whole camp panic. Soon the Philistines were running as for their hunted lives.

This created such a tumult that Saul saw what was happening and, with his ill-equipped army, started in pursuit. These were joined by the one-time deserters. Then even those shirkers who had been hiding among the hills swarmed out of their caves and with a shout swaggered after a fleeing foe. Thus heroes, deserters, and shirkers joined in pursuit of an already defeated enemy, and there was a great victory. But that victory was really won by a one-man army named Jonathan.

There was one blot upon this victory, however. Saul had that day made a rash vow that no one should taste any food until the day was over. He had the idea that has haunted religious people through the centuries—that God is pleased if we make ourselves miserable. Now to sacrifice for a purpose is noble, but to sacrifice just for the sake of sacrificing has nothing of nobleness about it. Those saints of the Middle Ages who forsook the world and whipped themselves both for penance and discipline may have deserved the whipping, but their suffering did not help anything, not even themselves.

It so happened that Jonathan knew nothing of this silly vow. Therefore, when he came upon some honey he ate it. Not only so, but he encouraged the fainting soldiers to eat. This he did more by his conduct than by his words. He knew that a soldier could fight better on a full stomach than on an empty one. Then, too, I think he had a keen interest in the welfare of his soldiers. He was therefore eager to relieve their hunger.

But Saul took far too harsh a view of Jonathan’s conduct. “Tell me what you have done,” he questioned. “I tasted a little honey,” was the reply. Then Saul passed upon him the sentence of death. How did Jonathan react?

He did not tell his half-mad father that he was foolish for making such a vow. He did not remind him that it was due solely to the victory that he had won that Saul was now able to carry out his stupid vow. But with a devotion and loyalty to his father that never wavered though so greatly strained, he said with beautiful humility and courage, “Here I am, I will die.”

The soldiers would not have it, however. With high courage, they declared, “There shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground.” Thus, wiser than Saul, they showed their appreciation of the fact that Jonathan had brought them a victory such as they had not experienced for many a gloomy day.

We get our second view of this gallant prince as Saul—once more with an inadequate army—faced the Philistines. This time it was decided to settle the contest in about the most humane way. A champion was to be chosen by each side and the one who won was to bring victory to the whole army. That was better than our highly civilized methods where we kill not only soldiers but civilians and little children as well. Now the challenger for the Philistines was a huge, rugged chap named Goliath. (He reminds me considerably of a gentleman of our day—a gallant, shoe-pounding hero called Khrushchev.) Goliath, of course,
LIVING WITH ROYALTY

was a little more refined. But he was still a bully as he challenged the Israelites to send a foe against whom he could display his power.

Then one day, when he was making his oft-repeated challenge, it so happened that there was a young shepherd present whose name was David. When he heard this challenge, his eyes flashed and his cheeks glowed. He watched with breathless excitement to see a mad scramble on the part of all the soldiers to claim the honor of facing this giant. To his utter amazement, not a man volunteered. Even when he himself showed a lively interest, his oldest brother rebuked him with scorn, sneering, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep?" But this youth was not to be daunted, even by his older brother. So he took the matter up with the king.

Why, I wonder, had not Jonathan accepted this challenge? I have an idea it was because of his too-cautious father. And further, I have an idea that Jonathan was not present when David volunteered. Jonathan and his father were very close. They consulted each other about all important matters. Since Jonathan's name is not mentioned here, I imagine he was absent. But if he was absent when David went out to the conflict, he was present when he returned a victor. He saw him as with the stride of a conqueror he returned, bringing the head of the giant in his hand.

What was Jonathan's reaction? What would have been the reaction of a lesser man?

Some time ago, during a great campaign being conducted by Billy Graham, I am told that a certain minister, pastor of one of the largest churches of that city, made the gallant announcement: "I could conduct meetings such as Graham is conducting if I wanted to." Well, perhaps he could. Yet such a statement, I am persuaded, did not add one cubit to his stature. Instead, it gave the impression that he might be a bit of a dwarf.

Jonathan did not react in that way. Instead, he was fairly swept off his feet with enthusiasm. His eyes sparkled, his face became radiant, and his heart was all aglow. He looked upon David with boundless admiration. He saw in him a hero bigger and braver than himself. Therefore, the story tells us that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David and that he loved him as he loved himself.

That knitting of soul to soul was possible because these two had so much in common. They could be thus welded together because they were kindred metals. It is not easy to weld gold to clay. Hosea tried it when he sought to weld the clay soul of Gomer to his own golden soul. But it did not work. With these two, however, who had so much in common, it did work. For this reason there began here one of the most beautiful friendships of all history.

Now the one most responsible for this friendship was Jonathan. His friendship for David was far more costly than David's to himself. Indeed, by this friendship David was to gain everything, but Jonathan was to give everything. In that his friendship resembles that of our Lord who said, "No longer do I call you servants . . .; but I have called you friends." He has come to be our friend, and in so doing he puts into this friendship all that he has. "All that is mine is yours." How much must we put into it? Naturally, if we
are to receive his all, we must give our all. This we should
do gladly. He has infinite to give while we have only our
small selves.

There was a king in our day who gave up a throne for
the woman he loved. Now I am not questioning the sin­
cerity of his love. I cannot, however, give it quite 100 per
cent of my confidence. This is because I have an idea that
he had a strong hope that his people would not permit his
giving up the crown. But be that as it may, he did give it up.
How much did the woman in the case give? We cannot
know. But as I see it, she gained everything while the
king gave everything. “The only way to have a friend,” said
Emerson, “is to be one.” David, therefore, must have given
grandly. But Jonathan’s giving was greater still. He gave
his very all.

III

The last crisis I mention has to do with the two final
meetings of these devoted friends. At the first of these
David said to Jonathan—with what seems to me a touch of
suspicion—“There is but a step between me and death.” I
am inclined to think that at first David had suspected that
Jonathan knew about this threat to his life on the part of
Saul, and was taking sides with his father. David further
said to Jonathan that it is not we who have now entered
into covenant before God together, but you (Jonathan) who
have entered into a covenant with me before God. Here I
think David falls far short of Jonathan. He was a great
friend, but he was not quite equal in this to princely

Jonathan whose loyalty and self-giving love nothing could
shake.

Listen to this: “And Jonathan, Saul’s son, rose, and went
to David . . . and strengthened his hand in God.” What a
Christlike visit that was! How deeply and beautifully un­
selfish! Jonathan was afraid that his friend, whose youth­
ful brow had already been anointed, might fail in his faith
and, thus failing, miss the crown. He was determined that
should not happen. This was the case in spite of the fact
that he knew if David were to let the crown slip, it would
then be his own. Thus this prince knew that in order for
him to win he would not have to “wade through slaughter
to a throne.” All he would have to do was nothing. In
spite of this he went the limit to uncrown himself for the
sake of his friend.

IV

Now why did Jonathan take this amazing course? Why
did he deliberately renounce his crown? I am sure he did
not do it because he was too sluggish to care. Nor did he
do it because he was interested neither in serving his people
nor in being honored by them. It is just that there are
some things we give up simply because we do not care for
them.

I qualify as a good fisherman. I not only catch fish, but I
catch choice fish—the smallmouth, swift-water bass. But
having caught them, I usually give them to my friends. And
the further tragedy is that I feel sure that these friends do
not greatly appreciate them because they, knowing that I
do not eat fish, realize that my gift is not sacrificial.
LIVING WITH ROYALTY

Had I met Esau the day after he sold his birthright I would have seen no tears on his face. Had I said to him in deepest sympathy, "Esau, I'm so sorry! It breaks my heart that you have had to part from your birthright," Esau would have burst into wild laughter and said, "Don't waste any tears on me. I was hungry. I couldn't eat a birthright, so I gave it for something I could get my teeth into." He came to be sorry in later years, but it was no sacrifice then for him to give up his birthright; he did not care for it.

But how about Jonathan? Did he care for the crown? Did he have any patriotism? Was he eager to please his father whose dearest dream was to leave him a throne? He cared immensely. We can be sure of this because he cared enough for his country to die for it. He cared enough for his father to die with and for him. They fell side by side on that bloody hill of Gilboa. Greater love has no man than this, that he will lay down his life for his father and for his country. But in spite of that love—and because of that love—Jonathan resigned the crown in favor of David.

He did this because he loved David with a love that seeks not its own. But there was more in his love than mere fondness. It is often said that love is blind. Perhaps—but the opposite is also true. It is the most keen-eyed thing in the world. It can see sparkling jewels where others can see only paste. Jonathan did not give up the crown only to put it on the brow of one who was worthless. He believed in David with all his soul. He believed that this divinely anointed friend would make a better king even than he himself could make.

This does not mean that Jonathan suffered from an inferiority complex. He was too wholesome and great for that. Yet, though he knew he could make a strong and wise king, he believed that his friend would make a better one. Therefore he put David first, not solely because he was seeking the best for his friend, but because he was seeking the best for God's people. Whatever was for their highest good, he was willing at all cost to do. Thus Jonathan's giving was not only a gift born of love; it was also a gift of a profound and vital faith, both in his friend and in his God.

