WHAT JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE FAMILY

There are only four passages in the Gospels that have to do with marriage and family life. These are as follows:

Matthew 5: 31, 32
Matthew 19: 3.9
Mark 10: 2 - 12
Luke 16: 18

I.

Jesus was born into a race where a family life was of great importance. Through all the centuries the Jews have been among the best, if not the best, home builders. It is true to this day. During the years in which I was pastor in Birmingham we had an active and often congested juvenile court. But during those years I am told not a single Jewish child passed through the court. In every Jewish home children are desired. The childless woman lived under a cloud. Witness the case of Hannah and Elizabeth. When such a woman found that she was to be a mother, her joy knew no bounds. She felt that her shame had been taken away.

The training of children was regarded of highest importance. It was not the duty of a mother so much as of the father. He was to teach the precepts of the Lord diligently to his children. He was to write them upon the lintel of the door. He was to teach them when he liest down, and when he arise, and as he walked by the way. The Old Testament enjoined such training again and again.

Here is a typical word, "Train up a child in the way it should go and when it is
old it will not depart from it." If you fail to give such training you were likely to end in tragedy. Here is a sentence of doom being uttered against a good old man who had made this type of failure. "I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity that he knoweth. For his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not."

But if the right training of children was important, the duty of children to parents received a yet greater emphasis. Such disloyalty was without excuse. Here is a typical Proverb. "The eye that mocketh at its father and refuses to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pluck it out and the young ravens shall eat it." We put, the responsibility of parents to children, the Old Testament puts the emphasis on the responsibility of children to parents. This is one of the Ten Commandments, "Honor thy father and mother that their days may be long upon the earth." Jesus himself waxed hot and indignant at certain Jews of his day who renounced their obligation to support their needy parents by declaring that they had dedicated money to God that ought to be thus used. Jesus was therefore born of a people that had a high regard for family life. Perhaps the fact that he said so little about this important matter was due to the fact that the need was not as pressing here as in other matters that were neglected.

II.

But while Jesus spoke of marriage and family life but briefly, he emphasized the high importance in which he held it by what he had to say about children. A recent writer declared that it was the twentieth century that discovered the child. But it so happens that this man is about nineteen hundred years behind the times. It was Jesus who first discovered the value of the child. It was Jesus who first set the child in the midst. There are certain declarations on the part of the Læster that stand out. Let us glance at them.
1. Jesus declared that the kingdom of heaven belongs to the child and to those who succeed by the grace of God in becoming child-like. When one day mothers had brought their children to him, when the little fellows were struggling to get into his arms, the disciples were terrified. They thought that such a swarm of babies would annoy Jesus. But he rebuked them. "He was much displeased," the story says. Then he added, "Suffer the little children to come unto me for such is the kingdom of heaven."

2. Not only does the child belong in the Kingdom, but he is not there as an inferior, he is not there as a miniature adult, he is there superlatively great in his own right. The disciples of Jesus were constantly arguing as to who should be greatest in the Kingdom. To answer this question Jesus took a little child and set him in the midst and said, "Except you become as a little child you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." You must be child-like to get into the Kingdom at all. The more child-like you are the greater you are.

3. Jesus warns of the importance of accepting God's view of the child. "Not so," he says, "the angels do always behold the face of my father." What did he mean by that? In speaking of their angels he is referring to the old faith that every child had its guardian angel. These angels who have little children in their charge are the ones that always behold the face of God. That means that they are the ones of highest rank, the ones who dwell in his immediate presence. It is Jesus' way of saying that God looks upon the child as of superlatively important.

4. That estimate we are to share. Therefore, he warns us against thinking cheaply of children. "Take heed," he said, "that ye despise not one of these little ones." Despise is to under-value. Take heed that you do not under-value the child. Take heed that you see the child through God's eyes. To despise a child might lead to tragedy for the child. It seems certain a tragedy for the one who does the despising. If we think meanly of the child we might thereby
cause the child to stumble. Such would be fatal.

5. This leads us to a fifth word of Jesus. "It is better to have a millstone hanged about your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea than to offend one of these little ones." This, little ones, might mean a weak adult, but it certainly takes in the children. So bent upon the guarding of children was Jesus that he fenced them in with a wall of millstones. How tremendous must have been the love that uttered such forked lightening as that.

6. So important is the child that Jesus identifies them with himself, and says, "Whosoever receiveth such a little child in my name receiveth me." In dealing with children then, we are dealing with supreme values. The child is valuable in himself. He is valuable also because he is the keeper of the future. He holds tomorrow in his hand.

Now since the child is so important in the mind of Jesus we can judge how he regarded the home. We can see something of the high estimate he put upon family life. The family was the best institution of that day. It is the best of our day. He modeled his Kingdom on family life. The Kingdom of Heaven depends on our taking God as father and acting toward one another as brothers. That is, the Kingdom of God is to be like family life at its best. In the family the strongest do not get all the privileges while the weak are pushed to the wall. In the family the weak are protected, the strong put themselves at their disposal. Everything then today and tomorrow depends upon the home and the home depends upon marriage.

III.

What then did Jesus say about marriage? The Pharisees came with a question, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for any cause?" If it was, a husband might put away his wife for burning his bread. He might put her away for losing her good looks. He might put her away in order to marry some other woman. The
woman on the other hand could not put her husband away for any cause. But husbands claimed the right to divorce their wife for any cause. (Deut. 24:1) to back up their position.

In answer to their question Jesus went back beyond the law of Moses to the beginning. He said that Moses is permitted divorce because they are such utter barbarians. But no such plan was in the mind of God at creation. He reminds them that God made them at the beginning, man and woman, and said, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. Where there are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Here are four plain assertions with regard to marriage:

1. Marriage is a part of the divine plan. It is a relationship in which men and women come to their best. Man to himself is but a hemisphere of humanity. The same is true of woman. They are only made complete as they are completed in each other. During the middle ages there came a fallacious doctrine that remaining outside of marriage was morally superior to entering into this relationship. But such is flatly contradicted by both the Old and New Testament. Men and women come to their best in the marriage relationship. Marriage is a part of the divine plan.

2. This relationship is to take precedence over all others. With the husband, the wife is to be first, with the wife the husband is to be first. That is what Jesus means by that very plain language, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife." No person has a right to come between husband and wife be that person father or mother. Jesus emphasized the importance of loyalty of children to parents, but loyalty to wife or husband is to take precedence over this. It is to be the highest of all human relationships.

3. The husband and wife are to be one. They are to be one in their mutual
self giving. They are to be one in their material interests. They are to be one in their spiritual interests. Marriage is more than a mere contract, it is a union. We come to understand the oneness of the wedded pair better when we witness old couples that have lived together for forty or fifty or sixty years. They have so grown together that they think alike and see alike. Sometimes they even seem to talk alike. When one goes to the Long Home the other soon follows.

4. Marriage is to be for life. "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and they twain shall be one flesh. What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." There is no such thing as a right divorce with the privilege of being married. By this I mean that such a divorce can never be right for both parties. One may be justified, but the other never.

IV.

Look then at this matter of divorce. It is one of the most pressing questions of modern life. Mark and Luke agree in saying that divorce is not right under any circumstance. Here is Mark's version, "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another committeth adultery against her, or if a woman shall put away her husband and marry another." (Mark 10:11, 12.) Here is what Luke has to say, "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another committeth adultery, and whosoever shall marry her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." Matthew puts it in this fashion, "Except it be for fornication; and whosoever shall marry her who is put away doth commit adultery."

In the time of Jesus adultery for woman was far different from adultery for man. If a woman was unfaithful to her husband regardless of who might be partner in her sin, she was guilty of adultery. But a man was only guilty of adultery when his companion in sin was the wife of another man. Here we see cropping up the convictions of the inferiority of woman. The sin of adultery so far as the man
was concerned was not against the woman, it was against her husband to whom she belonged. The unfaithful husband, therefore, was safe so long as he confined his attentions to women who did not belong to some other man. But Jesus knocked the double standard to pieces and said, "What was wrong for one was wrong for the other."

Now we have here only one possible condition for divorce with the right to be remarried. If you will read I Corinthians, seventh chapter you will see that Paul certainly understood Jesus to give men and women the privilege of separating and divorcing each other for other causes than unfaithfulness provided they did not remarry. But it was Paul's understanding that only one cause can justify divorce with a right to a second marriage. Such has been the interpretation of our Church through the years. Certain other protestant churches, with ours joining them, at the last General Conference have decided upon unfaithfulness or its equivalent. This brings on more discussion.

Those who affirm that divorce with the right to be married except in the case of adultery seem to do so on the condition that Jesus made a rule against it. But is this a rule or is it a principle? I agree that Jesus never dealt in rules. A rule may be timely, but it is never timeless. It is principles alone that last. But when Jesus affirms that the wedded pair are essentially one he seems to be uttering a principle. To take Jesus seriously in this matter sometimes involves great suffering and embarrassment. But to take him seriously also lies back of almost all the moral uplift that has come to the world.

Certainly the need of our time is not an improvement on divorce laws. We have enough methods of wrecking marriage, we need an improvement on marriage. We are not likely to make a go of it unless we enter it with the realization that it is for life. We must foreclose our minds against failure. It is only by safeguarding marriage that we safeguard the home. It is only by safeguarding the home that we safeguard our children. It is only by safeguarding our children
that we can hope to build a better church and a better world.
of permanence about it. Generally speaking, our best citizens are not made up of the shattered fragments of broken homes. My experience in speaking to large groups in reformatories has taught me that these boys are there not because of any natural inferiority—they are the keenest and quickest to which I have ever spoken. They are there as a rule because they have been put there by their parents and bear in mind there is no substitute for parents.

Now since the home and family make the best contribution, must have some degree of permanence, they must be built on a solid foundation. What is the foundation of the home? It is a marriage tie. Russia is today trying to improve its home life. This it is seeking to do by making marriages more permanent. If the foundation of a building is a thing of sand, then no house built upon that foundation can stand. If the marriage tie is weak, then the family is sure to go to pieces.

How, then, are we to strengthen the marriage ties? Suppose we clarify our thinking by turning once more to the teaching of Jesus regarding marriage. Bear in mind that what Jesus had to say about marriage was not certain rules but fundamental principles. A rule may be timely but it is seldom timeless. Jesus' teaching about marriage is timeless in the sense that the multiplication table is timeless.

It has not been many centuries since a man by the name of Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood. Of course, the blood had been circulating since man was born. All Harvey did was to discover that fact. When Newton saw the apple fall and deduced the law of gravity, he did not pass that law. He discovered what had been in vogue since creation. Even so, what Jesus had to say about marriage was true in the nature of things. He tells us how marriage achieved its best results.

Years ago when I bought a new car, I discovered among the various accessories that came with it a booklet on how to care for the car.
It was a kind of automobile Bible. The maker of the car was telling me how to get the best results from the machine. I could have taken either one or two attitudes toward that booklet. I could have said "I've paid my good money for this car yet the maker is trying to tell me how I ought to run it. It is none of his business. I will run it just as I please. I will grease it and wash it whenever I get ready. If I don't want to, I will not grease it at all." But I realized that the maker of the car was not dictating to me; he was telling me simply how I could get the best use out of my car.

Even so is the teaching of Jesus about marriage. You do not have to treat the marriage relationship as he urges. Millions refuse to do so. But in so refusing they simply cheat themselves and others. This relationship makes its largest contribution to husband and wife, its largest contribution to their family, and its richest contribution to society as a whole when it is practiced according to the charge of our Lord.

Let us, then, glance briefly at what Jesus has to say about marriage. He makes four assertions. First, he declares that marriage is a divine institution. By this he does not mean that all marriages are made in heaven. I have known plenty that were made elsewhere. He means that marriage is a part of God's purpose for man. Man is one hemisphere of our humanity; woman is the other. Generally speaking, men and women come to their best in the marriage relationship. Then marriage is God's plan for propagating the race. Children born in homes have a better chance than children born of promiscuous parents. Marriage is a divine institution.

Second, marriage makes the wedded pair one. "They twain shall be one flesh," but they are to be one in their mutual self-giving. I am to give myself to my wife as completely as I expect her to give herself to me. They are to be one, so far as possible, in their material interests. Young
husbands and wives especially ought to have a business partnership. I have always felt that one-half of every dollar I earned belonged to my wife. Of course, to practice this, the wife must have good sense. She must know how to "costly her habit as his purse can buy". Finally, they are to be one in their devotion to God. It is tragic when husband and wife are together in every relation but separate at the family altar or at the altar of the church.

Third, marriage takes precedence over every other human relationship. With the husband the wife is to come first; with the wife the husband is to come first. "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife." No other book so emphasizes the duty of parents to child and of child to parents as does the Bible. But it is just as emphatic in asserting that the marriage relation is supreme. Nobody, not even a child, is to come between husband and wife.

Fourth, marriage is to be for life. It is not to last until you meet somebody else more charming. It is not to last until you come to suffer from mental cruelty. There is no real divorce for both parties save that indicated in terms of green grass on the grave of either the husband or the wife. This is the way marriage is meant to work. Those who work it that way find the best for themselves and give the best to others. About this, in my opinion, there can be no argument. It is loyalty to this teaching that will make the home permanent.

II

The fact on which I think we can all agree that if the family is to make its best possible contribution it must be vitally religious. Speaking for ourselves it must be vitally Christian.

1. This is the case in the first place because vital religion is a great aid to making home life permanent.
sociologists

2. A leading sociologist who have investigated thousands of marriages declared a few years ago that married couples who were vitally religious stood twenty-five times as good a chance to make a go of marriage as those who were not religious at all. This was based not upon guess work but upon investigation.

It is easy to see why this should be the case. Those who are vitally religious are possessed of a "love that seeketh not its own". Most of our married discord is born of an unwillingness to give and take or to compromise. Each is bent on having his or her own way. Folks who are vitally religious will practice the Golden Rule. They will not cheat on each other. They are gripped by fundamental loyalty to God. They will go the furthest possible to guarantee their loyalty to each other.

3. Not only is a vital religion essential because it safeguards home life, but because children need religion. Children need religion just as truly as they need milk and bread and vitamins. This intelligent parents are discovering more and more. In recent years parents who have been brought up in nominally Christian homes but who have broken with religion, have been forced to a new interest because they have discovered that even in their own very imperfect lives there is a stability, a purposefulness born of that early religious influences. These their own children lack. Many intelligent parents are being forced to a serious consideration of religion because they feel that they must have something of religious faith to give to their children.

Not only is this the belief of many intelligent parents, it is also the belief of many of our best psychologists. Dr. Henry Link, for instance, after much investigation declares that the need of a child for religion is indicated by the fact that children who attend Sunday School have a higher personality rating than children who do not. Not only so but he affirms that the children of parents who attend church, though the children
do not go themselves, have a higher personality rating than the children of parents who have no contact with the church. Modern science recognizes that a child needs religion.

This same conviction is being voiced more and more by the law enforcement agencies of our land. The F. B. I., headed by Mr. Hoover, affirms that much of our juvenile delinquency is born of delinquent homes, delinquent parents, parents without religion. The judge of a juvenile court in one of our leading cities affirmed some time ago that of more than youths 4,000 who had come before him and that he had had to sentence, not one of them was a regular attendant at Sunday School or church.

This need of religion on the part child should be recognized by the parents. Listen to Paul, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind". Take that last word. One contribution that vital religion makes to him who possesses it is a firm or healthy mind. Our society is becoming increasingly cluttered up with sick minded folks. A child needs a firm sound mind born of religious faith. Thousands of crimes today can be traced to a lack of a vital religion in the home. The American home, therefore, needs nothing so much as it needs a vital religion.

III

The third and final factor to which I call your attention is this: if your home is to be vitally religious, that high consummation must be brought about by the parents. I know there are other agencies that can help. The church can help, provided it, but its efforts are largely futile if it fails to have the backing of the home. The last quarter of a century has witnessed a great decline in the number of children attending our church school. Why this decline? It has taken place in spite of the fact that we have had the best trained teachers that the world has ever
known. It has taken place in spite of the fact that we have had the best physical equipment ever known. The fault, in my opinion, is in the parents. We have not backed the church in its effort to train. If, therefore, the home is to be Christian, there must be Christian parents.

This is, in part, the responsibility of the mother. That she has carried the heavy part of the load through the years nobody can deny. I have known mothers to go to church and take every child and child with her in spite of the fact that she was married to a pagan. There is no substitute for a Christian mother.

But this is not the responsibility of the mother alone. No man has a right to tumble the responsibility for the material support of his children on the shoulders of his wife. No, husband has a right to tumble the responsibility for moral and spiritual training on the shoulders of his wife. It is as cowardly as it is wicked. Your small boy may love his mother possibly more than he loves you, but generally speaking, it is his dad whom he admires. You are the one that he wants to be like.

"He's the best thing, Dad is,
When he ain't got the rheumatiz
Gives me pennies and good advice
'Bout staying clean and being nice,
And saying 'please', and don't deceive
And handkerchief instead of sleeve.
Seems just like that Daddy knew
He was once a small boy too.
Anyway, he always says
'Give the kid the best there is'.
And when Ma sends me off to bed
He always takes the light ahead
And holds my hand and talks, maybe,
About the things that used to be
When he and Unkie was little boys
And all about their dreams and toys.
What am I gonna be, Gee Whiz!
I'm gonna be like Daddy is.
I'd rather be like him, By Jingo!
Tha' president or anything!
He's like Ma says, anyways,
When he ain't got the rheumatiz.

There is no substitute for Christian parents. A child needs a
Christian mother. He also needs a Christian father.

Given these, the chances are the child himself will be a Christian. This is the case because religion can be taught. "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures". How did Timothy come to know the Holy Scriptures? Because his mother and his grandmother had taught him. You don't expect your child to reach up in the air and gather a knowledge of algebra or or geometry. Yet we often leave it to mere chance what he knows about religion. A child will no more learn the Ten Commandments or the Lord's Prayer or the Sermon on the Mount by chance than he will learn the multiplication table by chance.

Here is a wise word coming out of the long ago. "Theu shalt love the Lord, thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and the words unto this day thou shalt keep in thine heart, and thou shall teach them diligently unto thy children and thou shall talk about them as thou sit in thy house and as thou walk by the way, as thou layest down and as thou ariseth up and thou shall write them upon thy house and upon thine gates". The Jew has remained through the centuries because of his teaching.

Then if religion can be taught, it can also be caught. This is the surest guarantee for your children. I confess to a deep love for the word of God. I gaught that love from hearing the Word read in my own home. I love poetry. One time I did not. I did not that love from another. Our formal teaching is of vast importance but what we teach, what we are, or the atmosphere we create in the home, that is of greater importance still. Remember that the mind of a little child is the most sensitive something in all the world. Given a home of peace, the child will likely be at peace. Where there is conflict and confusion, it will tell upon the children.

Some time ago I had a letter from a mother who was a radio listener. She wrote after this fashion: "I have a large family, ranging in age from an infant to fifteen years of age. They quarrel and fight from the moment
they wake in the morning until they go to sleep at night. Two years ago I broke with religion and have been miserable and at war with myself ever since. At times it seems that their fighting will drive me mad. Then I go and lock myself in a room and sit and curse and curse and curse. When they have gotten to sleep at night, I am penitent, but the same thing happens next morning and I go to my swearing again." Why this bedlam and this hail of confusion? It is born of the atmosphere that mother has created. She is fighting with God and fighting with her better self.

But where the parents are vitally Christian, the child will learn of the knowledge of God as naturally as flowers bloom and the _______.

For a child can be a Christian. There is a natural affinity between Jesus Christ and a little child. A child can become a Christian easier as a child than at any other time. Those who come to Jesus Christ as children make the best Christians. Those who fail to come as children, generally speaking, never come at all.

Here, then, are certain facts upon which we can agree: a home to give its best and to receive its best must be permanent. A home to give or receive its best must be religious. If the home is religious, there must be religious parents. It is out of such homes that the best of American life has come.

While I was pastor in Houston, I was called one day to perform a marriage ceremony. When I reached the home where the marriage was to be performed, I did not find a young man or a blushing young bride. I rather found an old couple who were celebrating their golden wedding. They were surrounded by strong sons and daughters who were Christians. They were surrounded also by a flock of happy grandchildren. And these two who had taken their vows in youth's bright morning fifty years ago wanted to reaffirm them in the presence of their children, their grandchildren and their Lord.

Over a ministry of nearly forty years it has been my privilege to
officiate at some beautiful weddings but I have never officiated at one that gave
me a greater glow of heart than this one. There was more of heaven in the eyes
of that devoted couple than all the marriages according to Hollywood in
my opinion has ever given. Here then is marriage according to the principles
of God. You do not have to accept it but if you refuse it you will miss the
best, for thus you will cheat others of what they have a right to expect at
your hands.
At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

—Matthew 18:1-4

A recent writer declared that it was left to the twentieth century to discover the real value of the child. In so saying he showed himself some nineteen centuries behind the time. It was Jesus who discovered the true value of the child. He gave to the child an importance never given before. He gave to the child an importance that has never been fully given since. Jesus came of a race that had understood the worth of the child as no other people of the ancient world. It is highly significant that other ancient literatures have very little to say about children. Childhood to them was nothing more than a troublesome period through which one had to journey in order to become an adult. But the Bible, although an old book, literally frolics and laughs and sings with children. There is little doubt that more has been written about the child in the last fifty years than in the last thousand years up to that time. Yet it was Jesus who first put the child in the midst.

"So important is the child," said Jesus, "that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father." Here Jesus is referring to that old faith that every child had its own guardian angel. What type of angel was set to guard the child? It was not the work of inferior angels of subordinate rank. This task was so important that it was given only to those angels of highest order, those
whose privilege it was to live and move in the immediate presence of the Living God. They were angels that were privileged always to behold the face of the Father.

Not only did He emphasize the importance of the child by saying: "He that receiveth one such little child in my name, receiveth me." What a word that is! To lay hold on the hand of a child is in a profound sense to lay hold on the hand of Christ. That is true whatever the color of that little childish hand may be. That is the case whether that hand is the clean hand of a prince or the soiled hand of a poor.

Since the child is thus important, we are solemnly warned against failing to recognize that importance. "Take heed," said Jesus, "that you despise not one of these little ones." "Despise" is not "to detest" as we use the word today. It is to undervalue. "Take heed that you do not give this being of supreme importance a place of secondary importance. Take heed that you do not get your values confused."

So often we do! But always the most priceless something in every generation is the little child, the boy and girl in your nursery at this moment.

So deadly in earnest is Jesus about our setting proper evaluation upon the child that he would him in with a wall of grim millstones. A tender mother can become a blazing fury when her child is wronged and outraged. The greater her love, the greater her fury. Listen to these words from Jesus: "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." By "little ones" Jesus might mean also weak adults, but he certainly means children. How intense must have been the love and the appreciation that could give utterance to such forked lightning as this.

The testimony of Jesus as to the importance of the child is borne out by common
sense and by human history. What is to be the shape of the world of tomorrow? Are we going to have a better world than the one that is opening its own veins at this
That depends upon the boys and girls that are now in our schools and nurseries. This army of children is marching to take over every possession we have. What the world of tomorrow is therefore will depend upon them. The world moves forward on the feet of little children.

Since this is the case however dark the present there is always a hope for a brighter future. Frank Boreham calls attention to the fact that the year 1809 was one of the blackest in the history of the world especially for Europe. At that time Napoleon was at the height of his power. At that time he was breathing upon the nations of Europe like a blighting pestilence. But in that same year there were babies born who were to be far richer in help and healing than Napoleon had been in hell and destruction. It was in 1809 that Lincoln was born in a hut in Kentucky. It was in this same fateful year that William Gladstone was born. In this dark year Oliver Wendell Holmes first saw the light. In this same year Alfred Tennyson was born. In 1809 Charles Darwin came with some light to throw on God's way of progress. In this year also Felix Mendelssohn was born with a flock of song birds in his soul. In that same year also there were born Frederic Chopin, Samuel Morley, Edward Fitzgerald, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Always the child is the most important citizen.

What a black hour that was when Joseph and Mary journeyed from their home up to Bethlehem. "On that hard pagan world disgust and secret loathing fell, Deep weariness and sated lust made human life a hell." But on that black night a baby was born, who was to bring to the world a new sunrise. Centuries later when the night had settled down bleak and dark over England, God slipped a baby into the arms of Susannah Wesley. She trained him for the God who had given him. Then one day that baby, having grown to manhood, mounted his horse and rode literally through the century and as he rode wintertime changed to spring. He lived in an eventful century but all the events of that crowded century pale into insignificance in comparison with the evangelism of this wonderful baby.
II

But a baby is of vast importance not only because he may bring unspeakable treasure in his hands, but also because he may bring unspeakable disaster. Thomas Carlyle is holding a little baby in his arms. He looks into his wide eyes with a kind of holy awe. "Just to think," he said, "that Shakespeare was once like this!"

Yes and so were John Dillinger andPretty Boy Floyd and Adolf Hitler and Premier Tojo. Who then is to decide whether the child shall become a curse or a blessing, a liability or an asset? Who shall determine whether he is to open new doors of opportunity to his fellows or wade through slaughter to a throne and shut the gates of mercy on mankind?"

1. The answer to that question is that we who have the care of the child are to determine. By proper training we can make of the child largely what we will. By this I do not mean we can give genius to one who is ordinary. I mean that we can determine the child's moral bent. We can determine whether he is going to grow into a good man or a bad man. In proof of this we can call witnesses that are almost beyond dispute. First, this is the testimony of the evening book. It insists over and over again with hot urgency that what the child becomes depends upon its training. The Old and the New Testament fairly din into our ears this earnest word, "Train up a child in the way it shall go and when it is old, it will not depart from it."

Second, to the testimony of the Bible science adds its convincing voice. The psychologists disagree on many important matters but they come together on this—that what a child becomes depends upon its training. They agree, as I have reminded you before, that children are not so much born as made. Third, this is also the plain affirmation of law. It is the law of sowing and reaping. Whosoever a man sows in his field he reaps. Whosoever he sows in his own life he reaps. Whosoever he sows in the heart of a child he reaps. Would it not be amazing if we could determine the quality of harvest we reap in dealing with life's lesser values if it were left to chance when we come to deal with life's supreme values?
Finally, this is the testimony of experience. It has been demonstrated again and again that the whole outlook of a nation can be changed in a single generation by the right or wrong kind of teaching. I was reading afresh not long ago of the educational program being carried out during the early days of Hitler's rise to power. The youth was being taught to love Hitler, to love cruelty, to count all other nations as enemies. What is happening in the world today is but the natural outcome of such a process of education.

2. Since we have it in our power to make of our children what we will, we can make them Christian if we are willing to pay the price. This is not a matter of guess work. It is within our power because a child can be a Christian. A child can become a Christian as a child easier than ever after. This is the case because the characteristics that go to make a Christian are inherent in the heart of every child. A child naturally believes. A child is naturally humble. A child loves to lean upon a stronger power. A child is naturally loyal to what it loves. Faith and humility and loyalty—these are outstandingly Christian characteristics. Not only can a child become a Christian easier than anybody else, but they make the most effective Christians. Finally, if they are not won as children, the chances are that they will never be won.

III

Now since the Christianizing of our children is the most important matter in the world, and since that important matter is in our hands, what are we going to do about it? What are the agencies upon which we may count for the bringing about of this great result? Roughly speaking, there are three major influences that play upon every child. There are the home, the church, and the outer world. By the outer world I mean the street, the movies, the school—all the influences outside the home and the church that play upon the life of a child. Take this latter first.

We cannot count on much help from this direction. An optimistic prophet,
looking forward to that better day when childhood should have a finer chance than
it was having in his time, said, "The cities shall be full of boys and girls playing
in the streets thereof." "There is a time coming," he declared, "when our city
streets shall be safe for our boys and girls." That day has drawn nearer than it
was then, but it has not dawned so far. We cannot get much help from the movies.
Generally speaking, they do far more harm for childhood than good. We cannot count
on much help from the school aside from the church school. There are many religious
people teaching in our public schools and secular colleges, but, generally speaking,
our education is not friendly to faith. This is the case not so much because our
educators denounce God. They do something worse—they ignore Him. There are seven-
teen million boys and girls today who are not being touched by religious teaching
either in the home, the church, or in the outer world.

What then are the two agencies to which we must look?

1. There is the home. This is, of course, the first school and the best.
   Let me say emphatically to begin with if your child is to have any vital religion
   it is up to you as its parents. That nonsensical theory that parents can save
   their children by leaving all religious training to mere chance has been exploded
   times without number. Such, of course, does not even make respectable nonsense.
   You do not allow your child to select its own toys—razors, torpedoes, or tops!
   You do not allow him to choose his own food—spinach, lysol, rat poison, milk!
   You do not because you know that he has not sufficient data upon which to go to
   make an intelligent choice. Neither does he in the realm of religion. If your
   child is ever a Christian, it is up to you. You must teach him by what you say.
   You must teach him far more by what you are.

2. The second factor upon which we must depend for the Christianizing of our
   boys and girls is the church. The church is to help through the church school and
   through the preaching services. There is no group to whom we are indebted more than
to the faithful teachers who week after week, month after month, year after year,
give themselves to this holy task for love's sake. They surely deserve the hearty
backing of the parents of the children that they teach. They also deserve the hearty backing of the church of which they are a part.

Since you are engaged in this high and supremely worthful task, what are some of the qualities that you should require of yourself. You are doing what your Master did. He was supremely a teacher. You are sharing with your Master in the spread of His Gospel. How are you to do it?

First, a teacher ought to be interesting. To fail to do so is to fail to teach. I know it is important to teach the truth but even the truth falls flat if nobody is listening. One of the major sins of the ministry, whether in the pulpit or in the classroom, is to talk right on when nobody is paying the slightest attention to what he or she is saying.

Second, in order to be interesting one must be interested. You must be interested in those whom you teach. Your interest awakens interest. Love teaches love to love. You must be interested enough to give your pupils your best. That means that you will be present, that you will not allow any triviality to prevent your discharge of your duty. It means also that you will prepare your lesson. If I were called upon to sit in the class or in the pew, I think I could forgive my minister or teacher most any sin quicker than not caring enough to prepare.

Finally, it is up to us as teachers and ministers to exemplify in some measure what we teach. What we say is of importance; what we are is always far more important. To urge the supreme necessity of putting first things first while we ourselves act as if they were of no great importance at all is only to do more harm than good.

At the outbreak of the other war a woman was teaching a Sunday School class of young men in a little log church among the mountains of east Tennessee. One Sunday morning it was raining in torrents. She had a battle with herself as to whether she should walk four miles across the mountains to teach her class. She told herself that nobody would be there and that her walk would be in vain. But her conscience got the better of her and she made that long trek through the rain
to find only one person there. That was a young man who belonged to her class. She taught him as best she could. Just before he went across never to return, he wrote her a letter saying, "Had you failed to come that morning, I would doubtless not have done what I have done since then. Your earnestness led me to surrender to Christ." But to have earnest teachers is not enough. These teachers must have the backing of the parents. They must also have the backing of the members of the church. We must bear in mind that the church school and the church are one. The services of the church ought to help the church school. The services of the school ought to help the church. How can we train our boys and girls to carry on the work of the church when we have gone? It is only by fencing them in with adults. A church whose services are not attended by boys and girls is on the way out, however crowded its pews may be.

A few years ago a district superintendent held a united quarterly conference in Newark, New Jersey. There were present nine hundred officials of the varied churches of his district. He asked all those officials who were accustomed to attend preaching services when they were boys and girls to stand. Every one of them stood except eight. Of those serving the church in mature life, eight hundred ninety-two out of nine hundred had formed the habit in their young and tender years. The Sunday School is the business of the church. Whether you teach or do not teach you can only make its work effective by being good churchmen and good Christians. This is the way to a new world. To my mind it not only furnishes our best hope but our only hope. May God help us to believe it and act accordingly.
"Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein."

- Mark 10: 15

I.

Jesus discovered to the world the supreme importance of a child. We are just learning to put the emphasis where He put it. It is safe to say that more has been thought and written about the child in the last fifty years than in the last fifty thousand up to that time. No ancient book, except the Bible, makes mention of the child. In the long ago, childhood was just an obnoxious period through which it was necessary to pass in order to reach the desired state of adulthood.

But this view is changed. We know now that the most important being in the world is the child. We know that civilization moves forward, if at all, on the feet of boys and girls. A whole nation can be changed in the same generation by the training of the children. We are accustomed to look at the headlines of the newspaper for the important events, but the most important events are the births. The year 1809 was a tragic year. Napoleon was casting a black shadow over Europe. But it would have heartened the discouraged had they realized that in that year were born Abraham Lincoln, William E. Gladstone, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Alfred Tennyson, Felix Mendelssohn, and others who were destined to help reshape the world.

Now, Jesus makes certain definite statements regarding the value of a child.

1. "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father." By this Jesus meant to say that the angels of greatest authority that were nearest the throne were the angels that had in charge of the children. It was His figurative way of declaring that the supreme concern of God was not the manufacture of worlds and the flinging out of stars, but that His supreme concern was a little child.

2. So important is the child that Jesus idealized Himself with him. "Whosoever receiveth one such little child in My name, receiveth Me." This is, to go into
a home in the slums, to take the grimy hand of a child in yours is to take hold of the
hand of Christ, it is to grip the hand that was nail-pierced, it is to grip the hand that
was dipped into the chalice of eternity and made the oceans to drip and the rivers to
flow.

3. Since the child is so important, Jesus warns us against disregarding that
importance. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones." To despise is
to undervalue. Take heed that you do not undervalue the child. Take heed that you do
not get so concerned with things, so concerned with business, so concerned with looking
after the adults, that you forget the child.

For years, the church did just that. We gave all our attention to the grown-
ups. We convinced ourselves that the kingdom was to come by capturing adults from
without instead of by rearing children from within. We considered the conversion of
some outrageous sinner a greater triumph of grace than so to train a child that he should
be a Christian from the cradle to the grave. But the creature of supreme importance, the
individual that we dare not undervalue is the child. "Take heed that ye despise not one
of these little ones."

4. That we might take this warning the more earnestly to heart, Jesus utters
another. It is one of the most fearful that ever fell from His lips. "It were better
for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be
drowned in the bottom of the sea than offend one of these little ones." How intense
must have been the love that gave utterance to such as this. There is a splash and a
gurgle, and then death among the crawling things at the bottom of the sea. Better that,
said Jesus, than to mislead or cause a child to go wrong.

It is just this offending of little children, this allowing them through our
neglect of positive sin to grow up morally and spiritually distorted that constitutes one
of the major evils of our day. The neglected child does in reality become a millstone to
"As a Little Child"

the parents and to the society that neglected him. The most expensive business in America today is the crime business. It costs many billions of dollars. The crime business is made possible because of our neglect of children. A survey conducted in Birmingham showed that delinquency among boys and girls increased in direct proportion to their distances from the slums. Slum environment whether in poor homes or wealthy makes for the destruction of childhood.

II.

Now, how are we to conserve the wealth that is represented by our boys and girls? The answer of Jesus and the answer of common-sense is that we are to Christianize them. The greatest asset that any community can have is men and women of the right kind of character. One man of integrity, one man of unselfish devotion, one man of Christ-like character, is worth more than any dozen men of wealth who are God-less and selfish. The hope of our homes, the hope of our church, the hope of our nation and our world, is in the Christianizing of our boys and girls. And that is a possibility for the following reasons.

1. A child can be a Christian. It seems that it would not be necessary at this late date to make a statement of this kind, but it is. There are still those who think Christianity is a religion of adults rather than of boys and girls. Yet Jesus says, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." That is, the kingdom of heaven is made up of boys and girls, of little children and of those who succeed by the grace of God in becoming child-like. The child, therefore, is the model Christian. A child can be a Christian because the characteristics that go to make a Christian are inherit in the heart of a child - God put them there.

First, a child has faith. The faith of a child is to the mind of Jesus faith
"As a Little Child"

at its best. A child naturally believes. If you have always told your child the truth he will believe you whatever you say. He will believe you till by deceiving him you teach him to believe otherwise. Some times, we begin early to train our children that we will not do to trust. We threaten them with punishments that we had no notion of giving. We make them promises that we have little thought of making good. Some time ago a father and mother, not abnormal parents, were accustomed to slip out at night after their little son had gone to bed, leaving him with the nurse. The boy did not like it. One night he made them promise not to go. But he heard the door slam and he sprang out of bed and was just in time to see them going out the gate. "There go the two biggest liars in the world," he said to the nurse," and they expect me to tell the truth." But a child who has not been deceived will believe you. It is your privilege to take this faith in yourself and direct it toward your faith in heaven.

Second, a child is naturally humble. He naturally leans on a higher power. When the little child comes to the street crossing, he instinctively reaches for the hand of his mother or his father. It is our privilege to take this teachableness, this humility that God has planted in the heart of the child and direct it toward God. A child will naturally reach up for the hand of his heavenly Father as he will for an earthly with the right kind of training.

Third, then a child is naturally loyal to what he loves. When we grow older, we often become a bit ashamed of our own loved ones, if we find ourselves better placed educationally or socially than they. But a child will turn aside from a queen to hug the neck of a black mammy, if he loves her.

Years ago, when the superintendent of the Pennsylvania State Prison was going home for his Christmas dinner, he met a little girl creeping along the shadow of the forbidding gray wall. The little girl knew who he was and stopped him. "My Daddy is in there," she said, pointing to the prison, "and I have brought him a Christmas present."
I want you to let me in to give it to him." And the superintendent was a kindly man and went back with her. "What is your father's name?" he asked, and when she answered, he knew that her father was one of the worst prisoners in the institution. He was even then in solitary confinement.

But he sent an officer and had him brought up. He was a great brute of a man. He came blinking into the room. He looked indifferently at the girl and gave no sign of recognition, but the little girl stepped timidly forward and said, "Daddy, I brought you a Christmas present. I wouldn't give it to anybody but you. I clipped it from the forehead of Jimmie when he was in his coffin and I know you always loved him."

And then the rugged man softened and the little girl ran into his arms and she said, "Daddy, they say out yonder you are the meanest man in the world, but I don't believe it because you are my Daddy." It is our privilege to take this loyalty that is inherited in the heart of a child and tie it on to the heart of God.

2. Not only can a child be a Christian, but a child can become a Christian easier than anybody else, easier than at any other time. This is the definite statement of Jesus, "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no case enter therein." Child-likeness is absolutely necessary for entrance into the kingdom. I ask you in all candor, when is it easier to be child-like, when you are a child or when you are 30 or 40 or 50 years of age? A man may be "born again" when he is old, but it is easier to become a Christian as a child than at any other time. With the right sort of training, the little child blossoms into the knowledge of God as naturally as the blossoming of a flower.

