbaned Turk."

"So what?" broke in a rude thought.

"The thought struck me, what if all those elephants would combine their energies? What power they would possess!"

It's a long leap from elephant heads hooked to elephant tails, but if the church members of all the churches of God would combine their spiritual energies what power Christ would have for world conquest!

Said a man to the guard at a "bughouse" as the janitor calls insane asylums, "What if all those people in there should combine against you?"

"That's why they are in there. Crazy people don't know enough to co-operate."

Often we wonder if the lack of spiritual power in the churches is not due to the fact that church members do

not co-operate with each other in the blending of their Christ-given energies.

Hearing from Heaven

"It is possible to hear from heaven!" says the believer. The doubter shouts, "Oh, yeah!"

Here is an incident of hearing from the glory world. "I was in my Kansas City study when the phone rang, and I picked it up to answer," said Rev. E. E. Hale. "Before the party on the other end of the line could begin the conversation after saying 'Hello,' the glory struck her soul and she could not speak to me."

"What did she do?"

"She kept on shouting over the phone and laughing for a long time, and then she handed the phone to another person in the room who conveyed to me her message."

We are prone to live so close to the world of business, pleasure and fun, that God has little chance to break into our activities with His glory. Let us try awhile to live in an attitude of expectancy and the glory of God will strike us even amid the commonplace duties of life.

THE PREACHER'S WORKSHOP

An exchange of methods, plans and seasonal suggestions. If you have discovered an idea that has proved successful in your church, send it in.

Roy E. Swim

Prayer for Christmas

O God, our loving Father, help us rightly to remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the wise men, close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts. May the Christmas morning make us happy to be Thy children and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen!—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Christmas the Expression of God's Heart

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son (John 3: 16).

Our lovely custom of Christmas giving cannot confine the day. When the little children no longer scamper about the house, hiding bundles in their efforts at secrecy; when the crowds dwindle in stores and we no longer give much sympathy to the weary shoppers who strive to express large love by small income; when we

no longer study the faces that we see in the rush as models for Madonnas, or of aged Simeons in the temple of the kindly God—even then Christmas abides.

Yet in respect of this gracious custom, the pleasure of Christmas depends upon its rare coming. Christmas is the expression of God's heart; and Christmas is never deeply real until it becomes the expression of a love like unto God's.—BISHOP EDWIN H. HUGHES.

Enduring Christmas

Some six thousand years ago a ruler of Egypt resolved in his pride that his name should never perish. Enslaved hundreds of thousands built through agony of toil a great pyramid—today laughing travelers scale its sides—and wonder about the "old duffer" who had it built to encase his remains.

Two thousand years ago, mighty men of Rome swelled with pride in their military elegance and intellectual prowess, resolved that all nations should be bound to it in chains forever. Some excellent roads and ruins today may be seen.

Nearly twenty centuries ago, lived a humble Carpenter who, in a world teeming with hate, greed and materialism, went about doing good to rich

and poor alike, urging men to love one another as they loved themselves, and to do unto others as they would be done by. He also taught the truth that life does not end at the tomb but continues without end, and "that as a man soweth, so shall he reap." They put Him to death as an enemy of the state and a religious disturber.

Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone. Today He is the Center-piece of the human race—the Leader of the column of progress—the One unalterable, wholesome Influence in a world torn by countless problems.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever were built, all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon earth as that One Solitary Life. His birthday we pause to remember.

Men build lastingly not through the power of money, not by the whirling wheels of industry, not through the strength of armies and fleets, not by the power of domineering groups and classes, but by the irresistible, eternal power of truth and love.—AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

A baby hears before he understands, and to sing lullabies, not only of "treetops," but of a Father's love, will awaken a deep reverence. Your prayer over the baby's crib will be heard and even though not understood will induce a peaceful trust. Here is the very seed of the religious life, for unless there is this feeling of awe and reverence toward religious objects and ideas, there will be nothing to which

formal religion can appeal, and though later the parent or family may, through authority, compel formal or conventional respect, it will be without any deep seated sentiment.—R. D. HOLLINGTON.—in *Georgia Nazarene*.

The Voyage and the Bible

For a compass, chart and quadrant, God has given us the Bible; and the most completely does it answer the purpose of all three.

By this Book, as a compass, you may shape your course correctly. It will always traverse freely, and it has no variation.

By this Book as a quadrant, you may at any time, by night or by day, take an observation, and find out exactly where you are.

And in this Book, as on a chart, not only the port of heaven, but your whole course, with every rock, shoal and breaker on which you can possibly strike, is most accurately laid down.

If, then, you make a proper use of this Book, mind your helm, keep a good lookout, and carefully observe your Pilot's directions, you will without fail make a prosperous voyage, and reach the port of heaven in safety.—EDWARD PAYSON.

The One Book

Do you know a book that you are willing to put under your head for a pillow when you are dying? Very well; that is the book you want to study while you are living. There is but one such book in the world.—JOSEPH COOK.

Young People and Their Pastor

The young people of the Church of the Nazarene at Newburgh, New York, keep things interesting by worthwhile action on their part. Not content with the customary Sunday evening service they have undertaken two interesting projects in behalf of their pastor.

First they have taken an active part in the building of the new parsonage. They are laying plans to completely furnish one room. Second, they have provided a "postage fund" for their pastor, which as any pastor knows can run into quite an item in a year's time.—Reported in "Ink-Links," *New York District Bulletin*.