A gentleman told me some time ago of the reply of his minister when he chided him for his seemingly foolish habit of seeking somebody else to play before the footlights while he himself played backstage. "Why, man," he answered simply, "I'm out for the cause. Whatever helps the cause of my Lord is the prize on which I set my eye. Therefore if I find a man who is one inch taller in ability than I am, I'll put him out ahead. I'll hold his coat and run his errands. I'm not out to shine. I'm out to get the work done." That was like Jonathan. That was supremely like our Lord.

What matter, I or they?
Mine or another's day,
So the right word be said
And life the sweeter made?
—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER, "My Triumph"

Here, then, is one who lived centuries ago in a grim and cruel age. Yet of all the characters we meet on the pages of the Bible, I know few indeed who impress me as more Christlike than this great friend, this great believer, this great giver, this uncrowned king—Jonathan.
IV. A ROYAL CRIMINAL (David)

_The sword slays one as well as another._  
—II Sam. 11:25 (Moffatt)

"The sword slays one as well as another." What a self-evident and commonplace truth that is! Upon hearing that, nobody is tempted to rise in angry protest. Yet heard aright, what a damning and loathsome lie! David has just committed about the ugliest crime recorded on the pages of the Bible. But here he descends to yet deeper depths by pleading not guilty. "Sure Uriah is dead, but I am in no sense to blame. He was a victim of the fortunes of war. The sword slays one as well as another." Thus, this royal criminal sounded the lowest depths and—for the moment at least—slammed the door of hope in his own face.

I

How did this deeply religious king, who had feared the Lord from his youth, come to be guilty of this hideous crime? Of course we know that his first step down was the sin of adultery. This ugly deed was made the more hideous by the fact that the woman in the case was the wife of a faithful and honored soldier. This soldier was away at the time fighting for the king who was wrecking his home. The base ingratitude, the utter lack of loyalty, either to God or to man, that lay back of that fall could hardly be exaggerated. No wonder it put David's feet on a toboggan where there was no stopping till he reached the very bottom.

This temptation came upon David in an hour of idleness. How many of us go wrong for lack of something better to do! When I was a boy certain Sunday-school teachers used to tell us that work was sent us as a curse. That is, if Adam and Eve had only behaved themselves as they should, then everybody could have lived off the government instead of just half of the people as in our day.

But, of course, work is not a curse. It is one of life's supreme blessings. It is a means of growth, a roadway to self-respect. It is a great safeguard against temptation. When sturdy Nehemiah was being invited to a council that would have meant the death of him, he stood firm by being able to make this assertion: "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down." David could no longer say that. He was then residing in a house of idleness whose open doors always invite temptation.

A ROYAL CRIMINAL

It was not in the open fight  
We threw away the sword,  
But in the lonely watching  
In the darkness by the ford.  
The waters lapped, the night-wind blew,  
Full-armed the Fear was born and grew,
LIVING WITH ROYALTY

And we were flying ere we knew
From panic in the night.¹

Then David had reached that prosaic period we call middle age. We have many sermons for youth, quite a few for the aged, but almost none for those who are braving the middle passage. Yet this is the group that makes up most of our congregations. It is also the group that is carrying the heaviest part of the world's load. It is this group also that is peculiarly tempted. Possibly more people go irretrievably wrong in this middle passage of life than in any other.

It is easy to see why this is the case. Youth tends to be idealistic. Youth sees visions and dreams dreams. But by the time we reach middle age we have run past many of our ideals. We have become slaves to the practical. We have allowed the potatoes to displace the roses. We are too far from the morning to be romantic but not close enough to the eventide to be softened by the thought of going home.

One spring day some months ago I watched a young ant making his first venture into the sunlight. He had wings. He spurned the ground as if he would seek the sky. But very soon he lost all interest in the heights and soared no more. Instead he said, "Business is business." Then he threw away his wings and began to crawl.

In Tennyson's Round Table story, a young man named Gareth is seeking to win knighthood. But before he can attain his goal, he must meet and conquer certain foes. First is the Knight of the Morning Star; second is the Knight of the Noonday Sun. David also met these two knights. He won grandly his battle with the Knight of the Morning Star. His youthful victory over Goliath, a victory of faith over force, is an abidingly gripping story. But this same hero went down in utter defeat before the Knight of the Noonday Sun. Indeed there is a destruction that wasteth at noonday. Few are in greater peril than the man who is sure that he has arrived. Such men especially need to pray this great prayer, "Revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known" (K.J.V.).

David had a false sense of security. Part of this security perhaps was the outcome of the self-sufficiency born of his great success. His every undertaking had ended in victory. Human hearts had opened to him as flowers at the kiss of spring. He felt he could get away with anything. I used to know a young chap like that. He had a personality as winning as a baby's smile. By and by, with a kind of swagger, he became a drug addict. As such he would sometimes tell me how he could spot an addict a block away. But all the while he was blissfully sure that nobody could spot him. Then the inevitable crash came.

David felt secure not only because of his confidence in himself, but because he was so sure that no one need ever know. He had all the agencies of despotic power to protect him. There seemed not the slightest danger of exposure. Therefore he could have his fling and nobody need be the wiser. So braced by a false sense of security he took the plunge.

¹ "The Rout of the White Hussars" by Rudyard Kipling from the book *Plain Tales from the Hills*. Reprinted by permission of Doubleday & Company, Inc.
What was the outcome?

He quickly found that his security was a sham. No sooner had he done this secret wrong than fear began to yap at his heels. Every evil we do secretly always involves fear. Ours is a day in which the sin of adultery is regarded with shocking tolerance. So much is this the case that when one man asked a certain cynic for the time of day, he answered, “It’s sex o’clock.” But with all that, even this sin requires secrecy and for that reason still turns loose the nemeses of fear upon the guilty.

At first the baying of the hound of fear seemed to David quite distant and all but harmless. But when the woman in the case whispered that a new life was on the way, then this guilty king could almost feel the hot breath of the pursuing hound upon his neck. Thus, tortured by fear, he knew that something had to be done. He simply could not bear the shame of having it known that he had so desperately wronged a gallant officer of his army and so sinned against his God.

It was then that he became a creature of shifts and shams. With brazen hypocrisy he sent to call Uriah to a conference. When Uriah came David, with pretended sincerity, asked him about Joab, about his fellow soldiers, about the progress of the war. Then, the conference over, he ordered Uriah to go down to his own home for the night. But it so happened that this soldier was a man of superb loyalty and devotion. Therefore, realizing that his comrades were sleeping in the open, deprived of the comforts of home, he refused such comforts for himself. So he slept that night before the king’s door. The next day David discovered that he had not gone to his own home. Therefore, he was still more disturbed. The torture of fear was still more agonizing.

Then he made a final effort. He sought to get Uriah drunk. He knew even then that liquor has a way of killing all inhibitions, that it tends to blind one to all moral distinctions. Surely, he reasoned, a drunk Uriah would have no scruples about accepting privileges denied to his fellow soldiers. But in spite of the king’s efforts Uriah did not get drunk enough to outrage his convictions.

Then what? The ghastly thought of putting Uriah out of the way came to the king. I think at first it made him shudder. “Not murder,” he said with horror. Next he began to toy with the thought, to rationalize about it. Then suddenly it dawned on him that he could kill Uriah and not kill him at the same time. What a fine scheme! So Uriah was again called before the king. David, with a fine show of friendship, put the loyal soldier’s death warrant in his hands and sent him back to Joab.

This death warrant was in the form of a little note from the king himself. It ordered Joab to make an attack on the city, put Uriah in the front, then withdraw from him so that his death at the hand of the enemy would be a certainty. And thus it was done. Then, this royal criminal, having plunged into the abyss of murder, crowned it all with this ghastly lie, “I am in no sense to blame. The sword slays one as well as another.” It would be hard to find an uglier crime than that.
LIVING WITH ROYALTY

III

Yet this royal criminal was forgiven.

How did it come about? The first move, of course, was God's. That is ever the case. Once we have made a wrong choice, he never allows us to be fully at peace. The very pangs of hell got hold of David. There is no measuring what this once saintly man suffered—the agony of guilt, the even more appalling anguish of a lost sense of God. The Good Shepherd whom David once knew no longer led him. Instead, he was lost in a wilderness as torturing as hell.

Then David was helped by human hands. God in his wisdom and mercy has a way of reaching me through you, or you through me. There is no sharper test of our dedication, I think, than our willingness to go to a friend who has lost the way and confront him personally with the claims of our Lord. To me, at least, it has never been easy. Yet as I have gone with fear and trembling, how often I have found that the Lord had gone ahead and prepared the way. Sometimes we have the feeling that our friend was simply waiting for our invitation.

What dedication it took on the part of Nathan to pay this pastoral visit to his king! None of us relish rebukes, least of all one like David who was accustomed to the opposite. But Nathan took his life in his hands and went. He was very tactful; he told the king a story of rank injustice. David was outraged. How much uglier is the sin you have committed when it is committed by me! "The man who has done this deserves to die," said David in hot anger. He was eager to do something decent in order to bring some bit of healing to his wounded self-respect.

Then the bolt struck. "You are the man," said the prophet. I heard a brother minister preach on this text years ago. He declared that Nathan shook his finger in David's face and thundered at him. Of course his guess is as good as mine. But judging by the outcome I do not think it happened that way at all. I rather think that the prophet said in a voice choked with sobs, "Your Majesty, it breaks my heart to say it, but you are the man."