3. Not only can a child be a Christian, not only can they become Christians easier as children than ever again, but they make the best Christians. That is just common-sense. That is what we should expect. The best golf player that ever walked on a golf course was Bobby Jones. How did he develop his skill? Not by beginning when
he was twenty-five - by that time he was ready to retire. He began as a child. Who make the best tennis players, the best baseball players; who make the best violinists, the best pianists? - Those who begin in childhood. Who are doing the work of the church today? Largely those who came into the church as boys and girls.

A few years ago, I was holding a meeting in St. James Church, Montreal. A friend took me out to Mount Royal to see some skiing. It was a thrilling and exciting past-time. After I had watched for some thirty minutes, my friend turned to me and asked me if I should like to ski. I told him that I had a family to support. It was too late for me to learn. Were I to ask all in this church to stand who joined before they were twenty, it would take almost all of you. Those who come as children make the best Christians.

4. Unless we become Christians in childhood, the chances are overwhelmingly great that we never shall. I have been an evangelistic pastor all my ministry. So far as I know, I have never known one single individual to be converted and unite with the church who had not been touched by religion in their young and tender years. Even those so touched who fail to take a definite stand in childhood, generally fail forever.

I recall an old gentleman who lived near my home in Tennessee. My Mother asked me to visit him almost the last time I was at the old home. We had a pleasant talk together. I asked him about becoming a Christian. He seemed much concerned. I explained to him the way of life so that a little child could have understood, but there was no light in his face. Then we prayed together, but his last words were these. "It seems simple enough, but the trouble with me is I have waited too long." If we do not become as children, the chances are we do not become Christians at all.

III.

How are we going to Christianize our boys and girls? There are just two
agencies that are engaged in this great enterprise.

1. The church. It is the work of the church through its Sunday School, through its teachers, and through its pastors to help you in enabling your boys and girls to grow up into Christ-like men and women. How old should a child be before uniting with the church? There is no definite age. Some children have more spiritual understanding at six than others at sixteen. I believe a child should be allowed to unite with the church whenever he or she desires to do so. However little they understand, the church is the best place for them to learn to understand. The first Christians were called "disciples" which means "learners." A school is not a place for folks who already know, but for those who do not. The church is not for those who have arrived, but for those who are on their way.

If, therefore, your child expresses a desire to unite with the church, do not answer, as some do, "You do not know what you are talking about." If such is the case, you might take time to explain. If your child comes home with a problem in his school work, you try to help. Why not help him to spell out the big word "God" in his own mind. Then, there is this terrible danger. If you refuse the child at the time of the child's choice, you have no assurance that the child will be willing at the time of your choice. I have seen some very sad tragedies happen through making just that mistake.

Sometimes, this is nothing more than a misunderstanding. Sometimes, it goes deeper and as a result is sheer indifference. A laddie came home from church a few years ago saying, "Mother, I am going to join the church tomorrow night and I want you to go with me." She was a member of the church, had no objection to her son's joining, but she said, "Not tomorrow night. Wait till the next night." The son found out that her objection to "tomorrow night" was that she wanted to go to a card party. He became convinced that she did not care. He never joined. And that mother lived to break her
heart over her thoughtless blunder. A church is to help you with your children.

2. The home. Of course, the supreme agency for the Christianizing of our boys and girls is the home. Why is it that the lower orders of life develop so quickly, while man has to pass through such a long period of helplessness? Our children are fenced in with us with the world shut out for this long period that we might have the opportunity of making of them what we will. If we bungle it, if we are careless and indifferent about it, then the loss is tragic and irrevocable.

If the home is to be of help, then the parents must co-operate with the church. The church has your children for only an hour a week. It can, therefore, do little without your help. Every home, so far as possible, ought to have a family altar. There ought to be the reading of the Word and prayer. But we can have both of these and yet fail miserably.

The supreme need of the home is an atmosphere that is vitally religious. Remember this that a child's mind is the most sensitive thing in the world. A certain nurse who was anxious and worried had the care of a bottle baby in the hospital. As soon as that baby was put in her care, it too began to fret and lose it's appetite. As soon as the worried and harassed nurse was removed, the child again became quiet and began to take it's food. A child is very susceptible to an atmosphere.

A certain psychologist tells this story. There was a mother whose husband was an atheist, but she was a devout Christian. She used to sing her child to sleep with the great old hymns of the church. That child had an undefinable feeling that he, with his mother, had a Friend, that they were both being encompassed by everlasting arms. When the little fellow was three years of age, the mother surrendered her faith and sang to him no more. But five years later, when he was only eight, the mother became desperately ill. He asked that unseen Friend that he had come to know through suggestion for the life of his mother and it is his conviction to this day that God gave him his
mother in answer to prayer. If the atmosphere of the home is vitally Christian in its influence, any child will be all but irrepressible. It is in such a home that many of us grew up. That is the reason we are here today. I could take you back to the old home place that has now fallen into ruins, but the memory of the prayers and consecration of my father and mother are vital and alive still. They will last forever! If the church and home co-operate, they can save the children and thereby build a new world.
RELIGION IN THE HOME

"For this child I prayed. Therefore have I lent him to the Lord. As long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord."

I Samuel 1:27

My subject is "Religion in the Home." Our first reaction in hearing such a subject is often one of depression. "Religion in the home," we answer, "there isn't any." In too many instances that is sober truth. There are millions of boys and girls growing up in the homes of Christian America without any definite religious training whatever. This is true not only of those who are the children of parents who are non-church members, it is true of multitudes whose parents belong to some church. This lack of religion in the home constitutes one of the great threats to our American home today. This is the case because the home and religion belong together. The home cannot come to its best without religion. Religion cannot outlive the home. These two cannot be divorced. They stand or fall together. When religion goes the home is likely to fall in ruin. When the home falls religion and all other fine values are likely to fall with it. These two must not be divided. "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

I.

We can readily agree that in speaking of the home we are speaking of an institution of supreme importance.
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I.

We can readily agree that in speaking of the home we are speaking of an institution of supreme importance.
1. It is of supreme importance to us who have grown to womanhood and manhood. What happens in our homes will do more toward determining our well-being both for time and eternity than what happens anywhere else. However unfortunate we may be in the big outer world, if we succeed here we can still live victoriously. If our home life is what it ought to be, here we can find strength for our weakness and healing for our wounds. But if our home life is a failure, however well we may succeed in the big outer world, this failure spells tragedy. It means that to us one of the deepest and sweetest secrets of human blessedness has half whispered itself only forever to pass us by.

2. But if the home is important to adults it is of even more importance to our boys and girls. It is out of our homes that the streams flow that make up the great seas of our national life. If we are to have better churches tomorrow, better schools, better cities, a better nation, and a better world, all these are to come out of the home. No nation will ever rise above its home life. No nation will ever sink below it. Our homes condition all else. Because it determines what the child is to be it is the most important institution in all the world.

This is the case because the one big question is the child question. "What manner of child shall this be?" a wise father and mother asked centuries ago as they gazed in deep mystery into the eyes of a baby's face. That is ever the supreme question. A wise essayist tells that in rambling through this world he came upon the Little Palace Beautiful. In this palace were four rooms. And in each one of these four rooms lay sleeping a little child. In the room toward the north lay sleeping the little child that never was. Here was the child that was hoped for, dreamed of, but never came. In the room toward the west lay sleeping that child that was. The little fellow that came and stayed just long enough to gather our hearts into his baby hands and then slipped away. In the room toward the south lay sleeping the child that is. The boy and the girl that today
romp and play in our nurseries. In the sunny room toward the east lay sleeping the child that is to be. And this wise writer tells us that we are to take the love that we would have given to the child that never was, the child that was, and focus it all on the child that is because he holds in his hands the destinies of the child that is to be. Now the institution that determines the child that is to be is the home.

II.

What kind of home gives the child the best chance? If you had to start all over again and had the choice of your own home, in what kind of home would you decide to be born and to grow to manhood or womanhood? I believe most intelligent people would agree that the home that gives the child the best possible chance is one that is vitally religious. If you are bent on giving your child the best possible chance I can say to you with confidence that there is nothing you could do that would help more than the building of a home that is safeguarded and sweetened by the right kind of religion.

In making this assertion I am not merely guessing. This claim is sanctioned by the Scriptures as a whole. It is sanctioned by our wisest psychologists. It bears the sanction of experience.

1. This is the case because religion stabilizes the home. Many of our homes today are going upon the rocks. This spells tragedy for the husband and wife. It often spells a far deeper tragedy for the child. It is written into the constitution of things that every child needs a father and a mother. I have had some experience in preaching in reformatories. When I first went to speak in such an institution I went with fear and trembling. "What," I asked myself, "can I say to these street arabs that would interest them?" I had an idea that they were in these institutions because they were morons. But I found them instead as keen and quick as any audience that I have ever faced. Why were they there? In
an overwhelming majority of these they were the shattered fragments of broken homes.

It is only commonsense that religion should stabilize the home. People who are Christian are likely to enter into this holy relationship with a Christian view of marriage. Such foreclose their minds against failure. They realize that there is no right divorce for both parties save that written in terms of green grass of one of the graves of one of the contracting parties. Such take the words of Jesus on the subject of marriage seriously.

But far more important than this, vitally religious folks bring into this relationship that spirit of forbearance, goodwill, unselfishness that are essential to success in any human relationship, and that is supremely essential in this the most intimate of all relationships. Those married couples that meet their difficulties in the spirit of Christ, who practice the Golden Rule in their relationships one with another will find their marriage growing richer and deeper and sweeter with the passing of the years.

2. But religion is not only essential to the parents but to the children. Multitudes of fathers and mothers, I think, are coming more or less keenly to realize this fact. Many of these have broken with organized religion. Brought up themselves in religious homes, compelled to attend church in their youth they have given over this practice. But they have discovered that there is a lack in the lives of their children that is often times distressing and alarming. Some of these are being driven to religion, not so much because of their own sense of need as because of the needs of their children.

Two considerations indicate the supreme importance of religion in the home. First, the home has the best possible opportunity to Christianize the child because it gets there first. Other influences will come into the child's life at a later date. The city streets, the movies, the school, the church. But for
those years in which the lasting impressions are made, the home is the one influence. It is in the first seven years of its life, Psychologists tell us, that the child gets its sense of values. It is in these impressionable years that it wins its conception of God. It is of vital importance, therefore, that the home be religious because it is such a home that makes religious children. Second, then it is essential that the home be religious because it is only religion that creates the right kind of atmosphere. Religion by imparting peace, and courage, and goodwill creates the kind of atmosphere into which the child blooms into the knowledge of God as naturally as the rosebud blooms into a flower. A home torn by strife and confusion makes such a development next to impossible. Sometime ago a very young baby in one of our hospitals, bottle fed, was getting along beautifully. But a new nurse was brought in. The child became fretful and began to lose. Upon investigation it was found that the new nurse was passing through a severe nervous strain. But as soon as she was removed and another nurse with a quiet disposition and steady nerves was put on the case the baby showed marked improvement. There is nothing else so sensitive as the mind of the child.

Sometime ago I had a distressing letter from a mother. "I have a large family," she wrote. "Two years ago I broke with religion. Since then I have been unspeakably wretched. Wretchedness has been greatly increased by the fact that my children fight and shriek and yell from the time they awake in the morning till they go to bed at night. I stand it as long as I can, then I shut myself up in a room and curse and curse and curse." What was the matter? In that atmosphere of tension the children were just sharing the civil war that was going on in their mother's heart.

Here is another side. A man who is today a scientist and scholar said, "My mother was a Christian but my father was an atheist. When I was a wee chap mother
used to put me to sleep by singing the great hymns of the Church. I did not understand those hymns, but I knew she was singing to me about a Friend, and I felt a sense of security. When I was only three her faith broke under the strain, and she joined my father in his atheism. Five years later she was desperately ill. I went alone and ask that Friend for help. Though all I knew about him was what I learned before I was three years of age. Not only did he ask that Friend for help, but he believes to this day that that Friend heard and answered his prayer. He was made religious by the atmosphere created by his mother.

III.

If it is essential then for the highest good of our children that our homes be religious institutions, how shall we make them so?

How shall we so Christianize our homes as through them to make Christians of our children?

1. Let us face the fact that this is a possibility. A child can be a Christian. It ought not to be necessary to say this, but it is. There are still those that feel that a boy and girl must have a first class education in theology before they become vitally religious. Of course, this is not the case. It is neither true for the child nor for the adult. A child does not have to be very old before he or she learns to love father and mother. Nor do they have to be very old before they learn to look past mother's face and father's face into the face of Him who is father and mother in one.

I do not mean by this that a child can put its experience of God into words. We adults are not very successful at it. But there are always those who who have a feeling that because a child can not tell its experience in the language of the adult that it has no experience. When Helen Keller was a little child and was learning to read she found it very difficult to define the word love. When her
fingers would touch the word, book, she could understand that. All she had to do to let her teacher know that she understood was to take a book in her hand and lift it. But when she came to the word love it was not so easy. She blundered over it so often that by and by she came to feel that she was grieving her teacher by her stupidity. Therefore, when she would come to the word and read it with her fingers, she would run up to her teacher put her arms around her neck, and sometimes tears would flow from her blind eyes because she was so dull. She couldn't tell what love is, but she could feel it and act it. So can a child feel and act this love for God.

Not only can a child be a Christian, but it can be a Christian easier as a child than at any other time. Not only can a child be a Christian, but those becoming Christians as children make the best Christians. Not only do they make the best Christians, but unless they become Christians as children, the chances are that they will never become such. We need, therefore, to realize that we can make Christians out of our children. To live in a world where the law of sowing and reaping operates in every other field except in that which is most important would be tragic indeed.

2. The second fact we need to bear in mind is that if our homes are to be religious, we who are parents are to make them so. Here is one responsibility that we can not shift to other shoulders. Here is something that no one can do for you but yourself. I know how prone we are to pass the buck. You remember that saying, "When my father and mother forsake me then the Boy Scouts will take me up." Blessings on the Boy Scouts. But they do not take all our children up. The more is the pity they can not. The movies do more of the taking up than almost any other organization. Our children receive far more training from Hollywood than they do from heaven. But though others can do many things for us, nobody can create a religious atmosphere in the home but the parents.
And how can the parents do this? They can only do so by being vitally religious themselves. I know that there is a sense in which religion can be taught. Formal teaching in our homes could be greatly improved upon. There was never a day when there was so many helps. The Upper Room, for instance, is good for a quiet moment about the breakfast table, or the dinner table with your children. A story telling hour on Sunday afternoon, if wisely prepared for, would be very helpful. It would be a step forward for us to realize that religion can be taught. I am saying this in the realization that that is not the best way. There are those parents who were taught in a formal way when they were boys and girls who have broken with religion. They have, therefore, decided not to teach their own children religion. They are going to allow them to grow up unbiased. But this is not only dangerous, it is stupid. It is a course that we do not take with regard to anything else. We do not allow our small children to decide for themselves what they are to drink. We do not set before them milk and coffee, carabolic acid and lysol, and say take your choice. We do not allow them to choose their own foods. We know they have not sufficient data on which to go. To refuse, therefore, to bias them in favor of right religion is merely to act stupidly. There is one thing with which you may count with certainty, if you do not teach them a right religion somebody else will teach them a wrong religion. That is as sure as twice two make four.

But not only can religion be taught, but it can be caught. That is the best way of making the best kind of Christians out of our boys and girls. What we say is important, but what we are and what we do is far more important. All your formal teaching will go for nothing, and sometimes for worse than nothing if it is not backed by the right kind of life. All your lecturing on kindness will go for nothing if you are not kind. All your warnings against untruth will be fruitless if you yourself are not truthful. All your preaching about the values of religion will come to nought if you yourself are not vitally religious.
We might do well to glance at this story of mother Hannah. She is holding a baby in her arms. A mother with a baby! There is nothing this side of heaven more beautiful than that. And as she looks the love light into his baby eyes this is what she says,-"For this child I prayed. Therefore have I lent him to the Lord. As long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord." What does this tell us about Hannah? First, she was an eager mother. She looked upon motherhood as a privilege. I know she lived a long time ago. In that distant day there was only one honorable vocation open to women, and that was the vocation of wifehood and motherhood. Today roadways lead directly from her door to almost all vocations in which men are entering. Woman is vastly more free today than was her sister of the long ago. I hail this freedom as a boom. I am glad she has been given a wider field of choice. I am not claiming that every woman ought to be a wife and mother. When this vocation is shut out to women they can find other work that is worthwhile.

But having said this, I am old fashioned enough to believe that Hannah's vocation is still the highest in all the world. If you want a place of supreme influence, there is nothing equal to this. All other influences come on the scene too late. It is still the "hand that rocks the cradle that rules the world."

Not only did Hannah look upon motherhood as a privilege, but she was a wise mother. She was wise enough to realize that she could not accomplish her task without God. She was a woman of prayer. She was wise enough to allow nothing to come between her and the duties of her home. She names her boy, Samuel, and Samuel came first in her life. When the conference was to be held at Shilo it had been her custom to go. But this time she could not go without neglecting Samuel. She put her duties as a mother first. So have other choice mothers who have done most to enrich the world.

Finally, Hannah succeeded. "All Israel," this story says, "knew that a prophet
had risen." Yes, and Hannah knew that she had rocked Israel's prophet to sleep in her arms. She had given to the world the greatest possible gift, a strong, consecrated, spirit-filled man. This is still the greatest contribution that can be made by any father and mother. There is absolutely nothing that you can do that will bring such joy to you personally. There is absolutely nothing else you can do that will so enrich your world as to give to that world stalwart, God conquered sons and daughters. We can only do that by making our homes genuinely and vitally Christian.
"For this child I prayed. Therefore have I lent him to the Lord. As long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord."

I Samuel 1:27

"I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice. And I am persuaded that in thee also."

I Timothy 1:5

Here are two scenes that tell the same story. In the first there is mother Hannah holding her baby in her arms. As she looks the love light into his eyes this is what she says,-"For this child I prayed. Therefore I lent him to the Lord. As long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord." We are not surprised, therefore, when we discover that this little baby became one of Israel's greatest prophets. He bloomed into a knowledge of God, under the influence of his mother, as naturally as a flower blooms at the kiss of the springtime.

In this second picture Paul is speaking to a young man who is now a Christian minister. He is rejoicing in his beautiful and victorious faith. But he is aware that this young minister, Timothy, is not alone responsible for that faith. It was a rich inheritance. It was a lovely heirloom. It had come down from his grandmother and from his mother. He was possessed of a bracing faith, but that faith had dwelt first in the heart of his grandmother Lois, and of his mother Eunice. What Timothy became was a natural outcome of his upbringing.
In the light of these two texts we are thinking today of religion in the home. When we begin to talk about the home we come very close together. Certainly there is no subject that we can discuss that is of greater importance.

1. It is impossible to overestimate the influence of our early homes upon us who are older grown. It is here that we received the impressions that have been most lasting. It is from here that have come through the years our sweetest memories.

"How dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood, When fond recollections present them to view, The orchard, the meadow, the deep tangled wildwood, And every loved spot that my infancy knew."

As a boy I used to drive along the road and see the birds and wonder why they didn’t make for my home. The picture of it is still most winsome. I can see the old white house under the hill, with the sturdy apple trees around it, and the beech and chestnut trees in the back of it. I can hear the crowing of the cock in the barnyard, the neighing of the horse, the lowing of the cattle. I can hear the merry tinkling bells. I can see the farm sloping away to where the Buffalo River pounded it with its song of silver. Once more I see the old loved faces. Once more I am gathered with them about the family altar where a priest-like father held our needs before God. Such memories as these are some of the most priceless and bracing possessions of our lives.

2. Then home is of vast importance to us who are fathers and mothers, and who have since formed homes of our own. In fact, it is so important that if we have succeeded in building worthy homes, if home is a place where love lights the altar and ministers before it, then though we fail elsewhere life may still be radiant. If we bark our shins and break our hearts in the big outer world, if
we can find in our homes, through the ministry of those we love, and through
the tender presence of God, an atmosphere of help and healing, then nothing can
defeat us. Succeeding as home builders life cannot fail.

But if we fail with our homes we are likely to fail everywhere else. How­
ever great the fortune we might amass, however successful we might become, the
applause might ring in our ears and we might drape our couch in a nation's praise.
Yet, if those connected with us make our home a hell, then life for us is a tragedy.
Then to us one of the deepest and sweetest secrets of human blessedness has half
whispered itself to forever pass us by. It is hard to over estimate the importance
of a home even to us who are adults.

3. But for the child the home is of supreme importance. This is the case
because the home conditions the child. The home determines what the child shall
be. This is not mere theory, this is not speculation, this is fact. The Bible,
experience, science, all agree that children are not so much born as made. The
chief factor in their making is the home.

This is true for one reason because the home has the best opportunity. It
has the first chance. The home has the child in those tender years when impressions
are most easily made and most lasting. There is no other something in the world
quite so sensitive as the mind of a child. A great many people, eager for their
children to be religious put off any efforts to make them so, till, as they put
it, they are old enough to understand. But a child is capable of real impressions
from its very birth. Modern psychology tells us that they receive their sense of
values, they reach their conception of God usually by the time they are seven years
of age.

The home then more than any other institution determines what sort of man or
woman your child is going to become, Because it shapes the character of the child
it shapes all else. The homes of America are the foundations out of which flow
the streams that make up the oceans of our national life. If the streams are good and pure then the oceans will be good and pure. If the streams are brackish and bitter then the oceans will be brackish and bitter. Every great nation has been great because of its homes. No nation ever rises above its home life. And no nation ever sinks below it.

We can readily realize then the vast importance of the home. It is important because above all other influences it gives answer to that superlative question, "What manner of child shall this be?" Jesus put the child at the center. He did this because he knew that to decide the destiny of the child is to decide the destiny of the world. It is possible to change the thinking and the character of a nation in a single generation by the training of children. This is our hope. Every generation God sweeps the world clean and gives it a chance to go forward on the feet of little children.

Frank Borham has a charming essay on The Palace Beautiful. "At this little palace," he said, "there were four rooms. In each room a lovely child lay asleep. In the room toward the north lay sleeping the little child that never was. Here was the child that was hoped for, dreamed of, but never came. In the room toward the west lay sleeping that child that was. The little fellow that came and stayed just long enough to gather our hearts into his baby hands and then slipped away. In the room toward the south lay sleeping the child that is. The boy and the girl that today romp and play in our nurseries. In the sunny room toward the east lay sleeping the child that is to be." And this wise writer urges that we take all the love and care that we would have given the child that never was, and all the love and care that we would have given the child that was and focus it all on the child that is, because he holds in his hands the destinies of the child that is to be. And what the child is depends on the home. Therefore, the home is an institution of supreme importance.

II.
How shall we bring our homes to their best?

If our homes are to accomplish what they might accomplish and what they ought to accomplish they must be permeated by the right kind of religion. If there is any task in which we should welcome the cooperation and leadership of Almighty God it is in the building of the home. We need the right kind of religion at least for the following reasons:

1. In order to stabilize the home. During recent years the world and the flesh and the devil have conducted a veritable campaign against the home. More than one sixth of our marriages go upon the rocks. Among the causes for the breaking down of marriage, that is always followed by the wrecking of the home is a lack of religion. This is not guess work. Psychologists who have investigated the matter have given their emphatic declaration of the fact that young folks who are accustomed to attend church stand a better chance to make a success of marriage than those who do not.

This is altogether reasonable. Marriage has its foundations in religion. Many enter upon the marriage relationship without any conception of what it means. They feel that it is a partnership in which they alone are concerned, and that they alone can break it whenever they see fit. But marriage is a divine institution. It is to be for life. Those accepting this Christian view find the largest happiness for themselves and do the most for their own children and for society as a whole.

When a home falls apart who suffers most? Every one concerned suffers. But the greatest victims in almost every incident are the children. The first time I ever went to speak in a reformatory I wondered what I could say to interest a group like that. I expected them to be ruffians and morons, halfwits and what-not. But on the contrary I found them to be beyond the ordinary. In fact, I have never spoken to a keener audience anywhere. Why then were they there? They were the shattered fragments of broken homes. Many a home goes on the rocks that could be
saved by the right kind of religion.

2. Not only is religion needed to keep a home from foundering, but it is needed to make it a fit place to live. There are those who refuse to separate who are the worse for it instead of the better. Comparatively speaking this is not always the case. But I have seen the time where I have advised a separation. If you do not have patience and forbearance and humility enough to keep from living in the atmosphere of a perpetual war-whoop then you had better live a part. There is nothing more helpful in sweetening our human relationships than the right kind of religion.

3. Then the home ought to be religious because our children need religion. I daresay there are more people ready to say "Amen" to this today than in any other time in recent years. There are multitudes of fathers and mothers today who have had some sort of religious upbringing, but who are giving their own children no religious training at all. While they themselves have broken with organized religion many of these are beginning to realize that their loyalty to the fundamental decencies of life has been inherited from a pious ancestry. They realize that they have not handed on this same loyalty to their children. And they are becoming frightened by the moral and spiritual collapses they are compelled to witness in some that they love. There are tens of thousands of parents today who while feeling no compelling need for religion on their own account do feel that need because they want something to give to their children that will safeguard them.

These once religiously indifferent parents have been made to think by the collapses that they have witnessed in their own children and in those of others. Then the stern goddess of science has stalked across their path and has told them some of the sober facts in the case. Modern psychology tells us that by actual experience, children that attend Sunday-school, even those that receive no religious training elsewhere, have a higher personality rating than those that do not. Not
only so, but they declare that the children of those that attend church, even though the children do not go themselves, have a higher personality rating.

"God has not given us a spirit of weakness, but of power and love and san延迟." If you do not think that your child needs that sort of character with which to face the world then you are grossly blind. We need religious homes then in order to stabilize our homes, in order to make them lovely places in which to live, in order to give our children what they need most, a right religious faith.

III.

I am assuming that all of you have gone with me thus far. Now we come to a most pointed question. Confessing that the home should be religious, acknowledging that the home ought to be religious, who is to make it so? There is the rub. At once you can anticipate the answer to that question. There is but one possible answer. Who is to make your home religious?

1. The one big answer is this—the parents. If your home is to be religious it is in part the business of the father. Certainly no intelligent father will try to deny that. I know the flippant and silly way with which we say, "My wife is the praying member and I am the paying member." But no man has a right to put all the responsibility for the religion of his home on the shoulders of his wife. It is cowardly and not fair. If you have a boy in your home he may love his mother better than he loves you, but you are the one he admires. You are the highest that he knows. If he should find you upon your knees talking to One higher than yourself it would do something to that boyish heart of his that would likely tell on him forever. That is what my father did for me. That is what some of your fathers did for you.

But while the father has his part the mother also has hers. The responsi-
bility of the mother is perchance the greater because the child spends far more time in her companionship of necessity than in that of the father. There is no other influence quite so strong and bracing and abiding as that of the influence of a mother with the grace of God in her heart, upon her child. But here is a task for the father and mother that they can not delegate to others. Face the fact, say it to your heart, if we are to have a Christian home it is up to us.

2. How are you to do it?

Certainly you do not expect to succeed by neglect. A few years ago many young parents who had been brought up in nominally Christian homes turned in a large measure from their faith that was never really vital. Feeling that their own parents, being only nominal Christian, decided not to give their own children any religious training whatever. In a broadminded fashion they decided to let them think things out for themselves. But, of course, this worked disaster. It hadn't the backing of either experience or good sense. To refuse to give your child a right religion does not mean that he will have none at all. Some attitude toward religion he is going to have. If he does not have a right one he will have a wrong one.

Then, we are too intelligent to take this attitude about any other matter that concerns our children. If we give them a penny we explain something of the uses of money and how it ought to be spent. We do not allow them to choose their own playthings. We do not put before them toy dogs, razors, gattling guns, and say, "I am broadminded, I will let them select for themselves. We do not allow them to choose their own foods. We do not allow them to choose their own drinks. We give them intelligent direction because we know they do not have sufficient data on which to go. To give them intelligent direction in every matter except the supreme direction in religion is to be guilty of dire stupidity.
3. Since it is up to us to give our children the right kind of religion, how shall we go about it? With two solid convictions.

(1) Religion can be taught. Let us bear that in mind. We have more helps for the teaching of religion today than in any other day in all human history. Any parents who are deeply concerned for the welfare of their children can secure helps that will prove of vast value.

(2) But while religion can be taught, it is usually caught. While what you say as a father or mother is important, what you are is of vastly more importance. I confess a genuine love for beautiful English. Part of this love I learned by hearing my father read the Scriptures about the family altar. In later years I fell under the influence of one of the finest teachers of English in America. He did not merely lecture me on poetry and prose he read them to me. He made me see where I had been blind. I caught my love of poetry from him. So it is supremely in matters of religion. I saw a loveliness and a beauty in the face of my mother that made me know she had discovered hidden springs. Believe me then when I tell you that while religion may be taught to the child, at its best it is caught by the child.

IV.

What then is our encouragement? To take the business of Christianizing our homes seriously. I give you four solid and substantial reasons. If they are not solid good sense, treat them as you usually treat sermons, forget them.

1. A child can be a Christian. This is the case because the characteristics that go to make a Christian are inherent in the life of the child. God put them there. Faith, humility, the leaning upon a higher power. These are natural in the heart of an unspoiled child.

2. Not only can a child be a Christian, but a child can be a Christian easier as a child than at any other time. "Except ye be converted and become as a little
child." When is it easier to be like a child? It is easier to be childlike when you are a child. A child, therefore, can become a Christian easier as a child than ever again.

3. The one who becomes a Christian as a child, others things being equal, makes the best Christian. That should not surprise us. Those who begin to play base ball as children make the best players. Those who begin to paint as children makes the best artists. Those who begin to study music as children make the best musicians. Those who are carrying on the work of the Church today are the ones who became Christians as children.

4. Finally, unless we win our children to Christ when they are children the chances are that we will never win them. In a solid piece of concrete the other day I saw the print of a baby foot. There was a time when that concrete was so plastic that a foot of a little child could press it down. But it is not so any more. It has grown as hard as stone. So life tends to harden us. Let this startling fact, therefore, grip your hearts, if you do not turn your child toward Christ in childhood the chances are that he will miss that high privilege for evermore. Here then is the way to build the best manhood, the best church, the best world. Surely there is nothing quite so important for us as to have religion in the home.
I quote you this verse to show you that the question of love and of love making is not too insignificant to find a place in God's book. It also shows love's eternal power uplift and bless. It was love that made the long years short. It was love that took the heat out of the summer's sun and the kneelessness out of the winter's wind. It was love that made the heavy burden light and the hard toil easy. It was love that took the steepness from the hills and the roughness from the mountain path. It was love that took the ache out of the tired shoulders and the wounds from the weary and bruised feet. And ten million Jacobs since that far-off day have had the same story to tell. For it is love that transfigures life and transforms its drudgery into poetry. [Willing to Love]

And let me say, first of all, my young friends, that this question is no matter for mere jokes. I am sorry that it is so often made so. I am sure that there is no single question, aside from your relation to God that will go so far toward settling the question of your eternal destiny for weal or for woe as will this question. And because so many approach it in a careless and flippant matter there has broken out among us a moral cancer that is absolutely appalling. We are divorcing more people in this county to-day than any other civilized nation on the face of the earth. And this is digging the very foundation out from under our nation. No church and no nation will ever rise higher than its home life. And no church or nation will outlive its home life. A breakdown in the marriage relation means a breakdown in every fiber of our national life. So you see that we are considering a question of the profoundest importance to-night. The fact is that the flowers carried by the bride as she approaches the altar of marriage are no more matter for jest than those she will wear upon her bosom when
when the heart is still.

Now my young friends, there is but one legitimate reason for making love and that reason is marriage, or at least a purpose to marry. I know that many will think me an old fogey for saying this. I know you will think me a little like an old grandmother in Israel that knows nothing of the standards of society in the world of to-day. You may think me harmless, but just a little to be pitied. But what I say to you I say as one who has himself been once just as you are now and who is not so far away now. And from every point of view there is but one legitimate excuse for a Christian gentleman making love to a girl and that is for the end of marriage.

In the first place there is no reason why a man should be dishonest in this relation alone. I never have been able to see why young men who expected of themselves honesty and truthfulness in business relations should turn liars in the social relation. If honesty is required in the exchange of merchandise why not in this infinitely higher relation? And yet we seldom expect honesty of ourselves in this relation. And the fact that we do not is one of the most fruitful sources of unhappiness in society to-day.

Love is entirely too sacred and earnest a matter to be trifled with. Now I am perfectly aware that every little love affair does not have a fatal ending. I am perfectly aware that our heart are not broken every time that we fancy that they are. I am perfectly aware that there are all too few hearts that are capable of breaking, because incapable of really loving. The reason is they have trifled so long that there finer possibilities are dead. Look at the stage folk for example. Their life is one long series of marriage and divorce. They have murdered the possibilities of a great un-
selfish devotion in their lives.

But the heart that has been loyal to itself. The heart that has not frittered and discipated and blighted and blasted its holy energies is capable of something better. It demands something better. It feels that something better is its due. It feels that the right to love and the right to be loved is one of the great divine rights. (My ships).

And while we might find love making very amusing at times, to do so at the price of another's pain is to act far beneath the standard of a gentleman, not to speak of a Christian. I know this is done and is done often. But the pain that I have witnessed as a result of it has led me to know that is wrong and altogether wrong. I recall a childhood's friend of mine whose heart was broken in this way. (Sisy Graves). The boy who wronged her meant no harm. He left her as sweet and pure as he found her. But he blighted her life and, as I believe, his own as well. (Broken Heart).

And then there is that nameless fiend that wins to destroy. He woes for his own ends and these so low that the devil himself must needs crimson under his black mask at thought of it. He will induce his victim to put the key to her treasure house in his hand for love's sake. This done he will rob her and dispoil her of her treasure. I tell you that a man who would be guilty of a thing like that is rotten. His very soul stinks. If you should hang his old reeking soul on the back gates of hell the very vultures of damnation would fly off and leave it. Hear me, young man! If you ever expect to merit the name of gentleman you will see to it that no girl was ever made the worse in any respect for having been in your company.

The next proposition I wish to make is that every young man should be a lover. I have no sympathy whatever with the growing tendency on the part of young men to shun the responsibilities of the marriage re-
There are reasons that are legitimate for refusing to marry, but they are few. There are old bachelors that are good and useful men. But they are few. A man is not a normal man outside the family relation. It is not good for man to dwell alone. The God who made him and knows him as he is said so. When a man refuses to marry he lays himself open to degeneracy in many directions. His interests become narrow and contracted and he very often becomes miserly and mean and selfish. (Jobbins)

Then, too, I am sure that man reaches his best and does his best only under the inspiration of a good woman's love. I do not wonder that the lonely and unloved man often grows weary and shuns the battle. Should he be wounded there is no hand to apply balsam to his wounds or lotion to the eyes smarting and blinded with passion. But with one upheld by a great love it is different. "Her voice is heard through roaring drums etc." The author spoke a great truth when he said back of every great man there is a great woman. When disease was eating the life slowly out of the poet Lanier it was the sweet and tender devotion of his wife that killed the bitterness with sunshine. In My Springs he tells something of what she meant to him.

How many times when the business has failed, when all seems lost has a man been brought to his feet and saved by the devotion of a good woman. I have stood in Boston and New York harbors and watched the big ships come in. And I have seem them coming with no smoke c min from their giant stacks. Their own machinery was no longer working. At first I wondered how it moved. But soon I saw at its side a strong little tug that hugged close to it and pulled it in. And that is how many a man has made the harbor of success in this world and the haven of rest in the world to come.

The next question is how shall you love? How shall you treat this business of marriage? If you are wise you will treat it as a most important business. You will remember that once married it is for better or for worse,
for richer or for poorer till death. You will remember that about the only legitimate divorce is that written in the green grass upon the grave of one of the contracting parties. Remembering this you will be honest. You will not pretend to be either better or richer than you are. Jacob courted Rachel, but when he married he found that he had Leah. But while Leah could pass herself off as Rachel at the marriage altar, yet in the actualities of life she was soon found out.

You will love somebody that is worth loving. Avoid her who would make you think meanly of the best things in life. Avoid her who would ask you to be untrue to God and conscience in order to be true to her. (Dan M)

Avoid the selfish jealous woman. She will make you break with your best friends. She will make you to insult your own brother. She will make you to turn enemy to your very mother. A selfish woman is fairly rare I am glad to say, but when you find one you had better flee her presence. (Ethel).

And next I ask you to be worthy of her. You have in your mind what you are going to demand of her who is to be honored by being made your wife. Did it ever occur to you that she has a right to demand a few things as well as you? "Do you know you have asked for the costliest thing etc?"

In so asking if aspire to the knighthood of Christian gentlemen you will try to be worthy. You will look forward to that. You will have no soiled and hidden pages in your life history. You will have nothing over which you must forever draw the curtain of silence. You will not depend upon turning over a new leaf just before you marry. In asking her to give all to you, you will gladly give all to her. If you will not you are no more fit for her company than a hog is fit for the company of an angel. You are no more fit to make love to her than avulture would have right to make love to a dove.
I know I am not following the dictates of modern society in this matter. I am hitting at the rottenest feature of modern society. You must be young man, eternally against the false standard that demands more of woman than man. I would not lower the demands for woman, God knows. But I would raise immeasurably the standard for men. And the reason that men do not set a higher standard for themselves is because no more is demanded. "She was a woman etc." Till we get away from a standard so fraught with filth as that our young men will continue to unfit themselves for life by their sin.

And last of all, remember that the marriage altar is not the place where the lover is mustered out of service. Unless you married life degenerates quickly into the sordid and commonplace you will continue to be as ardent a lover as you were before. You will cultivate the finer little courtesies toward your wife. You will not spring clear across the room to pick up another woman's handkerchief and then allow your wife to carry a scuttle of coal and a back log upstairs. You will avoid quarreling. It is in no sense a necessity. It never helps. I know Tennyson says blessed on the fallings out that all the more endear. So would I say if there were any such. But there are not. Your wife will never love you the better for having had you say mean and unkind things to her.

Browning counted as the greatest blessing of his life the privilege of giving all to his wife Elizabeth. Her life was little more than one long sickness. But he was never absent from her side for a day. Often he would rise long before day to go out into the fields and gather flowers for her that they might be the first things upon which her waking eyes looked. And after she had died in his arms with her faded cheek against his own, he still held her memory as his dearest treasure. And there was never
an anniversary day that he did not find his way to the little church where they had been married. And the passer-by would see in the gathering shadows a white haired old man kneel and kiss the storm steps where her foot had fallen as a bride years before.

Mr. Banks tells how a certain famous novelist in New England used to observe honeymoon night once every week. And long after his death his wife told him of it with glowing cheeks and love's sweet rain bathed her face as she spoke.