A Child's Grace

Some hae meat and canna eat,

And some would eat that want it,
But we hae meat and we can eat
And sae the Lord be thankit.

New Tongues Declare His Word

According to the *Bible Society Record* only one new language was added to the list of those in which at least a portion of the Bible has been printed. Three more were reported as having been printed in 1939 and 1940 which had been overlooked previously. The small showing, smallest since 1874, was due largely to the war.

The four new languages to be added are:

Sora, southeastern India 1939 Gospel St. John.

Bandi, Liberia, Africa 1940 selections.

Okela, Belgian Congo 1940 Gospel St. Mark.

Moba, Togoland, Africa 1941 Gospel St. John.

The summary as of December, 1941, is as follows:

Languages in which the whole Bible has been published	184
Languages in which the whole New Testament has been published	229
Languages in which at least a complete book has been published	554
Languages in which only selections have been published	88
Total number of languages in which some part of the Bible has been published	1,055

What Makes Christmas?

*Oh, it isn't the holly, it isn't the snow,
It isn't the tree or the firelight glow;
It's the flame that goes from the hearts of men*

*When Christmas love is abroad again;
'Tis the laughter of children quivering high*

*In a shower of radiance to the sky;
For wishes are real and love is a force,
And the torch which ages ago had source*

*In a star that lighted the Wise Men's way
Burns with a magical fire today.*

So great the shining, so pure the blaze,

It reaches beyond through the stellar ways,

Till—listen! A wind voice told it to me—

*Our globe that swims in ethereal sea
Glow's like a lamp whose flame is love
To the other worlds that swing above;
And this is the signal that makes them know*

We have hearths and homes and cheer below.

Why, seraphs and angels walk by the light

That streams from the earth on Christmas night.—Bulletin, First Church, Pasadena.

For the Men in Service

A short time ago First Church of the Nazarene of Malden, Massachusetts, under the leadership of Rev. Roy F. Stevens, tried something different in the way of a service of recognition for the men in service in the armed forces. The occasion was the dedication of the Honor Roll of men in service from the church. The program was sponsored by the Young People's Society.

The success of the service was attested in numerous ways. Many outsiders who had never been in attendance before were present. The uplift to the families of the men honored was evident. Notices of the service were sent to the men in service and to their parents or relatives requesting that some representative be present to receive the gift which was to be presented to each service man on the roll. The gift was a copy of the book, "Strength for Men in Service" which is proving very popular with spiritually minded soldiers and sailors. So enthusiastic was the reaction to the meeting that when the offering was taken to cover the cost of the roll and of the presents to the men fifty dollars was laid on the plates.

The printed program of the dedication service displayed an attractive cover in color showing a church spire framed in green trees and blue sky with the crossed American and Christian flags in a lower corner. The inside of the folder contained the program and the Honor Roll with addresses of the men. The back cover was entitled "Service Notes" and furnished interesting information concerning some of the men and an appeal to write to them.

The program follows:

HONOR ROLL DEDICATION SERVICE

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN — "Onward Christian Soldiers," *Gould*.

PRAYER—Chaplain E. J. Dodge.

CHURCH OFFERING

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN—"My Country! 'Tis of Thee," *Smith*.

SCRIPTURE READING—Ephesians 6:10-18.

UNVEILING OF THE HONOR ROLL

ROLL CALL—by the pastor (congregation standing).

DEDICATION OF THE HONOR ROLL

"Out of a deep sense of appreciation and respect for the men who have gone forth to serve our country in the Second World War, and with a desire to keep their names before us as a reminder to uphold them by the strong arms of prayer, the members and friends of the First Church of the Nazarene, Malden, Massachusetts, reverently dedicate this Honor Roll."

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

SALUTES TO THE TWO FLAGS—led by

Ensign Gordon Kiehn.

Salute to the American Flag:

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Salute to the Christian Flag:

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of to the Savior for whose kingdom it stands, one brotherhood, uniting all mankind in service and love."

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN—"Stand Up,

Stand Up for Jesus" Duffield.

OFFERING FOR SERVICE MEN

SOLO—"My Wonderful Lord," Lillenas.

Miss Elizabeth Nelson

PASTOR'S MESSAGE—"All Out for Victory."

BENEDICTION

Christ Crucified

BISHOP J. C. RYLE

Without Christ crucified

In her pulpit,

A church is little better than a

Cumberer of the ground,

A dead carcass,

A sleeping watchman,

A silent trumpet,

A messenger without tidings,

A lighthouse without fire,

A stumbling block to young believers,

A comfort to infidels,

A hotbed of formalism,

A joy to the devil, and

An offense to God.

In Brief

Keeping the best and holiest things is the highest patriotism.

Almost any preacher will preach a better sermon if the church is well filled.

Much damage has been done to the cause of good religion by people who are ignorantly sincere.

An unpainted church building is poor evangelism.

A quarrelsome church wins few converts.

People who are doing nothing can usually find fault with those who are doing something.

A man's patriotism, like his piety, is not to be judged by the amount of talking he does.

Nobody is more disagreeable than the man who is so "religious" that he cannot believe he is very wrong.—
R. L. SMITH in *The Christian Advocate*.



X116



X117

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