Then what? Instead of being a creature of shifts and devices and answering, "Thou canst not say I did it; never shake thy gory locks at me," David's knees went weak and he sobbed out this prayer:

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to thy steadfast love;
according to thy abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.

That prayer God answered—he always does. For it is forever true that if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Along with this radiant ending, however, there is a solemn warning. God did save David from his sin, but what he did not do and could not do was save him from the consequences of his sin. The prophet Nathan told him that the sword would not depart from his house. That sword
LIVING WITH Royalty

pierced his heart through the sins of his own children. The agony of that grim experience was even more terrible because he had to say to himself, “You are to blame.” God will forgive our wild-oat sowing, but even his forgiveness will not save us from reaping some bit of the harvest.

Some time ago I was called to see a vigorous young woman who was dying of bichloride of mercury poisoning, self-administered. Of all ways to shuffle off, that, I think, is the most ghastly—unless one takes enough to kill quickly. She had not done that, and so she was dying by the inch.

As she gripped my hand in both of hers, she said, “I have sent for you to ask you just one question. I want an honest answer.” I said, “I will answer your question to the very best of my ability.” “This,” she said, “is the question. I have taken my own life. Will God forgive me?”

I was so glad to have a gospel of infinite mercy. “Surely he will,” I said with assurance. “There is no sin that our Lord will not forgive. ‘He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.’” I think she went out in the peace of that healing. But there is one thing that divine healing did not do for her; it did not take the poison out of her veins.

There is no sin, even the most ghastly, that our Lord will not forgive if only we repent. But since repentance does not always save us, and those who are bound in a bundle of life with us, from the consequences, our supreme wisdom is to repent before we become guilty.

V. THE SHEPHERD KING (David)

I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel.

—II Sam. 7:8

While I was a student at Harvard I went to one of the Boston theaters to see a play that ran for about one hundred nights. The name of that play was The Shepherd King. The hero, David, was played by the author, Wright Lorimer. He was a brilliant and idealistic young man who took his art seriously. Perhaps the play did not possess all the merit it had in my eyes. I was young and quite lacking in experience. But be that as it may, I was thrilled and enchanted. For that brief hour I lived in a new world redolent of romance and poetry and also of high faith. This shepherd king cast a spell over me that night from which I have never fully recovered.

Why should this not have been the case? As a success story Horatio Alger never wrote one that comes within leagues of it. From Shepherd's Tent to Royal Palace—what a title that would make for a best seller! But the story of
the shepherd king is far more than a glittering picture of getting on. It is far more than a record of a military genius who waded through slaughter to a throne. It is the story of a man, intensely human, whose name has yet become, in a sense, a part of that of our Lord. Centuries later a blind beggar found sight through this prayer “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

I

David was a many-sided man. There are those who are greatly gifted in one direction, but who have meager gifts in another. There are those who are lopsided—half-baked. But this shepherd king was symmetrical. He was well rounded. God seems to have given him almost every gift.

Physically, he was a bit of a poem. As a rule the writers of the Bible are not greatly concerned with outward appearances. They are sure that while man looks on the outward appearance, God looks on the heart. They do not even give us a description of the physical appearance of our Lord. But they feel compelled to describe David. We are told of his lovely complexion. What a hit he would have made on television, advertising cosmetics! The author tells us further of the beauty of his eyes. He was an all-around handsome man.

It was doubtless from him that his son Absalom inherited the good looks that so inflated him as to help toward his own undoing. David was gifted physically.

Then, he was richly endowed with a virtue that all admire; that is courage. He had physical courage to a high degree. Better still, he had moral courage as well. When he volunteered to meet Goliath, that required great physical courage. But even more terrifying than fighting this giant was the ordeal of facing his own people. In doing this he had to brave the sneers of his elder brother as he scornfully inquired about his few sheep. He had to dare also the gloomy questionings of Saul. Perhaps harder still, he had to face the bewildered glances of the common soldiers, who, though eager to call him a hero, felt compelled to call him a fool. Thus, David had the fine courage to trust himself when all men doubted and to “make allowance for their doubting too.”

David was a man of vast intellectual ability. The author tells us that he was quick-witted; that is, he had an alert and sparkling mind. He tells us also that, though a rustic, he behaved himself wisely in the royal court. Nor was he simply a brilliant nitwit; he was a thoroughly practical man. He possessed that sense without which, we are told, all other sense is nonsense: He had commonsense.

Thus gifted, he became an able and victorious military leader. He was also an equally wise and practical statesman. He knew how to rule. So wisely did he govern that his people through all the centuries have looked back to his reign as their golden age. Not only this, but as his reign was their most bracing memory, so the expectation of the reign of his greater Son was looked forward to as their fondest hope.

This warrior statesman was a prophet and poet. His prophetic utterances are frequently quoted in the New Testament, especially by our Lord. He also had a flock of songbirds in his heart. He early became leader of the Marine
Living With Royalty

Band. In fact, he was the band himself. Perhaps he sang some of his first psalms to quiet the ravings of half-mad Saul.

Just how many of the psalms attributed to David are really his it is impossible to say. The very fact, however, that he is credited with writing so many is an indication of his large contribution. That picture of young George Washington, ax in hand, standing by the cherry tree he had felled, bravely confessing that he had cut it down, is quite ridiculous. To have lied under those circumstances would have been intensely stupid. Why has this story lived? The known integrity of George Washington has kept it alive. Even so, the many poems credited to David indicate that he was a productive poet.

This one-time shepherd was also a man of beautiful modesty. He never swaggered. The nearest he came to it was when he took a census of Israel. Even when he had won his battle against Goliath, he refused to say to those who had sneered at him, “I told you so.” Later when it was suggested that he might marry Saul’s daughter, he did not take it as a matter of course. He greeted this suggestion with a kind of amazed horror, saying that it was no trifling matter to be the son-in-law of the king.

Being thus modest, thus beautifully humble, he never took the blessings of God as matters of course. He never felt that these blessings had come to him through any merit of his own. His attitude was always, “Who am I, that this gift should come to me?” Thus every gift of God became to him a glad surprise. Every blessing he greeted with eyes sparkling with wonder. He was a man of beautiful humility.

With all this he was naturally a man of irresistible charm. He seems to have had an all but universal appeal—and that is very rare. He cast a spell over gloomy Saul. At first sight he so won the heart of princely Jonathan that this great soul was eager to uncrown himself that he might give the crown to his friend. But the common people loved him, too. “Everything that the king did,” says the author, “pleased all the people.” He cast a spell over high and low, rich and poor.

For instance, one day he was hiding in a certain cave. With perhaps a touch of homesickness, he said, “How I wish I had a drink out of the old well by the gate of Bethlehem.” Three of his soldiers heard him. In spite of the fact that they knew that Bethlehem was in the hands of the enemy, they set out for the well. Hours later they returned, each with a skin of water. With deep gratitude David accepted their gift; but in his sight the water was so tinged by the sweat and blood of sacrifice that it was too sacred to drink. Therefore, he poured it out as an offering to his Lord. Thus he cast a spell over the generation of which he was a part. Not only so, but he has cast a spell over all generations since that far-off day.

What was the crowning characteristic of this shepherd? What was it that bound all these varied gifts into a beautiful whole? It is my conviction that the outstanding characteristic of David was his God-hunger with its resulting God-consciousness. More than any other man in the Old Testament, it seems to me—excepting, of course, his terri-
Living With Royalty

ble fall—he referred the decisions of his life to God. Just as almost everything we do tends to have a self reference, even so, everything that David did seems to have had a God-reference.

When, for instance, he made his first visit to the army of Saul and heard the challenge of Goliath, his heart leaped with excitement and joy. “I have come at a good hour,” he said to himself. “I am going to have the privilege of seeing God’s champion defeat that boasting pagan.” But when nobody volunteered, when he saw in the faces of the soldiers, and even in the face of Saul himself, nothing but fear and shame and defeat, he was at once amazed and deeply grieved.

Then it was that he himself madly offered to fight Goliath. Why? That he might become famous? Not a bit of it! He realized keenly that the cowardice of the soldiers of Israel was a dishonor to God. That he could not endure. No knightly husband was ever more jealous for the honor of his bride than David for the honor of his Lord. It was this that sent him into the battle.

But even then, with all odds against him, how did he dare? Certainly he knew himself no match physically for this giant. It was his sense of God that gave him courage. Saul and his soldiers had their eyes so fixed upon this giant that for them he completely hid the face of God. Naturally, therefore, they were afraid and felt themselves mere pygmies. But to David, with his keen sense of God, it was the giant who became a pygmy to be faced and defeated without fear.

Again, when Saul’s faith in David had become fear, when his love had changed to hate, this one-time favorite was forced to become a hunted outlaw. Everyone doubtless told him “It’s your life or his.” Then one fateful night, as if arranged by God’s own hand, David had Saul completely at his mercy. He might safely have pinned the sleeping king to the earth with his own spear. Not only so, but everybody, friend or foe, would have declared that he had a right so to do.

But this amazing fugitive, to the horror of his friends, passed up his big chance. Why did he do it? He did it because of Saul’s peculiar relationship to God. However hard-pressed David might have been, he could not bring himself to stretch forth his hand against the Lord’s anointed.