The wedding ring of Martin Luther bore upon it the image of Christ. And the marriage that brings highest success always has such an image, either visible or invisible. If you are wise, you will not shut Christ out of these matters. And his presence and Spirit will save you from all sordid and sinful motives in your marriage. It will make any motive impossible save that of a pure and holy love. And it is only such a love that can save you and keep you sweet and strong amidst life's hard pains and changes. (What a big strong man should be a slave to a woman like that).
In speaking to you of the young man in society I use the word in its largest and widest meaning. I mean the young man mixing with people into society of this kind, every young man must, or at least will go. In fact the social instinct runs through all nature. It combines the insects of the air into swarms, the fishes of the sea into schools, the beasts of the field into flocks and herds, and men into society.

The social life of man is God sanctioned. To refuse to mix is to break God's law and the laws of your own being. The first ministry of our Lord after his baptism was not a ministry to the sick or to the sinful or to the dead, but to the social life of the day. There was a little wedding to take place in a small town among the Galilean hills. A Jewish youth had won the heart of a Jewish maiden. They were going to be married. And they had the good taste and the good sense to invite Christ to their festivities. And He went, and I am quite sure that the occasion was none the less enjoyable because of his presence. I am quite sure that the whole atmosphere was toned up by his being there.

A man can no more resist and ignore the social instinct of his being without hurt than he can ignore another law. It is God implanted. The Italian youths who liked the looks of the Italian maidens, even though they were called devils was altogether natural. If the very bent of our natures did not force us into society, some of us would never get there. When I had finished up going with my first girl I felt somewhat like a man who has just left the dentist chair. The first party I ever attended I just didn't get there. I got only to the wood pile. But at last I broke in and once there I enjoyed it.

So we must enter society. To refuse to do so is to be abnormal.
To refuse to do so is to violate the law of our own being. To refuse to do so is to rob ourselves of much wholesome joy. The worst calamity that can befall a prisoner is solitary confinement. Many of the lunatics have become so from lack of companionship.

If we must enter society the question is what society. Society has many false gods. There are those who make money their god and you must have so much money before you are eligible. Others make family their god and you must be of one of the old families to enter. Others make learning and you must be cultured to enter.

1. Enter the best society. By this I mean the society whose moral standards are the highest. The the society that terms itself the best is often the lowest. The greatest needs of ordinary society is for brains and heart. Enter a society that has brains. Take brains with you. Let you amusement be of a nature that requires more brain work and less heel work.

Another need is for heart. Take Christian kindness with you. The ideal of society is not to help, but to astonish; not to uplift, but to impress. Some of the most pathetic things I have ever beheld have been in society. The sufferings of the girl not well endowed by nature, though she might have had a soul as sweet as a rose. The pain and embarrassments of the green and awkward country who was made the butt of the jokes of the crowd and he who fed their fun with his pain. (Lee who gave the old woman on the train his seat.)

2. Enter with the determination to take your ideals with you. Do not go with the idea that you must do all that the crowd says do. Of course you will want to be popular, but the way to do so is not to follow the dictates of the crowd. Dare to be yourself. Dare to stand for what you believe.
Dare to be snickered at and to be laughed at if need be. Stand by your convictions and sooner or later society will kiss your hands and follow at your heels. For society is not looking for mush men. It is not looking for fishing worms. It is not looking for ninnys. It is looking for men. (At Harvard).

3. Enter to make society better. You do not have to preach at folks to do this. You do not have to carry a grave yard face with you to do this. You just have to be true to yourself. The society preacher is not welcome, but the true man in society is always welcome. He carries an atmosphere with him that makes it easy for men and women to be at their best and think their best thoughts. (Finis at Waverly).

To fail to do this means ruin. Look at the picture in the text. Herod has made a rabs promise. To keep it means murder. He has no inclination to murder. Why does he do it? He is in a bad crowd and he is afraid not to. He has gathered about him a wicked society and that society was his ruin. No man has ever yet sought an evil companionship and been able to overcome it. This man was a king and he could not. Byron could not. He and the woman of sin met face to face, she to laugh in his face and he to shake with terror. They make sin easy. They make it seem attractive. They make it seem little short of a necessity. (Deslow).

Avoid the Scorned, the idler the blaze.

Seek those who will make you better. Seek to be one who will make others better. I knew one such a Webb School. He did not belong to the aristocracy of money. He paid his way by milking the cows. He did not belong to the aristocracy of family. His father was a blacksmith. He belonged to the aristocracy of God's noblemen. In that school he touched two hundred boys and girls and to be good for him. He did not always preach at
boys and he toughed them all for the better. O he was not always preaching at folks, but he was always living well. He did not have the boys bowing down to him, but they bowed to God more because the knew Browning.

Christ was a society man. Once he was in a crowd and a sick woman touched him and was made whole. You in your finite way can be like that. You can go into society. You can be popular in society. Above all you can be a benediction in society. The way to do it is to be a Christian in society. The same Christ will be with you there that is with you at the church and at the Sunday-school. And if your life does not ring true there it will not do so at the church. Be so true that when the call is over and you feet sound on the walk outside and the gate is shut for the night she on whom you have been calling may say this night I have passed a two hours in the company of a real gentleman.

I am to speak to you this evening about my young man and his dreams. That is my young man and his aspirations, his ambitions, his longings. My young man and his life purpose. You are standing near the beginning of life's way to-night, young man. What do you expect from your life? What do you purpose that the years shall bring you? What are you going to demand of yourself? Hat road have you determined to travel and at what goal do you intend to be when the sunset comes?

Youth is in an especial sense the time of the dreaming of dreams. It is the time when all things seem possible. The eye has not yet been dimmed with tears nor the back bent with burden bearing. The heart has not been disillusionized. However stormy may be the sunset, the sunrise is serene and without a cloud. However sordid and commonplace the path may become, it begins in a wealth of glory. However bruised may be the feet at the end of the journey, they are far otherwise as they brush the dew from the flowers of life's early morning. Shame and defeat may be our only attendants as we put the armor off from our wounded bodies when the day is done and the conflict over. But hope and victory marched at our side as we went fourth to the first encounter. Life for us may end in a sob, but it begins in a song.

Happy is the man who never allows himself to become disillusionized. Happy is he who can dream fine dreams to the very end. Let no man rob you of that joy. Avoid him who would set himself by your side and tell you how there was a time when he dreamed as you are now. But his dreams brought him only bitterness and sickness of heart. It seems to be expected that life for those who are older grown shall be a very humdrum and sordid something. The thought sobs its way through the world's best literature.
It is true of Wordsworth, Byron and Hood. But I want to tell you that it is not true of the Bible. It is not true of God's book. It tells us that the old men shall dream dreams. As you will see later it has locked in its pages the secret of immortal youth.

Now all men who do things are dreamers of dreams. He who would be a money king must first see himself as the captain of the world's industry. He who would sing a great song must first hear the cadences of it in his own heart. He who would paint a great picture must first see it adorning the chambers of his own imagination. He who would live a great life must first see something of the divine possibilities that through Christ are locked in his own heart. A short time after the burning of San Francisco there came out a very suggestive picture. There lay the once beautiful city in ruins. Off upon the mountain top stood a man in the garb of a laborer. He at first seemed to be looking at the ruined city. But as you followed the line of his vision you saw that he was not. He was looking at another city, a new and more splendid city that hung in the black smoke just above the ruins. This was the San Francisco that was to be. The city that its manhood saw as possible out of the wreck of the old. So from the mount of vision I would have you to-night to look across to that unexplored country to the manhood that in the grace of God may be yours. So I would have you gaze across the seas to that fair harbor into which you may at last cast your anchor. It is new. You are the first that ever burst into that silent sea. If you are true it will have an eternal newness.

And first let me warn you that what you are now and what you will tend more and more to become will depend upon the dreams that you dream. Years ago an English lad dreamed of writing a
poem that the world would not willingly let die. He remained true to his vision. The lad was John Milton and his song was Paradise Lost. In the garden of a country house in northeastern Germany, some century ago, a ten year old lad was at play. He had made a snow man on the pedistel of a statue that the had been broken off by the army of France twenty years before. This snow man he was pelting lustily with stones. It tottered, but did not fall. Then a strange thing happened. The lad’s eyes flashed. His cheeks flushed. He seized a heavy stone and rushing upon the snow man utterly demolished it. "What are you doing, Otto," called a voice. "I am Germany whipping the French" was the reply. And that boy became the iron chancellor Bismark, the father of modern Germany.

The great trouble with our youth to-day is not that they do not dream, is not that they have no ambition. It is that their dreams are unworthy, their ambitions are too low. Look at the young man of the text. His mistake, his folly, his sin is in an especial sense that of the young man.

Esau loves the hunt. He loves athletics. He loves the freedom of the life of the fields. He loves the rivers with their sheen and sound. He loves the hills. There is a fine free charm about the young fellow that draws us. Nor are we in any sense at variance with his pleasures. I, too, love athletics. I love the rivers. I love God out-of-doors. I have stood among those great old Tennessee hills and felt their thrill, their solemn silence and majesty. There was nothing wrong for the young hunter in this. But one day he came home very hungry. He asks to be fed. And shrewd Jacob drove a bargain with him of which the devil might have been ashamed.

Esau was the older son. As such he was to be the religious leader
of his family. As such he was to be the priest of his home and tribe. It was this privilege that Jacob proposed to buy from him for a mess of pottage. And this mad trade the hungry Esau made. And thus says the text, Esau despised his birthright. He did it not because he was so hungry, but because he had a contempt for his birthright. Because he had a contempt for religion and his place of religious leadership.

The ruin of Esau was his contempt for the spiritual. The thing that wrecked him was a mean ambition. He had no ambition beyond the things that are seen. The unseen and eternal had for him no attraction. He was cursed by an unworthy ambition. He was damned by an ignoble dream. And this is one of the greatest dangers to the young manhood of to-day. They are not without ambition. But too often they are without ambition for the best that life and eternity can give.

Aim high, young man. Strive after the impossible. Let your ideal thing forever Beyond the distant mountain tops. You may never reach it in all fullness. If it is worth of you, you will not. Every man fails in proportion to greatness of the task to which he sets himself. If you determine to float with the tide, to stand for nothing, to enlist in no great or worthy cause, you can do that. Any old rotten chunk can float down stream. But if you prove yourself the child of God it is going to take a lofty conception of life and a heroic fidelity to that conception.

There is a story of how young Phaeton heard that he was the son of a god. He was not content with the mere information. He aspired to do something worthy of his divine ancestry. The task to which he set himself was the driving of the sun chariot. He failed and was dashed to death. The nymphs took up his body and buried it by the riverside and wrote over it this epitaph: "Here lies Phaeton, driver of his father's chariot, who
though he failed, yet died in a great attempt. And I say all honor to the young hero. Better to fail in a noble task than to succeed in an ignoble. Better one drive in the sun chariot beyond the clouds than a whole eternity plowing like a mole.

And this is the high calling we have in Christ Jesus. Not to taste sweet things, but to do true and noble things and to vindicate ourselves as God-made men and women. I invite you to-night into the company of those choice souls who have failed grandly and largely. "I envy not in any mood etc." "It is not what man does, but what man would do that exalts him." Life can never rise above the commonplace to you if you have no ambition beyond the commonplace. It is only as some lofty ideal charms us and leads us on that life becomes worth while.

The sin of Esau is in as especial sense the sin that threatens the young man. Esau did not hate religion, he had no use for it. He did not fight the spiritual. He was indifferent to it. Is not that your attitude? You are in no sense antagonistic to the church. You are not opposing the Christ. You are just letting him alone. He is not in your program. You are not interested. All your time is taken up with something else.

Look at the story. Esau sat down and ate and rose up and went his way. And that was about all life ever meant to him. A little eating then a blundering off the stage into the night. His cradle stood bare, his coffin there and between them a table with some smoking pottage. He climbs out of his cradle, eats his pottage and then climbs into his coffin for the long sleep. And that is the story of his life.

In ignoring God and religion Esau did not feel that he had lost anything. He followed the hunt as before. His aim was a true, His bow as trusty, His arm as strong. The sky was as fair above him and the great
mountains lifted their heads in silent majesty just as they used to do.
Has he lost anything? Nothing. But wait. A few years go by. And then
one awful day his sick soul rises up in horror within him and gives the
lie to that statement. And with an exceeding bitter cry, just how bitter
none but God will ever know, he seeks to inherit the blessing that he has
despised. He seeks to lay hold on the gift that he has hertlessly thrown
back into God's face. He seeks to grasp the crown that has passed beyond
his reach forever.

Hear these awful words. "Afterward, when he would have inherited
the blessing, he found no place for repentance, though he sought it di-
gently and with tears." Are there any sadder words than these. They tell
of the bright angle he spurned from his presence forever, the better part he
refused to choose. This does not mean that he could not repent in the sense
of having his sins forgiven. It meant that he could not possess again what
he had carelessly thrown away. It means that no repentance could set him
again at the fork of the road as he stood that day of his awful bargain
and give him his chance over again.

"Afterward!" Hear that word. It totters under a weight of agony.
It drips with tears. The irrevocable and irremediable sob through it like
the wail of a lost soul. "Afterward, afterward. When it was too late." Then
despair had come down like mildew upon the soul. "Afterward, when woe sat
sobbing like a troubled ghost in the chamber of his heart. When remorse
was torturing from him sighs of pain freighted with the agony of a million
dying lips. "Afterward there came a rude awakening and he saw the depth of
his folly.

Ah my young man, in your thoughtless pursuit of your selfish
ambitions to-night you do not miss the things of religion. But there is
coming an afterward. And when it comes you will read in letters of blood the story of your folly. Not that you cannot repent, but because repentance cannot undo the past. Repentance cannot bring back to you the years that have been worse than squandered and wasted.

We sometimes think that it matters little how deeply one goes into sin just so he repents before he dies. But I tell you no man ever spent a day in sin but what he was the worse for it. I am seeking to-night to get you to repent before you commit the sin. I am seeking to get you to save not only your # soul, but your life as well. I am trying to save you from that awful afterward that must come to every man who spends his manhood in a mean and unworthy and selfish living.

The tragedy of life, my young friends, is that too often repentance comes too late. The disciples were no doubt very sorry that they had slept away the hour that their Lord had commanded them to watch out in the garden, but no amount of repentance could undo the past. I read of a boy who broke his mother’s heart and was called home to see her die. She was in her grave when he arrived and he spent the entire night by that new grave in tears and prayers. He repented. But it did not come in time to save the last hours of the old mother from being troubled hours. It did not dry up the midnight tears with which the loving heart had wet her pillow for so many long months. You won a heart. You teach a young one to sin. You help a young girl to take her first step down. Years go by and you repent. But that does not undo your evil past. That does not take the oaths off that boy’s lips that you taught him to swear. That does not put the blush of innocence upon the cheek of the maiden that you stole from her in your godless years.

And there stands Esau, broken, mean commonplace looking at the
man that he might have been and now can never be. Looking at the good he might have done and now can never do. Looking at the wrong he has wrought and now can never remedy. No wonder it wears a dry from his too bitter for tears. And so some of us will stand by and by. And we will look at the picture we might have painted and now can paint no more.## And we will hear the far off angelic cadences of the song we might have sung, but is now forever beyond the power of our feeble lips. We will look at the lofty mountain our youthful feet might have scaled, but is now far too rugged for the feet of age. We will see the weapons that we might have wielded but are now too heavy for the arm raised by the years. And with sobs that tear the heart we will remember this night. We will remember the songs of the road. We will remember when life was young and when the best was possible for us. And then you will take up the burden of your colorless existence sighing only it might have been. "God pity us all, who vainly the dreams of youth recall. For of all the sad words of tongue or pen the saddest of these, it might have been."

I would save you from this by asking you to look at this second story. Here is a man on trial. He is allowed to testify for himself. He turns the court into an experience meeting and begins to tell of that wonderful experience that came to him years ago that had so changed his life. The vision that had come to this man was of Christ as the rightful Lord of his life. When he found out the truth of this he made it the one ambition of his life to be true to that vision.

The same vision comes to you tonight. I beg you as you love the best. As you would get the very most out of life to embrace this fine vision. It will not interfere with any other ambition that is worthy. It will lift it from the mud and give it wings. It will not keep you from achieving the best. It will make the best possible. Gladstone.

Having embraced it, at all cost be true to it. Follow the gleam.
If you hesitate the vision will fade and the star will set. (Russian woman and old artist.)

Follow it and you will find in it the secret of immortal youth. Paul was always living for the future. "Not as though I had already attained or were already perfect. I have not found the best yet. The best is yet beyond.

You will find in it the secret of growth. Paul after while got a greater vision, one that it was not lawful for him to utter. "Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul."

You will find in it the secret of a peaceful sunset. Look at Solomon. Paul as he puts on robes of ascension cries "Henceforth." It is only thus that life shall bring you the best and that you will approach your end like one that wraps th drapery of his couch about him and lies down to sweet and pleasant dreams."
OUR YOUNG MAN

Mark 14:51, 52
Isaiah 32:2

This evening I am calling your attention to two texts. The first is found in the Fourteenth Chapter of the Gospel according to Mark, verses fifty-one and fifty-two.

"And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him; And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked."

The second comes from the Thirty-second Chapter of Isaiah, verse two.

"And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

These two texts bring before us two types of character. They are types of character that are exactly opposite. The first represents the despoiler. He does not help; he hinders. He does not lift up; he pulls down. He does not make for moral soundness, but for moral rottenness. When he is by, it is harder to be right and easier to be wrong, harder to be clean and easier to be unclean, harder to be unselfish and easier to be unselfish. By his very presence he tends to wither the flowers of the heart and to change the garden of the soul into a desert. Both by virtue of what he is and what he does, he is a part of the disease of the world rather than a part of its remedy. The other is just the opposite. He is not a despoiler, but a protector. He does not tear down; he builds up. He makes it easier to be right and harder to be wrong, easier to be kind and harder to be unkind, easier to be clean and harder to be unclean. Both by virtue of what he is and by virtue
of what he does, he breaks up the drought of the heart and sets the fields of the soul to flowering. By his own choice he is a part of the remedy rather than a part of the disease.

Now as a matter of fact you and I play either one of these roles or the other. By this I do not mean that the protector is universally helpful. All of us play at times in both roles. But if you are as "a hiding place from the wind and as a shadow of a great rock in a weary land" the trend of your life is toward helping and not hindering. Then, if you belong to the despoilers, you may have not a few good and generous deeds to your credit, but the trend of your life is in the opposite direction. Mixtures though we are, at the long last our lives count either predominantly for usefulness or uselessness. We are either a part of the remedy or a part of the disease.

I

Look at this first picture. "There followed him"—that is, Jesus—"a certain young man having a linen cloth cast about his naked body. The young men laid hold on him; and he left the cloth in their hands and fled from them naked." The scene is the city of Jerusalem. It is a Thursday evening, the night before the crucifixion of Jesus. On a certain narrow street, there is a young man who has just come from the bath, or who is perhaps preparing to retire for the night. But suddenly he hears a tumult in the street. He hears the clamor of voices and the tramp of many feet upon the cobble-stones. His curiosity gets the better of him. He opens the door to a slit to see a company of Roman soldiers followed by a mob hurrying down the street.

"What is happening?" he wonders. He must know. Therefore, he shouts to one of the passers-by, "What is going on?" "We are going out to Gethsemane to arrest a criminal," comes the prompt answer. Then the young man moves to shut the door, but there is one other question: "Who is the criminal?"
"Jesus of Nazareth" is the startling answer. At this the young man is no longer merely curious. That word changes him at once from a vagrant into a crusader. He knows this Jesus of Nazareth. He has heard Him preach. He has perhaps seen Him open blind eyes. He has watched Him as He took the part of the weak, as He sought to make life easier and braver for everybody. As he has watched Him, he has come to love Him. Because he cares, he cannot endure having Him arrested without protest. He will go whatever the cost to stand at His side and seek to steady Him by his friendship. He is not dressed, but what of it? The time is short, and the issues are great. Therefore, he seizes the first thing that comes to his hand, His linen cloth. He flings it about his body and dashes out into the night. The spell of the Christ is upon him, and he is ready to do the big and daring thing.

Did you ever notice how many of those that Jesus gathered about Him were young men? Why was this the case? It was not simply because Jesus Himself was young. We sometimes fancy that youth appeals especially to youth. We hear one say sometimes we need a young minister to appeal to our young people. But young ministers appeal to old people far more than they do the young. Youth cares nothing about the almanac. It is the young in heart that appeal to them always. The spell that Jesus cast over the young men of His day was the spell of one who was mad enough to seek to do the impossible. One day this young man looked up His carpenter shop and set out on no less a quest than the salvation of the whole world. No wonder two men with thunder and lightning in their souls, James and John, followed Him. No wonder some of the choicest young spirits of that day were caught under His spell.

I can imagine that this young man reached Gethsemane in the immediate wake of the Roman soldiers. He arrived just as they are putting the Master under arrest. He is on the point of dashing to His side in fine self-forgetfulness to share His fate with Him even to the death. Then something happens, something
unspeakably tragic. He runs into a group of other young men, friends perhaps. They notice the queer costume of their excited young friend. Perchance with loud laughter they lay hold of him. Suddenly the young man comes to himself. His courage changes into cowardice. He leaves the cloth in their hands and flees naked into the night.

What have these young men done? They have found a friend with his face turned resolutely in the direction of Christ and they have turned him in the opposite direction. They have found one with a high and holy courage that made him willing to dare all for his Master, but through their influence he has become a coward. They have found him with hot enthusiasms burning upon the altar of his youthful heart. But when they left him, the fire had died down to cold gray ashes. They found him a friend of Jesus, but under their spell he became a foe. They had robbed him of something far more priceless than gold. They were not protectors; they were despoilers.

Why were they playing in this role? I am quite sure that it was not because they had anything against their young enthusiastic friend. It was not because they set out deliberately to wreck him. Nor did they take this destructive course because they were consciously antagonistic to Jesus. I am quite sure that they were here neither as the friends of Jesus nor as His foes. They were mere onlookers, colorless neutrals. They did not mean any harm. But sad to say most of the harm in the world is done by those that do not mean any.

Years ago when I was at Webb School, there was a boy working his way through school named Tom Albright. Tom was not vastly attractive. He was certainly not a fastidious dresser. He was having to keep batch to stay in school at all. I tried the experience with him for a while. I used to eat on one side of my plate and then turn it over and eat on the other. One day Tom came to school with his elbow just peeping out from his coat sleeve. Some young fellow
mistaking a tragedy for a joke, ran his finger into that hole and tore it a bit. Some were foolish enough to laugh. So others took a hand. When Tom went home that day he was minus one coat sleeve.

I have never ceased to resent it. Of course, it was the cruelty of thoughtless boys. Had you rebuked them, they would have told you frankly that they did not mean any harm. But they had never known the meaning of poverty. Therefore, they had little idea how ugly their conduct was. But there is a kind of conduct infinitely more ugly. It is to take advantage of one's moral and spiritual weakness. It has been said, "Let it be known that you can be used, and folks will use you. Let it be known that you can be wrecked, and folks will wreck you." It is partly true, I daresay, but I certainly do not believe that it is universally true.

How do you stand with regard to another's weakness? Years ago when a girl went wrong, the blame was almost always hers. We had a shabby way of excusing the partner in her sin. I heard the same contemptible word not too many years ago. It ran like this—"Young men will be young men." By which the speaker seemed to say in order for a young man to be normal he must take advantage of another's weakness and be not a protector but a bit of a jackal.

That old saying we used to have that a girl can get any conduct from a boy that she likes is frankly false. By this I do not mean to say that the conduct of the girl does not have much to do with the conduct of the boy. If she is cheap, it certainly helps him to be cheap, just as his cheapness makes hers the easier. But where there is sin, there are always two involved. To say that the girl can get any conduct that she likes is false in two directions. It is false because there are girls who are politely insulted in business offices and elsewhere almost every day who feel that they must take it because of economic responsibilities. Then, it is false in another way, thank God!
There are young men that will not be cheap and shoddy even if they are given an opportunity. Why should there not be such? Suppose I were arrested for stealing ten dollars from a friend. Suppose, having been arrested, I should confess my guilt, but seek to explain it away by saying, "He was not looking. He was very careless." His carelessness would not excuse my rascality. The weakness of another does not give you the right to take advantage of that weakness whether it is in the matter of gold or something far more priceless. God pity us when we allow ourselves to play the ugly role of the despoiler.

Let us look at the opposite picture. "A man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Here is a man as God meant him to be. Here is man as God made it possible for all of us to be. Of course, this prophecy is fulfilled in its completeness only in Jesus Christ. His was a sheltering manhood to the superlative degree. His coming made life fuller and richer for everybody.

But what He does, He enables you and me to do. "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also." "A man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, as a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as a shadow of a great rock in a weary land." One day a brilliant young genius stood in the presence of a marvelous painting by Titian. As he looked where the great master had splashed his dream upon the canvas, his cheeks glowed and his eyes sparkled, and he said, "I, too, Titian, am a painter." And he turned from the contemplation of that beauty to realize his possibilities.

Glance at this picture in detail.

1. "A man shall be as a hiding place from the wind." I passed sometime ago through the track of a cyclone. It had swept along the side of a hill
and hardly a tree had been left standing. Houses that were in its track had become utter wreckage. Lives had been lost. Those who had been saved had found places of shelter. And I have watched tempests of temptation and passion blow upon human lives. What is the hope of bruised and broken men in a world like ours? They find help at the hands of those who are as a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest.

2. "They shall be as rivers of water in a dry place." There are dry places in the human heart. There are souls that have become desert. There are homes where the flowers of beauty and loveliness have ceased to bloom. But there is a power that can change desert into garden and transmute the world's moral waste into the world's moral wealth. "A man shall be as rivers of water in a dry place." He has the amazing capacity to break up the drought of the soul and set the fields of the heart to flowering. That is what Jesus had in mind when He uttered this great word, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, out of his inner life shall flow rivers of living waters."

3. "He shall be like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." So one spoke of his friend sometime ago. "I was passing," he said, "through trying times, but I found this friend as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." It is a desert picture. Here is a caravan traveling over the hot burning sands. Their tongues are parched with thirst. The sun from out a copper sky is shooting them with arrows of fire. To the westward is a lew of the desert that threatens soon to wrap them in winding sheets of sand. But when hope is all but gone, they see an oasis. In that oasis is a great rock, at whose foot a spring gurgles. They reach its shadow and while death rages without they find sheltering life within. And the prophet said a man shall be like that.
Here then are two types of personality, those who help and those who hinder—those who have life and share it, those who have death and share that. Here is an arbitrary division, but Jesus used it over and over again. Bear in mind what I said—The life-givers may play on both sides at times as the dealers in death may play on both sides, but in the long last we either help or hinder.

The road we take depends, Jesus said, upon our attitude toward Him. To His friends He said this bracing word: "Ye are the salt of the earth." Salt is a positive something. Nobody can ignore salt. If salt comes to town when it is not wanted, it can be terribly in the way. If it is absent when it is desired, then there is nothing that can take its place. It gives a tang to life but above all else it is a great preventive. It is the great protector that stands at the door of invading rottenness and says, "You shall not pass." We are offered then, each of us, the choice of being a part of the disease or a part of the remedy. Which do you choose?

There is an old story that is true. It tells of forty wrestlers who were Christians. These wrestlers were ordered to burn incense to the statue of the Emperor, but their consciences would not permit. As a penalty they were sent to the far north to be turned lose amidst the snows of the Alps. Arrived at the parting of the ways, a centurion ordered them to be stripped bare. Then the forty went away in the thick of the tempest singing as they went, "Forty wrestlers are we, wrestling for Thee, O Christ."

But before they had passed out of sight of the centurion, one of them lost his courage. His heart failed him. "The biting foe was too much. He turned and hurried back, saying, "Give me back my clothes, and I'll burn incense to the Emperor." The centurion looked at him hardly with contempt but more with pity. "You may have mine," he said, as he began to remove his warm tunic and toga. "I am going to become a follower of the Christ Who is able to make his servants sing in the face of death."
Our Marriageable Daughter

Proverbs 31:30

"Beauty is deceitful, and favor is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

Our marriageable daughter is a real problem. She is a problem, first of all, to her mother. Her mother is really worried about her. At times she is worried to know whether she will ever marry at all or not. At other times she is even more worried at the kind of man she seems bent on marrying. But most of all she is worried over her ultra-progressive ideas. She wonders what the sweet young thing is going to do next. And even daddy is worried also. He doesn't say as much as mother, but when he is alone he scratches his head thoughtfully and wonders what the world is coming to.

And if the old folks are worried, the marriageable daughter is worried also. She has her troubles. They are very real. One of the greatest of these troubles is what she is going to do with her mother and father. How can she, delicately and lovingly, make them see that they are a hundred years behind the times? How can she be a dutiful and respectful daughter, as she wants to be, and at the same time show her fond parents how much wiser she is than they are. Her problem is the problem of bringing the Renaissance to two foolish old people who are still living in the middle ages.

Now, it is possible that you may dismiss the whole girl question with a wave of your hand and say she is just like she always was. But that is not true. She has a different name today from that she has ever had before. When did any civilization ever christen this marriageable daughter as "flapper" before our day? That is something entirely new. Nor is it possible to accept that name as complimentary. It seems to me to savor of irreverence and disrespect. It smacks of contempt. It has a suggestion of flabbiness about it. It seems to savor of something that is a plaything of the wind.

That is not, however, the real meaning of the word. The name is derived from a young fledgling that has not yet learned to fly. Here is, for instance, a little bird in the nest. Its wings are not yet sufficiently strong to bear its weight. But it spreads them out boldly before its mother and says, "Let me show you. I can do it so much better than you can." There is at least, however, this consolation in this definition of the word. It is a prophecy of a coming day when the flapper may cease to merely flap and really fly.

What is new about the situation of a modern girl? There is no mistaking the fact that she has advantages today that her sister did not have. First, the modern girl is better educated than her sister of a few years ago. The best colleges of the land have been opened to her. And she has entered those colleges and has done her work with the keenest intellects among the men and she has shown herself to be absolutely mentally fit. Along with her mental development has come a larger physical development. She has gone upon the athletic field and into the gymnasium. Here she has shown herself capable of doing stunts that her grandmother would have looked upon as horrible and mighty impossibilities. So that the modern girl, whatever else we may say about her, is more keen and more competent than the girl of a few years ago. She has a fund of information as well as of horse sense that surpasses anything that the woman of another generation has possessed.
Of course it must be confessed that while these things are treasures they are not necessarily the supreme treasures. It is possible to have a strong body and a very shabby soul, though other things being equal the chances are in favor of the strong body. It is possible also to have keen intellectuality totally divorced from high morality. You may be very cultured and morally very common at the same time. That fact has been illustrated over and over again in the lives of countless men and women. But while that is true, the advantage is in favor of the educated woman.

Second, the modern woman has an economic independence that her sister did not possess. This independence gives her a decided advantage. She does not have to marry today in order to have a home. It is not necessary for her to have a husband in order that she may have somebody to pay her hotel bills and her clothes. She is able to pay her own way. Therefore it is not necessary that she enter into any unwelcome marriage simply for the sake of having a home. She is as independent in this respect as a man.

Since this is true there is less excuse for the easy mark today than ever before. And yet that is one of the most common complaints against the modern girl, that she is too dead easy. You do not have to marry. Therefore, be not anxious. And yet it is the modern girl rather than her sister who invites the young man to accompany her to the theater and to the dance and who sometimes will even pay the way of the worthless young ninny. I am not saying just what I think of him. I will wait till next Sunday night. But the girl is a nut. Remember, young lady, that a man who is worth the catching really likes a bit of a chase. But he must be a highly developed Christian Scientist to fool himself into thinking that he is having a chase when he knows how much harder the victim is trying to be caught than he is trying to catch her.

Third, the modern woman has a freedom that has been unknown to any other woman in our history. She has a freedom of occupation. She can enter almost any school she likes, take any course she likes and then enter any profession she likes. Women are doing that all over the land today and are making good. She can wear what she pleases. Hence, she decks herself in window curtains and table cloths. And in them she looks very beautiful, I confess. Or she can refuse to wear very little of anything. Which thing is done also. But on the whole I will concede that the modern woman is showing more plain good sense today than in any other time since Eve began to experiment in the garden of Eden. I think it is possible to get a skirt too short, but anybody knows it is better to have a short skirt than one that sweeps the street wherever the wearer goes.

The modern girl is not only free in the matter of occupation and dress but also in her coming and going. If she stays at home she has her own latch key. But a large and growing number do not stay at home. They are away alone in strange cities, with absolutely no restraint put upon them more than is put upon the young man of today.

Now, it may be that you look upon this situation with horror. Or it may be you look upon it with absolute approval. But however you regard it it is a fact, and to be perfectly frank, I do not think we are going to change this situation very materially. The thing to do is to face the facts and make the best possible out of them. As we face them some will see no danger at all. The average girl, for instance, regards her worrying mother somewhat as a brood of ducks on the mill pond would regard a hen that had been put in charge of them on the bank. They know that the hen is
those who have been killed by the auto, but there is one individual that it has run over and smashed beyond recognition and that is the chaperon.

"Poor thing! She is dead and they are alone. 
'Tis a debt all models must pay. 
Of all the freedom they have had in their lives, 
It was never complete till today."

A few years ago a young lady received her company in her mother's home. Her courting was conducted in the wholesome atmosphere of the parlor. But it is not true today. The average girl does her courting in an auto with the curtains pulled down in the park in the night. There is no danger of surprise that was always a possibility in the good old days. But here there is no restraint. Mother and dad haven't the least chance for a look-in. And that is a real loss.

"He is teaching her arithmetic. He says that is his mission. 
He kissed her once, he kissed her twice, and said, Now that's addition. 
And as he added smack to smack in silent satisfaction, 
She sweetly gave his kisses back and said, Now that's subtraction. 
Then he kissed her and she kissed him, without any exclamation, 
Then both together smiled and said, Now that's multiplication. 
But dad appeared upon the scene and made a quick decision, 
He kicked the lad six blocks away and said, That's long division."

The third contributing cause is the modern bathing beach. Do not understand me to say for a moment that the girls who appear in public wearing garments of the texture of a good sneeze are not nice girls. I once thought they were not. But I have changed my mind absolutely. It is a bit puzzling that girls that are as pure as dewdrops will wear as little as the law allows, but I am convinced that this is true beyond the shadow of a doubt.

The fourth contributing cause is the movie. Do not understand me to argue for prudishness. I think a girl ought to know the facts of life. But I believe there is a proper and an improper place to learn them. And looking at the bedroom scenes of a modern movie is not the proper place. As a girl sets out upon her voyage she ought to have a real compass given by a wise mother. But too often she has only some vulgar sailors' yarns for her guidance.

A young lady who can be a habitue of the modern theater and see its filth and yet keep her modesty is a rare specimen indeed. There sin is often made to look attractive. It is plated with the phosphorescence of romance. Its kisses are the kisses of love degraded and befouled. This is not true of all shows, I know, but it is true of entirely too many.

The last of these enemies of modesty that I mention and one that is by far the most deadly and dangerous is the modern dance. I know we encounter prejudice here and prejudice that is deepseated, because the appeal of the dance is very strong. Now do not understand me to say that every girl that dances is immodest. But what I do say is this, that the
Our marriageable daughter

modern dance cannot but tend to take the fine edge off the girl's modesty. The modern dance, one wise man has said, was born of the high cost of living, or rather of the high cost of rent. He said it came of the necessity of putting the largest number of people in the smallest amount of space. Hence we have the cheek to cheek dance, and this danced oftentimes in costumes that are dangerous. For the modern flapper is as afraid of being called iron-sides as she is of death.

Then the third danger that confronts the girl of today is the danger of becoming irreligious. Many girls from pious homes sleep during the church hour and take the afternoon and the night for the theater. And they feel themselves only broad minded in doing so. I am afraid that the religious average is not as high among women as it once was. I am thankful to say, however, that there are still multitudes of those who are religious today and religious under difficulties that are tremendously great.

In the face of these dangers how is the modern girl to conduct herself? What are to be her safeguards? In the first place she must realize her responsibility. When Queen Victoria was a little girl her wise teacher used to say to her again and again, "Remember that one day you are going to be queen. Remember that one day you are going to be queen." And that is my word to you. Remember that you are going to be queen, the rulers of the world, for the hand that rocks the cradle does rule the world.

Do you remember the story of the "Little Palace Beautiful?" There were four rooms in the palace. In the loveliest room of them all, the room that looked out toward the sunrise, was sleeping a beautiful baby. It was fair with the brightness of the morning. It was pure as the breath of heaven fanned by an angel's wing. The name of that little fellow was "The Child-that-is-to-be." And you above all others are its guardian, its teacher. Your responsibility then is the supreme responsibility.

Then you are to remember that a woman's best friend is Jesus Christ. Nobody ever understood woman as He understood her. Nobody ever praised her as He praised her. Nobody ever helped her as He helped her. You have been brought to your high place through the efforts of the dauntless Knight of Galilee. Therefore you are under infinite obligation to give first place to Him.

Remember, too, that it is in His fellowship that you are to find your highest winsomeness and your finest usefulness. There are two things that every normal woman longs for. She wants to be useful and she wants to be loved. Would you believe me if I tell you that you will find your highest winsomeness, your sweetest attractiveness, through the touch and the fellowship of Jesus Christ? Hear the words of the text: "Beauty is deceitful and favor vain; but the woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." Not that beauty is to be despised, but it is not the supreme thing. Neither are you to despise popularity. Every girl ought to seek to be popular with the right kind of popularity. But the pathway to that kind that is really worth having is the path of vital Christianity. "A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

A few years ago a woman lay in her coffin in a certain building in London. From sunrise to sunset it is said two hundred thousand people filed by to look at her. She had been a blessing to thousands of them. And as the people passed and looked in her face love's sweet rain dropped
Our marriageable daughter

down into the coffin. And when the day was closed it was said that her shroud was as wet as if she had been dipped in the Thames. Now, I had rather leave this world and appear before God in the tear-soaked robes of Catherine Booth than to have been the most brilliant society queen that ever reigned. Many things may be desirable, but only one thing is supreme and it is the key to the highest usefulness as well as the highest winsomeness, and that is vital contact with Jesus Christ.
OUR MARRIAGEABLE DAUGHTER

"They marvelled that he was talking with a woman."
—John 4:25

Our marriageable daughter is a source of much worry. In fact, she is worried herself. But the main source of her worry is not about herself. She is worried about her elders. She is wondering how she is going delicately to get it across to her stupid old dad that he has lost step and is at least a mile behind the procession. She is still more worried about how she is going to inform her mother without unduly hurting her feelings that she is still in the dark ages. Her stupid elders are so far behind her that they worry her.