Naturally, by far the blackest period in the life of David was when he was being tortured by remorse for his most ghastly crime. In hot blood he had committed adultery. In cold blood he had committed murder. Of course he had thus wronged the woman in the case, and he had also helped lower the moral tone of his nation. But above all, he had wronged to the death a faithful, loyal subject and friend. How that damning realization must have haunted and tortured him! There is no measuring the agony of that black memory.

But for this shepherd king there was yet a hotter hell even than that! Here is a question from Job (7:20 Moffatt) that David would never have asked:

If I sin, what harm is that to thee,
O thou Spy upon mankind?

The Shepherd King
LIVING WITH ROYALTY

So keenly conscious was this royal penitent of the harm that he has done God that the torture of it dimmed all other agonies as the sun dims the stars. Therefore, from the flames of this hell he reached trembling hands to clutch at God's skirts and cry:

Against thee, thee only, have I sinned.
Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,
thou God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of thy deliverance.
—Ps. 51:4, 14

Thus, even in his blackest hour, David put God first.

III

Now what does this story of David have to say to us? I mention only two words:

First, it tells us of our all but infinite capacity to go wrong. "If one had told you ten years ago that you would ever become what you are now, you wouldn't have believed?" I once questioned a pitiful wreck. "If one had told me such a thing," he answered bitterly, "I would have killed him." But no moral attainment, however high, exempts us from temptation. Even Jesus was tempted. Naturally the fact of temptation carries with it the possibility of moral failure. Since all are tempted this word is surely to be taken seriously: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (K.J.V.). That the door to hell always stands open is the verdict of the pagan poet Virgil. Bunyan also discovered that even hard by the gates of heaven there is a by way to hell.

Here is a word from one who has climbed into higher heights even than this shepherd king. He has been mightily saved. He has tested the validity of his faith through long, stormy years. He has under God made the desert rejoice and blossom as a rose. Yet he has not run past the danger of collapse. He writes, "I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified." We never climb so high as to be beyond the reach of that grim tragedy.

Secondly, this story also tells us that no fall need be final. In answer to David's penitent prayer God did forgive him. He restored to him the joy of his salvation. Not only so, but he enabled him once more to sing. There may be a bit of truth in the claim that the bird with a broken pinion never soared so high again. But I am sure that it was not true in the case of David. Though every wing seemed broken, once healed by the forgiving touch of God, I think he soared to higher heights than he had ever known before. I feel sure that it was out of a heart throbbing with gratitude and love that he burst spontaneously into the Shepherd's Psalm.

Could I prove that David wrote this psalm? By no means. I could no more prove that he did than you could prove that he did not. But from what we know about him I think this song befits his tuneful lips better than that of any other poet. I love to believe that one day, stirred by hallowed memories and cheered by holy hopes, this greatly

THE SHEPHERD KING
forgiven lover burst with birdlike naturalness into this immortal song:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

(K.J.V.)

VI. AN AGED PRODIGAL (SOLOMON)

When Solomon was old his wives turned away
his heart after other gods.
—1 Kings 11:4

“When Solomon was old.” There is a haunting sadness about this phrase that is more depressing than a sob. Here is a tragedy of the twilight: “When Solomon was old.” When his step had lost its spring; when his eyes had lost their early sparkle; when the grasshopper had become a burden and he had grown afraid of that which is high—then it happened. At that late hour, made lonely by the fact that many whose hands had once grasped his had passed into the silence—at that time of supreme need, this aged man madly let go the hand of God.

Solomon failed not only at his hour of great need, but also at the hour of his great opportunity. What a witness might have been his! He might have testified with another that of all God had promised in life's morning not one thing had failed. He might have said, “I know from my own experience that the eternal God is our refuge and
underneath are the everlasting arms.” He might have comforted tempest-tossed souls by saying, “Here is the port into which I put when the storm was on and found it more than sufficient.” But instead he gave the lie to all for which he had stood in his yesterdays.

But the supreme sadness of this ugly fall is its finality. It is tragic to see a young chap gather together his all and take his journey into a far country only to waste his substance in loose living. But our grief may be softened by the hope that he is not playing for keeps. Some day he may recover his sanity, return to his waiting father, and make it possible for the festivities to begin in the once-shadowed home. But when an old body heads toward the swine pen, we know that in all probability he will soon reach the point of no return. The climax of this ugly turning away from God is its finality.

I

Look now at Solomon’s big chance.

First, he inherited a great position. David had many sons but he chose Solomon as the most fit to wear the crown. Not only was Solomon the choice of David, but we are told that he was the choice of God as well. This is the case in spite of the fact that this gifted king made a bad ending. When Jesus chose Judas to be one of his apostles, he did not choose him because he knew him to be a scoundrel. He chose him just as he chose Peter, James, and John. He chose him as a high adventure of faith. Even so, God chose Solomon for his royal position in spite of his shadowed eventide.

Second, Solomon was greatly blessed, not only because he had a position, but because he had ability to fill that position. A lofty place does not always guarantee a lofty personality or great abilities. “Pygmies will be pygmies still though perched on the Alps.” Though I think the wisdom of this man has been greatly exaggerated, he was a man of superb and splendid gifts. I am sure he had abilities equal to his high position. That always means a fine opportunity both for the one who rules and for those who are the recipients of that rule.

Third, Solomon was further enriched by having a consecrated father. David, in Solomon’s day, was a very dedicated man in spite of some shady yesterdays. Though he had greatly sinned, he had greatly repented and had been greatly forgiven. Perhaps Solomon had had the privilege of hearing his father sing that song that has gripped the human heart as none other ever written, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” So truly does this song portray the very heart of God that our Lord took it as a picture of himself, saying, “I am the good shepherd.” This high faith David had sought to pass on to his gifted and needy son.

Listen to this father’s parting charge. It is full of holy urgency and beauty. “You, Solomon my son, know the God of your father, and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind. . . . If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will cast you off for ever.” Solomon, therefore, had known the enriching power of a good father’s life and of a good father’s instruction.

Finally, Solomon had had a personal experience of God for himself. Two appearances of God are mentioned; doubt-
LIVING WITH ROYALTY

less there were others. First, God came to him in a dream. This fact does not detract from the reality of Solomon's experience. God's message to him is in full character. It is true to the best we know in the Old Testament. He gave this young king the power of choice. He told him to ask any gift at his hands that he chose.

To that invitation Solomon made a satisfying response. He did not ask for things; he did not ask for glory and honor; he asked for an understanding heart. What a beautiful request! In humility he asked that he might have the undergirding of God for the great task set before him. Thus, putting first things first, all these secondary values were to be added unto him. At least this was the case so long as he kept true to his first great choice.

The Lord appeared to him a second time after the building of the temple. He told him graciously that his prayer had been heard. He told him something of his acceptance with him. But he did not leave him without the warning that the dedication he had just voiced must be a continuous dedication. He made it plain that if he failed in this, the great temple that he had built and dedicated would be of no worth at all. Indeed, it would become through his disloyalty and that of his people an utter ruin.

Here, then, are the great assets with which this promising king began his reign. He had high position, vast abilities to fill that position, the undergirding of a good father's life, and above all the undergirding of the everlasting God.

II

What did Solomon do with his big chance? It seems certain that for a time he used his opportunities wisely and well. I am sure that he was an able statesman and a sane and just judge. Not only was he an able ruler, a magnificent monarch, but he was a very shrewd and successful merchant as well. That was all to the good. There is nothing ugly or wicked in making money. Given a right motive, it is just as religious to make money as it is to be a missionary. Of course, that is only true if the money is made by methods that are humanly helpful.

Being a man of peace, he did not squander his wealth in fruitless wars. He did, however waste some of it in military preparations which had no higher purpose, it seems to me, than mere display. Thus, delighting himself in the abundance that was born of peace, he became so prosperous that the author tells us that he made silver as common in Jerusalem as stone.

But if Solomon was wise in the making of money we cannot be quite sure that he was equally wise in the way he made it, nor are we sure that he was wise in the use he made of it. Of course, he used some of it constructively. He became a great builder. One of the most famous temples of all time bore his name. But little of his wealth seems to have been used for the common good. He was foolishly fond of display. He constructed gorgeous palaces for his numerous wives. He gathered about him a pampered court. His drinking vessels were all of pure gold. He acquired money extravagantly and spent it in the same fashion.

But if Solomon was extravagant in the accumulation and squandering of money, he was even more extravagant in the accumulation of wives. He gave himself to a veritable orgy of marrying. Some have suggested that these foreign...
marriages were at least in part matters of state; that is, Solomon was seeking to avoid war by allying himself with all the rulers of the surrounding nations. He may have thought that it was better to wage private wars in his various palaces than wars that were international. But a more compelling reason, perhaps, for his numerous marriages was his love of display, his desire for the sham glory of possessing the largest and most glamorous harem of any king of his day.

How did this showy king manage with a good conscience to get away with these numerous pagan marriages? Of course he knew that by such conduct he was flouting the law of his God. But were not his motives good? Was he not seeking the high goal of peace? Isn’t it right to do evil that good may come? Of course that lie has been exploded a million times, but I doubt that it was ever more ardently believed and practiced than it is today. Many still believe (sometimes in the state, sometimes in the church) that it is right to do evil provided the end in view is good; that somehow we can reach heaven by way of hell. But if everybody who has found that to be false were to say “Amen,” it would shake the pillars of the universe.