But if she is worried about others, others are certainly worried about her. Poor old dad often is utterly dumbfounded. He shakes his head and says inwardly, "I wonder what the wild young thing is going to do next." Mother is even more worried. There is likely some twenty-five years difference between her age and that of her daughter. Revolutionary changes have taken place since her girlhood. She, therefore, says desperately and truly to her perplexing child, "I never would have thought of doing that when I was a girl."

When I was a boy on the farm, we used to raise chickens and geese and ducks. There was one old hen that was bent upon setting. She was as hopeful when her eggs were a piece of glass as any other way. To utilize her industry, Mother gave her about a dozen duck eggs. In due course of time, she was the possessor of a lovely family. She taught those ducks diligently how to pick up the tidbits about the barn-yard. But one day she chanced to lead
them in sight of water. At once they deserted in mass. They rushed into the water, stood upon their heads, and did all sorts of foolish things that the frantic mother would never have thought of doing when she was a girl. In fact, she abhorred them now. She warned that certain disaster was ahead, but the ducks were not worried in the least unless it was over the stupidity of their mother who was fearing for them and in addition missing all the fun. Some modern mothers remind me of this poor hen.

I

But that they should be afraid is perfectly natural. She has witnessed one of the most amazing revolutions in history, for it is only in recent years that woman has come to a place of freedom and of equality with man. Look at our text. Jesus is talking to a woman by an old well curb. This woman is an outcast, but she is highly intelligent. That is evident by her conversation. By and by when the friends of Jesus who have gone into the city return, they are astonished to find him talking with this woman. But their astonishment was not born of the fact that the woman was an outcast. The text does not read as the authorized version has it—"They marvelled that he talked with the woman"—but "that he that he talked with a woman". A respectable Jewish rabbi was not expected to speak on the street to any creature as low as the best of women.

In every nation of the ancient world, woman was looked upon as inferior. This was true among the Romans. It is true among the cultured of Greeks. In fact, the only educated woman among the Greeks were the courtesans. Wives and mothers were not expected to be educated. They were not expected to be in any sense the equal of their husbands. Hesiod said that his ideal of complete anarchy was a situation where a wife ate at the same table with her husband.
Among the Jews women held perhaps a higher position than among any other nation. But here they were also regarded as inferior. Every Jewish boy was taught to pray morning after morning this prayer: "Thank God I was not born a gentile or a woman or a leper. When the genealogy of a child was traced, it was always traced through the father, never through the mother. So fixed was this rule that even Matthew and Luke who were the only evangelists that speak of the virgin birth, trace the genealogy of Jesus not through his virgin mother but through Joseph. This they did in the firm conviction that women simply did not count.

It is only in recent years that this attitude has undergone any considerable change. Less than a century ago a New England woman sued the railroad to recover her trunk that was full of lovely clothes. But she lost her suit on the grounds that she did not own any trunk nor clothes. They all belonged to her husband. Of course, she doesn't have much clothing today, but what few slacks she has are her own. It has not been a quarter of a century ago since a learned chap wrote in one of our leading magazines somewhat as follows: "Man can beat woman doing practically everything. In fact, there are only three things in which a woman can excel. The first is being a mother. The second is singing soprano. And the third is keeping her face smooth without shaving." But in recent years this attitude has undergone a revolutionary change. Look at some of the new privileges that have come to woman that mark her equality with men.

1. She has been granted the right to vote. We have at last realized that taxation without representation is unjust for women as well as for men. Now I believe profoundly in the right of women to vote. I have to confess, however, that so far this privilege has not been worth much either to herself or to anybody else. The great moral changes that we once
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prophesied would come once woman had the right to vote have not materialized. When she gets into office, she is as a rule a politician just like her brother.

2. The modern woman has unlimited vocational choice. Fifty years ago a woman might be a teacher or a nurse or a home-maker. Almost every other door was shut in her face. But that has changed today. As far back as 1920 of the five hundred seventy-two gainful occupations in the United States woman had entered into five hundred thirty-seven of them. That is, there were only thirty-five occupations that were exclusively masculine. There would be even fewer today.

3. Along with this wide range of vocational choice has come an equally wide range of educational opportunity. For centuries some women have been being educated, but their education was of a type to fit them into the needs of men. It is only in recent years that she has a right to educate herself for her own choice. John Milton did not permit his daughter to be taught the languages, giving as his reason that one tongue was enough for any woman. Not more than a century ago the school board of Boston voted that girls might use the high school when it was not being used by boys. About three-quarters of a century ago the Medical Association of Philadelphia voted to excommunicate any of its members who would lecture in a school that women were permitted to attend. The same penalty was to be meted out to those physicians who would consult with a woman physician. But today every door of educational opportunity is open to women that is open to men.

4. Our day has brought to woman a new economic independence. The woman of your mother's day felt that she must marry however poor her chance. This was necessary for two reasons. Unless she inherited an estate, she must marry in order to obtain economic security. She was often not capable of earning her own living. Then, she had to marry in order to save herself from the
stigma of being an old maid. That was a type of disgrace from which your mothers and grandmothers shrank. All sorts of crude and cruel jokes were cracked about them. They were called the "army of the unenjoyed". In the dedication of a new fire department, they put over the portal this word—"May this department be like the old maids of our town—always ready but never called for."

But all that stupidity is of yesterday. Most of you never saw an old maid. Today she is about as extinct as the dodo. I can remember her in my boyhood. She wore a dress that reached from her ears to the bottoms of her feet. It was rumored that she wore yarn stockings, and high shoes, but nobody could swear to it as no one was ever allowed to see her ankles. Her chief occupation was knitting, tatting, crocheting, and looking after the children of her fortunate married sister. But today she has thrown aside her long dresses, her high shoes, her flannels, and her hair, and has gone out to become one of the world's workers. No woman has to marry today unless she gets a chance. That was not the case yesterday as evidenced by what some of you drew.

Just as the modern woman does not have to marry unless she gets a satisfactory opportunity, so does she not have to remain married unless conditions are liveable. Yesterday many a woman was forced to remain in a relationship that was little better than hell simply because she was economically dependent. Much of that is gone and that is all to the good. Unless conditions have changed very recently eighty percent of the divorces that are being granted today are at the request of wives rather than of husbands. This does not mean that wives are more to blame than husbands. It does mean that when conditions become unbearable the modern woman feels that she can stand from under those conditions and look out for herself. The majority of the wealth in America
is now in the hands of women. Our modern day has brought to women a new economic independence.

5. Our new day is coming more and more to recognize the single standard of morals. It is strange how slow we have been to follow the teaching of Jesus in this matter. There has never been a nation that did not expect purity of its women. There has never been a nation that did not tolerate the opposite in its men. Today for better or for worse we recognize one standard. Increasingly we hope that men will rise to the moral level of women. If they refuse, women will sink to the moral level of men. But there is only one standard.

II

Naturally, this new freedom involves certain perils. In fact, freedom is not always an unmixed blessing. Whether the right to make my own choices is a help to me or a hurt depends upon my fitness for that high privilege. Perhaps you have a canary at home shut in the narrow bounds of a cage. Do you ever get sorry for him? Suppose you would get so sorry that you would turn him out to the large freedom of the outdoors. The chances are a hundred to one that he would make a meal for some cat before sundown. It is not a matter of wonder, therefore, that some girls have not been able to handle this new freedom. What are some of her dangers?

1. The modern girl is in danger of confusing liberty with license. Of course, that is a danger that threatens all of us. You can do with impunity today what would have disgraced your mother and grandmother. I am not objecting to that. But I am afraid sometimes that because we can do so many things with impunity we think we can do absolutely as we please. Nobody can do that and get away with it. To shrug your shoulders and tell your elders that you are going to live your own life without any regard to their
to their wishes or even to the moral law is surely to dress your soul in chains. If everybody who has found this true were to say "Amen" it would shake the mountains.

2. A second danger that threatens the modern young woman is the loss of a fine feminine sensitiveness. Now I am not arguing for prudishness. But there was a certain fineness about the woman of yesterday that the modern woman is in danger of losing. Take modesty for instance. It is not in vast evidence today. Blushes are rather rare blossoms save as they are bought at the beauty parlor. "What of it?" you may say indignantly. Well, perhaps this—that a blush is to the face at times what blossoms are on the boughs of an apple-tree. It shows that there is still life and springtime in your heart.

3. A third peril that I mention is the peril of a false ideal. The girl of yesterday chose as her ideal some woman. Too often the ideal of a modern girl is man. That is, there are those who convince themselves that man through the centuries has had the better of it. His has been the larger freedom. His has been the good time. Therefore, they must be as much like a man as possible. Therefore, some girls become imitators of men.

Now there is this about imitation. Whenever we go to imitate anybody as a general rule we imitate their idiosyncrasies rather than those virtues that make them of worth. Sam Jones was one of the most remarkable, unique preachers the South ever produced. But how many preachers have wrecked themselves trying to imitate him? Schumann-Heink said that she was called upon to sing a role that she had not had opportunity to practice, but she entered upon the task with confidence because she had heard it sung by half a dozen of the world's greatest artists. But her result was disappointing. Her critics said that she had reproduced every flaw of every artist that she had ever heard sing.

In their imitation of men, many women have taken to swearing. That is no great accomplishment even for the male. It sounds even more shocking in
I was with a bunch of high school students sometime ago who were entertaining a young woman from Washington. This young woman was very emancipated. She swore like a fish woman. It so happened that the crowd she was with was not given to the vice. They looked on with a bit of amazed horror.

Then, another habit that the modern woman has taken over is that of cigarette smoking. Of course, you have as much right to smoke as your beau. Yet there is this difference, you are the keeper of the gate of life. A London physician said sometime ago that in his practice the infant mortality rate among cigarette-smoking mothers was 227 per innumerable while that of non-smokers was 153. That is, smoking cost seventy-four per thousand. A Washington physician declares that many mastoid operations are made necessary by cigarette-smoking mothers. Charles Mayo is credited with saying that because the mucous membrane is so much more tender than that of a man smoking increases woman's susceptibility to cancer.

Then, I fear that drinking among women is vastly on the increase. This was certainly true in England before the outbreak of the War. I have seen women crowd in among men at the bars. I have seen them senselessly drunk. One officer said that nine out of ten drunks arrested in London were women. This does not mean that women were drinking more than the men. It only meant that they were drinking much and could not carry their liquor so well.

The harshest critics of your sex is women. One matronsister wrote a of a certain type of modern young woman as "a little hell-cat with a muddy mind." That is, she buzzed about a candle without absolutely burning her wings and falling into the blaze. But she escaped not because she was too good but because she was too shrewd. Dr. Beatrice Henkle declares that the ideal of virginity is on the decline among women. She is a distinguished physician. Maybe she is speaking with authority. I do not know, but I do know that the danger of a false ideal is a real danger.
III

What is the remedy for all this? It is certainly not to try to get back to the old days. The freedom that is yours today is likely to abide. The old cry of back to the kitchen is as futile as futility. Woman will never go back to the old days until she goes back in the ox-cart and prairie schooner and that means never.

1. The modern woman ought to remember that new opportunities bring with them new obligations and new responsibilities. Thank God many do recognize this fact and are acting accordingly. It is Jesus Who before all others has brought you this freedom. Do you realize that of all the great religious teachers Jesus alone put women on an equality with men. He is the only one that never said anything to man that he could not say to women, or that ever said anything to women that he could not say to men. They were one in their hungers and thirsts. They were one in their responsibility to keep the moral law. They were one in their opportunities to serve.

But in finding your place in the scheme of things never be afraid to be yourself. The more you become like a man, the less attractive you are. The more you remain feminine the more attractive you are. You are equal with men but you are different. Thank God for that difference and make the best of it. It is rare indeed that a husband will carry on religiously without his wife, but many a wife has carried every chick and child with her into the Kingdom when her husband was a pagan.

Every one of us owes an unpayable debt to our Lord. But your debt, if possible, is even greater than ours because the Master found you a chattel and gave you your superb opportunity. It is in service to Him that you come to your highest. Years ago a Methodist preacher in England got so interested in the poor of London's slums that he left his church to found the Salvation Army. At his side was his wife, Catherine, as devoted as himself and more
brilliant. When she died a few years ago people whose lives she had touched passed by her casket from sun up to sun down. At the close of the day it is said that her shroud was as wet with grateful tears as if it had been dipped in the sea. Somehow I think I would rather go up to meet God in that tear-soaked shroud than to go up dressed in the gorgeous robes of the most popular society belle that ever lived.

1. the house of  
2. the town  
3. our room — 600. How can we repay the God of  

THE MARRIAGEABLE DAUGHTER

For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom fo such a time as this?

Esther 4:14

These words were addressed to a young woman who had suddenly come from a position of obscurity to one of prominence and power. Yesterday she was a member of a conquered race. Today, she has risen to a position of freedom. The bright lights that play about her throne are shining upon her. She has become a woman of great opportunities, of tremendous privileges. She has a capacity to serve, such as formerly she had not known. To her has come a tremendous opportunity of living grandly and unselfishly.

But along with these great privileges have come corresponding responsibilities. That is ever the case, a capacity to serve always means an obligation to serve. No single soul is exempt. "You have come to the kingdom" said her wise adviser "for such a time as this;" "By refusing to measure up to your opportunity" her kinsman tells her, "you will not only destroy others, but yourself as well. On the other hand, by rendering the service you ought to render, you will both save yourself and save your people as well."

I.
Now this is a fitting word for the young woman of today. Our modern daughter is a source of no end of worry. She is worried herself. Her chief worry is not about the dangers that threaten her personally, she is mainly worried about the old fogies with whom she has to deal. She is a bit puzzled how to let her Dad know in a delicate way that he has forgotten the score and has fallen entirely behind the procession. She is wondering how she is going to inform her mother that she is still living in the dark ages.

But, if our marriageable daughter is worried, her elders are more worried still. Some of her older sisters are half-frantic about her. They would not be greatly suprised by any rash thing that she would do. One of this group spoke of her in this slighting fashion: "She is a chaste little hell-cat with a muddy mind." By this she meant that a certain type of modern girl would not go the limit of sin. She only played with the idea, She buzzed about it like a candle fly about a lamp. She never quite burned her wings enough to drop into the furnace. This was the case, however, not so much because she was too good, as because she was too shrewd.

As her older sister is worried, Dad is worried even more. He does not say much, but now and then he scratches his head in bewilderment as to what the wild young creature is going to do next. Mother is the most worried of all. If she is around fifty years of age, she finds herself and her daughter belonging to vastly different worlds. Though they are separated from each other in point of birth by only fifty years, they are separated in point of change by centuries.

When I was a boy on the farm, we used to raise horses, cattle, hogs, chickens, geese and ducks. I remember an old hen that was fond of sitting. She was so determined upon thus serving her country that my mother gave her
about a dozen duck eggs. In due course of time, she became the mother of a large and interesting family. At once she began to teach these ducks how to scratch and find the little tidbits about the barnyard. Then, one day she wandered down by the water, that was tragic, for, suddenly, in spite of her clucking and calling, her family broke from her and began to disport themselves in the water. The hen was horrified. "I never did that when I was a girl" she said. But the ducklings merely shrugged their shoulders, and pitied her for missing so much fun. Many a modern mother is like that. She stands watching the antics of her daughter in this new day with mingled horror and amazement.

II.

The young woman of today does face a vastly new situation. The change that took place in the position of Esther was little greater than that which has taken place in the world in which the modern woman finds herself. She has come to a new position of freedom, of privilege, of opportunity. Hers is a far roomier world than that of her sisters of fifty years ago. It has far bigger opportunities, it also has far greater dangers. Among the changes that our modern day has brought are the following:

1. The modern woman has a right to vote. We have reached the conclusion that "Taxation without representation is unjust," not only for men, but for women as well. Today women can help to control the destinies of the nation through the ballot just as men can. Up to date she has not done much with it, but that is her privilege nevertheless.

2. Our modern day has brought to women a wide range of vocational choice. I have reminded you that of the 572 gainful occupations in 1920, women had entered 537 of them. That is, there were only 35 occupations then
that were exclusively masculine. In 1870 there were only 150 stenographers in the United States. Today there would be that many in almost any office building. Women are entering all kinds of vocations outside the home and are making good.

3. Along with the wide range of vocational choice, women have an equally wide range of educational opportunity. It has only been about a century ago since the school board of intellectual Boston passed a resolution that the girls could use the high school building when the boys were not using it. Even so wise a man as John Milton would not allow his daughters to be educated in the languages because he said "One tongue is enough for any woman." That does not mean that women were not educated at all, it does mean that they were educated to fit them into the scheme of man rather than to live as individuals. But all this has passed. Today our young women have as free chance at educational opportunities as our young men.

4. Along with this unlimited opportunity of vocational choice, there has naturally come a new economic independence. A few years ago the average woman had to marry in order to find a home. She could not well earn her own living. If she had a financial competence, she had to marry to save herself from the stigma and disgrace of being an old maid. There were few things so bad as not getting married. The old maid was the butt of every kind of crass and cruel joke. She was spoken of as "the army of the unenjoyed." When a new fire department was organized in the village, they took this as their motto "May this fire department be like the old maids of our town, always ready, but never called for."

In those days you could spot the poor souls anywhere. They wore dresses that reached from their ears to the soles of their feet. It was reported that they wore woolen hose, though this was only heresay, nobody
ever saw their ankles. They also wore long hair, and their chief pastime was knitting, crocheting, and looking after the children of their fortunate married sisters. But today all that is past. The old maid is almost as extinct as the Dodo. She has thrown away her high shoes, her knitting. She has turned her back on the children of her married sister and has gone out into the big world where she is giving a good account of herself in helpful service. She is rejoicing in the new economic independence that our modern day has brought to women.

5. Then, our modern day, under the leadership of Christ, has brought to women emancipation from the double standard of morals. There has never been a nation where purity was not expected of women. There has never been a nation where impurity was not widely tolerated in men. Millions of women have been flung into the garbage can, when far less guilty than the men who threw them there. Today we are realizing that what is wrong for one is wrong for the other. They must either stand together, or they must fall together. The same moral measuring stick is rightly being applied to both.

III.

Now this is a great new day into which we have come. It has brought privileges of which the woman of a few years ago did not dream. But this new freedom is not of necessity a blessing. Freedom of course, is good, but it is not always an unmixed good. Like every other blessing, whether it helps or hurts, whether it enriches or impoverishes, depends upon our readiness for it. We can use it in such a fashion as to bring joy and helpfulness to ourselves and others. We can also use it in such a fashion as to lower the moral temperatures of the world.
When I was a boy I used to trap for quail. One morning I went to my trap to find in it a beautiful Kentucky Cardinal. He was wild and savage and full of fight. But I made up my mind I would make a pet out of him. So I fixed him a cage and did my best to win his friendship, but all in vain. At last I turned him out, he went back into a world that was full of dangers. There were hawks, there were owls, there were foxes out there. But it was his world, and he was far more at home in it than in a sheltered life in a cage. I was wise in giving him his freedom. But had I performed a similar service for the canary, I would have been very foolish. That petted and pampered bird was not fitted for the dangerous life into which the cardinal went without fear. In the same way we need not be surprised that this new freedom has brought peril to many a modern girl. There are certain dangers to which she is especially prone to yield.

1. There are those who, intoxicated by this new freedom tend to push it too far. They claim the right to live their own lives. That is, to do absolutely as they please. But nobody can be thus free. There can be no freedom except in conformity to law. Those who seek to be free by flouting the law never find freedom. They simply dress themselves in chains. Many a woman, as many a man, has found that true in our modern day.

2. The modern woman is in danger of losing her fine sensitiveness. There are those that tend to be hardened by the contacts of our day. Blushes are rather rare touches of color for our modern girl, save as she buys them at the beauty parlor. This, I know is regarded as of little consequence. But a blush upon the face of a girl is akin to what an apple blossom is upon the bough of a tree. It indicates that there is still life and springtime at the heart of it. Happy is the girl that can keep a fine feminine sensitiveness in the presence of the coarseness connected with our modern day.
3. A third peril that faces the modern girl is that of being brought under the dominion of a false ideal. Fifty years ago the ideal of practically every girl was some woman. That is not true today. The modern woman tends to be brought under the dominion of the masculine ideal. That is, too many seem to think that man, through the centuries, has had the better of it. Therefore if woman is to come to her high privileges, she must be as much like man as possible. This has led to her imitating men.

Now there is this tragedy involved in imitation:—When we set out to imitate somebody, we are prone to imitate their vices rather than their virtues. We tend to imitate their idiosyncrasies rather than those qualities that make them what they are. Years ago we had an evangelist in the South who was wonderfully unique, his name was Sam Jones. He had a way with an audience that was all his own. He rendered a great service, but he ruined many a minister by that minister having no better sense than to try to be like him. Schuman Heink said some years ago that she was asked to sing a role that she had never sung before. But she was heartened by the fact that she had heard it sung by some of the greatest artists of her day. With their renditions in her mind she sang the role, but the result was not encouraging. Her critics said that she reproduced every fault of all the artists that she had undertaken to imitate.

Today women are imitating men in their language. Some of you can swear with fluency. I was in a group of high school students sometime ago who were entertaining a girl from Washington. This girl swore with the proficiency of a fish woman. It so happened that the boys among whom she found herself were not given to that vice. They greeted her outburst with freezing silence. Swearing is silly and senseless among men. It certainly does not enhance the charm of women.
Women in imitation of men have taken up the smoking habit to an alarming degree. Now I am not going to tell you that you have not as much right to smoke cigarettes as your brother. But what I do say is that it adds nothing to your loveliness. In the minds of some, it takes something away. Dr. Charles Mayo is credited with saying that, since the mucous membrane of a woman's mouth is more tender than that of a man's, it increases her susceptibility to cancer. A great London physician said that investigation conducted by himself indicated that while the mortality rate among the babies born of non-cigarette smoking mothers was 153 per thousand, that among cigarette smokers was 227. That is, it cost 74 babies per thousand to smoke. You have all the right there is, but while you claim that, it might be well to remember that you are the keepers of the gate of life. That places a responsibility upon you to which you dare not shut your eyes.

Then I fear that liquor drinking among woman is on the increase. In England, when we were dry, I was horrified to see how women were at the bar the same as men. One policeman said that nine out of every ten drunkards he arrested in London were women. We are going to the same bars here, and drinking somewhat in the same fashion. I am not saying that you have not as much right to do so as men, but what I do say is this: I cannot have great hope for a new and better generation nursed in the arms of liquor sipping mothers.

In a hotel in a certain city recently, I had the misfortune to be assigned a room next door to where some young folks were staging a party. It seems to me I have a fatal facility for getting into this predicament. Being where I was, I could not help hear what was going on in the next room. Among the girls present, there was one that insisted on her right to stay sober. It was amazing the batteries of scorn that were turned loose on her.
The one that seemed to wound her the worst was this:—They accused her of being a sissy. Now for a boy to be a sissy is bad, but it seems to me that that is what a girl is made for. But, this girl swore her denial violently. All this because she had come, as so many others, to be dominated by a masculine ideal.

IV.

But, if this new day brings its perils, it also brings its vast opportunities, its high and wholly privileges. I believe the woman of tomorrow is going to be far stronger and far more able to serve than her sister of yesterday. But if she does this, she must use her freedom, and not simply abuse it.

1. She must keep in mind that while she is the equal of man, she is eternally different from him. She must therefore be willing to accept her place as woman with all of its crosses. She must remember that it is only as she accepts its crosses that she can receive its crowns.

2. Above all else, she must guard and strengthen herself by the supports of religion. It is to Jesus that she owes above all others her freedom. He alone, of all the great religious teachers made no distinction between her and her brother. All other teachers had one teaching for man and another for woman. Jesus put the two on absolute spiritual equality.

(1) They were one in their hungers and thirsts. Man is possessed with an insatiable thirst for God. But what is true of man is no less true of women, even the most sinful. It was to an outcast woman that Jesus said "If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that sayest unto thee, give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him and he
would have given thee living water."

(2) It was Jesus that delivered woman from the bondage of the double standard. When one day a company of crass and cruel men dragged a shamed and broken woman into his presence, they said "Master, this woman was taken in the act of shame, the law of Moses demands that she be stoned. What do you say?" "Let him that is without that same sin among you," he answered "cast the first stone at her." "What is wrong for her is no less wrong for you," he said "act accordingly."

(3) Jesus admits both man and women into his presence by the same door of repentance. We once thought there was a sin from which a woman could not come back. But our Master knew no such. He opened the door of mercy alike to both men and women. It is to this Christ that all of us owe an unpayable debt. It is in His service and there alone that all of us can find at once life's highest usefulness and fullest joy.

Years ago a brilliant young woman gave her hand and heart to a humble Methodist preacher. Later that minister left the church to become the founder of the Salvation Army. His wife Catherine worked at his side, and helped to make his great achievement possible. When she died those whom she had served were allowed to view her body. They passed from morning until night. When the doors were closed, I am told that her shroud was as wet with the tears of the people as if it had been dipped in the sea. She met her opportunity and faced it in the strength of her Lord. And somehow I had rather go up to meet God in that tear-soaked shroud than to rustle in angel-plums. Yesterday was her day, today is yours. "You have come to the kingdom for such a time as this."
OUR MARRIAGEABLE DAUGHTER

Esther 4:14

"Thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this."

I

Our marriageable daughter has us worried. We really never saw anything like her. Her mother is worried. She wonders what the sweet young thing is going to do next. Even father is worried. He does not say much but at times he scratches his head and marvels at what this present generation is coming to. Her older sisters are worried. Some of them think she is the worst ever. One harsh critic of her own sex describes her as "a chaste little hell-cat with a muddy mind," thus implying she knows much about evil; buzzing round it like a candle fly round a candle but managing not to fall into it, not so much because she is too good as because she is too wise.

But if we have our worries, this daughter has her worries too. She is wondering how she is going to show her mother that she is at least a century behind the times. She is a little perplexed as to how she may delicately inform her father that he has come in on the freight and has simply failed to hear the news. Her problem is to bring about a renaissance to those prosaic members of her family who yet live in the Dark Ages.

When I was a boy on the farm we used to raise geese, ducks, and chickens. One time there was a hen that was bent on sitting, but she had no eggs of her own. Mother filled her nest with duck eggs. In due time this mother had a large and interesting family. She was evidently very proud of them. She could certainly not tell them from
her own flesh and blood. She did her best to keep them scratching about the barn yard. But one day, inspite of all her clucking and coaxing, they made their way to the water. It was pitiful to see her fright as those audacious young flappers disported themselves in the water. They would dive and the mother would hold her breath, doubting if they would ever rise again. Meantime the ducklings were not worried at all. They were perfectly sure of themselves. They were a bit sorry that the old hen had no more sense than to be worried, and no more judgment than to miss a good time in the pond.

Now there always tends to be a chasm between youth and age. An old tablet was discovered in the Orient some time ago that was at least five thousand years old. Yet there was written upon it this significant sentence: "The world is soon coming to an end. This is evidenced by the fact that children are disobedient to parents, and that everybody wants to write a book." But if this lack of understanding belongs in a measure to every age, it belongs more fully than ever before to this age. For though our marriageable daughter is separated from her mother and grandmother by only a few short years, yet she is separated from them in point of change by whole centuries. Your mother said to you recently, "Things were not that way when I was a girl." That is a word that has been spoken some hundreds of billions of times, but it could never be spoken with such truth as now, for if your mother is anywhere close to fifty, things were vastly different when she was a girl.

For instance, when she was a girl woman was looked upon as a bit inferior to man, and few occupations were open to her outside the home. That had been the case since the beginning of history and beyond. It was the case among the very greatest and most enlightened people of antiquity. It was so among the Jews. The Jewish people
boasted of many brilliant and gifted mothers, yet every Jewish boy was taught to thank God daily that he was not born a woman or a Gentile. And when one traced his lineage it was always through the father and never through the mother. The Greeks were great people but the wife and mother was in no sense equal to the husband or father. She had little or no education. The only educated women among the Greeks were the courtesans. Hesiod’s idea of a bad wife was one that insisted upon eating at the table with her husband. 

Nor did we get so far away from this until recently. It has been a little more than a century ago since a woman suing a railroad for the loss of her trunk, failed to recover on the ground that she did not own either trunk or clothes, both belonging to her husband. Of course, she still does not have many clothes, but all the flimsy and abbreviated things she does have are her very own. About seven years ago the physicians of Philadelphia voted to excommunicate any doctor who lectured at a school that allowed women to attend, or any doctor who would consult with a woman physician. But now all this is changed. We have passed into a new day.

II

Look at a few of the changes that this new day has brought:

1. Woman has now the right to choose her own vocation.

All through the centuries her power of choice was very circumscribed. Today numerous lanes lead directly from her home into almost any vocation into which man has entered. The census of 1920 showed that there were 572 gainful occupations in the United States. It also showed that women had entered 537 of these. Not only has she entered but she is competing in many of them with a high degree of success.
Notwithstanding the fact that a recent writer declared there were only three things in which a woman could excel, first in being a mother, second in singing soprano, third in keeping her face smooth without shaving. But this man was a bit of a cynic.

2. Along with this right of choice of self-expression has come that which goes hand in hand with it, the right or preparation. It is only in recent years that women have had a fair chance of an education. In cultured Boston in the early part of the last century the school board agreed that the girls might have the use of the high school when the boys were not using it. Even as wise a man as John Milton would not allow his daughters to be taught any language other than English, declaring that one tongue was enough for any woman. I do not mean by this that up until recently women had not been educated at all. They have for many years been getting a certain kind of education, but it was one that was intended to fit woman into the scheme of man rather than to fit her to live as a separate and independent individual. Today this is changed. Our girls now have a great opportunity and as free scope in the educational world as have our boys.

3. Then this new day has also brought to woman a new independence by virtue of her better and more practical education. She has the capacity for taking care of herself that did not belong to the woman of yesterday. There was a time when many women had to marry in order to have a home. They were incapable of taking care of themselves. If they were left with an estate they had to marry to save themselves from the stigma of being old maids. There was nothing that was as much dreaded by the woman of a few years ago as to be condemned to remain unmarried. It was a species of disgrace. Such were called cynically "the army of the unenjoyed." Every crude and
cruel joke that man's ingenuity could contrive was told at her expense.

But this painful dependence is now past. In fact the old maid no longer exists. She belongs to our dead and buried yesterdays. Years ago you could spot her in any crowd. She wore a dress that would reach from her ears to the soles of her feet. I am told that she wore yarn hose, though that is purely hearsay as no one ever saw her ankles. Her occupation was knitting, crocheting and looking after the children of her fortunate married sister. But all this is changed. She has cast away her flannels, her high shoes, her long skirt and her long hair. She has dropped her knitting, crocheting and nursing. She has gone out into the big world. She can now remain single and nobody sneers at her. No woman has to marry today unless she gets a chance. She once felt compelled to marry without much of a chance. This is evidenced by some of the husbands that she drew. But the woman of today enjoys a new independence.

4. Finally this new day has brought to woman deliverance from the bondage of a double standard of morals. There has not been a nation in all history where virtue was not expected and required of the wife, but till the coming of Christianity there was no nation where virtue was ever expected or required of a man. Even in spite of Christianity we have gone on for centuries demanding that our women be lily-white while we ourselves had the privilege of walking the path of pitch. But that also belongs to the past. Today, what is wrong for the woman is wrong for the man, and what is right for the man is right for the woman. Whether the morals of both will be raised by this change, or lowered, remains to be seen. But this is certainly true: Both are henceforth going to be judged by the same standard.
In coming, therefore, to the kingdom at this time, you have come into the midst of great opportunities. But in proportion to the greatness of your opportunities, your responsibilities have become correspondingly great. Not only so, but these days of freedom are days of great testing. Freedom, you know, is not an unmixed good. It may have in it much that is evil if we are not prepared for it. There are multitudes who through these new tests and new temptations that have come with this new freedom, have grown vastly wiser and vastly stronger. There are others to whom it has brought disaster.

1. There are certain dangers against which we need to be on our guard in this new day. First there are those who are in danger of pushing their freedom too far. Freedom does not mean doing absolutely as we please. Nobody is, or can be, thus free. If the modern girl often says with a toss of her head, "I am going to live my own life," by that she means "I am going to do as I please under all circumstances and at all costs." But that is never the way to freedom. It is the way to slavery.

2. The modern woman is in danger of losing her reticence, her fine feminine delicacy, her moral sensitiveness. It is no exaggeration to say that modesty in our day threatens to become obsolete. Nor did it die of a long, lingering illness. It seems rather to have suffered some sudden stroke and to have perished over night. Blushes are at present rather rare touches of color except as we buy them ready made. Now I am not arguing for prudishness, but to my mind this is in itself a threat. For mark you, modesty is not a matter of trifling importance. A blush is often the crimson banner that a fine moral sensitiveness floats above the citadel of
the soul to show that it has not yet capitulated to the god of the
course, the common and the vulgar.

3. Then our marriageable daughter is suffering from the
peril of a false ideal. Years ago the ideal of almost every young
woman was some other woman, most likely a wife or mother. This,
I am happy to say, is still the ideal of the great majority. But
there are those whose ideal seems to be the masculine rather than
the feminine. They have somehow come to the conclusion that man
all through the centuries has had the better of it. Therefore,
they want, so far as possible, to do his work and live his life.
In short they want to be as much like man as possible. This
desire leads some to an imitation of men, which imitation is
generally disappointing in its results. This is true for the simple
reason that the one who imitates another almost invariably imitates
that which is worst in the one imitated instead of that which is
best. Madame Schumann-Heink tells us that she was to sing a role
for which she had not had opportunity to prepare. But the fact that
she had heard a number of other great artists sing it gave her
courage. So she sang with their renditions in her mind. What was
the result? It was little short of disaster. Her critics said that
she reproduced every fault of the artists that she was seeking to
imitate.

Now the girl who becomes obsessed with the masculine
ideal usually imitates man’s vices instead of his virtues. That is
true of many today. Swearing among women seems to be on the
increase. This is a silly and useless and ugly habit in men. In
women, of whom we expect better things, it is even more disgusting.
Cigarette smoking among women is certainly on the increase. This
habit is decidedly pronounced among certain college girls and society
women. This, to my mind, is most unfortunate. Of course, I am well aware that there are worse habits than cigarette smoking. I am aware also that women have as much right to smoke as men. I am further aware that I am a bit of a back number in these matters and may be speaking out of the abundance of my prejudice. But having confessed all this, I still maintain that it is an unfortunate and hurtful habit. How tragic therefore that so many who are to set the standards of society are addicted to it! How doubly tragic when so many of these are the future mothers of America! I am perfectly aware that there are many fine and noble women who smoke but somehow I simply cannot bring myself to hope for a stronger and finer manhood and womanhood to be nursed in the arms of cigarette smoking mothers.

Then, what is worse still, our marriageable daughter is sometimes given to liquor sipping. Sometimes she goes further and becomes senselessly drunk. There is considerable drinking among women in America. There is far more in the British Isles where they have the open saloon. There it is nothing uncommon to see women savagely drunk. While I was in London a police officer told me that nine out of every ten drunks arrested in London were women. And sadder still, Dr. Beatrice Hinkle declares that the ideal of virginity among women is losing its grip. This woman is a brilliant physician and a close student of her sex. Is she correct? I do not know. This I do know. We have only one standard today. If we are lowering the common level rather than raising it, then it is surely serious cause for alarm.

IV

What are we to say to our marriageable daughter as she faces this critical day of great privilege? We cannot tell her to live in every way as her mother lived. This is a new day. It has brought with
it a new woman. Whether we like this new woman or dislike her, she is here to stay. She will never go back, except as she goes back on the ox-cart or the prairie schooner. Our daughters cannot live in yesterdays, they must live in today.

My first word is this: Were I speaking to a daughter of mine I would try to remind her that while she has much in common with man, she is essentially and eternally different. For this she ought not to feel sorry. She ought rather to thank God. Too many women seem to believe that in order to be equal with man they must be like them. That is not the case at all. God has given to woman a place that is altogether unique. She is the keeper of the gate of life. Our marriageable daughter must be willing to accept this trust with both its crosses and its crowns. Every normal woman longs to be attractive. She longs to be loved. The more genuinely feminine she is the more lovely she is and the more like man she becomes the less attractive she becomes.

Then above all else I should urge upon this daughter the supreme privilege and obligation of knowing Jesus Christ. All the real freedom that has come to her has come at His hands. Every step that she has taken from the position of a mere chattel to that of being a queen of the modern home, she owes to the Dauntless Knight of Galilee. The attitude of Jesus toward women was altogether unique. Every other founder of a religion seems to have accepted with the men of his day the conviction that woman is inferior. But Jesus is grandly different. He never uttered one single word that indicated that he considered woman in any sense inferior to man. In fact, if we had only the Gospels to go by it would never occur to us that woman at any time or anywhere was regarded as man's inferior.
To be convinced of this it is only necessary to consider the following facts:

1. Man and women are one in their spiritual hungers. Throughout the Bible man is represented as being possessed with spiritual hungers and spiritual thirsts that God alone can satisfy. "As the hart panteth after the water brook, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God." That is a thirst that belongs to every man but it belongs no less to every woman. It is not a sex characteristic. It is a characteristic of the race. Christ recognized this thirst as belonging even to a woman who was an outcast. Hence he said to her with abounding confidence, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, 'Give me to drink,' thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water."

2. It is Jesus that has freed women from the slavery of the double standard. He recognized men and women as bound by the same moral law. How strikingly is this fact brought out in the sordid story of the woman caught in her shame! There they come, a group of self-righteous Pharisees. They are dragging in their soiled hands a shamed and tarnished woman. They fling her down before the Master with these words: "She is a sinner. We are eye witnesses of her guilt. Moses says she should be stoned. What do you say?" "Stone her if you will," he replied, "provided you yourselves are clean. But let no man dare fling a stone who is guilty of the same sin. What is wrong for her is wrong for you!"

3. Finally Christ admits all into his fellowship by the same door. If a man goes wrong and wanders into a far country and wastes his substance in riotous living, if he will repent, Christ will give him welcome back to his heart. Christ gives every man a second chance, but no less free is he in his offer of mercy and pardon to sinful women. It is hard for us to give the woman a second chance.
Once she has sinned we fling her away and shut the door in her face. But it is not so with Jesus. To this soiled and bedraggled woman who had been cast in shame at His feet, He said, "Go thy way and sin no more." We are admitted, therefore, by the same door into the fellowship of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Christ Jesus has shown Himself infinitely gracious toward man, but he has done even more for woman since woman's condition was worse than that of man at His coming. We are all under infinite obligations to Him and, frankly, I do not see how any woman can claim the large freedom that He has brought, without an irresistible compulsion to give herself in surrender to Him. This is the demand of gratitude. It is also the pathway of highest winsomeness and lovableness, for however beautiful you are by nature, you will never reach your supreme charm except through Jesus Christ. It is also the way to your highest usefulness. Womanhood's supreme contribution must remain spiritual.

Now you can gauge the spiritual condition of any generation by that of its womanhood. You have peculiarly in your keeping those supreme spiritual values by which a nation lives. In conserving them will be your supreme achievement. A few years ago a woman died in London who had begun by being the wife of a Methodist preacher, and ended by sharing with him the dues and responsibilities of the leadership of the Salvation Army. When she lay in state men and women passed by to view her remains from morning till evening. There were thousands of them. At the close of the day her shroud was as wet as if it had been dipped in the Thames, and personally, I would rather go up to face God in a tear-soaked shroud like that, than in any robes that royalty ever wore.
PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

"They that were ready.....went into the marriage feast, and the door was shut."

---Matthew 25:10

There is a way of entering upon any enterprise in such a fashion as almost to guarantee success. There is also a way of beginning in such fashion as to make failure all but sure. One day a young man came to Jesus, all enthusiasm. "Lord," he said, "I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." But Jesus seems to have treated him coolly. He seems to have acted as if He did not care whether he followed Him or not. But such was not the case. Jesus desired wholehearted followers with all His soul, but He saw that this young man did not realize what he was saying. He did not understand what was involved in discipleship. So Jesus reminded him that to be His follower was costly. He reminded him that He was more homeless than the foxes and more destitute than the birds in the air. When the young man realized the price to be paid, he turned away and we hear no more from him.

Ours is an ordered world. This being true, we enter the door for which we are ready. If a great musician is giving a concert in our city, the fullness with which I enter the musical feast will depend upon my readiness. In our libraries the master minds of all the centuries offer their rich treasures. But how fully I enter into the possession of those treasures depends upon my readiness. What I do with the examination is a matter of readiness. What I do with a physical feast depends upon my readiness. If I have so wrecked my body that I no longer have an appetite, the best feast will be no feast to me. The door that you are ready to enter seems to open of its own accord, but God Himself cannot thrust you through a door permanently for which you are not ready.
Since this is the case we must agree that happy marriages are not mere matters of chance. It is a matter of readiness. Many people spoil their chances of making a success of this most beautiful of all relationships before they ever enter into it. Many a bridegroom loses the wedding ring before it ever comes into his possession. Many a bride throws hers away before the groom ever slips the holy symbol upon her finger. Many a marriage is foredoomed to failure simply because those entering upon the high adventure are not ready.

How then shall we prepare ourselves for marriage? This, of course, is a matter of deep consideration. This is the case because, as I reminded you, you are likely to find your success or failure, your richest joys or your most devastating sorrows, your heaven or hell, in the one you marry. Not only is this of vast importance to you, but to the children whom you share with God in creating. Not only will it mean much to your children, but it will mean much to society as a whole.

The first step toward making a successful marriage, the first needed preparation is a proper understanding of what marriage ought to be. "To the ship bound for no harbor, no wind can be favorable." It matters little how speedy your car may be, it might as well be an ox-cart if you do not know our destination. If you cannot see the target, you are not likely to hit the bull's-eye. If you have no plans and specifications, you are not likely to build a cathedral, a poem of beauty. You are more likely to build a monstrosity and a ruin. As it is important to know where you are going when you set out to travel, so it is important that you know what you are undertaking when you marry.

Where shall we turn for a proper philosophy of marriage? I indicated to you in my last address that we ought to turn to Jesus. I said that this was
the case not merely because Jesus is divine, but because His plan is more workable. I drive a Buick car. Years ago there was a painted bit of wreckage that bore the name of Brisco. The name Brisco is about as beautiful as the name Buick. Yet we prefer the Buick simply because the car bearing that name as shown itself to be a better car. The name of Judge Ben B. Lindsay may sound as well in the ears of some as the name of Jesus, but the plan of marriage that Jesus suggests has been found in actual experience to stand up better than that of Judge Lindsay.

Let me then remind you once more of the goal of marriage according to Jesus. (1) Marriage is a divine institution. It is God's plan for the propagation of the race, for the rearing of children, for the making of a better society and a better world. (2) Marriage is the highest and most intimate of all human relationships. It takes precedence of every other, even of that between parent and child. (3) It makes the wedded pair one, one in their mutual self-giving, one in their economic relationships, one in their devotion to God. (4) Marriage is for life. This is the ideal. This is the goal for which we are to steer. This is the beautiful dream that we are to seek to translate into reality.

II

A second preparation that we need for successful marriage is a faith that the plan of Jesus is workable. During recent years marriage failures have greatly increased. It is blazoned far and wide that one marriage out of every six now goes on the rocks. Of course, that percentage is far too large. Unfortunately too, one marriage that goes on the rocks gets far more attention than the six that succeed. It is the unusual, as you know, that gets into the news. It is the man who bites the dog that gets on the front page, and not the dog who bites the man. Thousands went to church in Jackson today, but the one man who may have broken into a store and stolen a package of cigarettes will get more publicity than all the thousands who walked in the path of duty. The one
preacher who tears up his credentials by immorality will get more publicity than ten thousand who remain true.

Now this vast publicity that we have given to failures in marriage has caused some to be suspicious of marriage. They enter it with a defeatist attitude. They have seen so many failures. Maybe the homes out of which they themselves came were blighted by this kind of failure. For this reason they are in doubt as to whether the plan suggested by Jesus is really workable. They are not sure that it is not far too high for ordinary human beings. Of course, such an attitude is a real handicap.

Then this attitude of defeatism hurts in another direction. It keeps you from foreclosing your mind against failure. You marry with the hope that you may get on all right, but with the secret thought in the back of your mind that if you do not you can do what so many others have done—just quit. So a young lady said not very long ago. "I do not know," she declared, openly, "how Tom and I will hit it off. But if we do not get on all right, we can quit." Enter marriage with that in your mind and the chances are overwhelmingly great that you will quit.

Years ago I remember telling a friend of my coming marriage. I had boarded in her home. I thought she would glow with enthusiasm at the momentous news, but she looked about as sad over it as if I had announced that my physician had just announced that I was afflicted with an inoperable cancer. Of course, being possessed of youth her attitude did not discourage me in the least. But there was that about it which depressed me in some measure. I realized from her attitude toward my marriage that her own had been a bit of a failure. It had not turned out to be the beautiful romance of her dreams. Let us face the fact that marriages do fail, but let us face the further fact that many of those who fail fail needlessly. They did not have to fail. Your marriage does not have to fail. Enter upon it with your mind foreclosed against failure. In a {"golf"}
game sometime ago I watched a friend drive a half dozen balls into a narrow little pond. He could have driven three times the breadth of that pond. Yet he had so fixed his mind upon that hazard that he had despaired of the distant goal. With the rumblings of so many fallen homes in our ears, some of us get our gaze so fixed on the hazard that we lose the goal. If you are going to make the best of this relationship, avoid defeatism. Enter upon it with the assurance and determination to succeed.

III

Another guide-post I suggest is this: Remember that marriage is for adults. It is like some of the juicy shows that we have advertised in our cities from time to time, "For Adults Only". One of the curses of India is the marriage of children. There is no measuring the blight that this has put upon that great nation through the centuries. But India is not the only land where children sometimes marry. Here in our country we have now and then a marriage between some old man and a child of twelve or fourteen. Of course, both of these, or the parents of the child, are apt to be morons. Then, there are marriages between high-school students who are yet in their teens. Marriage of young people under twenty, according to statistics, has a high average of failure. It is all right to marry, but wait until you are grown.

But marriage between two who are children in years is nothing like so common as marriage between grown-ups who are children morally, spiritually, and emotionally. Marriage between young babies is bad. But marriage between big old babies is worse still. Some folkës, you know, simply never grow up. I went to a home for dinner years ago. Arrived there, I saw a full-grown man playing about on the lawn. He was clad in a little checked apron such as babies two years of age used to wear. He had grown physically, but he was a baby mentally. There are plenty of folkës old enough to marry physically who
are still mental and emotional babies. Here, for instance, is a young chap who has grown up in a home without any discipline. He has never learned that anybody else has rights. What he has learned is that if he will cry loud enough, if he will stomp his foot hard enough, if he will quarrel long enough, he can upset all the plans of the household and get his way about any matter. He is of age now, but he is still a child in his attitude toward others. Childlike people are wonderfully winsome, but childish folks can be the very Nick.

Now suppose that this young man meets a girl reared in the same kind of home. She too has been spoiled from her youth. She too has been taught that "all roads lead to Rome" and that she is Rome. I was in a home sometime ago where they were celebrating the birthday of just such a girl. She was at the beautiful age of sixteen. I think that the girl was right who said that the happiest years of her life were the three years that she was sixteen. Before dinner the parents gave this girl her birthday present. She unwrapped it with the company standing about. When she looked at it, it was not what she wanted. She dashed it down upon the floor in a fit of utter rage.

Suppose such a young woman meets a young man of the same kind. Suppose they fancy themselves in love. It might be that they would really fall in love. It might be that genuinely in love with each other they might learn forbearance. They might learn that the other one has rights. But the chances are entirely against them. What would most likely happen would be that which happens when an irresistible force hits an immovable body. There would likely be a terrific explosion that would end in the divorce court. Over the door of the beautiful temple of marriage you ought to inscribe this word: "For Adults Only".

IV

A fourth guide-post toward successful marriage is this: Get acquainted with the one that you are to marry. Too many folks marry strangers. Perhaps
if you met each other on the street you would recognize each other. At least you would be able to say, "Your face is familiar." That is the part of the anatomy with which you have dealt most graciously in your brief days of courtship. But beyond that you know next to nothing. I am reminded of the marriage of Hannah. She had worked for the same mistress for years. Being frugal in her habits, she had trusted her mistress with her wages and had thus piled up quite a sum. "Hannah," said the mistress, "now that you are married, I suppose you will want your money." "Law, no!" she answered, "Do you think I would trust that much money in the same house with a strange niggah?"

One reason we marry strangers is that we are in too great a hurry. It is well to avoid the hasty marriage. I am not denying that there is such a thing as love at first sight, but what I do affirm is that what passes for love at first sight is often something entirely different at second sight. You can bear testimony to that. Many who impressed you very favorably at first meeting did not impress you favorably at all when you came to know them well. On the other hand many who made a bad impression at first sight came to make a good impression on you when you knew their real hearts. Give yourself a chance to know the one you marry. Else that trite old saying might come true—"You marry in haste and repent in leisure."

This is not to say that no hasty marriage ever turns out well. No doubt many of them do. I knew a minister years ago who went to a certain town to hold a meeting. At the beginning of the meeting he met the organist. She played for him during that series of services that lasted three weeks. At the close of the meeting they were married. So far as I know they got on well. So far as I know they lived happily ever afterward. But even if they did, their success does not prove the wisdom of hasty marriage. It only proves the truthfulness of that passage of Scripture that says, "The Lord preserveth the simple."
A second reason for the marriage of strangers is a dishonest courtship. It is perfectly natural for the young man who is interested in you to put his best foot foremost when he comes to see you. It is perfectly natural if you are interested in him for you to do the same. There are folks in whose company we naturally are at our best. There are others in which we are at our worst. There are some that appeal to the high in us, and some who appeal to the low. There are some fine personalities in whose presence no guilty thought can live. But whatever you are it is wise to be yourself—that is, to be openly honest in your courtship.

This is not always done. There are those who succeed in concealing their real characteristics from the other. Jacob courted Rachel for seven long years. By and by when he married Rachel as he thought, he found himself married not to Rachel at all but to weak-eyed Leah. This is a kind of parable. Many a man has courted Rachel to find himself married to an unattractive and disagreeable Leah. Many a woman has been courted by a Godlike gentleman to find herself married to an image of clay. Worshipping this image, she has gathered dust and dirt not upon her knees only but upon her soul as well.

If there is something in your life that is hidden, that is likely to come out after marriage, you had better be honest about it now. Carlyle wisely said that nothing can stand that is founded upon a lie. Build a lie into a rock wall, and it will fall down. Certainly! Build a lie into a bridge, and it will collapse. Build a lie into a ship, and it will find its grave in Davy Jones' locker. Build a lie into a marriage relationship, and it will topple into ruins. Be open and above board with the one that you marry.

A final reason I mention for marrying strangers is the deliberately shutting of our eyes to the facts. Sometime ago a little child stood in front of me with tightly closed eyes and said, "You can't see me." But I could. His
blindness did not make me blind. There are some who are blind because they cannot read character, but there are others who are blind because they shut their eyes to unpleasant facts. Here is a young man who appeals to you while you are in his company. Away from you he makes no appeal at all. He does not love the same amusements you love. He does not care for the same values for which you care. He has a background altogether different from your own. Even now you sometimes fight like cats and dogs, but you shut your eyes to these facts, hoping it will all come out right.

Bear this in mind, what offends you in your lover now will be far more offensive when that lover is your husband or your wife. It is vastly important that you be friends as well as lovers. It is vastly important that you have something of the same background, that you have a common faith, a common nationality. Marriage between protestants and Catholics have a high average of failure. If such marriages are entered upon at all, the difference ought to be adjusted before marriage and not after. During the World War a good many American boys married French girls. I am not saying that the girls were not just as good as they, but of those marriages that came under my observation personally, every one was a failure. Know the one that you are going to marry. Be honest. Face the facts. This will keep you from marrying strangers.

Here then are a few helps. Know what marriage is about. Avoid defeatism. Foreclose your mind against failure. Be grown up. Remember that marriage is for adults. Refuse to marry a stranger. Bear in mind too that success or failure is not a mere matter of chance. Marriage is not a lottery, as it is sometimes said. It is a matter of readiness. They that are ready enter into this Palace Beautiful; in the face of all others, the door is shut.
PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

"They that were ready went into the marriage feast and the door was shut." Matthew 25-10

This word of Jesus embodies a principle that is universal. We enter the door, whatever its nature, for which we are ready, and God himself can thrust us through no other. This is the case whether it is going out to dinner or entering Heaven.

1. If I am invited to dinner, however fine the feast, my readiness in point of health and appetite will condition my enjoyment for that feast.

2. If I am attending a concert, what I get out of the music will depend not simply upon the artists but upon my capacity. When I went to hear my first grand opera, I am told the artists did well, but I did not get into the feast. This was the case because I was not ready.

3. We have a library where are stored the accumulated wisdom of the great thinkers of all time. Here we can talk with Isaiah, with the greatest of the best. But what this feast means to us depends upon our readiness.

4. Herein lies the philosophy of Heaven and Hell. We may be sure that the door of Heaven will open to everyone who is ready to enter. But if you are not ready, if it so happens that you have hell in your heart, then the more fully you enter Heaven, the more painful would be your hell.

5. We need not, therefore, be surprised that this law holds in marriage. Whether a marriage is a joy or a sorrow, a delight or a tragedy, depends upon the readiness of those who enter into it. If you are both ready, then the door will open to you of its own accord and you will find yourself in possession of one of the deepest and sweetest secrets of human blessedness. If you are not ready, then in your face the door would be shut. This is the case not because God or anybody
else is angry with you. It works exactly as the law of sowing and reap-
ing. Ours is an ordered world. We reap as we sow. As my young friend
in Houston said, "Every man hits his own telephone pole". Now, if we
are to be ready, we ought to begin our preparation now and keep it up
through the years. To help in this I am going to mention a few guide
posts.

I

The first guide post I mention is a proper conception of marriage.
It is hard for the best of marksmen to hit the bulls eye if he cannot
see it. The finest of cars will wear out and fall to pieces before we
reach our goal if we do not know what that goal is. To the ship bound
for no harbor no wind can be favorable. The builder who throws away the
blue print of the architect is more likely to build a monstrosity than
a cathedral.

Now what is our goal? Let me remind you of the conception of mar-
riage that we learned from the lips of Jesus. I believe that conception
is right because it is universally helpful. It appeals to my common
sense. Its worth is borne out by the experience of many centuries.
He made four assertions about marriage.

(1) Marriage is a divine institution. It is a part of God's plan,
It is the way man and women come to their best. It is the way the chil-
dren whom they share with God in creating will come to their best. It
is, therefore, the way in which such as hold to it will reach their best.
Marriage is a part of God's plan for propagating the race and bring his
world to its best possible.

(2) Marriage takes precedence over every other relationship. With
the husband the wife is to come first. With the wife the husband is to
come first. No parent, not even a child, is to come between husband and
wife.

(3) In this relationship, husband and wife are to be one. They are to be one in their mutual giving. They are to be one in their economic interest. They are to be one in their devotion to God. Both ought to be religious. Not only so, but they ought to have the same religion. Mixed marriages do not, as a rule, turn out well.

If you as a Methodist marry a Catholic, you have to sign your name to this three-fold pledge: First, I will be married only by a Catholic priest. Second, I will not interfere in any way with the religious practices of my husband or wife. Third, My children must be baptized by the Catholic Church and trained in the Catholic faith. As a Protestant I sign away all rights in their religious training. If they ask me about my own faith or the faith of my mother and father, on this I must be silent. For this reason, unless you can become a Catholic whole-heartedly, your chances of making a go at marriage with a Catholic are poor indeed.

(4) Marriage is for life. That is what we should naturally expect. The Catholic church will not recognize divorce on any grounds. We accept divorce on the ground stated by Jesus in the New Testament and that is unfaithfulness of one of the contracting parties.

II

A second guide post, if you wish to make a successful marriage, is faith in the possibility of success. You must believe that marriage is workable.

You must believe this in the face of much that is discouraging. In 1945, one marriage out of every four went upon the rocks. That is appalling. We ought to know such grim facts in order to increase our care and determination to succeed. But many get their eyes so fixed on the failures that they begin to affect a defeatist attitude and reach the
conclusion that a really successful marriage is hardly to be expected. Some time ago a certain advertisement carried the astonishing news that three in every hundred had something wrong with their eyes. Its reverse reading is that ninety-seven percent have good eyes. It is well to read that even in '45 seventy-five percent of the marriages held together.

Unfortunately, it is the failures that get all the publicity. It is the unusual that gets into the paper. It is when the man bites the dog that it becomes news. Tens of thousands went to church in Charlotte this morning, but one tramp who broke open a store and stole a package of cigarettes would get more publicity than all these thousands.

Looking thus at the failures about us instead of the successes should make us more determined. Some time they prove a handicap. We fix our minds on defeat rather than on success. I watched a golfer drive almost a dozen balls into a pond. He could easily have driven twice the distance across the pond but that pond proved a mental hazard. So he gave it one ball after another.

Another bad result of fixing our eyes on failures is that make provision for failure ourselves. The surest way to win is to foreclose your mind against failure. Unless you do this, you will be constantly seeking an out. Jesus said, "If any man looketh back he is not fit for the kingdom". This does not mean that he is necessarily wicked. It does mean that he is half-hearted. Those who succeed in marriage enter it and continue it with a whole-hearted determination that come what will we are going to win. Unless you foreclose your mind against failure, you are not likely to succeed.

III

A third help toward a successful marriage is the realization that marriage is for adults. That sounds trite and commonplace, but in real-
There are two kinds of children that get married.

(1) There are those who are childish in years. Some marry too young. This is true of almost all who marry in their teens. Few such marriages have much chance of success. Those who marry at that tender age are not fully developed, either physically or emotionally, nor are they fully developed mentally.

(2) But I think the most disastrous type of child is the one who is mature enough physically but has failed to develop morally and spiritually and emotionally. Little babies who marry would have a poor chance. Big babies do little better. These babies are sometime immature. At times they have been spoiled to death by their parents. Here, for instance, is one who has learned that if she will scream loud enough, cry long enough, stamp her feet hard enough, she can upset the plans of the whole house and get her way. By and by she meets and falls in love with a boy who has had the same lack of training. Maybe they will be unselfish enough to get on in spite of this, but the chances are that it will be like an irresistible force hitting an immovable body. It would end in disaster.

To succeed in marriage there must be give and take. Little babies are not good at this. We do not expect it of them. You may carry your colicky youngster in your arms for three solid hours and he will never show the least appreciation. We hope it is because he is a baby but if he keeps that up after he is grown, he never learns to say "I owe," "I ought", "I must," "I appreciate," then he is still a mere dwarf. When two such babies get together there is a tragedy ahead.

The fourth and last guide post I mention is this. If you expect to succeed, know the girl or the boy that you marry. Thousands of people every year marry strangers. Of course, they might recognize them if they met them on the street, but, in reality, they do not know them at
all. There are three principal reasons for this.

1. Take these hasty marriages. Marriage, if it goes the normal way, ought to begin by dating, going steady, engagement. But you are in too big a hurry for that. When Texas passed a law requiring three days' notice before marriage, marriages fell of the following year 18,000. There were 1,500 who could not stay of the same mind for three days.

I am not saying that there is no hasty marriage that succeeds, but whenever they do, it is no proof of the wisdom of such marriages. It is rather a proof of that word from the Psalm, "The Lord preserveth the simple".

2. A second reason that folks fail to know each other is dishonesty. "If you build a lie into a rock wall", said Carlyle, "it will fall down". That is true of a building. When San Francisco was destroyed by an earthquake, its shoddy buildings accounted for more disaster than the earthquake itself.

Naturally, if you build a lie into a marriage, it will fall. Be honest. Jacob and Leah never got on well. This was the case because he thought he was marrying Rachael when he was marrying Leah. If there is something in your life that you believe would case the one you are to marry to back out, you are foolish and dishonest if you do not face it before you marry.

I courted my wife before I decided to enter the ministry. I had good reason to believe that her parents were not deeply enthusiastic over their daughter marrying a minister. Suppose I had kept my decision a secret until we were safely married and then sprung it on her. It might have worked out all right but the chances are even though she had no objection to marrying a minister, she would have felt that I had married someone who was not honest. Be sincere in your courtship.
3. Face the facts. I have seen engaged couples who shut their eyes to disagreeable facts about the one they were going to marry. Sometimes their attitude toward religion got on their nerves. Sometimes they could not endure the family of the bride-to-be. Sometimes the prospective husband had some personal traits that filled the girl with inward rage. But knowing these things, they shut their eyes and acted as if they were not true.

I read some time ago of a scientist who saw a savage in the South Sea Islands sitting under a fig tree eating figs. The scientist broke open one of these figs and showed it to the savage through his microscope. As the savage looked, he discovered what the scientist already knew, that the figs were just alive and working with vermin. The sight so utterly enraged the savage that he shattered the microscope to bits and went on eating his figs.

You had better face the facts in advance about the one you are going to marry, otherwise you will have to face them later with bitter heartache and tears.
"Offer not thy burnt offering in every place to which thou comest."
—Deuteronomy 12:13

I

We are continuing our study of guide-posts to successful marriage. So far we have indicated four that we believe will be helpful.

1. Have a proper philosophy of marriage. We turn for this philosophy to Jesus. This we do not because of His claim to divinity or inspiration. We do so because His plan has been found to work better than any other plan. Two guide-posts may be exactly alike. But the one that indicated the road to our destination is the one that we should choose even though it might be less pretentious than its fellow. We choose the plan of Jesus because it is the best plan that society has tried out so far.

2. To guarantee the best chances of success we must foreclose our minds against failure. It may be that we ourselves are the shattered fragments of a broken home. It may be that while our home still holds together we live in an atmosphere of an armistice rather than of a settled peace. It may be some of our friends have made shipwreck. All these create distrust. They often cause an attitude of defeatism. To give ourselves the best possible chance of success we must so believe in marriage as to foreclose our minds against failure.

3. We are to remember that marriage is for grown-ups. Marriage between little babies is tragic. Marriage between big babies is more tragic still. But the marriages against which we need warning are not so much against those who are babies in fact but those who are babies emotionally and morally. Childlikeness is beautiful, but childishness is horrible. If you intend to succeed
at marriage, be your age and choose a mate who is of the same mind.

4. If you are going to make a successful marriage, try to get acquainted with the one with whom you intend to share your entire life. Some use more care in buying a new suit of clothes than they do in marrying. Avoid the hasty marriage. Avoid the dishonest marriage. Avoid the stupid marriage such as we make because we refuse to face the facts.

II

This brings us to the guide-posts of the evening. The first we mention is this: Marry with the purpose of building a home rather than a reformatory. That may seem a trite and silly thing to say, but when we face the facts such is not the case. People are constantly marrying in spite of the fact that there are characteristics and habits and attitudes on the part of the one they are marrying that offend them deeply. The only reason that they ever make up their minds to such a marriage is because they take the sweetunction to themselves that once they are married they can iron all these difficulties out with consummate ease.

But generally speaking, such is not the case. This is true in the first place because most of us do not like to be reformed. We have got into comfortable ruts where the running is fairly easy and there we desire to stay. Especially do we resent being reformed by one whose approval we thought we already had. Here is a girl that loved me well enough to marry me. I thought I made quite a knightly figure seen through her eyes. But now I discover that she did not like a lot of things about me. That in itself arouses my resentment.

Since this is the case, the effort on the part of husband or wife to reform the other is usually quite difficult. Sometimes it is difficult to the point of impossibility. "If you did not like me as I am," the one who is being reformed is likely to answer indignantly, "what did you marry me for?" That is quite a reasonable question. It is certainly true that if you have any hard difficulties
to iron out you had better do the ironing before you are bound together by the
close ties of marriage. Yet we persuade ourselves that the prizes that would
be hard under the best circumstances will become easy under circumstances far
more difficult.

Here, for instance, is a young girl who is engaged to be married to a young
man of a suspicious nature. When she is with a friend across the room and
laughs, he fancies that she is laughing at him. If she as much as speaks to
another man on the street, he is jealous and fancies that she may be walking
out on him. In short he does not believe in her. He is of a jealous nature. Now
there are times when jealousy is right and inevitable. If my wife gives more
attention to some other man than to me, I have a right to be jealous. But there
are so many people who are jealous without reason. For these jealousy is
what Shakespeare said—"The green-eyed monster that makes the meat it feeds
upon." If two folks cannot believe in each other before they are married, they
are likely to do it even less afterward.

Perhaps the matter at issue between them has to do with religion. Maybe
the girl is religious and the boy not. Perhaps he has no particular objection
to religion but is simply not interested. Again he may be downright antagonistic.
He may laugh at those convictions that are the safeguards of your life. He may
likely make flings at those fundamental integrities by which you believe that
the soul lives and that civilization lives. Maybe you can get him to change
his mind, but if you cannot be happy with one who has that attitude when you
are single, do not expect to be after you are married. Maybe both of you
are religious but you belong to different churches. That is not an impassable
barrier unless you make it so. But if you find yourselves getting angry at
each other over your different faiths now, marriage will not improve it; it
will make it worse. Settle your differences before you get to the altar or
they will become greater instead of less.
Then maybe that to which you object is a matter of some particular habit. Here, for instance, is a boy who has grown up in an old-fashioned home. He has been taught to have a high regard for his body. He has been taught to keep it clean. He uses neither tobacco nor liquor. But he meets a girl who is modern. She takes a cocktail now and then. In addition, she smokes cigarettes incessantly. Naturally the boy objects. Maybe you think he has no right. I am not saying that he has, but I am saying that if her habits get on his nerves now it will do it even worse by and by.

Mark you, I am not here discussing the good or the evil of cigarette-smoking on the part of girls or of anybody else. Broadly speaking, a girl has as much right to smoke as does a man. There is, however, this difference. The woman in a fuller sense than a man is the keeper of the gate of life. What she does influences the coming generation even more than the man. Some of the best physicians living today tell us that smoking mothers do not have as good chance in being successful mothers as non-smokers. A far smaller percent are able to nurse their own babies. One of the best physicians in Washington declares that a practice of nearly fifty years has taught him that many a mastoid operation is made necessary because the mother was a smoker. You have not quite a right to do as you please on this because you are the keeper of the gate of life.

But it is the woman rather than the man who runs the risk of becoming a reformer. Generally speaking, if a man knows something shady in the past of the woman in whom he is interested, he quits. If she does not measure up, he turns away. But often the woman is not so wise. If she is warned of that which is objectionable in her lover, she shuts her eyes and presses on a little closer. She can remedy it all beyond the altar. But bear this in mind, the man who swears in your presence will swear at you later on. The man who comes into your presence perfumed with cloves to hide the perfumes of liquor will come
without the cloves once you are married. For this reason set out to build a home—never a reformatory.

III

Then if you want to give yourself the best chance, fight shy of the secret escapade. Avoid so far as is reasonable the run-away marriage. Do not misunderstand me. I am not saying that those who run away always run down hill. I am not saying that many a run-away marriage has not proved successful, but what I do say is that they are risky. The man who wants you to run away with him and keep the marriage a secret usually has a reason. That reason might be such that if you knew all the facts you would not have him.

Sometimes the run-away marriage takes place because of the objection on the part of the parents. Now such objection may be very foolish. Sometimes parents object when they have no right to object. Sometimes their reasons are not reasons that are solid and fundamental. But it is well to bear this in mind—that there might be some sense in their objection. At least it is well to remember that they have seen quite as much of life as you have. It is well to remember that they love you perhaps as much as the one who wants you to run away with him, that they are seeking your highest happiness. Therefore, it is well to give their objection some consideration. In fact, you ought to give them at least this much consideration. If their objections seem flimsy and ill-founded, at least wait, if you are not of age until you belong to yourself. If you cannot wait that long, then you ought not to marry anyway. When Texas passed a law requiring three-day's notice before marriage, the marriages of that state were cut down that year by eighteen thousand. Of course, many of them went across the border to neighboring states, but there were thousands of them that could not stay of the same mind three days. Mrs. Browning, whose married life was such a beautiful poem, has this to say about the power to wait:
"Unless you can muse in a crowd all day
On the absent face that fixed you;
Unless you can love, as the angels may,
With the breadth of heaven betwixt you;
Unless you can dream that his faith is fast,
Through behoving and unbehoving;
Unless you can die when the dream is past—
Oh, never call it loving!

Then I should like to offer this suggestion to the man. The girl who will lightly treat the objections of her parents might be a flimsy character. The relationship between parent and child is a high and holy relationship. We certainly owe something to those who have given us life and have made a home for us. Any girl who would treat such a relationship lightly might even treat lightly the relationship between husband and wife. Therefore, give some consideration to the objections of your parents. Do not walk over and run away from their will at least until you belong to yourself. But if you have become of age, if in spite of the objections you still want each other, then I say, marry. That is your own business in a sense in which it is the business of none other. I had a wealthy kinsman some years ago whose beautiful daughter was foolish enough to fall in love with a Methodist circuit rider. The father objected most strenuously. He forbade the minister to come on the place. One day when he thought they might get together while he was in town, he locked his charming daughter in the basement.

That time he guessed right. The minister came. The girl slipped her small hand through the lattice door that shut her in and took the hand of the minister, and they were married. As Uncle Dick came back, he saw this minister with an ax on his shoulder turning the corner of the house. "Where are you going?" he said indignantly. "I am going to smash down this door and get my wife," he said with quiet determination. "Never mind," said Uncle Dick.

"Here's the key." And they lived happily ever afterward.
But this I remark is the exception rather than the rule. At the close of the last World War a bewildered young man came to my study and told me this story. "At the outbreak of the War I was secretly married to a girl of one of the best families in South Carolina. There they have no marriage license. We were given a certificate, but my wife tore it up. We lived together for a little while. Then I went to the front. Last week I received my discharge. I wrote her to come. She wrote back that she was married to somebody else. What am I to do?" There was nothing for him to do but to erase himself. It leaves one with the feeling that the girl desiring to keep the marriage a secret wanted to leave the door open to do just what she had done. Therefore, avoid so far as possible the secret escapade.

IV

My final guide is this: Hold yourself in wise reservation for this supreme adventure. Remember here as elsewhere you cannot have your cake and eat it too. This wise old prophet of the long ago said, "Offer not thy burnt offering in every place to which thou comest." Do not broadcast yourself in life's green spring lest when you come to the supreme sacramental moment of life you will have nothing to give. There are various ways in which we broadcast ourselves.

1. We do so by petty flirtations, by playing at love. Take our stage folks, for instance. By nature they are neither better nor worse than the rest of us. Yet their marital adventures have a low average. There are some even in Hollywood that remain with the same mate to the end of the day, but this is the exception rather than the rule. Why is this the case? They play at love so frequently and so long that they lose their capacity to love. They offer their burnt offering upon so many altars that when they come to the supreme sacramental moment of life they have nothing to give.

Then there are times when it is more than a flirtation. They go off the
deep end. There was a young chap at Harvard, idealistic beyond the ordinary. He said that he only walked the primrose path one time and I believe him, but that was one time too many. He contracted a social disease from which he thought himself entirely recovered. When he was married, there was every hope of a lovely home life. But today his wife is little better than an invalid. There are no children. What makes his hell is this—the realization that he has made of his own body a draw-bridge across which the cloven-footed devils of disease have walked to the wrecking of his finest hopes and dreams. "Offer not thy burnt offering in every place to which thou comest."

Did you ever hear the story of the three weavers? One morning a weaver said to his two friends, "The Angel of Suffering came to my home last night and a lovely girl was born." "So it was at my house," said the second weaver. "So it was at mine," said the third.

"But that is not all," said the first weaver. "A beautiful fairy came and gave my little girl a wonderful loom with thread of gold. 'One day,' said the fairy, 'a prince will seek to wed your daughter. If she can weave a garment for him out of this thread of gold that fits him as the falcon's feather fit the falcon, that day her sweetest dreams will come true. But if she cannot weave such a garment, that day her heart will break.' " "So it happened at my house," again said the second weaver. "And so it happened at mine," said the third.

Then the rapid days slipped into weeks, and the weeks into months, and the months into years. The little girls grew apace. Often the first weaver would take his beautiful little daughter upon his lap and talk to her about the wonderful loom with its thread of gold. The second weaver would sometimes mention the magic loom in the presence of his daughter but always with loud guffaws and sometimes with understanding winks and nods at his adult companions. The third
weaver never mentioned the loom with its golden thread at all. He acted as though it were an unclean and guilty thing.

Then one fine day a prince came to the home of the second weaver. The father dashed in with the same loud laughter upon his lips to tell his daughter, "Your prince has come. Set yourself to weaving at once." She looked at him in amazement and said, "You never told me that he was coming except jokingly. I did not think you were serious. I have already been weaving. I wove a garment for a passing knight. I wove another for a squire. But I will do my best." So she wove a garment for the prince, but when it was finished it was so little that it would not have fit a pygmy. And the prince went his way, and that day her heart broke.

To the home of the third weaver the prince came one day. The father rushed in to tell his daughter that the prince had come, and it was time to begin weaving. The girl looked at her father with hard and angry eyes. "You never told me that there was to be any prince. I never dreamed I would have such an opportunity. I have been weaving. I have given one garment to a troubador, another to a page, another to a village churl." But she wove with what little thread she had and when the garment was finished, it was too little for the smallest dwarf. And the prince passed out of her life. And that day, as the fairy had said, her heart broke.

But when the prince came to the home of the first weaver, he said to the daughter with voice glad with understanding, "Your prince has come. Now you can begin your weaving. We have talked about it many times. You know what it means." So she set herself to the task of weaving a garment out of the thread of gold. When it was finished, the prince donned it, and it fit him as the falcon's feathers fit the falcon. And that day, according to the prophecy of the fairy, her dream came true. It was no accident. She had held herself
in wise reservation. Therefore, "offer not thy burnt-offering in every place to which thou comest," else when you come to the supreme sacramental moment of life, you will have nothing to give. They that are ready go into this feast, and in the face of all others the door is shut.
Causes of Failure - Before Marriage

What God has joined together, let no man put asunder.

Matthew 19-6

There is a way of venturing upon any enterprise that makes success more or less certain. There are also ways of venturing upon that same enterprise in such a fashion as to make failure all-but inevitable. A young chap, all enthusiasm, told the other day how he was going to learn to play the violin, but those who knew him were not thrilled. They were sure that he would never follow through. One day an eager young man came to Jesus with a magnificent purpose. "Lord" he said, "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." Now that was exactly the thing for which Jesus yearned above all else. Yet the Master did not thrill. He saw that the young enthusiast had not counted the cost, that therefore, his glamorous undertaking was likely to end in drab failure.

As with other adventures, so it is with the high adventure of marriage. There is a door of entrance that one feels leads almost certainly to the palace hall of success. But there is another door of entrance that leads to failure. There are marriages that to the wise observer are foredoomed. There are multitudes of husbands that throw away their wedding rings before they ever purchase them from the jeweler. There are brides that throw them away before the groom ever slips the sacred symbol upon her finger. Tonight we are to study together some of the causes that make a successful marriage next to impossible. What are some of the follies and failures, ignorances and stupidities that tend to guarantee our failure in this most worthwhile and beautiful adventure.

I.

One great and fundamental cause of failure is the fact that so many marry
without any adequate conception of what true marriage really is. Sometimes such ignorance is not their fault. Very often they are more sinned against than sinning. Their parents, their teachers in the Sunday School, their pastors have failed to give them the needed instructions. They enter upon this adventure as a ship would begin a voyage without either chart or compass. They are like a contractor who would set out to build a skyscraper or a cathedral without any plans or specifications. It is hard to do anything well when you are more or less ignorant of what you are about, when you have a vague and hazy notion of the thing that you are undertaking to do.

1. One of the great needs of our day is a right philosophy of marriage. I believe we learn that right philosophy from the lips of our Lord. As I said to you on last Sunday evening, nothing is either right or wrong in itself. The test of whether anything is right depends upon this. Is it humanly helpful? We believe Jesus' philosophy of marriage meets this test. It works. Few indeed are they who have taken the Hollywood philosophy, for instance, that would tell you that they are making a success. If the habit of flitting from one husband to another, or one wife to another proved to be more humanly helpful than that of Jesus, then I would say that his plan should be thrown into discard. But not until that is proven.

Let me remind you again of the four assertions Jesus made with regard to marriage.

(1) He declared that it is a divine institution. By that he meant that it is a part of the divine plan. It fits into human need. Marriage is humanly helpful. It is meant to be so for the husband and wife. It is meant to perpetuate the race. It is meant to give the children the best possible opportunity to grow into strong men and women. Since marriage is a part of God's plan, it is not to be entered upon except for reasons that we can hold up before His face without embarrassment. This would make impossible a great many of the silly and selfish marriages that some are entering upon today.
(2) Marriage is the supreme human relation. That is, with the husband the wife is to be first, with the wife is to be first. The relation between parent and child is an exceedingly high and holy relation. But it is to be superceded by that between the husband and wife. "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife." The marriage relation is the highest human relationship.