I think also that Solomon’s assurance of his own ability, and especially his high success, had gone to his head. It had given him a sense of superiority to the moral law. Common and stupid folks still had to reap as they sowed. But that was not true of Solomon. He had cunning to manipulate this law and garner wheat from a sowing of weeds.

After speaking to a university congregation some time ago on “The New Birth” a professor took issue. She said that it was not necessary for artists and men of genius to be born anew. Of course, I was not able to argue with her in a convincing fashion. But I could only hint that since these highly gifted souls had to pass through a physical birth in order to get into this visible world, it might be just as necessary for them to pass through a second birth in order to enter the kingdom of God.

The law of gravity operates for a genius just as it does for a moron. But Solomon had become so very successful that he felt himself above the moral law. Therefore he went his gaudy and godless way, feeling himself an exception because of his great gifts and his seeming success.

III

Now what came of this flouting of the will of God? It happened to Solomon as it happens to the most stupid. The man gradually rotted down. As he led one bride after another to the altar he was getting up in years. Some of those brides were doubtless youthful, charming, and clever. They had been in the palace long before they learned that they could flatter this much-married husband. I can imagine they told him he was just as good a man as he was forty years ago. Sad to say, he was silly enough to believe it. This in spite of the fact that his hands shook somewhat, that his face had some ugly furrows, and that his brow had the sparkle of a billiard ball. He persuaded himself that he could deceive the almanac and kick it in the teeth.

We usually face the problem of getting old in one of three ways.

Some simply ignore their birthdays. They shut their eyes.
LIVING WITH ROYALTY

hardens into hate and hate tends to harden into hell. Therefore, we should throw away the petty slights and insults and even the real injuries that come to us along the way.

Not only so, but if we are going to be true Christians, having repented of our sins, we are going to forget them also. That is a keen insight that we find in the Old Testament: “I will forgive their iniquity, I will remember their sins no more.” That is, God not only forgives our sins, but he forgets them as well. Therefore, what God forgets we have a right to forget.

There are other values we cannot forget except at our vast peril. It was this kind of forgetfulness that worked such fatal consequences for Joash. What, then, did this man forget? He forgot the kindesses that had been shown him. Oh, you say, “that leaves me out. Nobody ever did me a kindness.” Don’t say that. Such an affirmation indicates beyond a doubt that you are not telling the truth. Not only so, but it is all but positive proof that you are a complete grouch. We have all been the recipients of constant kindness both from man and from God. Everything that we hold dear came primarily from God and secondarily through human hands. “What have you,” said Paul, “that you did not receive?” The answer to that question is nothing.

This king was no exception. He had been abundantly blessed by kindnesses. When he was a wee baby a vicious woman set herself to destroy every member of his family. His own life was suspended on something more frail than a gossamer thread. But the wife of the priest, Jehoiada, at the risk of her own life, gathered the little mite in her arms and hid him. Then through the coming days she, with her husband, became in a sense father and mother to him. They trained him in the religion of his fathers. At a tender age they put him on the throne. As a result of their kindness he became a religious man, and for a time a genuinely useful king.

It was Joash who set himself under the inspiration of the teaching of the priest Jehoiada to the repairing of the temple. He raised money through the chest of Joash that is famous to this day. Under this king’s leadership there came what amounted to a revival of religion among his people. Thus he had not only been greatly blessed by his teacher, but he had the yet greater privilege of becoming a blessing to his people. Countless blessings had come to him from the hand of God and from human hands, just as to you and me. But this king made the tragic blunder of forgetting all the beautiful. He remembered only the ugly and unpleasant.

III

Why did he forget?

Now there is a sense in which memory seems a capricious and arbitrary creature. One seldom knows what he is going to remember and what he is going to forget. But memory is still subject in great measure to control. We have considerable choice of what we forget and what we remember. We are urged over and over throughout the word of God to remember certain things. “Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth.” “Remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you.” Jesus said as he was going away, “Do this in remembrance of me.”
LIVING WITH ROYALTY

Why are we so forgetful? Sometimes we forget because we are preoccupied. Our minds are crowded with something else. When I forgot that wedding it was not because I was indifferent to the lovely couple seeking my services. They both belonged to my church. The young man had been converted under my ministry. (I am afraid he may have backslid under it, too.) But something happened that day that was out of the ordinary. Something happened that took up my time and attention so that it simply crowded out the thought of the coming wedding. I forgot because I was preoccupied.

There are other times when through sheer conceit we take the kindnesses that come to us as matters of course. I am quite sure that this, in part, was the case with Joash. He had been shown every consideration but he said, “Why not? Am I not a king? Am I not born to the purple? Of course these people seek to please me! Of course they seek to help me! Of course God’s mercies rest upon me! Look at who I am! It is nothing more than I deserve.” There is no greater help toward forgetting God’s mercies and ending in ingratitude than sheer conceit.

Perhaps the big reason Joash forgot was that he wanted to forget. There are times when remembering is an annoyance. Some years ago a young chap came to see me to “make a touch.” I listened to his story and he had a good one. But I had seen him in conversation with a friend just before he came to me and so I excused myself. The friend was close by. I sought him and asked, “Do you know the man who has just been talking to me?” “Yes,” was the answer. “Did he ever borrow any money from you?” “Yes,” he replied. “Did he pay you back?” “No,” was the answer. Then I returned to my man with this question. “Do you know this man to whom I have just been speaking?” “Yes,” he said. “Did you ever borrow money from him?” “Yes,” was the answer. “Did you pay him back?” At that he popped his fingers in wide-eyed amazement and said, “You know, I forgot that.” He doubtless forgot it because he wanted to forget.

After the death of Jehoiada Joash, influenced by his nobles, turned from the religion of his people to become an idolater. The prophets rebuked him. Among those who sought earnestly to call him back to the faith of his youth was the son of Jehoiada, Zacharias. Instead of listening to him, however, the king became angry, not at the disease but at the physician. Suffering from wounded pride he refused to remember the kindness of Jehoiada and the kindness of Jehoiada’s son. He forgot their kindnesses because he chose to let that memory be crowded out by something ugly, a desire for revenge.

Now as it is possible to crowd out the beautiful with the ugly, so we can crowd out the ugly with the beautiful. Years ago George R. Stuart, a saint of princely gifts, came to preach for me in Washington. He was a magnificent mountaineer. Indeed, he was so grandly homely that it was a genuine asset. When I went to the train to meet him, I saw that he had acquired an additional touch. Two of his upper front teeth were missing. From mere homeliness he had thus attained ghastliness. I looked at him with a kind of horrified amazement and wondered how he was going to get by with a handicap like that.
LIVING WITH ROYALTY

When I presented him to my congregation he walked boldly forward, patted himself on the shoulder, and said, "Two or three months ago I took to hurting in this shoulder. I went to see the doctor and he said, 'It's your teeth.' I said, 'It's no such thing; they don't reach down that far.' But I had to have them out and my doctor made me a beautiful plate. But just before I started up here, I broke my beautiful plate. My wife didn't want me to come, but I said, 'Thank the Lord, I still have my tongue left. When I get up there, I'll explain it to the people. The sensible folks will understand and it doesn't make any difference about the fools nohow.' Now, I am here with my tongue. If any of you are not interested in my tongue, you can just look at the hole."

Thus that man took a liability and changed it into an asset. Even so, this man Joash took a great asset, the ministries of a faithful father and of a faithful son who in loyalty to God had supported him and had rebuked him when he needed rebuking, and turned what was gold into something far worse than mud. He crowded out the best with the worst.

IV

Now what came of it all? What was the result of his forgetfulness? How did it all end? Through this forgetting of the kindnesses he became an ingrate. "Think" and "thank" both look and sound amazingly alike. And in a sense they are related. The reason we don't thank more is because we don't think more. Forgetting the kindnesses, failing to think of the tender ministries that had protected his childhood, that had guided his youthful steps, that had given him strength and courage for his mature years, forgetting all this, he had no sense of gratitude. He became an ingrate.

Now ingratitude is a very respectable and common sin, but it is just as cruel as it is common. The greatest of all the poets calls it a fiend. It is not simply an ordinary fiend—it's a marble-hearted fiend. It is about the most cruel of all sins. Sometimes it is aggressively cruel as it was in the case of Joash. He inflicted bodily harm on the man who had rebuked him. He became guilty of cold-blooded murder because he had given away to the ghastly sin of ingratitude.

But ingratitude, perhaps, does its most deadly work not aggressively but passively. It is in our failure to express the appreciation that is really in our hearts that we are guilty of some of our most cruel sins. What a pity it is that we do not have the thoughtfulness and the gratitude to say in the here and now to those with whom we live and with whom we are bound up in a bundle of life what we are going to say about them when they are no longer here. It has been my lot to hold a great many funerals. But by far the saddest funerals I have had to hold were the ones where I knew that somebody was trying to say to the dead what he was so sorry he had failed to say to the living.

Through his ingratitude Joash cheated himself. He robbed himself of one of life's finest treasures. This is true because whatever wealth may come into your hands, if with this treasure there is no gratitude you are still a poverty-stricken wretch. Further, he robbed himself of one of the best and finest ways of helping others. This is true because everybody
LIVING WITH ROYALTY

needs appreciation. To refuse to give it is to cruelly cheat our fellows. Therefore, in taking the course of forgetfulness and becoming an ingrate, Joash cheated himself. He cheated his fellows. He cheated God. So low did he sink that his own people murdered him while he lay in bed, desperately wounded. When they buried him, it was not among the kings. So unkingly had he become that they would not let him rest among his royal ancestors. He lost everything because he forgot and in forgetting became an ingrate.

So what? We are to go right where he went wrong. We need to sing every morning as we wake:

Bless the Lord, 0 my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Bless the Lord, 0 my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

—Ps. 103:1-5 (K.J.V.)

The only way to drive out the forgetfulness that blights and dams is by remembering those mercies that uplift and save the soul.

X. A ROYAL RUIN (UZZIAH)

That ruined him.
—II Chron. 26:16 (Moffatt)

Here is a brief bit of biography written from God's viewpoint. A friend told of seeing on the bottom of a capsized vessel in the Columbia River this advertisement in loud capitals, "I DRINK HILL AND HILL." A little later, again passing that way, he saw how some wise unknown had finished the sentence in equally loud capitals, "AND I AM A WRECK." Here, too, is a wreck. It is the most tragic of all wrecks—that of human personality. "That ruined him," declares this author as he looks upon one who had so much and made so little of it.

I

Who was this man?
This is the story of Uzziah. He had a second name, Azariah. Both names carry a strong religious flavor—"Jehovah my strength" and "Jehovah my help." He was a brilliant and able king. He was kingly not only in position
but in his wise handling of his responsibilities. He came to
the throne when he was little more than a lad. (He was only
sixteen.) Yet he seems from the beginning to have played
the part of a man. He reigned over his people for fifty-two
years. That is the longest reign that any Jewish king ever
enjoyed except Manasseh.
Uzziah was interested in all the interests of his kingdom.
He was a builder. The first assertion made of him is that
he built Eloth. He also built towns in the territories that
he had taken from certain surrounding tribes. He strength­
ened the walls of his own city. He used the shrewdest
engineers of his day to contrive machines upon these walls
for the hurling of large stones and arrows. He worked
constructively.
Naturally, being a citizen of his age, he was a military
man. He kept an excellent standing army. He equipped his
soldiers with the best equipment of his day. With this well­
trained and well-equipped army, he warred victoriously.
He did not allow his little nation to become the stomping
ground for the armies of the nations round about.
Then, too, he was interested in stock raising and in
agriculture. He was wise enough to give attention to the
real source of all wealth—the land. He was in a sense a
royal farmer.
I shall never cease to be grateful that it was my privilege
to be raised on a farm. Though I have been exposed to
some of our best schools, few lessons from them have been
of greater value than those I learned on the farm. One
important lesson I learned was this—I don't like farming!
Now, since Uzziah was wisely interested in all the
interests of his people, his nation was prosperous. Not only
so, but he made his kingdom to be respected far and wide.
In fact, he gave it a standing such as it had not known
since the days of showy Solomon. "He was marvelously
helped, till he was strong."
Being thus highly successful, he gained a secure place in
the hearts of his people. He became a national hero. This
was true not only for the groundlings but also for the best
minds of his nation. This was especially true of a certain
brilliant young aristocrat named Isaiah. It speaks well for
this king that even after tragedy struck, Isaiah held him in
such honor as to become his biographer (II Chron. 26:22).
So much did youthful Isaiah honor and trust King
Uzziah, that when he passed from the palace to a pesthouse,
then from that pesthouse to the cemetery, it left for him
the loneliest possible place against the sky. When this
honored king had gone, it was for Isaiah almost as if God
had gone. Indeed, it was as he looked past the vacant
throne of his honored and loved hero that he became able
to see the throne that was not vacant. He saw the Lord
high and lifted up.
This tragic passing of Uzziah was used of God to bring
Isaiah into a new day. Having taken his eyes off a king,
he saw the King. This vision of God did not make this
possible prophet shout for joy. It rather broke his heart. It
drove him to cry in bitterness of soul, "Woe is me! For I
am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the
midst of a people of unclean lips."
Having thus confessed, his sorrow was changed into joy.
This was the case because his lips were at once touched
by a live coal from God’s altar. Then he heard that voice that still speaks to every repenting soul: “Your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven.”

Having come thus to see God and to see himself, he came next to see his mission. He heard this divine voice saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” There is no compulsion back of the response of Isaiah. He was not a conscript. He was a volunteer. “Then I said, ‘Here I am! Send me.’” Having thus given himself to God, God accepted him and used him and made him a mighty prophet. He made him also a statesman who exercised greater political power perhaps than any other man since King David. But even this remaking of Isaiah did not change Uzziah’s defeat into victory. He ended a moral failure.

II

What wrecked this king? Where was dropped the spark that reduced this palatial personality to charred ruins? Where began the leak within the vessel that set the waters of desolation and death to roaring above this sunken ship? On the surface it would seem that the fatal sin of Uzziah was that he presumed to take upon himself the office of the priesthood. His was not the role of a priest. When, therefore, he thus presumed, the priests, led by Azariah, made a strong protest. That protest so angered the king that his face became scarlet with rage. It was against this scarlet background that these priests discovered the glaring whiteness of leprosy.

But it was not the mere effort of this king to play the part of priest that brought about his ruin. That was only a symptom. The real evil, the eating cancer that destroyed Uzziah, was just this—he had run past God! “He was marvelously helped, till he was strong.” Having arrived, however, he decided he did not need God anymore. Thus this wise and able king became a victim of his own success. As sometimes happens to a bee, he was drowned in his own honey.

Now the fact that he allowed his success to become his ruin does not mean that success in itself is wrong. Success is no more a sin than failure is a virtue. It is our right and our duty to succeed if we can, just as it is an ugly sin to fail if we do so through our own indifference and laziness.

Uzziah’s success became a sin because it led to pride and self-sufficiency. Of course, this is not always the case. Success may be a roadway to deepest humility. That is always true if we regard it aright. Success no more has pride as its inevitable goal than failure has humility as its inevitable goal. Some of the most humble people I have ever known have been highly successful. Even so, some of the most conceited swaggerers I have known have been the dullest of failures.

In this latter group I would place one man whom I have known for long years. He is not a bad man; he is rather a kindly bore. Trained for his chosen profession, he has been a consistent failure in that profession. But this failure seems to have made him only the more cocksure. Thus, he is not only an authority in his own field, but in every other. To encounter him in the social circle is to make any effort at conversation unnecessary. All anyone is called upon to do is to nod agreement.
Just as a superb failure may be full of swagger, so the most successful may be beautifully humble. Billy Graham has occupied the limelight for the last decade to a degree greater perhaps than that of any other preacher who ever lived. He has drawn by far the largest crowds. He has had the greatest response. He has met with applause and approval from the learned and the unlearned. Yet a friend—not a member of his staff—writing of him recently, said, "He is the most humble man I have ever met."

Yet success is a heady wine. This is the case because it has a great tendency to make us self-sufficient. Having succeeded, we are prone to give all the credit to ourselves. That was the folly of the rich farmer. He had had abundant crops. His barns were filled to overflowing. But he had nobody to thank for it but himself. He forgot the men who helped to make his success possible. He forgot God, who had given him his life and all else. Therefore, he was called a fool, not because he succeeded, but because he allowed his success so to minister to his pride as to shut both man and God out of his heart.

III

"That ruined him." We can now understand the "that" of which the author is speaking. Uzziah was not ruined by his success; he was ruined by being so spiritually blind and stupid as to take all the credit to himself. No man has a right to do that, be he king or peasant. "What have you," questions Paul, "that you did not receive?" The only adequate answer to that question is "Nothing." Everything that is of worth came to us fundamentally as a gift.

To build life on the foundation of our own self-sufficiency is to build upon a lie. It is to ignore the facts of life and that spells disaster. This is the case when we ignore the physical facts. The man who presumes to live without eating will die. The man who presumes on the law of gravity will be crushed. The man who presumes on fire will be burned to a cinder.

If to ignore the physical facts of life spells disaster, how much more sure will be that disaster if we ignore the supreme fact, the fact of God? Yet there are few sins to which we are more prone. We ignore God in order to get to play that role ourselves. This temptation has dogged humanity from the beginning. "You will be like God," said the tempter in the old Genesis story. We have always wanted to play God. We have always desired independence, absolute freedom, the capacity to do as we please. But such an attitude has never worked.

We are trying it now in a big way among the nations. The primal command was this: "Have dominion." How marvelously we have carried out that command in the realm of the visible! As did Alexander the Great, we feel we have conquered our little world. We are soon to become masters of outer space. But in spite of this, we have not found peace. By thus increasing our powers of destruction, we have only added to our torturing fears. Said a certain Russian, "The universe has passed under new management." But that new management is causing us to hang over hell every morning.

This temptation to get on without God also constantly dogs the church. Individual churches often grow and be-
come powerful only to die of their own self-sufficiency. Here is one such. So sure is it of itself that it passed the following resolution: "Whereas we are rich and increased in goods, be it resolved that we announce to all and sundry that we have need of nothing." Yet "nothing" was all this church did possess. This was the case because the living Christ was even then having to stand and knock at the door of this highly successful church.

This pride and self-sufficiency also threatens every individual. How easy it is to blame circumstances or to blame our fellows for our failures. How easily also do we take sole credit for our successes, for the blessings that have come to us through others and through the good grace of God. That always spells disaster.