(3) Those thus married are to be one. This is more than a mere figure of speech. The wedded pair are to be one in their mutual selfgiving. Each is to give all to the other. They are to be one in their material relations. Sharing in what is primary, they are also to share in what is secondary. They are to be one in their devotion to God.

(4) The final assertion of Jesus is that marriage is for life. He permits divorce for the one cause of unfaithfulness. But there is nor right divorce, that is, there is no divorce where it is right for both husband and wife, save that written in terms of green grass upon the grave of one of the contracting parties. It is my conviction that many a marriage that goes upon the rocks would be saved if those making the adventure would brace themselves by this fine philosophy.

II.

The second cause of failure is the "defeatest" attitude with which many enter marriage. For a good many years divorces have been increasing. Today nearly one in six of those who marry make a failure. These failures are often paraded before our eyes in the movies and in the press. Some six times as many are successful as those who fail. But these are seldom mentioned. It seems to be the conviction of the American public, that only the evil, the unfortunate, the rotten, is news. I dare say that some 50,000 people go to church in our city every Sunday. But one negro who stold a package of cigarettes would have more notice in the paper on Monday than all the good and decent people who attended
to their duties. So the failures in marriage are played up and the successful are often forgotten.

It is natural, therefore, that some young people have become skeptical. They have learned their skepticism from their elders. I have been married for more than a quarter of a century. In my distant day divorces were not so common as now. But, even then, when I told the thrilling news of my approaching marriage to some of my older friends, they looked as though I had just informed them that I was on my way to the hospital for a desperate surgical operation. Of course, they did not frighten me in the least. But they did depress me somewhat because I realized that their marriages had not been greatly successful.

Sometimes this attitude of defeat takes the direction of skepticism as to marriage itself. The ideal set is so high that we feel that it is impossible. We can never make a go of it. How can we hope to succeed where so many just as decent as ourselves have failed? This fear becomes a hazard. I watched a golfer drive a half-dozen balls into a pond the other day. He was accustomed to driving much further than across that pond. But he fixed his gaze upon his difficulties and began to say, "What if I fail?" and fail he did. Those who enter into marriage despairing of the possibility of success make failure almost a certainty.

Then this defeatist attitude leads some to question the real worth of success. Here is a common characteristic. When we face a prize that we are too morally sluggish to claim, we seek to save our self-respect by talking the prize down, telling ourselves that it isn't worth capturing anyway. When the fox in Aesop's Fables saw the delicious grapes, they made his mouth water. But when he discovered that he did not have the courage to get them, he turned his back upon them, declaring that they were sour anyway. Therefore, he did not want them. A young lady said to me the other day "I do not know how Tom and I will hit it off, but if we do not like it we can quit." Thus she not only questioned the possibility of success, but its worth as well. A defeatist attitude lessens the
III.

A third cause of marital failure is the marriage of children. There are those that enter into marriage that are too childish to make a success of it. These childish folks fall into two or three groups.

1. There are those that are really too young. Now and then we have the disgraceful spectacle of some mature man marrying a child from ten to fourteen years of age. Of course, that is most tragic. A man who is guilty of such conduct is either a bit of a moron or a felon. Those who enter into marriage before they are twenty years of age, enter with a heavy handicap. They are not emotionally developed, the adventure is too high as a rule for their inexperience. Marriage between men and women more mature has a far larger percentage of success than those who are in their teens.

2. But there is another group more sure of failure still. They are those who are mature enough in years, but who have not grown up morally and spiritually. Sometimes they are quite vigorous and strong physically and quite well developed mentally, but they are still little more than big babies. They are thoroughly childish. Here for instance, is a young fellow who has grown up without any sort of discipline. He has been taught by experience, that, if he will cry long enough, stomp his foot hard enough, quarrel long enough, he can get his way about almost any matter in which he is interested. He has never learned that other folks have rights. He has never learned to put himself in the other fellow’s place. He prides himself in the fact that he wants what he wants when he wants it.

Now here is a girl who perchance has grown up in a similar environment. She too has been humored and spoiled till she is rotten. She has never learned the beautiful art of forbearance. She can burst into tears as easily as a house-
wife can turn the faucet. She pelts all antagonism with these tears. She handles them as skillfully as a gangster does a machine gun. Sometime ago I was invited to a birthday party where the daughter of the home was celebrating her sixteenth birthday. That is a beautiful and lovely age. (One girl said that the four most beautiful years of her life were the ones when she was sixteen.) Her parents presented her with a gift, she unwrapped it in the presence of the company. She then went into a rage and threw it on the floor. With adjunct humility her father picked up the gift and promised what she wished.

Now, suppose this girl meets and loves the boy above described. It might be that their mutual love would teach them mutual forbearance. But the chances are overwhelmingly against it. There is far more likelihood that that would take place which takes place when an irresistible force hits an unmovable body. There would likely be a catastrophe which would end in the divorce court. Some people are entirely too spoiled, too babyish, too utterly childish to make a success of marriage. To marry a little baby is bad enough, but to marry a big baby is the very climax of tragedy.

IV.

The fourth cause of marital failure I mention is the marrying of strangers. So many folks marry people that they really do not know. Of course, the husband might recognize the wife if he met her on the street, and vice versa. But they really do not know each other. Such knowledge as they have is purely superficial. It has to do with what is outside only. Of the inner depth of personality they are oftentimes entirely ignorant.

1. One reason for this ignorance is the hasty marriage. There are some folks that fall in love at first sight and must marry right now. I am not denying that there is such a thing as love at first sight, but what I do say is this: What passes for love at first sight is often something entirely different
at second sight. There are those who impress us favorable at first, who leave an opposite impression when we come to know them better. There are others who impress us most unfavorable at first, who win us when we come to know their real worth. This love at first sight is often times purely emotional, a totally flimsy foundation upon which to build.

Now, about other matters that mean something to us, we take real care. If you are buying a new hat or a new suit of clothes, you give the matter thoughtful consideration. If you are buying a new car or a new home, you take more time still. But in choosing a life-long companion, the father or mother of your children, you are often too hasty to gain any real knowledge. When a law was passed in a neighboring state compelling a three days notice it cut down marriages about 18,000 in one year. Of course, some of these got married in other states. But hundreds of them did not get married at all because they could not continue of the same mind for three days.

By this I do not mean that hasty marriages are never successful. Sometimes they are, but the chances are greatly against them. Some years ago I knew a rather attractive preacher who went to a certain Texas town to hold a meeting. The meeting lasted for three weeks. He met a girl at the beginning of that meeting and married her at the close. Possibly they lived happy eger after, but it only proves the truth of that Scripture that says, "The Lord preserveth the simple."

I am reminded of a certain colored sister who was going to take a husband. She had worked for her mistress for a number of years during which she had been her banker. She had quite a sum of money laid up with her, but now that she was getting married her mistress supposed she would want it. She said to her one day, "Hanna, you will want your money that I have saved for you." But Hanna looked at her in amazement and said, "Law, do you think I would trust all that money in the same house with that strange nigger?" We smile at that, but we trust our all to those who are strangers.

2. Then we are often ignorant of those whom we marry because one party or
both have dealt in deception. It is quite natural that when one goes courting he should put his best foot foremost. But too often we go beyond this. We are down-right insincere. We pose as possessing a wealth that we do not have. We lay claim to virtues to which we are strangers. Jacob courted Rachel for seven years. At last he thought he married her. But during the coming days he discovered that he was married not to Rachel, but to Leah. That is a parable. Many a man has courted Rachel only to marry Leah, and vice versa. Many a woman has bowed to her what seemed to be God, but to find out that she had been worshiping an image of clay and thus had gotten dust and dirt not only upon her knees but upon her soul as well.

If you hope for a successful married life, be honest and frank with each other. Remember that what we sow, even in our courtship, we also reap. Remember that Carlyle was speaking sober truth when he said "Build a lie into a rock wall and it will fall down." It is equally true that if you build a lie into a skyscraper, or a bridge, or a marriage they too, will fall down. Marriage is an adventure that calls for strict honesty. Of course, every case is to be judged upon its merits. But as a rule, if there is a soiled chapter upon your life that, if discovered, would likely make a happy marriage impossible, you had better face it during the courtship days. Though the one you love might never learn the guilty secret, yet your knowledge of it might come to gnaw like a devouring vulture at your heart.

3. Then there is another group who are ignorant because they simply shut their eyes. They refuse to face the facts. You love the girl, but her family gets under your skin and runs you wild. You love the boy but your tastes are wider apart than the spaces between the star. He loves rollicking company and you like the opposite. You love each other very dearly, but, even now, you sometimes spit at each other in hot anger and tend to fight like cats and dogs. If this happens before marriage, you are a fool to expect anything better to happen after marriage or you are much in love, but are really not good friends.
You could not greatly enjoy each other with petting taken out. That does not give promise of a successful marriage. You are likely to find yourself saying what a certain Irishman said of his wife "I love her, but I do not like her." There is more in this than meets the eye.

Maybe you are of different religions. That is a chasm that is hard to bridge. Many Protestants and Catholics have married and made a go of it, but the risk is great. Beware of marrying one whose background and tradition are all vastly different from yours. Quite a few of our American boys married French girls during the war. But almost all of them ended in disaster. I have in mind now one of the finest young men that it has been my privilege to know. He married a French girl of high intelligence. They really loved each other. They are living together still, but they are as far apart as the poles. Instead of finding a new heaven they have found a new hell. One feels that they never would have married if they had only dared to face the facts.

This is as far as I can go with this message, next Sunday evening I shall continue with the study of those follies and stupidities that tend to make a successful marriage impossible. Bear this in mind. The success of your marriage will depend upon the fitness of you and your partner for the high adventure. The fitness of one is not enough. Many a marriage fails where one party is at fault. It takes fitness on the part of both. Where this is the case life's greatest dream comes true. "They that were ready went in with him into the feast, and the door was shut" Before the feet of the ready, the door to marital happiness opens of its own accord. But in the face of the unready it is shut forevermore. May God give us the grace as young people to prepare ourselves wisely for this adventure.
Causes of Failure — Before Marriage —

Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest.

Deuteronomy 12:13

I.

So far we have said that many marriages fail because they are foredoomed for the following reasons.

1. Those entering upon marriage so often do so without knowing what it is all about. These are often more sinned against than sinning. But, regardless of whose fault it is, they have no star by which to steer. We therefore venture to suggest a serious consideration of the philosophy of marriage taught by Jesus. In this philosophy he made four assertions.

   (1) Marriage is a divine institution.

   (2) It is a supreme human relationship.

   (3) It makes the married couple one.

   (4) It is for life.

2. A second reason for failure in marriage is the defeatist attitude with which so many enter into it today. The failures of others as seen in the news papers and on the screen and in actual experience, creates fear. This fear often becomes a hazard. It is harder for the average golfer to drive a ball across even a small pond than if the pond were not there. This is the case because the presence of this pond creates fear in the driver and lessens his efficiency. Too few enter marriage with their minds foreclosed against failure.

3. Then there are those who fail because they are too childish to succeed. Some of them are too young in years. Some of them have never learned to respect the rights of others. They know nothing of the fine art of self-control.
They only know how to insist on having what they want when they want it. Of course, these big babies have a slim chance of making a go of this fine relationship. Then others while being mature physically are far from being mature mentally and emotionally.

4. Then there are those who fail because they marry strangers. They do not know each other. Sometimes this ignorance is born of undue haste. They have a fit of what they call love at first sight and marry immediately. At other times one or both have deliberately deceived the other. They bow down to what seems a god or goddess and wake to find that they have been in reality worshiping only an image of clay. If one builds a lie into a stone wall that wall will fall down. If we build a lie into our marriage relationship that relationship will fall down.

II.

The second reason I give for marital failure is that so often we postpone correcting the evils to which we object until after marriage. How many have met disaster by trying to build a reformitory rather than a home. Whatever irritates or irks you in your intended partner had better be gotten rid of before marriage. This is the case because it is easier done now, other things being equal, than it will be then. If it cannot be cleared now, the chance for so doing will be slight indeed after marriage.

Suppose, for instance, the man who is paying court to you is of a highly suspicious nature. When he sees you laugh in the distance, he vows you are laughing at him. "When you speak to another man he believes that you are deliberately plotting to turn him down. There are times when one has a right to be jealous. But, there are other times when jealousy is born of an unworthy and suspicious nature. If you cannot fully believe in each other before marriage you will find it far harder after marriage. Again you may be a Christian and he not. Perhaps
he is not even friendly toward religion. What you love he ridicules. The thing that means most to you, he laughs at or damns with faint praise, or he sneers it out of court all together. Perhaps you can help him. But if you see no improvement before marriage, do not expect a revolution after. Or maybe you are both Christians, but your church gets on his nerves and his church gets on you nerves. You had better get together now or the chances are that you never will. Even though your differing church relation may never end in divorce, it is likely to prove very confusing to your children.

Or it maybe the one you are thinking about marrying is addicted to some habit that is to you personally very offensive. It maybe that you have been brought up to have a great reverence for your body, that you use neither liquor nor tobacco. But the girl with whom you go is a modern. She smokes incessantly. Perhaps she drinks now and then. Maybe it is only a cocktail, or maybe she gets drunk. If she really loves you, she will quit all this before marriage, for your sake. If she does not and you marry her expecting her to quit after marriage, then you will be deliberately playing the fool.

But it is the woman rather than the man who is most prone to run a reformitory. How often girls brought up in a Christian home will marry men that they know drink habitually. These men promise, of course, that they will quit as soon as they are married. But the man who swears in your presence before marriage will likely swear at you after marriage. The man who comes into your presence with his breath perfumed by cloves to hide the fumes of liquor before marriage will come without the cloves later on. If all the fine women who have had their hearts broken by marrying men to reform them were to sob at once it would shake the pillars of the earth. Beware therefore, of setting out to build a reformitory rather than a home.

III.

The third cause of failure that I mention is the secret escapade. There are
those who seem to fancy that it adds much to the romance of marriage to run away. Now there are run away marriages that prove successful. But such escapades are a great risk. Generally speaking, the man who asks a girl to run away with him has a reason for so doing. That reason is likely to be his conviction that he has a soiled chapter in his life story that makes him undesirable as a husband. The fact that he desires you to elope with him may mean that your parents have already objected.

Now suppose this is the case. Suppose there is a young chap waiting on you to whom your father and mother have strong objections, then what? It maybe that they are both wrong. It maybe that this prince of yours is being greatly underestimated. But, assuming that they do not know what they are talking about, it might be well for you to give their objections some consideration. Bear in mind that they know quite as much about life as you. Bear in mind also that they might love you as well as he. Remember that the one thing they have in view is your highest happiness. Of course, I am aware how futile it is for me to say this. There is very little use in arguing with one who is in love. You might as well stand in front of the Niagra Falls and say "boo" and expect it to flow right back into Lake Erie. But, in spite of this, I am offering the suggestion that you give the objections of your parents some consideration. At least you should wait until you belong to yourself and have a right to marry. If you cannot stand a bit of waiting, the chances are that you are not much in love anyway. Mrs. Robert Browning, whose romance was one of the sweetest in history was of that conviction.

Unless you can muse in the crowd all day,
On the absent face that fixed you,
Unless you can love as the angels may
With the breadth of Heav'n betwixt you,
Unless you can dream that his love holds fast,
Through behoving and unbehoving,
Unless you can die when the dream is past,
The final reason I give that makes against successful marriage is the squandering of ourselves before we come to the crowning adventure of our life. A wise prophet of long ago wrote this "Offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest." The man who makes a holy place of every spot will soon have no holy spot at all. The man who makes love to every woman will soon find himself incapable of a real great love. We cannot have our cake and eat it too. Nor can we sow ourselves broadcast in trifling flirtations and have as much to give when we come to the supreme sacramental moment of life.

Now, it strikes me that we are in greater danger of doing this today than at any other time in recent years. This does not mean that young men and women did not indulge in petting parties even in the long ago when I was a boy. But, I do not believe that a girl was then expected to kiss every boy who had a date with her. She did not offer her burnt offerings in every place. Promiscuous kissing does something to us physically, a something that is not conducive to health, either physical or mental. Then it is well to bear in mind that it does not take much kissing of the lips of an unloved girl to kiss all the sweetness away.

It is my conviction, also, that kissing does something to our modesty. Along with its attendant evils, it tends to destroy our capacity to blush. Blushing has gone out of style, save as we purchase at the beauty parlor. Yet, the loss of the capacity to blush is no mean loss. A blush is the red flag that modesty waves above the citadel of the soul that declares that that citadel has not yet capitulated to the coarse and common and unclean. When we lose our sensitiveness to the questionable we are flirting with a deadly danger. Here again you cannot eat your cake and have it too.

James Lane Allen tells of two girls that he knew. They were both beautiful
and charming, but they were vastly different. One of them, he said, was like a peach that grew in the top of a tree. It was so high that it caught the first kiss of the sun in the morning and held its last lingering caress at evening-tide. Thus it grew radiant and sweet and ripe, but it was not to be had for a song. To possess it, one had to climb. The other, he said, was like a bunch of grapes that hung above a common path. Everybody that came along who desired took a grape. This he did, without awe, and without reverence, and without effort. These two types of girls are with us still.

Then there are those who fling themselves away on petty flirtations. Take the movie folks, for instance. By nature they are neither better nor worse than the rest of us. But, who takes their romances seriously? Certainly no one who is intelligent, they do not themselves. They offer their sacrifices upon every altar. They sow themselves broadcast. Thus trifling, they lose their capacity for any great love. No man and no woman can trifle with the deepest relationship of life without paying a terrible price. Surely one part of the price that we pay for trifling with love is a lost capacity to love.

Then there are those who pass beyond the mere petting into deeper depths. Of these we can say little. Those who engage in such practice before marriage bring to what ought to be a holy relationship, a mutual distrust that is likely to end in disaster. It is very easy to mistrust one that you know for a certainty was not true to the highest before you married. Then this trifling with the highest sometimes goes even beyond that.

There was a young chap at Harvard University who was clean morally beyond the ordinary. He declared that there had only been one exception in his life, but that one exception was infinitely too much. It made it impossible for him to have a clean bill of health when he came to the marriage altar. He loved the girl that he married with passionate devotion. He longed for a home and children. But today his wife is an invalid, his home is childless, and what makes his tragedy deeper is
this:— He knows that he made for his own body a draw-bridge across which the cloven footed devils of disease have marched to the destruction of his home. "Offer not thou burnt offering in every place that thou seest."

Did you ever hear the story of the Three Weavers? There were once three weavers who lived in the same village. One morning one of these weavers said to his fellows, "The sweet angel of suffering came to my home last night and a baby girl was born." "So it happened at my house" said the second weaver. "And so it was at mine," said the third. "But that is not all," said the first. "A fairy came, too, and left my little girl a magic loom with thread of gold. She said one day a prince would seek to wed my daughter, and that she would weave him a garment out of that thread of gold. If the coat fit him as the falcon's feathers fit the falcon: then they would be married and love's sweet dream would come true. But, if it did not fit then the prince would go his way, and that day her heart would break. "And so it happened at my house," said each of the other weavers.

The days and weeks and months slipped by and the little girls grew apace. Soon the first weaver began to take his little daughter upon his lap and tell her something of the meaning of the magic loom and the thread of gold. The second weaver also spoke now and then of the magic loom with its gold thread. But he always did it jestingly as if it were a matter only for laughter. The third weaver mentioned the wonderful loom not at all. He treated it as if it were either a sinful and shameful thing or a thing of utter mystery. Thus the years went by till the once little girls had grown to womanhood.

Then one day a prince came to the door of the house of the second weaver. The father was filled with great joy. With loud laughter he went to his daughter and told her that her prince had come, and that at last she might set to weaving in earnest. She too laughed lightly and said "I have already been weaving for sometime. I have given one garment to a squire, another I have given to a passing knight." But when she went to weave one for her prince, there was not enough thread to have woven a coat for a dwarf, and the prince went his way. And that day her
heart broke.

At the house of the third weaver, a prince also came. Her father came to tell her of the wonderful chance that was hers. "You must set to weaving at once" he said. But she glared at him through angry eyes, and her face was hot with utter shame. "You never told me a prince would come," she said. Therefore, I wove a coat for a troubadour and one for a village chariot." At once she set to work. But when she had finished it, it was not big enough for a pygmy. So the prince went his way and that day her heart broke. But when the prince came to the house of the first weaver, he went to his daughter to talk not for the first time but for the thousandth. Then she wove the deserved garment. When it was finished, her prince put it on and it fit him as the falcon's feathers fit the falcon. And that day love kissed her on the lips and her best dream began to come true. Beware then of so sowing yourself broadcast that when you come to the supreme sacramental moment of life, you have nothing to give. "Offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest."
HOW TO THINK OF MARRIAGE

For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. Matthew 19:5-6

In considering marriage we are considering a subject of vast importance. In fact, however long I shall remain your pastor, it is to be doubted if I shall ever discuss with you a more vital subject. This is true in spite of the fact that it is hard to get an audience to take a speaker seriously when he is discussing this subject. Such a subject tends to be born in a grin and smothered in a laugh. Yet our present tragic failures are forcing some to think seriously upon this subject. The fact that Dallas, Texas, last year had some eight thousand marriages with only thirty-two less divorces. The fact that the city of Mobile had something over thirteen hundred marriages with over divorces for the first eight months of this year. The fact that other cities show similar records should cause us to think seriously.

Why is marriage so important?

1. It is important to those participating in it. It is of vast importance to husband and wife. In fact, it is to be doubted if there is any decision, save that of our personal allegiance to Jesus Christ, that will mean as much as this business of marriage. Generally speaking, a man finds either his heaven or his hell in the one he marries. The same is, of course, true for the woman. In fact it is very difficult to succeed in right living, it is difficult to make a success of our vocations, if we are foolishly and disastrously married. This is the case in spite of the fact that many seem to play a kind of
blind man's buff only to marry whomever they chance to catch.

2. Then marriage is of vast importance because, generally speaking, if it is a right marriage it will eventuate in children. It is hard to have a successful marriage where there are no children. But if a marriage is a failure, the children born of such a marriage have a heavy handicap. A friend of mine, a physician, told me that recently a father and mother brought a small boy to his office for treatment. From the symptoms he became convinced that the boy's trouble was due to the fact that his father and mother were at war with each other. He began to question them. At first they were amazed and outraged, but at last confessed that they lived in the atmosphere of perpetual war-whoop. When this was set right, the child got well. Many a child is hampered by a heavy handicap because his parents cannot make a go of their marriage.

This is the case when parents continue to live together; it is even more often the case when they separate. The crime rate in the United States today is perhaps higher than at any other time in all our history. Yet high as it is, it is still more startling that fifty-six per cent of all our criminals are children ranging from six to fifteen. Of course, there are exceptions, but these, in the main, are either from unhappy or broken homes. This marriage question, therefore, is one of vast importance both to husband and wife and their children.

3. It is of vast importance to society as a whole. This is the case because the home will be either the maker or the wrecker of our civilization. The home is the little Lake Itaska from which flow the streams that make the great Mississippi of our life. If the streams are brackish and bitter, the river will be brackish and bitter. If the streams are sweet and pure, the river will be sweet and pure.
What is the foundation of a home? The home is only as strong or as weak as the marriage tie. If the marriage tie is solid and firm, so will the home be. But if the marriage tie is a thing of sand, when the rains come and the winds blow, and the floods beat upon that house, it will fall; and complete will be the wreck. No church, no community, no nation will ever rise higher than its homes. But the stability of the home depends upon the stability of the marriage tie. Therefore, this is a matter that concerns every one of us. Nothing concerns us more intimately.

-II-

How then shall we think of marriage?

Today many voices are clamoring for our attention. A few years ago a learned judge baffled by failures of marriage introduced a mad scheme of trial marriage. That is, a man and a woman were to live together and if they found the relationship pleasant, they were to continue to live together; if not, they were to seek another partner. This shocking insult to decency and common sense did not have a large following as a theory. But it did have a large following in practice.

What else is it but trial marriage when there are some among us who have been married for as many as seven or eight times. Trial marriages today are abundant.

Then there are those who seek to remedy this disaster by improved divorce laws. They want to make it even easier for those who desire to do so to get a divorce. What is needed is not an improved method for husband and wife getting apart, but it is an improved method of making them willing to live together. I believe a uniform divorce law that would be the same in every state would be helpful. But we would not cure this eating cancer that is destroying marriage by making it easier to wreck marriage.
Suppose now we turn from the clamoring voices, from a society that has in the last measure lost its sense of God, to listen to the words of our Lord. For believe me, the lack of listening to the word of God is a lack of good character. It is a lack of morals. This lack of morals is a lack of religion. Morality comes down when religious faith is destroyed. We need, then, to clarify our thinking by listening to the words of Jesus.

When listening to these words, let us bear in mind that what Jesus had to say about marriage was not a rule that He passed. The fact that we make rules means that we might have made them different from what they were. A rule might be timely; but it is never timeless. What Jesus taught about human relations is true in the nature of things. It is true as the multiplication table is true. I do not know when the multiplication table was written down; but I do know that it was not plain stubborness that caused the writer to make two times two equal four. He could not have made it otherwise if he had wanted. Thus, what Jesus said about marriage is true in the nature of things. The directions that he gave had to be what they are; human nature being what it is. Christ himself could not have said otherwise than he did say. Thus, in listening to Jesus, we are listening to one who can speak with authority. Here is the way marriage was made to work. We do not have to follow a guide, but we have to pay if we do not.

What then did Jesus teach about marriage? He taught that marriage was a divine institution. When questioned about it, He went back to God's original plan and purpose. He referred to the majestic poem in Genesis where it is written that it is not good for man to dwell alone, so God made him a companion. Man is one hemisphere; woman is another. They reach their best alone, and form a complete
sphere only in the relationship of marriage.

The best marriage is performed by God himself. It did seem that he officiated at the altar. That does not mean that marriages are made in heaven, as we are fond of saying. I have seen too many that seem to have been made somewhere else. But it does mean that it is God's plan that marriages are meant for the good of man. It also means that they are meant for the propagation of the race. It means that children will have a better home if born of one father and mother, than if born of a promiscuous mixture. Marriage is right because it is humanly helpful. Whatever is humanly hurtful is wrong no matter who says it is right. However jolly it may seem to flit from mate to mate, it is wrong because it is humanly hurtful. They cheat their children, their home, and society. If you can show me that the Hollywood plan results in happier home and community, then I would say that they were right and Jesus was wrong.

I went sometime ago to perform a marriage ceremony that was a bit unique. A husband and wife who had lived together for fifty beautiful years were celebrating their golden wedding anniversary. They wanted their pastor to marry them again. They wanted to renew the vows they had taken a half century ago. When I officiated and looked into their happy eyes, and into the eyes of the fine children standing near, I thought I had never performed a ceremony when the happiness was so sincere and genuine. Marriage is a part of God's plan for man.

2. Marriage makes the wedded pair one. "They twain shall be one flesh." This oneness of the wedded pair is more than a figure of speech. It is amazing how quickly a married pair feel that they have always been married. They begin to think alike. By and by, after fifty or sixty years one passes on. The other soon followers. They have become a part of each other.
First, in becoming one, they will be one in mutual self-giving. When I asked the woman who married me to become the wife of a penniless creature, I knew that I was asking quite a bit. I was asking that she give up the home of her childhood, and those who seemed to have caught the color of her life. I was asking her to give up her name. That name that suggested all that was manly in her father and queenly in her mother. When she consented, some thought she was crazy. Personally, I never agreed with them.

But since she gave so much, what obligations were on my part? Now there are times when both husband and wife are in love with the same one. I have seen both fall in love with the husband. I have seen both fall in love with the wife. But in that way disaster lies. I speak of the woman I married as my wife; she speaks of me as her husband. I no more own this right arm than she owns it. Secondly, we are to be one in our material interests. So far as possible, husband and wife should share and share alike in material wealth. Many a poor girl has married a richer man and lived happily ever after. Very few poor men have married a richer woman and got along well. Generally speaking, it is better for a couple to face poverty together and what they win be neither his or hers, but theirs. I have always felt that every dollar I made was one-half my wife's.

I have known husbands who have worked hard and made the living and thought every dollar was theirs. Thus they pauperize their wives who are working just as hard as they. A husband and wife should be partners. On the street of a village where I spend my summers two men were talking. One was a man of comfortable income. A woman approached one and asked him for a dime. His companion said, "These beggars are shameless." But that was the others wife. They should share alike. Of course, in saying this I am assuming you married
a wise woman and not a silly nut. If she is sensible, she will be
glad to share your poverty with you. Some are not willing to do this.
Good men have gone broke, to the penitentiary, because of their wives.
You should be one in your material wealth.

Third, you should be one in your devotion of God. Sharing in
what is material, you should share together the only wealth that
really abides. If your husband is a Christian and you are not, you
should join with him and help him. There will come a time when you
will need a Christian husband more than anything else. Remember too
that marriage is a religious institution. Those who are religious
stand a better chance of making a go than those who are not. There
are few men who will carry on religiously with out their wives. If
you do not help, chances are that he will fail.

But while the wife sometimes fails to help her husband religiously,
far more often a husband fails to help a wife. It is a strange blind-
ness that makes a man feel that because he makes a living, he has
no further responsibility of their family. "She is the praying member,
and I am the paying member." is the threadbare old phrase. But no
man has the right of putting the religious responsibility on the
shoulders of his wife. It would be just as cowardly as his putting
the financial responsibilities on his wife. Martin Luther had a cross
engraved on his wedding ring. It is altogether fitting. Marriage
should be one in their devotion to God.

-III-

Jesus taught that marriage is the most intimate and binding of
all human relations. Since the wedded pair are to be one, this is
naturally the case. The Bible has a high view of responsibility of
parents to child and child to parents. It contains this commandment.
Children, obey your parents, honor thy father and thy mother; that thy
days may be long upon the land with the Lord thy God giveth thee." There is a stern word in Proverbs that says, "The eye that mocketh at his father and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." But there is a relationship more intimate and binding than that of parent to child. And that is the one of marriage. "A man shall leave father and mother and cleave to his wife."

Since this is the case of the husband and wife, the wife is to always come first. With the wife, her husband is always to come first. If you receive a proposition of marriage, my girl, and find that you are more devoted to you parents and to your old home, then you are for his and for your sake to refuse and do not marry him. And young man, if you are thinking of proposing and find that you are more devoted to your parents, do not propose. The relationship of marriage is the most intimate and binding of all other relationships. This is natural since the wedded pair is one.

Finally, Jesus taught that marriage is for life. It is a permanent relationship. This is your vow "For better or for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, until death us do part." This is the ideal. This is God's plan and purpose. Have those entering into marriage the right ever to divorce and marry again? Mark and Luke do not answer this question. They give no exceptions. Matthew states that if one of the contracting parties becomes guilty of unfaithfulness; if she gives herself to another, or if he gives himself to another, then the marriage tie can be broken and the innocent party has the right to marry again. But so far as the New Testament states remarriage is right under no other conditions.
Here then is the plain teaching of Jesus. Marriage is the divine institution that makes the wedded pair one. It is the most divine of all relationships. It is to be for life. If you can find a better plan, one more humanly helpful, one more conducive, then adopt it. It so happens that this plan is best, that the God who made us really does know what fits best into the human needs, so take His plan. Those who have taken Him seriously have found it works. How many a husband whose life has been enriched by the unselfish woman can join sincerely in singing this song--
THE BUSINESS OF BEING MARRIED

Be in subjection one to another out of reverence to Christ.

Paul is here giving instruction on the high art of living together. To be able to live with others is one of the sharpest tests that we have to meet. It tests us both as individuals and as groups. The closer we come together, the sharper this test becomes. Now marriage is the closest of all relationships. Therefore, the art of learning to live together as husband and wife is at once the highest and most necessary. There is no other business to which you will set your hand and heart that will mean more for weal or for woe to you as husbands and wives than the marriage business. There is none that will mean more to the children whom you share with God in creating. There is nothing that you do that will likely mean more to society as a whole. Naturally, therefore as a Christian minister, it is my business to point out some of the guide posts to success in this high adventure.

I.

The first essential for a successful marriage that I mention is common sense. Of course, we are aware that common sense is not so vastly common. It is a treasure that is all-too-rare. By common sense, I mean that sense without which all other sense is nonsense. It is something that we need to exercise every day that we live. We need it in every relationship of life. We need it most of all in this delicate relationship of marriage. Many a marriage fails because the husband or wife, or both, fail to exercise plain everyday common sense.

1. For instance, we often seem to think that, having married, there is nothing more to do. The goal has been attained, we can now rest on our oars...
and let matters take their course. But a marriage license is no positive guarantee of a successful marriage. When you get a hunting license it does not mean always that you are going to bring home the game at the close of the day. An automobile license does not mean necessarily that our car will never break down, or that we shall never wreck it by foolish driving. Having obtained your hunting license, you know you must go after the game for yourself. Having obtained your automobile license, you must keep up your car and drive it with care.

Now, the same holds good with regard to marriage. It is wonderful to slip a wedding ring onto the finger of your bride. It is a great privilege, as a bride to wear that wedding ring. But, the wedding ring is not a wishing ring. You cannot rub it and summon countless genii to do your bidding as in the old Arabian Nights story. Your ring is nothing more than a symbol of your plighted love to each other. All the difficult details and adjustments must be made later on. The marriage is only the beginning. Whether the compact ends in tragic failure or glamorous victory is to be determined in the days ahead. Successful marriages do not simply happen, they are made with care and precision. No one expects to become a skilled tennis player or a skilled musician without effort. No more are we to expect to become skilled husbands and wives without effort. This is plain common sense.

Not only does common sense tell us that we must put thought and effort into our marriage to make it succeed, but, it also tells us that this success or failure depends upon ourselves. If your marriage is a go, you as a husband and as a wife must make a go of it. It is up to you, nobody can succeed in it but you. Nobody can utterly spoil it but you. I know the strain that comes at times through outside interference. I know the dreadful tension born of the wedaling of our in-laws. I am aware, too, that it takes more than one to make a successful marriage. But if the husband and the wife set their faces like a flint to make a success, nothing on earth can prevent them. If they fail to do so, nobody can
do it for them.

2. Then if we use good common sense we will realize that we cannot spend our whole life on a honeymoon. One trip to Niagra ought to be enough. Do not expect to live there. The thunder of that great cataract would get very monotonous after a while. It is well to remember also that while two may be able to live as cheaply as one, even one has to eat. For this reason somebody must have a job. If not the husband, then the wife. As a rule, I do not think it best for both husband and wife to work outside the home. But this is sometimes necessary. It need not prove a great hindrance, provided it does not last too long. But the ideal way is for a division of labor, the husband working outside the home and the wife inside. This husband, having a job, cannot therefore give all his time to courting you. Also he has to work where his job is. If he is transferred to Alaska, you must be ready to say "Just wait, my dear, till I get my furs and I will be with you."

3. Then common sense suggests that we are not to expect perfection of each other. You have not married an angel, neither has she. Personally, I do not thrill over angels. I never wanted one. I have an idea that an angel would make me very uncomfortable. Lowell, voiced my longing when he expresses his desire for

"A creature not too bright or good

For human nature's daily food,

For transient sorrow simple wilds,

Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears and smiles."

But while we are not to demand perfection, we ought to be willing to go as far in that direction as we can. As a husband I ought to keep up some of the courteous tactics by which I won my wife. I ought not, just because I am married, be more polite to every other woman that I am to my wife. I ought to remember diligently those tender considerations that made her mine when love's morning had its dawn. She, on her part, needs to continue to be as attractive as
possible. Many a woman, it has been said, has won her husband in her best dress to lose him in her worst. Then, often, having won him she reverses her attitude toward him. If the surest way to a man's heart is not through his stomach, often it is through his vanity. How did you win him? Partly by laughing at his stale jokes, by listening at what a great man he was. But if, having won him by such tactics, you let him know as soon as you are married that you think him a bit of a false alarm, he might begin to tell his stories to more sympathetic ears. Common sense dictates that after marriage we keep up some of the tactics by which we won each other.

II.

A second guide post toward successful marriage is to keep your eyes fixed on the goal.

What is the goal? When we enter marriage, what are we seeking? It is in answering this question that I am persuaded almost 99 percent of us go wrong. This is not surprising. What do we wish the bride and groom as soon as the ceremony is over? Answer, we wish them happiness. Why do we marry at all? We are in search of happiness. We say to ourselves, "Here is a girl that appeals to me, I am going to marry her because I believe that she will make me happy." Now, to make happiness your supreme end is to miss the mark. Do not misunderstand me, marriage ought to be happy. Not only so, but as a rule, marriage does make those participating in it happy. In spite of all the divorces, in spite of all the wretched marriages that hang upon the abyss of divorce, marriage has contributed more to the happiness of human beings than any other relationship. But, in spite of this fact, happiness is not the chief end in marriage. In truth it is not the chief end in any enterprise.

To make happiness our goal is surely to miss it. This is the case in every department of life. Happiness is not an end in itself, it is a result of a cause. You could no more find happiness without an adequate cause than you can have a gushing rivulet without a spring, than you can have fruit without a tree. The
most restless and wretched people in the world are those who are claiming happiness as their right and who are out in desperate search of it. There are some prizes we win only by taking the indirect road. They come as by-products. If we seek them directly, they elude us.

Take sleep, for instance. Did you ever make a frontal attack on sleep? Did you ever clinch your fists and square your jaws and demand of sleep that it stand and deliver. If you have, you have found that sleep became a very fleet footed creature. The harder you tried to catch it, the faster it fled. But when you gave it up and began to count sheep, when you told it to go jump in the lake, then all was changed. It then became so very gentle that you soon dropped off to sleep.

If, then you are not to make your own happiness the supreme goal in marriage, what is to be supreme? Answer, the happiness of the one you marry. It is my business to say, "I am in love with the woman that consented to become my wife. For this reason I am going to make her the best husband possible. For this reason I am going to see to it that she never rues the day that I led her to the altar. As far as in me lies, I am going to make her happy." As I take this course and my wife takes the same, we come upon happiness before we know it. That illusive creature that fled before our pursuing steps turns to empty her treasure into our hands and into our hearts.

III.

The third guide post to a successful marriage is the cultivation of good temper. Irritableness, bad temper is looked upon by many as a very trifling matter. Yet, I dare say that Drummond is right in telling us that anger lies back of more tears and more heartache than almost any other cause. In our everyday language we have another word for getting angry that is often closer to the truth. We call it getting mad. That is, anger for many is a form of insanity. When we are angry we cease to act from motives of reason or of love. We lose our heads, act and speak foolishly. In fact, we become for the time being just plain crazy.
1. One outcome of such anger is the petty quarrel. We are not married long before we discover that as husband and wife we do not see all things exactly alike. We do not agree in every particular. Even my wife is wrong part of the time. By this, I mean that she does not always agree with me. But, even when she is thus foolish, it is not necessary for me to bless her out, or to break a chair over her head. We talk things through and keep our tempers. We refuse to quarrel.

But what is wrong with a little quarrel? One thing is this. That it tends to become a habit. A wise psychologist said some time ago "It is easier to find a man who has never sinned than to find one who has not committed the same sin twice." These quarrels that usually start over trifles, tend to repeat themselves. They grow into habits. I have in mind a couple who are uniformly courteous to others, but who seldom speak a kind word to each other. They live in the atmosphere of a perpetual warwhoop. They love each other after a fashion, but they have formed the habit of quarreling.

Not only do these petty quarrels tend to become a habit, but they also tend to grow in violence. Having formed a habit of quarreling, we say sharper and sharper things to each other. We seek deliberately to wound each other. We have lived together long enough to know the sensitive spot of the other. We know the word that will hurt most, and we say it. Sometimes in our eagerness to cause pain we even exaggerate. We overstep the truth. Angry people have a great tendency to lie. Thus we slander each other. Then we feel ourselves wronged and outraged by the one who should understand us best and help us most. Thus we turn our steps to Reno.

Therefore, let me warn you against the petty quarrels. I know that most people treat them as a joke. We tell how fine it is to kiss and make up. Even our poets join in regarding them as a trifles. One sings:

'If ever we meet in heaven
I should not think it queer
That we loved each other better
For the way we quarreled here.

Well, I should think it queer indeed, if we loved each other the better in heaven or earth, for having stabbed each other to pieces with our tongues.

As through the field we walked at eve,
And plucked the ripened ears,
0, we fell out, My wife and I,
0, we fell out, I know not why,
And kissed again with tears.

And blessing on the falling out
That all the more endears
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears.

But I have yet to see the falling out that all the more endears. As for kissing again with tears, I like mine better without such sauce.

2. A second result of anger is pouting. Sometimes like Woodrow Wilson you are too proud to fight. But instead you puff up like a toad. Become silent as an oyster and for hours and even days refuse to say a word. An explosion is bad enough, to fly off the handle and let go of your tongue is a shameful and homely procedure. But pouting is, if possible, worse still. A young fellow confided to me some months ago that, having been married for about a year, he had pouted about seven months of that time. Possibly he holds the world's record. But if you want to make a mess of your marriage, put on a pouting marathon.

3. The final issue of anger that I mention is nagging. Of all the defects of temper this in my opinion is the worst. Those who go mad or lose all self-control and smash up the furniture are at once pathetic and contemptible. Those who puff up like a poison pup and refuse to say a word are unspeakably trying. But
to nag, that is the limit. To get on one subject and chew the rag about it
the last thing before you drop off to sleep, the first thing when you wake in the
morning, to make it the final word as you kiss each other good by as he goes to
work, the first, when you greet him in the evening, that is to make Reno seem the
gateway to Paradise.

This, then is my final word to you, to might. Learn self-control.
I used to know a successful mill owner who drove himself to poverty by losing
his temper and smashing some delicate machinery of his mill. You would call a
man like that a bit of a fool. But how much greater fool is that man or that
woman who ruthlessly smash up their homes and their happiness simply because they
do not have the grace and the grit to keep their tempers. After many interviews,
I am persuaded that it is not the big things that separate us. As a rule, it is
the little things. It is the little foxes that spoil the marital vine. Big
sorrows, big sacrifices, instead of driving us a part tend to bring us closer
together.

For instance, I have seen the wife become a great sufferer. I have seen
the roses fade from her cheek. I have seen the once beautiful hands become so
emaciated that if she dropped her arm her wedding ring would almost slip from
her finger. But her suffering drew them closer together. I have seen the husband
fail in business, lose his health, perhaps, even lose his good name. Yet, these
tragedies instead of dividing them, welded them into a sweeter oneness. Here
is a woman who found it so. What a word to say to a husband who had fallen upon
evil days!

Come rest in this bosom mine own stricken dear,
Though the herd has fled from thee, they home still is here.
Here still is a sky that no cloud can o'er cast
And a heart and a hand all thine own till the last.
0, what was love made for if 'tis not the same
Through joy and through torment, through glory and shame.
I know not, I ask not if guilt's in thy heart,
I know that I love thee whatever thou art.

Thou hast called me thy angel in moments of bliss,
Thine angel I'll be midst the horrors of this.
Through the furnace unshrinking thy step I'll pursue
And shield thee and save thee, or perish theretoo.
THE BUSINESS OF BEING MARRIED

"Be in subjection one to another out of reverence to Christ."
—Ephesians 5:21 (Moffatt)

This text deals with the most pressing problem that concerns our world. It has to do with the problem of living together. It has always been difficult for people to live together. That difficulty has vastly increased with the passing of the years. This is the case because we live in a rapidly contracting world. A few years ago one nation might suffer from some moral malady without any great danger to a nation of another continent. They were separated by dividing mountains and sundering seas. A nation might be sick in its own private ward in a hospital without danger to another, but now all partitions have been broken down. Each nation has come close to the other. But because they have drawn near to each other physically without drawing near to each other in heart, our present world is bathed with blood.

It is evident, therefore, that the closer we come to each other the more necessary it is that we learn how to live together. The nations of the world have come to share the proximity that belongs to the family without the family spirit. Since the nearer we come to each other the more necessary it is that we learn to live together, that problem is most pressing in the relationship between husband and wife. This is the most intimate of all relationships. Therefore, if we fail to learn how to handle it, we find the surest road to a domestic hell. If we do learn how to live together in right fashion, we set our feet on the highroad to a bit of earthly paradise. How then, having married, shall we learn to live together?
I

The first suggestion I offer is that husband and wife need to exercise much commonsense. As I have listened to stories of domestic tragedy across the years, I have come to believe that as many marriages fail for lack of plain commonsense as for any other reason—possibly more. By commonsense I mean that fine sense that is not very common. At a General Conference some years ago Dr. Bascomb Anthony was speaking to a question. "What we need," he said, "in dealing with this question is horse-sense." A rather troublesome chap who had interrupted the speaker again and again rose once more and asked for the privilege of another interruption. When it was granted, he asked, "What is horse-sense?" "It is the kind of sense," came the answer, "that a donkey hasn't got." That is the kind of sense I am talking about now. The exercise of commonsense will bear in mind certain obvious facts:

1. That having been married, you have only made a beginning. You will realize that a marriage license is not a positive guarantee of success. It is no more a positive guarantee of success than a hunting license. When you get a license to hunt, that does not mean of necessity that you are going to bring home the game. When you get a license to fish, it does not mean positively that you are going to make a record catch. When you get an automobile license, that is not a guarantee that you will always drive your car judiciously and will never have a wreck. When our boys enlist in the Army, that does not mean that for them the War is over. Yet we sometimes fancy that, having gone through the marriage ceremony, there is nothing else to be done.

Now it is a great privilege to slip a wedding ring on the finger of the girl of your choice. It is a great privilege for a girl to wear a wedding
ring of the man of her choice. But we need to bear in mind that a wedding ring is not a wishing ring. We cannot rub it as Aladdin did his wonderful lamp in Arabian Nights and summon all sorts of genie to do our bidding. Adjustments have to be made. Success in marriage has to be wrought out. Nobody is foolish enough to expect to become a good musician or a good tennis player without practice. Nor do we, if we are wise, expect to learn the high and delicate art of living together without careful practice.

We are to bear in mind also that success or failure in this high adventure is up to ourselves. Nobody can wreck our marriage except us. I know that it takes more than one to make a successful marriage. I know that one can wreck it. But if we are willing to work at it together, nobody can wreck us. If we are not willing to work at it together, nobody can make it successful. This is the most beautiful and worthful enterprise upon which we will ever adventure. But success is up to us. Nobody can defeat us; nobody can succeed for us.

2. Then commonsense will tell us that if we make a success we must make a success in our kind of world. This world is not ideal according to the thinking of many of us. After you are married, you still have to eat. You also have to live in some kind of house. It will not be a castle in the air but some homely cottage perhaps upon some homely street. Both of you may have to work out for a while. This is not bad, provided it does not last too long. The best arrangement is a division of the labor, the husband working out and the wife keeping the home.

Now since somebody has to work and earn a living, your honeymoon cannot last a lifetime. This does not mean that you are not to keep up the gracious courtesies by which you won each other, but it does mean that for a woman to expect to be made love to morning, noon, and night for the rest of her life is sheer stupidity.
One trip to Niagara is all right, but you can't live there. I have an idea that the thunder of that cataract would get on your nerves after while. We must succeed in this kind of world. It is a world where your husband has to go to his job. That may be at times in a distant city or state. You be willing to go with him! If he says, "My dear, I have a good job offered me in Alaska that means promotion," you ought to say, "Just wait a minute and let me get my furs!"

I say this because many a marriage has been made unhappy because one of the contracting parties has failed to realize the kind of world in which we live. When I courted my wife, I was not a candidate for the ministry. When I decided to preach, I realized that she ought to have the privilege of avoiding the constant moving that a Methodist minister had to face if she so desired. So I told her the facts frankly. I also said, "If you are not glad to share this sort of life, say so now. I do not want to be tied to a martyr." Of all the folks that vex my soul, it is the people who maybe hang on, but do it in a spirit of martyrdom. If you get on, you have got to be glad to cooperate with each other in this kind of world. That is plain commonsense.

3. Then, your commonsense ought to keep you from expecting too much of the one that you have married. The chances are that you have married a lovely woman, a splendid man. But neither of you is perfect. I hear of folks now and then who say they married an angel. Well, I didn't. Nor have I regretted it! I think an angel would bore me considerably. I might even do as much to the angel! I prefer somebody who is human. Lowell's idea is not bad:

"A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food--
Of transient sorrows, simple, wise--
Praise, blame, love kisses, tears and smiles."
Therefore, if you are wise, when you begin to discover imperfections in the one that you married, you will not talk them up and exaggerate them. You will not do so as a husband; it is perhaps even more dangerous if you are a wife. It has been said that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. I doubt if that is true. If it were, the cooking that some brides do would ruin their husband's hearts in the first six months. Often it does that for his stomach! I recall a dutiful husband who sat looking at a plateful of biscuit that was sweating in the plate. Looking fondly at his wife, he said, "My dear, this work is too heavy for you."

But while the way to a man's heart might be through his stomach, it is far more often through his vanity and self-respect. How he came to fall in love with you was not merely because you were beautiful and charming. It was not his high regard for you that decided the issue. It was perhaps even more your seemingly high regard for him. You listened to him as he talked about himself, told what a great man he is, and seemed to enjoy it. This indicates one reason that some highly gifted and cultivated women do not marry. Being superior to the man who is interested in them, they make him feel cheap. That is a fatal blunder either before marriage or after marriage.

Let me give you this wise word. If you are interested in that very ordinary chap who is going with you, put a sparkle in your eye when he tells you about himself. Listen to his inane jokes that you have heard scores of times and laugh musically. Send him home feeling that he has been a thrilling conversationalist. Then when he stands before his mirror that night, he will look at himself pridefully and say, "She is the most interesting and intelligent girl that I have ever met." And he will come back again! That is the reason some of you married women have a husband. You will be very foolish, therefore, if you begin to put him in his place. You will be doubly silly if,
when he says, "Stop me if you've heard this one," you actually stop him.

If he can't get a good audience at home when he talks about himself, he may
tell his story elsewhere. Do not expect perfection of each other. That is
commonsense.

II

Having married, keep in view one chief goal of marriage. What are you
to seek in this holy relationship? Here many of us miss the answer. It is
only natural that we should. When a couple worries, what do we wish them?
We wish them happiness. For this reason the predominant idea in the mind
of the husband is often his own personal happiness. Too often that is the
predominant passion of the bride. They are out each seeking his or her own
happiness.

Now when this is the case it is not surprising that the end is disappointing.
Happiness is not a cause; it is an effect. We never find happiness by merely
seeking it. That is true everywhere. It is like sleep in this respect.
Did you ever get in a hurry to go to sleep. If you have you will remember
that the harder you pursued sleep the more fleet-footed it became. It was
only when you gave over the chase and began to count sheep that you fell
asleep.

It is so with happiness. If you want to find the most weary, fed-up,
disillusioned folks in the city tonight, go to those whose one business in
life is to have a good time. Did you ever hear of a man who set out to find
the lovely little flower called heartsease? He took the road that led north,
but by and by he barked his shins on his brother's burden and turned back.
Then he took the road south. Again he barked his shins on his brother's
burden and turned back. So it was as he journeyed toward the east. And so
it was as he journeyed toward the west. At last in sheer desperation, he decided he would lift his brother's burden and get it out of the way and then continue his quest. But lo! As he lifted that burden, he saw looming underneath it the lovely flower that was the object of his quest. It was only as he eased to seek it as an end and lifted his brother's burden that he found it.

So it is with the lovely flower of happiness in the marriage relationship. If you think only of yourself, of course you are going to be miserable. Not only so, you are going to make the one who married you miserable as well. But there is a sure way to win. If you will say to yourself, "This woman gave up everything to marry me. Therefore, it is my business to make life as rich and full and deep for her as possible. I will avoid giving offense in so far as in me lies. Not only so, but I will do everything within my power to keep a song in her heart and laughter upon her lips." If you do this each for the other, the happiness that you could have never found by selfishly seeking will become yours as a rich and abiding product. Keep your eye on the goal then.

III

If you are to make a success of this delicate relationship, you must learn self-control. Especially you must learn to control your temper. There are those that look upon a capacity to fly off the handle and give way to rage as almost a virtue. Of course, there is such a thing as a moral indignation that may be a virtue. But the variety of anger that is most common with us is one born of sheer selfishness. Such anger is not a little thing. I rather fancy that Henry Drummond was right when he said that ordinary anger results in more heartache and more tears than almost any other one emotion.
Yet you will not have been married long before you will be tempted to give
to anger.

This will come about from varied reasons. You will discover that between
you and the one you married, there are wide differences. You will discover
that you do not agree on a good many things. You do not demand of
ordinary strangers nor of friends that they agree with us. We exercise a
wise tolerance and simply say, "You have a right to your view and I have a
right to mine." But the closer we come together, the more difficult it is
for us to do this. As a husband you want your wife to agree with you on
every question. She would like for you to agree with her. But this is
impossible. Each of you has your own personality. Even my wife is wrong
about some things. That is evident because she does not always agree with
me. But when we disagree we do so without flying into a rage.

One trouble with anger is that it leads to quarreling. Having had the
first fairly good quarrel, the next one becomes a bit easier. In order to get
the same thrill out of it it must be a little more severe. The speed demon,
for instance, who gets a thrill from driving seventy miles per hour today
must go eighty tomorrow to get the same thrill. Quarrels, therefore, tend
to increase in intensity. By and by they become a habit. There are husbands
and wives who have an armistice now and then. There are those for whom the
war—whoop is perpetual. I am thinking now of a lovely couple that are genuinely
dear to me, but they early fell into the habit of quarreling. In a few years
they reached the place where a courteous and kind word to each other was the
exception rather than the rule. Today they are in middle life. Their quarrels
are not quite so loud as they used to be. But I fear it is largely because
they no longer care. They have stabbed their love to death. Soon they will
be traveling in the light of the evening star, but neither has anything to

give the other. For this reason I cannot too strongly warn against the anger that leads to bitter words. I know we smile over family rows. Some of us treat them as matters of no importance at all. Often they are not, but too often they are. Even the poets mislead us here. Here is one singing of a couple that have stabbed each other with the sword of their tongue for more than half a lifetime. Yet he closes with this silly word:

"Well, if we ever meet in heaven
I shall not think it queer
If we loved each other the better
For the way we quarreled here."

But I should think it queer indeed if we loved each other better for the way we quarreled here or anywhere else. Even wise Tennyson writes this senseless word:

"As through the field we went at eve
And plucked the ripened ears,
Oh, we fell out, my wife, and I--
Oh, we fell out, I know not why,
And kissed again with tears;
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears."

Well, I pronounce a blessing on such falling out, but I have yet to see the kind that "all the more endears" and as for kissing with tears I will take my kisses with less salt.

Then loss of temper if it does not result in quarreling sometimes results in an attitude that is just as bad, and that is petting. Your wife does something you do not like. Your husband forgets your birthday. Then, you puff up like a poisoned pup and refuse to say a word. He gives you a peck in the morning and you won't peck back. You have to be coaxed into telling what is the matter. A young fellow confessed to me that of the nine months of his married life, he had pouted seven of them. Such a procedure is silly and childish.

Some years ago in another city, I married a member of my staff to a
rather lovely girl. But she loved to pout. One day when her husband came home for lunch she hid herself. He had to seek and find her. He explained and apologized and they made up. Then a few days later he came home and she was missing again. She had slipped in behind the piano to wait for his diligent search. He refused to seek. At last after crouching there for four hours, she came out, and they lived happily ever afterward. Don't pout!

Perhaps the worst result of ill temper is that by and by you reach that last station this side of Reno which is nagging. Of all the annoying people in the world the nagging are the worst. Something goes wrong between you and your husband. Maybe it is your fault; maybe it is his. But one of you nags about it. It is the last word upon your lips before you fall asleep at night. It is the first word in the morning. When he goes away to work, it is your farewell. I do not wonder that, married to a person like that, you would flee away to the zoo to sit among the tigers for a little peace. A young man of culture and fine family murdered his wife in Oklahoma City a few months before my coming here. It was a terrible crime. The only reason he could give was that she nagged him into insanity.

If you are going to make a success of marriage, learn to keep your temper. I used to know a successful mill-owner among the hills of Tennessee. He might have made a fortune, but he had one fatal defect and that was his vicious temper that he took no pains to control. Now and then something would go wrong with the machinery of the mill. He would work at it for a moment. Maybe the wrench would slip. Then in a rage he would bang that delicate bit of machinery with the wrench and turn and hurl the wrench into the mill-pond. Then the mill would remain idle until he sent away to the city to replace the parts that he had broken. A man like that seems a bit of a fool. But how much more foolish is the man or woman that will smash their beautiful marriage relationship in anger. Such break their own hearts in an effort
to wound the one they love the best.

These are some of the petty enemies of marriage that are to be avoided. The fact that they seem petty does not mean that they are not important. It is the little foes that spoil the marital enterprise more than the great evils. Generally speaking, the great tragedies draw us closer together. I have seen the health of the wife fail until she became so lean and emaciated that her wedding ring would have dropped from her finger if she had held her hand down. I have seen the husband become a wreck in body and purse. But these only brought the two closer together. It is not the big things but the little things that tend to wreck us.

Here, for instance, is a woman who is suffering in the failure and disgrace of the man to whom she has given her all. But the more tragic becomes her plight, the closer she presses to him. That has happened in countless thousands of times. Listen to her appeal.

"Come, rest in this bosom, mine own stricken dear,
Though the herd has fled from thee, thy home is still here;
Here still is a sky, that no cloud can o'ercast,
And a heart and a hand all thine own till the last!
Oh, what was love made for if it's not the same
Through terror and through torrent, through glory and shame!
I know not, I ask not if guilt's in thy heart,
I know that I love thee whatever thou art.
Thou hast called me thine angel in moments of bliss,
Thine angel I'll be midst the horrors of this,
Through the furnace unflinching they steps I'll pursue
And shield thee and save thee or perish there too."
"Be in subjection one to another out of reverence to Christ."

Enthusiasm 5:21 (Hoffatt)

Here is a rule that conscientiously followed would enable the most diverse and separated people to live together in harmony. Conscientiously applied it would settle all our international problems. The present war could not last for a moment. If this were taken seriously another war would never begin. This would also heal all our industrial quarrels. It would put an end to tragic holding up of our program of preparedness that is causing so much uneasiness at this present moment. But, best of all it would prevent strife in the home. Therefore it would stop our heartbreaking conflicts at their very source. It would enable men and women to live together in that intimate relationship that is fruitful in the bitterest sorrows or the sweetest joys of life.

Tonight I am speaking to married people. Of course, I am speaking primarily to those married people who have their married life mainly yet ahead of them. Some of you have already made a success or a tragic failure of this holy relationship. That, therefore, I shall have to say to you will mean little. I have observed, however, in recent years that it is never too late for marriage to end in tragedy. Now and then we are shocked to read of an old couple who have lived together almost long enough to celebrate their golden wedding, separating and allowing their marriage to go upon the rocks. But the view of marriage that I present this evening has not for its primary purpose the curing of our ills. It has in view something more important than that, it seeks to prevent. As
one who has listened to many a tragic story, as one who has lived in this relationship for more than thirty beautiful years, I point out a few guidelines to successful marriage.

I.

My first suggestion for successful marriage is a liberal use of common sense. Commonsense, you know, is that sense without which all other sense is nonsense. We sometimes speak of it as horse-sense. One of the keenest debaters in our Church was discussing a point before the General Conference some years ago. He emphasized the need of horse-sense. A troublesome minister who had asked a number of times for the privilege of interrupting the speaker so rang to his feet again for a final interruption. "What is horse-sense?" he asked. "It is the kind of sense," came the prompt answer, "that a jackass hasn't got." He asked no more questions. That is what I mean by horse-sense.

By use of this commonsense you will realize that marriage does not end at the altar. The buying of a marriage license is no guarantee of a successful marriage than a hunting license is a guarantee of an abundant supply of game, or a fishing license of a good catch of fish. The fact that you possess an automobile license does not mean that your car will drive without gasoline, or that if you drive it foolishly you will not wreck it. The same is true of this fine and delicate relationship. A successful marriage is not an accident, it is an achievement. You cannot buy it at the office of the County Clerk. You must work it out by the application of the finest of commonsense. A wedding ring is a lovely something, but it is not a wishing ring. You cannot rub it as you could the ring in Arabian Nights and summon a million genii to do your bidding.

Since marriage is an achievement you will not expect it to take care of
So They Were Married

By this I do not mean that you are to try to live of your marriage one long honeymoon. The hardness of the honeymoon is as a rule vastly overestimated. It is usually a time of considerable strain and weariness. But even assuming its romantic beauty, no couple can spend all their time at Niagara Falls. The thunder of that cataract would soon deafen and make all sensible conversation impossible. Let one trip be enough, then count on living in such a lonely world as ours, where you have to have a place to sleep and where three meals per day are needed for the average husband, and certainly for the average wife.

By thus applying common-sense you will realize also that you are not to expect perfection of the one that you marry. Now and then I meet folks who claim to have married angels. But, personally I have never envied such. I have a fancy that I should grow very tired of an angel. In fact, living with an angel would be like living on top of Pikes Peak. I spent one night up there and almost died, the altitude was too high. I would rather live with folks. My ideal is a bit like that of Lowell.

"A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food,
For transient sorrows, simple wilds,
Braise, blame, love, kisses, tears and smiles."

If you are out in search of perfection you will be disappointed except your husband's first wife, if he had one.

II.

Then if you are to make a success of marriage you will need to keep your eyes on the goal. What is the goal of marriage? Here, I think, the vast majority of those entering into this holy relationship blunder. We help them to make this tragic blunder by what we say and by our whole attitude. What do we wish for the young couple when they marry? Answer: Happiness. Hence I marry because I am in
in search of happiness for myself. You marry because you are in search of happiness for yourself. Naturally, we desire happiness. But to make that our one goal is surely to end in failure.

That is true in every relationship. The man who enters any enterprise in search of happiness will miss it. This is the case because happiness is always a by-product. It is the result of a cause. It is never an end in itself. There are some very worthy goals that we find better when we take the indirect road. Sleep, for instance. How few people can go to sleep by trying hard to do so. Nobody finds happiness anywhere by making happiness an end.

What then is to be our supreme purpose as we undertake this beautiful relationship? We are to seek the highest happiness of the one that we marry. We are to seek the highest happiness of our home, and of our society, and of our world as a whole. Then my wife turned aside from other opportunities to give herself into my unpromising hands, she brought me under everlasting obligations to her. I owe it to her to make her the best husband possible. I owe it to her to bring to her as much laughter and as few tears as I have in my power to bring. As I thus seek her highest good, I shall also find my own, and I can find it in no other way.

Since in marrying we are seeking the highest joy of others we shall permit our marriage to have its full fruition. Every right marriage should eventuate in children. That is one of its primary purposes. Marriage is instituted of God for the perpetuation of the race. I am aware of the fact that many a childless marriage has been highly successful. I am aware of the further fact that many a marriage where children have come has been a tragic failure. Yet, other things being equal, marriage reaches its best when husband and wife share with God in the creation of children.

The reasons for this are obvious. Sometimes there are no children for the
simple reason that children are not wanted. From the standpoint of health and economic ability they are eminently able to provide for children and to give them the best of opportunities. But they refuse to assume this high privilege simply because it is too much trouble. Where that is the case it means that either the husband or the wife or both are profoundly selfish. And selfishness is not a good foundation on which to build a successful marriage relation. The fact then that children are not desired is a symptom of an inner disease, or a fatal tuberculosis of the soul known as self-centeredness.

Then children make for the success and happiness of the marriage relation because they bring the husband and wife closer together.

"O the child too, clothes the father with a dearness not as dew

Half is his and half is hers. He will be worthy of it too."

A child has a way of putting one hand on the heart of the father and the other on the heart of the mother and bringing them closer together. Not only so, but the child makes it necessary that they become one in their hopes and dreams and loyalties. They come closer to each other because they love the same children, because they work together and pray together to give these children the best possible opportunities. In marrying then we are not simply selfishly to seek our own happiness. We are to seek constantly to bring the highest happiness to others, especially to the one we married, and to the children of our home.

A third guidepost to successful marriage is self-control. Self-control is essential in every step of marriage. But I am referring now to the control of the temper. The home is one place where some people reserve the right to let down. They feel that they have the privilege of flying off the handle, of unsheathing the sword of their tongues, and giving all and sundry a piece of their mind. In fact, there are those that not only regard this as their right, but they take an unholy pride in the way they can explode under proper provocation.
Now as a matter of fact, bad temper is ugly anywhere. But it reaches its supreme ugliness in the home. I know we look upon getting mad, generally speaking, as a small matter. Yet, I think Henry Drummond was right when he said, "It has caused more genuine pain and more tears than any one thing." Certainly it is true that bad temper has been the TNT that has wrecked about as many homes as any other one cause in all the world. The evil effects of temper are obvious.

1. If you lose your temper you become quarrelsome. Becoming quarrelsome you say the unkind things. You not only speak the truth that is unkind, but in your eagerness to wound, you often pass beyond the truth. Did you ever notice how prone other folks are to lie when they get angry? Thus you wound and outrage the one you love the best. You have the joy of speaking your mind followed by the sorrow of knowing that you have been little and mean and unkind.

I am aware this is not the commonly accepted view. Some folks chuckle merrily over rows between husband and wife as if they were matters of no importance at all. Even our poets have misled us here. Listen to this, It is a story of a husband and wife who had lived together for a half of a life in the atmosphere of a wild warhoop. They had quarreled right up to the verge of the grave. Then this silly poet sang his stupid song.

"And if ever they meet in heaven,
I shouldn't think it queer,
That the loved each other the better
For the way they quarreled here."

That does not rise to the heights of dignified nonsense. It is sheer stupidity.

Here is another from no less an authority than Tennyson.

"As through the fields we went at eve,
And plucked the ripened ears,
O we fell out, my wife and I"
"So They Were Married"

O we fell out I know not why,
And kissed again with tears.

And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears."

Well, I, too, should pronounce a blessing on the falling out that all the more endears, if I had found such. But I have yet to find people in any relationship who loved each other the better because they were everlastingly stabbing each other with their tongues. If you have known such, then on with your warhoop.

I for my part had rather go out to the zoo and have a little ape.

One trouble about beginning to quarrel is that it tends to become a habit. I have in mind a wonderful couple. They are gifted and attractive. They are courteous to everybody but each other. They have quarreled so persistently that were they to speak courteously and kindly to each other it would be a shock to both. They have managed to live together, but now as they come around the age of fifty, when their love should be a deep and mellow something, they are almost completely indifferent to each other. They have kept together the body of their marriage, but the soul is dead.

Not only does a quarrel tend to become a habit, but it grows in intensity. A speed demon has to drive a little faster each day to get a thrill. A quarrel addict has to quarrel a little more violently each day to get the same thrill. The mean things you said yesterday have to be made a little stronger today in order for you to get the same kick out of it. I told you of a man who used to lose his temper and hammer his engines to pieces in a fit of madness. But he was wise man in comparison with the one who loses his temper and hammers the happiness of his wife and himself to pieces, and smashes up his home.

The final stage of quarreling is that it degenerates into nagging. That is
about the last straw. There is a passage in the Proverbs that says, "A dripping
day and a contentious woman are alike." You have seen it rain all day, you have
also seen husbands and wives that go to bed mouthing over some argument. They
wake up chewing the same old rag. It is the last thing they say to each other
as he goes to his work, it is the greeting when he comes home at night. No
wonder such an existence makes Reno look like the doorway to paradise.

But there is another type who refuse to quarrel. Like Woodrow Wilson they
are too proud to fight, but instead they pout. If a birthday is forgotten, if an
anniversary is neglected, if a handkerchief is not picked up, then these puff up
like a poisoned pup, and somebody must inquire diligently, humbly, and tearfully,
what is the matter? He speaks but the silence is profound. She speaks, but there
is never a grunt. To live with a pouter is to be possessed with an insatiable
desire to gnaw a file and to flee into the wilderness. If you are going to make
a success of your marriage practice self-control.

Then if you are to make a success of this lovely relationship it must be
a growing concern. You must be partners with each other, and that partnership
must be constantly growing. Many marriages begin to fail through sheer neglect.
The husband and wife cease to cultivate each other. They develop tastes for
different pleasures, and different friends, and little by little go in different
directions. I noticed two railroad tracks exactly parallel at one of our great
railroad stations. Yet, out from under the shed one went to the Atlantic and the
other went to the Pacific. Some husbands and wives grow apart by simply neglecting
each other.

Then sometimes the husband and wife separate because one of them grows and
the other does not. Over in the Ozark Mountains some thirty years ago a young
married couple was converted. They were both big, blundering, ignorant, mountain-
eers. But the husband felt himself called to the ministry. His wife strung along
with him without enthusiasm. He had no educational opportunities but he educated
himself. He became a brilliant preacher. But when he was pastor of the most conspicuous church in Nashville, Tennessee, she became angry at him. In fact, she became so angry that she took his walking cane and beat him up so severely that he had to spend days in the hospital. That experience cost him his church. In a large measure blighted his usefulness. He grew, but she did not, and they became far apart.

Such failure to grow together not only sounds the death-knell of happiness, but it opens the door for so many other evils. One of these for instance is the triangle. Nature abhors a vacuum. The woman who does not love her husband is always in danger of falling in love with some man who is not her husband. The husband who ceases to love his wife runs an even greater risk. I know that some men go wrong, as some women, as a result of an infatuation. Some go wrong from sheer selfishness and lack of control. But in many instances love has died by small degrees. The husband has ceased to show any of those gracious courtesies by which he won her. The wife has ceased to make any effort to be the charming woman that made him hers in life's bright morning long ago.

The triangle usually spells tragedy. Almost no husband will forgive his wife this type of sin, though there are a few. Many wives will forgive. In fact, it is my conviction, that there is no sin and no wrong that a woman won't forgive if she deeply loves her husband. Let me say, further, also that as horrible as it is to see the man that you love pass through this devil's gate, even that need not prove fatal. Often times it is merely an infatuation and many a marriage has been saved in spite of it. Years ago a man singing in my choir, a high class gentleman, was going one night to board the train with a widow who had fascinated him. The wronged wife got to the train ahead, so when her rival boarded the train, she then marched him home at the point of a gun. The last I heard of him he was superintendent of his Sunday school and living happy ever after. But beyond this I mean that it is important that you share life with
each other. Share your business interests, share your pleasures, go out together, keep alive the delicate thoughtfulness by which you won each other. A queer literary man, who died a generation ago, had a habit of reserving one night a week to call on his wife just as he did before they were married. He would dress in his best, walk around the block, come around and ring the bell. She would meet him dressed in her best, and they would pass the evening together. The neighbors knew about it, and they called it honeymoon night. Then the wife spoke of it after the husband had gone, love's sweet rain wet her face as she told the story.

Finally, if you are to make the highest success out of this relationship bring God into it. Remember that marriage is a Christian institution. Martin Luther had on his wedding ring the image of the cross. That should be stamped on every wedding ring. There is no tragedy that threatens this supreme human relationship that could not be settled by Christianity, and intelligently applied.

Maybe things are tense at your home, let me repeat to you the simple direction of our text, "Be in subjection one to another out of reverence to Christ." Our Discipline used to require of the bride that she promise to obey her husband. I stopped using that part before it was put out of the Discipline. I did so not because I thought it wrong for the wife to obey her husband. I believe that is perfectly right. I left it out because it did not also say for the husband to obey his wife. That too is an absolute essential. "We are to be in subjection one to another out of reverence to Christ." Through this mutual subjection our relationship will grow sweeter with the passing of the years. Walking together here we shall go on walking together out "where beyond these voices there is peace."
SO THEY WERE MARRIED

Be in subjection one to another out of reverence to Christ.

Ephesians 5:21 Moffat

1. In our last message we emphasized the fact that since marriage is the most intimate of all human relationships, it is for that reason the most exacting. There is no other human relation that can bring such measureless joy, and there is no other that can bring such boundless sorrow. It is, therefore of supreme importance that we utilize all available helps in making it a success. In my last message we tried to point out certain guide posts. We reminded you that one essential in making the best of marriage is a lavish use of good common sense.

This is evidenced by the fact that successful marriages do not happen, they are made. It is of the highest importance to find the right companion. It is equally important to be the right companion. No man expects to play the piano skillfully the first time he tries it. He does not even expect to be a master of it after taking ten lessons by correspondence. To be good at tennis requires consistent practice. But, strange to say, we often feel that we can be successful husbands and proficient wives without any effort whatever. To take this position is to defy all common sense.

Not only must we make our marriages a success. But, we must make them successful in our kind of world. The world in which we live is not ideal. There is much in our modern life that is antagonistic to the home. But in spite of all these antagonisms, we can win a successful marriage relationship. But to do this we have to learn to adapt ourselves to our economic situation. We have got to learn to live not in an ideal world, but in a world of perplexing problems such as the average couple has to face everyday.
2. Then I reminded you of the importance of keeping in view a proper goal. What is the goal of marriage? Too often each participant is seeking his or her own happiness. Now, marriage ought to end in happiness. But the man who makes happiness his goal in any department of life misses that goal. Happiness is the effect of a cause. It is a by-product. Instead of seeking my own personal happiness, I am to seek the happiness of my companion. I am to seek to be the best possible husband. As we both take this position, happiness no longer eludes us but turns and empties its treasure into our hearts and hands.

3. Then I warned you against the petty quarrel. I tried to remind you that quarreling becomes a habit. That it tends to increase in bitterness. Therefore, it is to be avoided. This does not mean that it is necessary that husbands and wives should see eye to eye on every question. There are times when they will be as far a part as the poles. But when you differ from a friend down in the store, you do not go into a rage over the matter. No more need you do so in the home. People who love each other ought to be able to differ without fighting.

II.

This brings us to the subject for this hour. The first of these is:- That you will have the best chance of making a success of your relationship if you permit your marriage to fulfill its proper function. One primary of marriage is the perpetuation of the race. Married people should have children. This does mean that there is no successful marriage without children. There have been many. No more does it mean that children in the home are an absolute guarantee of success, they are not. What I am saying is, that, other things being equal, the presence of children tends to strengthen the marriage relation. This is true in the first place because it gives to the husband and wife a common interest. The bond of a common love. Many a husband and wife that were
slipping away from each other have been drawn closer together by a little child. When a child lays his hand on the hand of the husband and on the hand of the wife, they are brought closer together. There are times, I know when even this holy bond fails. But, many have learned to be patient and have won in the end because of the presence of children in the home.

Then, children are a safe guard because the very fact that they are wanted is an indication of a degree of unselfishness on the part of husband and wife or both. There are times when children are not welcome for economic reasons. But where children are not desired at all, that means that husband or wife or both are selfish. Now, selfishness is not a good foundation on which to build a happy marriage relationship. There are those that are too selfish to share with God in the creating of children. This is a symptom of an inner disease. It shows that selfishness is still supreme. But home is a place where love must reign.

"where love took up the harp of life
and smote on all the chords with might,
Smote the chord of self, that trembling passed
In music out of sight."

Now, in urging that we have children in our homes, I am not suggesting that they be unlimited as to quantity. That is a matter to be decided by those most intimately concerned. We are not in danger at present from race suicide. But, there is this danger, that we repopulate our country from the ranks of those least fit. The cultivated and well to-do, our college-bred men and women, for instance, are not reproducing themselves. This is not a healthy sign. Surely it is better to build our new world out of those most fit than those most unfit. Every married couple ought, unless there is a good reason for the contrary, to have children in the home.

III.

Then if we are to make a success of marriage, we must continue to cultivate
each other. Many a marriage fails through neglect. This is not surprising. The surest way to destroy any worthwhile position or relation is neglect. All that is necessary to destroy the best mercantile establishment in this city is for its owner to let it alone. All that is necessary to destroy the best farm in the state is for that farmer to neglect his farm. All that is necessary to destroy the sweetest friendship is for those friends to let each other alone. All that is necessary to destroy the most beautiful marriage relationship is for husband and wife to neglect each other, and thus grow apart.

This sometimes happens when the husband or the wife grows and the other fails to do so. Over in the Ozark mountains a few years ago, a young couple was converted at a revival meeting. They were both as ignorant as ignorance. But, the young man felt called to preach. He began to study. He read widely. Today he is an educated man. His wife has not grown at all except in weight. Today she is as ignorant as she ever was, but more fat and husky. While her husband was pastor of a cultivated church she beat him up so soundly as to send him to the hospital. They still live in the same house but they are as far a part as the spaces between the stars.

At other times they both grow, but in opposite directions. He has his interests and his friends. She has her interests and her friends. They are both very modern. They believe in living their own lives. But in the process they lose each other. They wake up to the fact that by and by they are living in different worlds. They may still love each other after a fashion, but they do not like each other. They have nothing in common except, perchance, the physical. And though our modern world has put the accent on sex, there must be something else for a successful marriage. The truth of the matter is, I am persuaded, that sex has received a hundred times as much emphasis as it deserves. But, the only way to make a successful marriage is for the husband and wife to live together and grow together.

This is only common sense. You can not drop after marriage all the delicate
courtesies and considerations by which you won each other. Take the husband, for instance, how did he win you as his bride? By persistent attention. He was courteous and thoughtful. He gave you all his time. He made himself just as interesting as possible. But, how is it now? He will still spring gladly and anxiously to pick up the hankerchief of his secretary, though that hankerchief is about the texture of a good sneeze. But he lets his wife run the furnace, then his conversation when he comes home at the close of the day is a thrill. His wife has been at home possibly the whole day. She is anxious for conversation, she wants to know what he has done, but she carries on a monologue while he hides behind his newspaper and grunts. Once vivacious and interesting, he is now about as thrilling as a first class mummy.