What a true story is that of the frog who decided to spend the winter in the deep south! Having no conveyance of his own, he decided to "thumb" his way to that land of summer. At once he put his resolution into effect with the result that soon two wild geese who were passing overhead, saw him and were kind enough to respond to his call. But having come from the heights to aid this lowly chap, they were at a loss as to how to go about it. But the wise frog, having thought things through, had a plan. He produced a good string, and gave one end of the string into the beak of A and the other in that of B. Then with firm jaws, he took hold of the middle. At once this ingenious flight began.

So unique was the adventure that all the birds looked on with high admiration. Not only so, but when a farmer looked up from his task to see this strange sight, he too was filled with both amazement and admiration. "Who invented that?" he shouted. Then the frog, with no thought of how impossible the flight would have been without his friends, felt he could not possibly miss this opportunity to boast of his greatness, answered, "I invented that." An instant later a handful of minced frog was lying at the farmer's feet saying, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

The way of pride and self-sufficiency is always, I repeat, a sure road to disaster. Whether we confess it or not, we always are utterly dependent upon God. "I am the vine, you are the branches." What relation does the branch have to the vine? It is one of constant contact and of constant receiving. But above all else, it is one of utter and absolute dependence. For the branch, to assert its independence is not to become green and fruitful. It is surely to wither and die.

This passing of Uzziah from a palace to a pesthouse was, therefore, not inevitable. It came of his independence toward God. It was born of his own self-sufficiency. I am quite sure he desired the favor and friendship of God. But as so many others, he desired it upon his own terms. Everybody would like a warm, rich, radiant, religious experience, if he could have it on his own terms. Everybody in school would like to make 100 on every recitation, if he could do so on his own terms. But that is impossible. Before God can depend on us, we must depend on him.

Now, how long are you going to be without the power of God in your life? Just so long as you are willing to be without it. You may deeply desire God's help. You may
even ask for it. But if you ask with it in the back of your mind that if he fails to help you can muddle through some way, then you will be left to muddle through. It is only when our desperate needs make us willing to give all, that we are capable of receiving God's all. No victorious help is possible for one who is independent toward God. No ultimate defeat is possible for him who depends on God. "He who believes in him will never be disappointed."

(Moffatt.)

XI. A ROYAL MODERNIST (HEZEKIAH)

He broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made.

—II KINGS 18:4

In calling Hezekiah a modernist I have no reference to that rather threadbare controversy between fundamentalist and modernist. I am only saying that this youthful king did a bit of thinking for his own day. Thus thinking, he dared to smash to bits the bronze serpent that Moses had made, calling it only a piece of brass. Such a shocking deed required either great rashness with a mixture of stupidity or genuine insight backed by high courage.

The latter was the case, because that serpent had gathered to itself a sacredness born of long centuries of veneration. It had upon it the very finger marks of their great leader, Moses. Not only so, but less clearly seen, there were also upon it the finger marks of God. In a distant and desperate day it had been of great service. So wonderfully had it played its part that Jesus made use of it in speaking of his own mission: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilder-
ness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” Yet this young king knew nothing better to do with this honored object than to smash it to bits.

I

How, I wonder, did his people react? I imagine that it divided them into at least three groups.

There were no doubt those who looked upon change as a bit of an end in itself. These of course burst into loud applause. “That,” they asserted with enthusiasm, “should have been done long ago. With that roadblock out of the way we can now make some real progress.” There are always with us those who, as the ancient Athenians, like to spend their time in hearing and telling some new thing. To them change means progress, regardless of the nature of the change.

Sometimes these people, with their passion for change, get into the pulpit. No sooner do they reach a new pastorate than they hasten to change everything in sight. Their predecessors have left nothing of worth. They look upon all that came from yesterday with a kind of contempt, whether it be a custom, a faith, or a person. Often they seem more concerned about the new than about the true.

I knew one such person years ago. He was a highly cultured man with many fine qualities. But so far as I remember he never once took a text in which he believed. He would first bleed it white. Then, when he sought to give it a blood transfusion out of his own brain, I often felt that the effort weakened him without giving strength to the congregation. Such negative preaching, however new, is not likely to change a valley of bones such as that of Ezekiel into a parade ground for an exceeding great host. It is more likely to reduce such a host to shattered bones.

Sometimes, though perhaps less often, the apostle of change is in the pew. He is eager to overhaul the whole organization of the church. All officers should be put out and new ones brought in. Then, above all, the minister must be remade. If he is too stubborn to learn wisdom, then he must move. There are for such people only two really good ministers, the one who served yesterday and the one they are expecting tomorrow. “We want a new minister,” said one such man. “We should like one who is religious if we can find him. If not, we want one that is religiously inclined. But come what may, we must have a change.”

The stand-patters were also present when this king did his rash deed. Some were saddened by it. They felt that they had been robbed, that something beautiful had been destroyed. Others were angered. They vowed they would attend church no more. Certainly they would make no further contribution. These hated all change. Rip Van Winkle was their ideal saint, save that he slept in the open instead of in church. Their favorite forest was not such as changed from the Easter beauty of spring to the golden glory of autumn. It was one that was petrified and changed not at all.

In almost every church there are at least a few who regard the new as they would a suspected person in enemy country. Their best reason for taking any action is that they have always done it that way. Any new translation of the Bible
fills them with horror, not because it is faulty or misleading, but because it is different. Indeed, it often seems difficult to move so much as a chair in some churches without setting it down on the sore toe of some saint. Such people are by nature and practice the foes of all change.

Some years ago a zealous young minister became pastor of a church that had sought to “hold its own” for almost a century. He came to his new charge from halfway across the continent. Therefore, he knew very little of the staid congregation he was to serve. The very first Sunday, instead of indulging in target practice, he shot to kill. The result was that when he gave the invitation at the close of the service more than a dozen people came forward. That was something different. Some became so excited over it, as the young pastor continued such practice, that they told their friends. These friends told others, until soon the church was filled to standing room at every service. Of course many rejoiced. One lovely old official said to his new minister: “I’m so glad you made this change before we had time to tell you that it couldn’t be done.”

But that favorable verdict was not universal. One day a sweet old spinster said to her pastor with real sadness, flavored by a touch of anger, “Before you came we old members could come to church and sit anywhere we pleased, even if we were late. Now, if we are not ahead of time, we often have to stand.” Such a thrilling situation, it seems to me should have resulted in glad hallelujahs. But for her it was only ground for groans.

Then there were those who viewed this serpent smashing not simply with their emotions, but with intelligent eyes. Thus seeing, they approved, not simply because they loved change for its own sake, but because they thought this change helpful. That is the real test of the right or wrong of any change. If it is humanly hurtful, it is likely to be wrong. If it is humanly helpful, it is likely right.

Why did Hezekiah smash this serpent? It was not to shock the people. There are still those of the adolescent type who believe in the shock treatment. Indeed, this is sometimes good, but it was not the purpose of this young king. No more was he seeking to win applause. Nor was he seeking to discredit the serpent by denying that it was the work of Moses. Least of all did he turn wrecker because the serpent had never been of any value. He was not denying that many, by God’s grace, had been healed by it.

Why then, I repeat, did he break it? This was one reason: The evil that it had been made to cure no longer existed. The people of Hezekiah’s day had problems, but fiery serpents were not one of them. There is no sense in keeping a remedy for a disease that no longer exists. There is no use in building factories to manufacture covered wagons when nobody travels in that fashion anymore.

Not only had this revered object ceased to be of use; it had become a hindrance. Some had made it into an idol. Thus they had made into an end something that at best had been only a means. Intended to turn the eyes and hearts of the people toward God, it was now turning them in the opposite direction. Therefore, this earnest young king decided to brave the wrath of many by smashing it to bits. “Here,” he said, “is something that needs to be changed; hence, I am going to change it.”
This is of interest to us because we also have to do with change. There are always idols being smashed for us or idols that we smash ourselves. All changes are not of the same kind. There are some about which we have little or no choice. There are others that we make of our own free will.

For instance, our world is constantly changing and there seems little we can do about it. A certain psalmist was confronted by that problem long ago:

The pillars of the State are falling:
what can a just man do?
—Ps. 11:3 (Moffatt)

Nothing is one answer. Run is another; "Flee like a bird." But this did not satisfy the poet's conscience. He was convinced that however hopeless his situation he could still vote on the right side, could still stand in his place and be true.

There are changes beyond our control that we must accept and to which we must adjust. A devoted young family is surely a thing of joy and beauty. But, like it or not, that family changes. The children grow up. Of course, parents accept that with gladness—that is, they are glad for them to grow physically—but some resist their growing emotionally. They wish to keep them as dependent as babies. I am thinking of an intelligent man of fifty who is as incapable of making a choice as a small child. For far too long all his choices were made for him.

Here and there is a mother who is eager to hold first place in the heart of her son even after he has a family of his own. This is what has made some mothers-in-law the high explosive for many a home. Blessed is the in-law who can gladly take second place. That old idol of first place must be smashed, or the marriage is likely to end in tragedy.

There is another idol we must break, or else be broken by it. That is youth. Like it or not, all of us change. We pass from youth to middle life; from middle life to old age. Some resent this. They are more afraid of the almanac than of the atomic bomb.

Years ago, when I was just turning forty, I went to see a friend of sixty-nine. This man was one of the superb preachers of that day. In spite of the wide span of years that separated us, he took a fatherly interest in me and I honored him greatly.

Suddenly in the course of our conversation he turned to me and said with utter desperation: "It's awful! It's awful for one who has lived his life in the thick of things as I have to get old and get where he can't do it anymore."

I was startled and saddened. I even felt that he had let me down. When, a few minutes later, I was alone I had the first conversation with myself about getting old that I had ever had.

"Look here," I said, "that is coming to you one of these days. When it comes you should meet it more gallantly than that. You haven't done much, but you have done more than anybody ever thought you would do, including yourself. Now when you strike out, don't throw down
Living With Royalty

your bat in a huff. Try to say to the oncoming batter ‘I
have not knocked as many home runs as I’d have liked,
but thank God, I’ve had the privilege of playing the
game.’ ”

From there I began to prepare myself for the breaking
of the idol of youth. So far, I have met this change joyfully.
Strange as it may seem, I am content to be old. I have no
desire to be young. I have fished that stream out and am
now fishing in more placid, yet equally joyous, waters.

There are also changes that are matters of choice. Per­
haps you are convinced, for instance, that your church is
not as it should be. If such is the case then, being a part of
it, you can help to change it.

In a certain church that seemed on the point of becoming
a mausoleum a group of young parents decided to do
something about it. They felt that some of the fault might
lie with their pastor. Then came the real test. “What is
wrong with us?” they questioned. They began with one
simple answer. “At the evening services we have been ex­
pecting our pastor to kindle a fire with one or two sticks of
wood. Suppose we help him by being there.”

I don’t know how the experiment will work out, but I
am sure of this: If they prayerfully follow through, it will
bring a new springtime to their own hearts and to their
church.

There are changes that you as an individual can choose
for yourself. Jesus tells of a certain chap who looked at
himself one day and did not like what he saw. “I am in a
mess,” he confessed. “I am dying of hunger in spite of the
fact that even the hired servants of my father have bread
enough and to spare. I don’t have to continue as I am. I can
still find a place at the feast of the fullness of life. But
if I find that place I am the one that has to decide.” And
decide he did—“And he arose and came to his father.”

III

Perhaps there is one fault to find with the rash conduct
of this king. For the present at least he put his chief accent
on the negative. He sought to destroy evil by a frontal at­
tack. He smashed the serpent, but we are not told what
he did to fill the vacuum. If he did not lead these one-time
worshipers of the serpent to a higher worship we may be
sure that their conversion was not lasting.

“Do not resist one who is evil,” said Jesus. What a queer
word from one who resisted evil more effectively than any
other who ever lived, and resisted it unto death! But what
our Lord is urging is not an easy tolerance of evil, but a
different tactic of fighting it. He does not approve of the
frontal attack.

This is the case because he knew that by such method
whatever victory we win will likely be temporary. The
unclean spirit, though once driven out, found it easy to
return because the house from which he had been driven
was empty. Even were the destruction of evil permanent
it would guarantee no positive good. Why pull up the
tares if the wheat is destroyed by the same process? The
result would not be a field of golden grain but a barren
waste. The only real enemy of evil is good. The only
conqueror of darkness is light. It was not by smashing false
gods that the primitive Christian changed that hard Roman world. It was by holding up Jesus Christ.

The village school building of my boyhood stood in a forest of scrubby oaks. When autumn came and all the trees decked themselves in scarlet and gold, these hardy oaks joined the colorful parade. But when the wintry winds came with their rain, sleet, and snow and called for an offering of leaves to fertilize the earth; when the other trees gave their very all, these oaks were as miserly as mummies. They seemed unwilling to spare a single leaf.

But by and by the winter with her strong blasts would give up, either from discouragement or disgust. Then the days would grow a bit longer and warmer. At last an unseen power would climb through the trunks of those tough trees out to the very end of the smallest twig. Then a mighty but silent voice would say to each brown stubborn leaf—"Move over." And what the howling winter, with all its power, could not do, spring did by the giving of new life. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Gal. 5:16 K.J.V.)

XII. A GOD-GIRDLED PAGAN (CYRUS)

I gird you, though you do not know me.
—Isa. 45:5

Cyrus is one of the giants of all history. He was a great conqueror. God opened doors before him and mighty nations dropped like overripe fruit into his hands. Not only was he a conqueror, but he was also a wise and gracious ruler. In fact, to the keen and understanding Greeks, he was an ideal king. Though they themselves had had some great rulers, yet in spite of their patriotism, they gave the highest rating to this foreigner. To them he represented kingliness at its best.

What is still more impressive, however, is that not only did the Greeks regard Cyrus highly, but he was held in little less honor by the narrow-minded and puritanical Jews. They were glad to accept him as their deliverer. They were glad to claim him as the one chosen of God to break their yoke and to bring them back to the land of their fathers. Thus he was honored both by Gentiles and Jews, by those who worshipped many gods and by those who
worshipped only one God. We may therefore take seriously the word that God spoke through his prophet, “I gird you, though you do not know me.”

I

Now the fact that God girded this pagan, if a bit of a shock, is also heartening. It gives this assurance:

The love of God is broader
Than the measure of man’s mind,
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

That is, God loves not only believers, but also those who do not believe. It makes us sure that there is a light that enlightens every man; that in every man, in every church, even in every religion there is some good. Our missionaries have learned that they are not to begin their work among those whom they seek to help by tearing to bits all on which they have built in the past. They are rather to take what is true and seek to build upon that. No people, nobody has been left without some bit of witness.

Now since God girded this pagan, we can believe that he girds every man. Paul, in his letter to the Colossians, said, “All things were created through him and for him.” That is, God has a purpose and a plan for every life. Horace Bushnell has a great sermon on this text entitled, “Every Man’s Life a Plan of God.” I was not able to find and read that sermon; therefore this of mine may be the poorer for that lack.

“All things were created through him and for him.”—All that this great preacher meant by that I cannot say. I do not take him to mean that we are all just as God intended us to be. Though God plans every life we do not all carry out that plan. God is the architect; we are the builders. Our supreme tragedy is that we too often refuse to build according to his plan.

When I was pastor in Washington, I sometimes met on my walks a man who looked little better than a nightmare. Yet I knew that when that man first came from his native state he was a magnificent figure. He had been elected more than once to the United States Senate, but he had fallen into the destroying grip of alcohol. Thus that once-fine body had been blighted and that fascinating personality had been torn into shreds and tatters. Therefore for one to affirm that this shambling wreck was a part of a divine plan would be an ugly slander against God. God does have a plan for every life, even for pagans, but all do not build according to his plan.

II

This universal girding of God explains in some measure the good that we find among the unorthodox. Of course, that good is often exaggerated. It is fashionable today for the writer of fiction to picture the renegade of the community as the one who in times of crisis shows the most compassion. Sometimes that may be the case. It certainly is not the rule, however. Other things being equal, what a man believes really does color his conduct. Therefore, when one affirms, “The best people I have known have not belonged to any church,” I have, in sober honesty, to say
that such has not been my experience. Far the best I have known have belonged to the church. Yet this is not to deny that I have known many excellent people who were “outsiders.”

This is true of some whom we meet on the pages of the Bible as well as in our daily living. I do not know the name of that ardent soul whom John found engaged in casting out demons. But I do know that though this man was fighting evil and fighting it victoriously, when John found that he was not of his company he made him quit. This must have given the demons a field day. This was the case because our unknown servant was prevented from doing the job, while John was too busy preventing him to attend to it himself. Thus they both quit. But when John hurried to report the great news to Jesus, he received no commendation. Listen to our Lord: “Do not forbid him. . . . He that is not against us is for us.”

He drew a circle and shut me out,
A heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But love and I had a way to win.
We drew a circle and took him in.¹

I do not know the name of that soldier who witnessed, with a tender heart, the crucifixion of our Lord. He was possibly one of the quartet sent to perform the bloody task. But be that as it may, when the suffering of Jesus reached its terrible climax and there was wrung from him that awful cry, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” this soldier had to go into action. The scribes and the Pharisees might scoff. Others might speculate: “It sounds as if he is calling Elijah. Well, let’s wait and see if Elijah will come take him down.”

But this soldier, though he did not understand what the Master was saying, though he did not even know who Elijah was, did understand that the dying man was suffering the very tortures of hell. He knew also that one of his sharpest agonies was that of thirst. Therefore, he hurried to dip a sponge into his ration of sour wine, put it on a reed, and hold it to the lips of Jesus. That gift Jesus gladly accepted. How striking that the last act of human kindness shown to our Lord came at the hands of an ignorant pagan. God girded him, though he did not know him.

When I was pastor in Memphis I cannot say how many times I have stopped in one of the cemeteries to look with appreciation upon the statue of a woman. This woman had not been Miss America, nor had she been the chosen mother of the year. She was a one-time prostitute. She had run a house of ill repute. But when yellow fever broke out she gave herself to the nursing of the girls in her charge till they either got well or died. Then she opened her home to the friendless, the frightened, the desperately ill. Day and night she gave herself unstintingly to the task of nursing these till the dread disease laid its deadly hand upon her. I cannot recall the epitaph that her grateful city carved upon her monument. But here is one that would fit: “I girded you, though you did not know me.”

¹ Edwin Markham, “Outwitted.”