Then take the wife. How did you win your husband? It has become a proverb "That the stomach is the way to a man's heart." Well, the brute still loves to eat, but that is by no means the whole truth. It is far nearer right to say "That the way to a man's heart is through his vanity." That is the reason why many highly cultivated women find it difficult to marry. They make the young fellow who goes with them feel a bit cheap. Believe me, if you send that beau of yours home feeling as dumb as perhaps he really is, there will be a lonesome place against the sky for you. You will never see him again. If you really desire to keep him hanging around, you have got to take an all together different procedure. What is that?

The answer is as simple as A B C. Listen to him with a sparkle in your eye and with a look of amazed admiration on your face as he tells you of his dreams, of his ambitions, of his conquests. Just say ah and o now and then as he tells you what a great man he is. Tell him how you envy the woman he will marry sometime. Laugh at his innate jokes and gasp in awed amazement at his lies. Then when he goes home around two or three in the morning, he will be whistling marshaling music. When he gets home he will look at himself in the mirror and say,"That girl I was with to night was the best conversationalist I ever talked to." Not that she
said anything but ah! and Oh, but she made him think she was good. Now, you smile at that, but there is more solid truth in it than most of us men want to believe. That being the way we get taken in, but also that having been caught by that sort of tactics, the wife goes into reverse as soon as they are married. Suppose when your husband starts to give you his old line, you stifle a yawn. Suppose that when he says "Stop if you have heard this one" then you actually stop him. Then you are headed for Reno. After he gets frozen up like that for a few times, there might be danger of his warning his frozen vanity at false fires. In all seriousness, keep up some of the delicate courtesies by which you won each other.

Some fifty years ago there was a unique literary man and his wife who had this beautiful custom. Every Tuesday night they would both dress in their best, he would then go out and walk around the block and ring his own door bell. She would admit him and lead him into the parlor and they would spend the entire evening together. The neighbors used to look out and see the light and say to each other "It is honeymoon night at the Terrace." And husband and wife were a bit more thoughtful throughout the village on account of this. And when the husband died, the wife told her minister of the beautiful custom and her sweet rain wet her face as she spoke of it. They managed to keep their relationship from sinking into the dull drab commonplace as is the case with so many. Keep cultivating each other. You will love each other far better 25 years after you are married or you will love each other far less. Whether less or more depends on you.

III.

If your marriage is not to end in tragedy, you must keep yourself each for the other. This is a day when the sorted triangle is all too common. Of course, one reason that husbands and wives find it so easy to fall in love with somebody else is simply because they have ceased to love each other. Nature abhors a vacuum.
When I cease to love the woman who has given herself to me, then some other love is likely to take that place. Many husbands and wives open the door to an illicit love by allowing their once beautiful love to die through neglect.

Sometimes the woman is at fault herself. She met another man who is more attractive, who has more position, who can give her more than her husband. But far more often it is the husband that is at fault. It takes two to build a successful marriage, but it only takes one to bring about utter wreckage and tragedy. I have seen this happen again and again in spite of the wife being as loyal and loving a wife as a husband ever had. Of course, it takes a ghastly degree of wickedness to be guilty of this. I sometimes think that of all the corruptible scandals that will ever creep into the dark hell, it will be the man that has ruthlessly walked over some woman's heart in order to win his own unclean prize.

But, even these sorted triangles need not always prove fatal. Sometimes the love that suffers long and is kind can win out. Wives are far more quick to seek divorce today than in former years. This is the case because she is more economically dependent than she once was. A half century ago she had to live with her husband even though she knew he was a moral leper. She had to do so because she had no way of making a living. But that is not the case today. We are glad that it is not. Eighty per cent of the divorces granted today are at the request of women. This does not mean that wives are more to blame than husbands, it simply means that they are more independent. There is disaster now, but in the end it is going to make for a better home-life and a more abiding relationship.

During my own experience, I have known more than one home to be saved where the situation looked to me absolutely hopeless. In a Texas city, a young wife reared in a parsonage came to me one day. She was unusually brilliant, a graduate in Art, Music and Law. She had about the choicest assortment of slang to which I have ever listened. "A few weeks ago", she said, my husband phone me that he would not be home until mid-night. I saw he was throwing me a wide out curve,
so I went to the office. I arrive about the same time that the blonde did. "Big boy", I said, "You are going home with me." "Not a bit of it" he answered, with a rather lamb-like boldness. "It is either with me or to the hospital or the morgue. I have my gun here and the choice is up to you." He went home with her. Murder was in his eyes and they watched each other all night. "Some day", she said, "I think I shall kill him" no she answered, "I am going to stay in there and pitch." When I left the city months later, she was still pitching and he seemed headed toward becoming a Christian. Now, I am not recommending a standing army for the safeguard of marriage, but I would recommend a desperate earnestness before you refuse to acknowledge that the highest and holiest secret of human blessedness has half whispered to you and then passed you by.

IV.

My final suggestion, if you are to make a success of your marriage is that you strengthen it by the sanction of religion. Marriage, I reminded you in the beginning is a divine institution. It is a part of the plan of God for your highest usefulness and your highest self-realization. Both husband and wife who come to this bow together at the foot of a common cross and look into the face of a common Christ.

In the old marriage ceremony that has come down to us from the past. The wife promises to obey her husband. I no longer administer that vow. My refusal to do this, however, does not grow out of the fact that she ought not obey. Every wife ought to obey her husband. I leave it out because it does not also enjoin obedience on the part of the husband. They both ought to obey. That is in accordance with that high pleasure laid down by Paul; "Be in subjection one to another out of reverence to Christ." It is by this mutual subjection that husband and wife find the highest joy as well as the highest freedom.

It is my conviction that there is not a foe that fights marriage today that
that could not be defeated by the presence of Jesus conscientiously and intelligently applied. There are those who separate because of cruel and inhuman treatment, but Christian love kills cruelty. There are those who separate from incompatibility of temper, but Christ transforms our tempers as he transforms ourselves. There are those who separate because one or both are determined to go their own and selfish way. They never learn forbearance. They never learn to put themselves each in the place of the other. They never learn to live by the Golden Rule. They never learn that mutual subjection, which is the only path to real freedom.

On the TransAtlantic liner a husky woman watched a couple pass by and said in an undertone to her companion. "What a pity to see a strong man like that such a slave to an invalid wife." The husband heard this, took his wife to a state room and came back and sat down beside the woman whose remark he had heard. "I could not but hear your remark about my being a slave, and I came to tell you that you used the right word. Years ago, I was reduced from wealth to poverty by the rascality of a business partner. Everybody thought I was guilty except one, that was my wife. It broke my spirit for the time, it wrecked my health, she nursed me through it all. Today I am on my feet again, but the strain was too much for her. You spoke the right word, I am her slave and my best wish for you is that you may have as willing a slave. Nothing can destroy marriage like that. Therefore, my last words are the words of my text "Be in subjection one to another out of reverence to Christ.

Of 164000 active Church people only 117 divorced. This is only 0.7% or about 1/3 average. That is 1/2 vote of Christians stand 25 times as good chance for success as those who are not. G. W. Fisk.
HE THINKS OF MARRIAGE

"For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Matthew 19:5-6

Tonight I am to speak to you on one of life's most beautiful and exciting adventures. It is hard to speak to a modern audience on the question of marriage, so many refuse to take it seriously. It is queer how many people tend to make a joke of marriage. They joke about it as a possibility. At times they make a tragic joke of it in practice. Too often when marriage is mentioned it is born in a smile and smothered in a grin. Yet, there is no choice humanly speaking that means so much to the chooser. It is a common place to say that generally speaking we meet our heaven or our hell in the one that we marry. Therefore, as our Discipline tells us this enterprise is not to be entered upon except discreetly and in the fear of God. What then are some of the guideposts that ought to help us as young people to find the road to a successful marriage relationship?

I.

1. First, and a fundamental importance is to begin with a proper philosophy of marriage. We ought to have a clear view of the goal that is before us. If we do not know where we are going there is little chance of a successful ar.
rival. One of the most fruitful causes of failure is the large number of young people who enter into this holy relationship without any proper conception of what it means. Of course, this is not the fault of the young people nearly so much as it is the fault of their teachers. We fail in the home, and in the school, and in the church so often to fit them for this most important adventure of their lives. We are beginning therefore by trying to get a proper conception of marriage.

In order to get this proper conception where shall we turn? To whom shall we look for a wise and illuminating word? Certainly we shall not turn to Hollywood and its disciples. When I wish to know how to run a bank I do not go to the man who is never engaged in the banking business, or to those who having been engaged in it have failed. Nor do I turn to those who have made shipwreck of this relationship to learn about marriage.

Then, there are those in recent days who have come forward with queer suggestions such as companionate marriage. That is, two young people are to live together for a time then if they find the relationship congenial they are to make it more or less binding. Of course, such an attitude toward marriage is as senseless as it is shameful. Two young people making such an adventure are not likely to trust each other. Each knowing the laxity of the other will remember that if difficulties arise in the future, then those who resolve to quit at the first difficulty that arises will never learn to do anything successfully, especially a thing so exacting as being successfully married. Such an attitude toward marriage is a sin at once against ourselves, society, and commonsense.

In shaping then a proper conception of marriage I am going to call your attention to an old fashioned book. It is a book that comes up out of life. It is a book born of human experience. That book is the Bible. I am going to call your attention to the words of the supreme Teacher in that book. The one
whom we call Lord and Master. It is my conviction that his teaching about marriage is still the most sane, the most solid, the most worthwhile ever uttered. His view is one that is essentially right. By this I do not mean that it is right because Jesus said it. But because it is right in the nature of things, therefore he said it.

How can we distinguish between right and wrong? There are many helps, but here is one of the truest tests that I know: Whatever is humanly helpful is right. That is, whatever course of action makes for the highest helpfulness for the doer, for those related to him, for his society, and his world, that course is right. Whatever is humanly hurtful is wrong. If a certain course of action hurts the doer, hurts those related to him, hurts the society and his world, then such a course is wrong.

Now take for instance Jesus' conception of marriage. I know it is under fire today not only from people without the Church, but from those within the Church as well. There are those who honestly believe that Jesus was wrong. They seek to improve on him, not by a better conception of marriage, but by easier methods of divorce. But it is my conviction that the trouble of our day is not with marriage, but with those entering into marriage. It has been pointed out that almost any form of government can be made to work provided we have good men to work it. Plato said that a good tyrant made for the best of governments. But the trouble of it was in keeping the tyrant good. We believe in democracy, but a democracy will rot down if those who compose it are rotten in themselves. We believe in Jesus' conception of marriage because it is the most humanly helpful according to my conviction ever suggested. Loyalty to it works the largest possible good to all concerned. This loyalty to it always results in tragedy.

What is this conception? Jesus made four solid assertions with regard
to marriage.

1. He declared that marriage is a divine institution. That does not mean that all marriages are made in heaven. Some of them are made in the other place. But it does mean that marriage is a part of God's plan. Man is one hemisphere of our common humanity, woman is the other. They reach their highest possibilities in the marriage relationship. Marriage is God's plan for the propagating of the race. Marriage is God's plan for giving babies the best possible chance of growing into wholesome, strong, God-like men and women.

Since marriage is a part of God's plan it is not to be entered upon except for reasons upon which God could smile. This would make many marriages impossible. Some marry for convenience, some marry for position, some marry for money, some marry for even baser motives, some marry because they are drunk. There is but one solid reason, and that is the mutual devotion of one to another. That is the love of a woman for a man, and the love of a man for a woman. It is only thus that we have a right to say, "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." More than once have I married couples that I thought it would be correct to say, "What the devil hath joined together let no man put asunder. They will get asunder themselves if given enough time." Marriage is a part of the divine plan.

2. Marriage is the highest and most binding human relationship. "This cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife." The Bible has a very lifted conception of a child to parent and of parent to child. "Children obey your parents," is a fundamental law of the Old Testament. "The eye that mocketh at his father and refuses to obey his mother behold the ravens of the valley shall pluck it out and the young eagles shall eat it," is one of the stern Proverbs of this Book. But as sacred as is the relationship between parent and child, that between husband and wife is more
sacred and binding still.

In fact, it is so binding that it is to take precedence over all other relationships. With the husband the wife is to be first, with the wife the husband is to be first. No in-law, not even a child is to come between them. Whenever this solid principle is not adhered to there is trouble. The most binding, the most intimate of all human relationships is that between husband and wife.

3. The married couple is to be one. "They twain shall be one flesh." That is more than a figure of speech. It becomes increasingly a reality. You have noticed how a husband and wife who have lived together a long time become increasingly to think alike. They come increasingly to grow into each other. So much is this the case that when the one passes on the other usually lingers but for a short time. This oneness is to be wide and deep.

They are to be one in their mutual self-giving. At marriage the wife gives herself to the husband, the husband also gives himself to the wife. I have a right to speak of the woman who married me as my wife. She belongs to me. But if I am going to play the game according to the rules I also belong to her. I no more own this right arm than she owns me. We are to be one so far as possible in our financial relationships. I know that there are times when the man has all the money, or the woman. But this is not ideal. It is much better for both to start on an equality and to conduct the whole business of living, including the sharing of their wealth on the basis of partnership.

Finally they are to be one in their mutual devotion to God. So often husband and wife are divided from each other by the fact that one is a Christian and the other not. Sometimes it is the husband who is a Christian. In that case if the wife fails to follow him and to give him her moral and spiritual support there is every chance that he will make shipwreck of his religion. It is rare indeed for a husband to carry on religiously when his wife fails to
support him in his adventure. More often it is the wife who is a Christian and the husband not. Many a woman is strong enough to carry on alone, but it is exceedingly unfair on the part of her husband to let her do so. You have no right to confine the oneness of your marriage relationship to things that are material alone. To make the highest success of marriage you are to be one in your devotion to God.

4. Then Jesus said that marriage is for life. It is not to last till the first quarrel. It is not to last simply till the first difficulty, it is to last till the sundown. This does not mean that when there is failure both are always to blame. I have known cases of divorce where one party was purely sinned against. But there is no divorce without guilt on one side. Somebody is always wrong. The divine ideal of marriage is that there is to be no divorcement save that written in terms of green grass on the grave of one of the contracting parties.

Here then is Jesus' conception of marriage. Is it right or wrong? That is, is it humanly helpful or humanly hurtful? Would adherence to it work good or ill? Here is a young couple who believe they have a right to separate and marry again for any reason that suits them. They flit from husband to husband and from wife to wife as the birds flit from one branch to another in a tree. Here is another couple that accepts Jesus' view. In spite of difficulties they live in loyalty to each other till their golden wedding and beyond.

Which of these two couples will give their children the better chance? Which will make the larger contribution to society? Which will find the higher happiness for themselves? There can be no doubt as to the answer of that question. It is the ideal of Jesus that is best because it is essentially right.

Having decided upon our goal how shall we attain it?
1. If we are to give ourselves the best opportunity of making a success of marriage we must believe that success is possible. I think that is true of the vast majority of those entering into marriage. But even then a defeatist attitude toward this relationship is far too prevalent. Too few of us foreclose our minds against the possibility of failure. Too few of us make the adventure for the set purpose to succeed at all cost.

One reason for this defeatist attitude is that there is such wide advertising of the homes that go to pieces. Six marriages succeed for every one that fails. Yet, it is the failures that make the news and not the successes. Over 50,000 people will attend church in our city today, but any bum who would break into a store and steal a package of cigarettes would get more notice in the papers tomorrow than all the 50,000 who went about enjoying their privileges and discharging their duties.

Then our young people sometimes get a poor appreciation of marriage from their elders. Divorces were nothing like so common when I was a youth as they are today. Yet, I remember still the shock that came to me when I told certain of my older friends the thrilling news of my coming marriage. I looked to see their faces light up, and their sluggish pulses quicken. I thought they would fairly shout over my coming happiness. Instead most of them looked sadly at me as if I had just handed them a suicide note. Being young their attitude did not discourage me in the least, but I went away feeling a bit sorry for them because I knew their attitude meant that their own marriages had been a bit of a failure. As you enter into this adventure, enter with the high purpose of making a success of it.

2. If you are to make a success you ought to take time to get acquainted with the one you marry. Marrying strangers may be very thrilling, but it is also very silly. If you are out to buy a car you take time to learn something about that car. If you have made up your mind to buy a farm, you at least look
it over and learn all you can about it. But many a time we marry when we are
practically strangers to one another.

Sometimes we fail to know each other because we are in too big a hurry
to get married. "Don't you believe in love at first sight?" Well, I have
observed this that love at first sight is often quite different at second
sight. Meet folks who make a bad impression at first, come to make a good
one and vice versa. Of course, there are those who marry in haste who get
on beautifully, but such exceptions do not prove the wisdom of hasty mar-
riages. It only indicates that the Lord sometimes preserveth the simple.

Then there are times when we do not know each other because our court-
ship has been dishonest. We have been insincere. We have concealed as far
as possible our real selves. Such deception cannot last. When it is dis-
covered always there is trouble. Carlyle says, "If you build a lie into a
rock wall that wall will fall down." If you build a lie into a marriage that
marriage will fall down. Here, if nowhere else, it pays to be honest.

But how many folks court one girl to find that they have married another.
How many girls receive the attention of a man to find herself married to one
who is entirely different. That was a high time for Jacob when he at last was
privileged to take Rachel to his home. But he soon found that he didn't have
Rachel at all. He had weak eyes for Leah. No wonder there was trouble. Nothing
makes for bitterness more than to find that the one to whom you have bowed in
soul is after all only an image of clay. In so bowing you have gathered dust
and dirt not upon your knees only but on your soul as well. Take time to get
acquainted before you marry.

3. If in the process of getting acquainted you find that in your pro-
spective husband or wife that which gets on your nerves, get it straightened
out before marriage or go somewhere else. Maybe the girl with whom you are
going is a jealous disposition. Maybe she is a creature of rather mean and
low suspicions. When you smile at another girl she thinks that you are in love with her. If you cannot get over that before you marry her you better let her alone, you are not likely to accomplish it after marriage.

It may be that there is that about your prospective husband that offends you, it may be that he is a different religion from yours, or that he has no religion at all. It may be that his family jars you and makes you uncomfortable. Don't tell yourself that you are not marrying the family you are only marrying George. You are marrying the family. That you will realize when your mother-in-law comes to spend the winter with you. Worse still, maybe the man who is waiting on you is a drinking man, a habit which you hate. If he comes into your presence with breath perfumed with cloves to hide the fact that he has been drinking, he will come without the cloves when you are married. In other words, when you marry don't set out to build a reformatory, set out to build a home.

4. Then I think you will add to your chance of success if your marriage is in the open. There are those who take delight in the secret escapade. They find particular sweetness in the bread that is eaten in secret. Naturally there are runaway marriages that are highly successful. Not only so, but there are times when young people have a perfect right to marry regardless of the protests of their elders. I had a wealthy old kinsman back in Tennessee sometime ago who opposed the marriage of his daughter to a Methodist preacher. He watched her like a hawk. One day when he had to leave he locked her in the basement. The minister came in his absence and married her though there was a door between them. When my kinsman came on the scene he saw his unwelcomed son-in-law preparing to attack the door with an ax. "What are you doing," he asked. And the young preacher answered, "I am fixing to smash the door and get my wife out." The old gentleman then looked at the daughter, and they lived happy ever after.
"He Thinks of Marriage"

But while such marriages may turn out well, while the objections of your parents may be silly and selfish, such might not be the case. It is well for you to bear this in mind, that they have known you quite as long as he. They know quite as much about life as you do. In spite of their dullness they love you better than anybody else in all the world. It might be well to consider their objections. I am sure it would be well at least to wait till you are old enough to be your own. The man who is eager for you to run away with him might have a reason. He might be quite sure that if you knew the facts you would never think of marrying him. At least wait, and if you do not love each other well enough to wait, the chances are that you ought not to wait anyway. Avoid the secret escapade.

5. Then remember that marriage is for grown ups. Children ought not to marry. Now and then we have a horrid example in our papers of some old man who has married a girl twelve or thirteen years of age. Sometimes both are children. The trouble with marriages between children is that they are both physically and emotionally undeveloped. Such marriages have every promise of ending in tragedy.

But the childish marriages are not made alone by those who are children. They are often made by adults who have never managed to grow up morally and spiritually. Little babies are very sweet, but big babies are an abomination. Here is a girl who has been spoiled rotten. I was at a birthday party sometime ago given in honor of such a one. She was presented with a lovely piece of jewelry by her parents. It was not exactly what she wanted so in spite of the presence of the company she dashed her gift on the floor in a rage. With abject apologies the father and mother picked up the jewelry and promised her what she wanted.

Now this girl may marry some time. She doesn't deserve it, but she may.
Suppose she finds one who is as big a baby as she is. He, too, has become convinced that all roads lead to Rome, and he himself is Rome. He too has been pampered, petted, and spoiled from his infancy. These two meet and fancy they fall in love. Then they marry. Then what happens? The same thing that happens when irresistible force hits a moveable body, there is an explosion.

Remember that marriage is for grown ups.

6. Finally, if you are to make a success of marriage practice a wise reserve. There is a sane word tucked away in the Old Testament that reads, "Offer not thy burnt offering upon every altar which thou comest." Those who sacrifice continuously upon wayside altars may fancy that they have a lot of fun. But you cannot eat your cake and keep it too. If you offer your gifts upon every altar you will discover someday to your horror that when you come to the supreme sacrificial moment of life, when you desire to give your best, you will have nothing left to give.

Then practicing this wise reserve, beware of too many flirtations. Beware of distributing your prize, even such as kisses to everyone that comes your way. Promiscuous kissing does something to us intellectually and physically. James Bowlin told of two girls that he knew. "One," he said, "was like a peach that grew high in the top of the tree. It caught the first kiss of the sun in the morning, and held its last lingering caress at eventide. It grew luscious and beautiful. But to get it one had to climb. The other was like a bunch of grapes that hung along a common path, everyone who passed along took a grape."

The effect of this is seen upon our movie folks. Most actors and actresses are no better or worse than the rest of us, yet their marriages become numerous. Why? They indulge in too many flirtations, too many petting parties. They offer themselves so promiscuously upon wayside altars that by and by they have
nothing to offer. There are thousands of young folks that so trifly with
love that by the time they reach the age in which they should marry they
have rendered themselves incapable of a perfect love.

Worse still, some of them go off the steep end and go positively im-
moral. Did you ever hear the story of the Three Weavers? There were once
three weavers. One morning one of them said to his two friends, "The sweet
angel of suffering came to my home last night and a baby girl was born."
"So it was at my house," said the second weaver. "So it was at mine," said
the third. "But that is not all," said the first. "A good fairy came and
left my little girl a golden loom with a thread of gold. One day this fairy
prince will seek to wed my daughter. She will weave for him a coat. If
it fits him as the falcon's feather fit the falcon, then he will marry her.
And life's sweet dream will come true. But if the coat does not fit, then
the marriage will be impossible and that day her heart will break." "And so
it was at our house," said the second and third weaver.

Then the years slipped past. The first weaver began early to tell his
daughter about the wonderful loom with the thread of gold, and about the high
privileges that were ahead of her. He spoke joyously, but he spoke solemnly.
The second weaver also spoke to his daughter about her wonderful gift. But
he seemed to make a joke of it. He never could mention it without loud guff-
faws. The third weaver mentioned it not at all. If his daughter ever hinted
that such a gift was hers, he hushed her as if her golden gift was an evil and
wicked thing.

Then one day according to the prophecy of the good fairy, the prince came.
The second weaver who had made a joke of the golden loom saw the prince and
hurried to his daughter. Again with loud guffaws he told her to begin her
weaving that the prince had come. But the girl answered with shame, "I have
already been weaving. I have given one garment to a passing knight, another
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to a nameless squire." But she wove a garment for the prince. But it was too small even for a dwarf and that day her heart broke. The third weaver told his daughter at last now she could begin weaving. But she turned on him with hot anger, "You never told me. I have already given my garment to a troubadour, another to a village cherub, another to a page." She wove the best possible garment for her prince, but it was too small for a pigmy, and that day her heart broke. But the first weaver said to his daughter, "Now you may begin weaving." And weave she did. And when the prince put it on it fit him like the feathers on a falcon, and that day love's dream came true. If you are to make a go of this high adventure, "offer not thy offering on every altar which thou comest." Keep thyself in a wise reserve lest when you come to the supreme moment of life you have nothing to give.
SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE

Matthew 19:5-6

"And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

I

Every thoughtful man will agree that the marriage question is one of vast and vital importance. In fact it is about the most important question that confronts the American people today.

1. It is a matter of vast importance to society. This is true because marriage is the foundation of the home. If the marriage tie is weak, the home will rest upon a weak foundation. Just in proportion as the marriage relation goes upon the rocks the home becomes a wreck. If the marriage tie is a thing of sand, then the home will rest upon a foundation thoroughly insecure. When the floods come and the winds blow and beat upon the home thus founded, it will surely fall and complete will be the wreck of it. Now it is only a truism to say that our whole social order stands or falls with the home. The home is the fountain from which issue the streams that make up the great Mississippi of our national life. If the fountains are pure the river of our national life will be pure, but if the fountains are poisonous, the river must also be poisonous. What we are in our school life, in our church life, in our civic and national life depends upon the home. The home is either the savior or the destroyer of civilization. And since the home depends for its security on the marriage tie, my subject is at once seen to be of tremendous importance.

2. This is a question of vast importance to those immediately concerned: that is the husband and the wife. It is hard to speak about marriage to a mixed audience. It is hard to get the audience to take the speaker seriously when marriage is mentioned. It is usually 'born in grin and smothered in a laugh.' It is continually a theme for jests. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that many not only speak of it jestingly but perform it in the same way. They seem to make a kind of blind man's buff out of it, grabbing and marrying whomsoever they chance to catch in the mad game. But in spite of this it is the most important decision that you will ever be called upon to make save your decision to follow Jesus Christ. You will likely find either your heaven or your hell in the one that you are led to marry. Therefore, for you it is a tremendously serious matter.
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II.

What is the basis of a successful marriage? In seeking an answer for this question, I think it is wise to turn to the Word of God. Of course we can give hospitality to all wholesome instruction that comes from other sources, but I believe an earnest effort to follow out the divine plan in this high business would go far to prevent many of the disasters that are taking place in the married life of today. Here as elsewhere in matters religious Jesus Christ is the supreme authority. Therefore, let us hear Him.

1. The first fact that He makes clear to us in the text is that marriage is a divine institution. It is not merely a civil contract. It is no business transaction like the exchange of property. It is no matter of buying and selling after the order of the market place. It is a holy partnership entered into according to the will of God. The first marriage was formed in Eden. The temple was the winsome beauties of a garden, the wedding march was played by God's choirs in feathers and God Himself officiated at the altar, and since then we have been taught to say at every wedding: "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Now, if we conceived of marriage as a divine institution, many marriages now being made would be impossible, for to conceive of the wedded pair as having been brought together by God is to make marriage impossible except for reasons upon which God Himself can smile. And what is that one reason? It is love of a man for a maid, and of a maid for a man. People who come together for any other reason are not truly married.

But when we face the situation as it is, we find men and women married for almost every trifling reason. There are marriages for convenience. Some marry to get a thrill, Some marry for social position. Some marry for money. Some marry for reasons even more base and foul and unworthy. I myself have performed ceremonies when I had a considerable suspicion that it was little less than mockery to say: "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder." I fear that it would have been more appropriate to have said: "what the devil hath put together, let not man put asunder," for they will get asunder themselves if you will only give them a little time.

I am aware that what I am saying sounds to some old fashioned to the point of being utterly ludicrous. Yet I dare to repeat, on the authority of Jesus Christ that the one basis for marriage is love of one for the other. Marriage for any other reason is not only less than marriage, but it can never reach the highest success. It may bring the prizes that were coveted. Thrills may be had, but they will be temporary. Wealth may be won, but your brilliant costumes will be only so many shrouds for the deaths that you die daily, and the rustling of your silken garments will be but the hisses of the adders that sting you and poison your life.

2. The second fact that Jesus Christ brings out about the marriage relationship is that it is supreme. It takes precedence over all other human relationships. The relationship of parent and child is one exceedingly intimate and exceedingly holy. The Bible has much to say about this
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relationship. We are commanded to honor father and mother. We are taught that this is the first commandment with promise. We are solemnly warned that "The eye that mocketh at his father and refuses to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pluck it out and the young eagles shall eat it." But there is a relationship more intimate and binding than this, and that is the relationship between husband and wife. "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife."

For this reason, if you expect to make the most out of your wedded life, your husband must come first. If you expect as a husband to make the most out of it, your wife must come first. If you find that you love your father and mother better than you love the man that you are going to marry, then you had better not marry him. The same it true for the man. Whenever I see a married couple unable to leave the home of father and mother I get uneasy. It is a gross misappropriation of rivers and mountains anyway not to use some of them to separate you from your in-laws.

This does not mean of course that in marrying you are to break with any of the old loves of childhood and youth. They ought to grow sweeter and tenderer and more binding through the years. But it does mean that if there comes a day when a choice must be made between these old relationships and the new into which you have entered, that you must side with the new. My firm conviction is that there is no other sure basis of a successful marriage, and if you are not willing to enter into the marriage relationship on this basis, then you owe it both to yourself and the one that you expect to marry to remain out of it.

3. Jesus taught that marriage was real the husband and wife one. "Therefore they are no more twain but one flesh." And, mark you, this oneness does not mean simply an idle or empty figure of speech. It stands for a most profound and important reality.

(1) The wedded pair are to be one in their mutual self-giving. I speak of the woman that married me as "my wife." I have a right so to speak. I asked her to give herself to me and she consented. She consented with open eyes. She knew that in so doing she was giving up her own name, that name that suggests all that was manly in her father and all that is queenly in her mother. She knew that she was giving up her childhood's home, all those dear scenes that from day to day had caught the color of her life, sympathized with her joys and her sorrows. She knew that she was giving me her very self. Therefore, I have a right to call her "my wife."

But just in the same way she has the right to speak of me as "my husband." She no more gave herself to me than I gave myself to her. She owns me. I no more own these two hands than she owns me. Our self-giving was mutual, if according to the divine plan. Now it is only this mutual self-giving that can insure successful marriage. There are times when all the giving is on one side. I have seen husbands and wives who are both in love with the same one. Sometimes they were both in love with the husband and sometimes both in love with the wife. But either way it is likely to spell disaster. If the man gives all, then he has a right to expect all. And the woman who divides her heart by petty flirtations
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with others is a cheat and a fraud. And if she divides it by giving herself in part to another, she is to be despised. And the same is true of a man. If you ask for everything, you must be willing to give everything. And it is only this mutual self-surrender that guarantees success.

A young fellow came to my study some months ago very much excited. He had been married to a lovable girl for possibly half a year. He sat down and said very excitedly: "Well, I suppose I am going to get a divorce." "What is wrong?" I asked him. "I want home" he said indignantly, "and found my wife reading 'Billy and the Major'." (It so happened that this gentleman was a "high brow." He read only heavy stuff and it seemed to him preposterous that his wife should not read the same kind of literature.) "Therefore", he said, "I took the book and put it in the stove."

I looked at this red headed gentleman in amazement. "What" I asked, not without indignation, "do you expect of a wife? Did you marry her in order for her to fling away her personality and become a second edition of yourself?" One like me" I continued "is quite enough in my family. Evidently you want a satellite and not a wife. You want somebody that will give everything to you, even her personality, while you give nothing." Of course such marriages must end in failure.

(2) Then those wedded are to be one in their material interests. What they have of this world's goods is not his neither is it hers, it is theirs. When you stood at the altar and put the ring on her hand, this is what you said: "With this ring I thee wed, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow." You may not have had much to give, but what you did have you solemnly promised to share with her. And a man who will be stingy and niggardly and skin-flint with his wife is not fit to be a husband. What is yours is hers, and she has the same right to it that you have.

On the other hand, it devolves upon the wife to be an intelligent partner. She will be willing to share, and not demand all. She will be willing to govern herself as their purse can buy. She will not look upon her husband as an unlimited meal ticket. If he is poor, she will be willing to share his poverty with him. Not only will she be willing, but she will count it a privilege. She will feel herself wronged if she is not so trusted and so relied upon.

Now I know that all women cannot be so trusted. There are not a few men today who are bankrupts because of extravagant wives. There are some in the penitentiary today because of extravagant wives. There are some who have gone out the suicide's door because of extravagant wives. But there are men who have climbed to wealth, or who have been happy in poverty because of the women who was glad to be one with them in their material interests. (Twins' wife)

(3) Then they are to be one in their spiritual interests. They are to be one in their devotion to God. I know there have been happy marriages without this. But it takes this to guarantee the highest possible success. Where a man and woman are truly married to each other and also truly wedded to God, then there is every reason why their home should take on some of the hallowed and holy joy that belongs to the
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home eternal. But it is a tragic mistake when the newly married pair go to establish their home, if they concern themselves about furniture and leave out that that is most vital and most necessary - the family altar. There is nothing that will go further today toward making a marriage successful than a firm devotion to God on the part both of the husband and the wife.

It may be young woman that your husband is a Christian and you are not. You may feel kindly toward the Church of Jesus Christ. You may want your husband to carry on and carry on bravely. But remember he is not likely to do so unless you help him. It is very rare indeed to see a man, however truly loyal to Christ he was in the beginning of their wedded life, keep that loyalty unimpaired through a space of years without the sympathetic help and support of his wife. But remember this, that some day you are going to want your husband a man that loves God. Some day you are going to want an arm on which to lean that has in it the strength of the everlasting Arm.

But while the husband sometimes has to go alone, it is far more often the wife. It is a great tragedy, young man, when you consent to have this holy partnership between you and your wife confined purely to the things that are of the earth. She can only find her highest happiness in fellowship with Christ. She can only find it as she shares that high fellowship with you. Surely you would not want to hinder her. Surely you would not be unmanly enough to want to put all the responsibility of the religious life of the home on her shoulders. Surely you would not be willing to carry your weight of responsibility in the material interests of the home and then prove a slacker and a coward in the deeper spiritual interests. You are to be one in your devotion to God.

In short you are to be one in all life's relationships. You are to remember always that growing out of this oneness, the thing that hurts the husband also hurts the wife. The thing that will hurt the wife will also hurt the husband. Since you are one, if one member suffers, all other members suffer with him. I do not know fully just what relationship my gall bladder had to the rest of my body, but I know this, that when it got into trouble that every organ and every member of my body shared in the pain and in the tragedy through which it had to pass. Whatever hurts the wife hurts the husband. Whatever hurts the husband hurts the wife. And whatever helps one helps the other. "For they are no more twin but one flesh."

The fourth fact that Jesus brings out about the marriage relation is that it is for life. It is not a temporary proceeding. It is not a thing of a month or a year or a dozen years. It is not to last until the first quarrel or until the first time you get your feelings hurt. It is to last till the sunset. There is no right divorce save that written in terms of green grass on the grave of one of the contracting parties.

How we need to believe this! If we only believed it we would not enter into this relationship except we loved well enough to be willing to live together for life. We would not enter into it flippantly and blindly.
Successfull Marriage - 6.

We would not enter into it, as our Discipline says "save advisedly and discreetly in the fear of God." We would realize that the flowers that the bride carried on her wedding day are just as solemn and just as sacred as those that will lie upon her still heart when the journey is over. It is a permanent relationship "for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and health till death do us part."

IV.

To take Christ seriously in His teachings about marriage would bring a new stability to our tottering homes. It would guarantee to our children the best possible chance at life both here and hereafter, for by far the largest number of those who go astray among our youth are the fragments of broken homes. They are the splinters of wreckage that have been spit up by the seething seas of the divorce court. And those who have not come from homes that have been utterly wrecked have come largely from those that are partially wrecked.

Finally, the man and woman who would make this teaching of Jesus Christ the basis of their marriage would find their wedded life the sweetest and most fascinating of all human experiences. Multitudes have so found it in the past and many are doing so even now. Such a relationship sweetens every joy and makes every sorrow to be transfigured. Here is a man whose life is one long battle with disease, but a brave woman is at his side. How much she meant to him only he and God can know. And what he said of her is

Here then is what marriage means in the

mind of Jesus. It is a divine institution. It is the

supreme human relationship. It means the ever-

ness of the bond of faith that emerges to last to

the end of life. There are taken up and

there are not. If fear to do so is to

total service with for ourselves and others, so

comply is to give ourselves a chance at deepest

heart of human blessedness. To such service and

service may come. But they will not empower. They

wise only lead to greater loveliness, such a marriage was

that of Janvier. Never be content with that experience

song to which many of us, thank God, can find a

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SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE

"For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

—Matthew 19:5,6

I

In speaking of marriage I am speaking of a matter of vast importance.

This is true in spite of the fact that it is a bit difficult for one who speaks on this subject to get his audience to take him seriously. However, that is far less true today than formerly. But even yet many people seldom speak of marriage except in terms of jest. When the matter is discussed, so often the discussion is born in a grin and smothered in a laugh. But in spite of this I am talking to you in deepest earnestness. I am talking to you with the conviction that the matter under consideration is one of the most important that I shall ever discuss with you however long I may be your pastor.

1. Marriage is of vast importance to those most intimately concerned with it, that is to the husband and wife. In fact, there is no choice that we make, except perhaps the choice of a personal allegiance to Jesus Christ, that will mean as much for our tomorrow as the choice we make in the matter of marriage. Vastly often whether we are Christian at all or not is bound up with this decision. Generally speaking, we find either our heaven or our hell in the one that we marry.

Therefore, the Discipline is supremely right when it says, "Marriage is not to be entered into save discreetly and in the fear of God." This is the case in spite of the fact that many of us seem to play a kind of Blindman's Buff at the business, holding and marrying whomsoever we chance to catch
SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE

in the mad game. Those who succeed in marriage have the best possible chance to succeed in every other relationship. Those who fail in marriage stand a good chance to fail everywhere else. To fail here certainly means that the deepest and sweetest secret of human blessedness has half-whispered itself to you and then forever passed you by. Marriage, then, is of vast importance for those who marry.

2. Marriage is of vast importance for the children whom we share with God in creating. If the husband and wife make a failure of their relationship with each other, the mark of that failure is often left upon their children. A friend of mine who belongs to this church told me recently of a couple who brought their boy to him for medical attention. Having inquired as to the child's symptoms, he was led to suspect disharmony in the home. Having asked the parents how they got on with each other, they at first shunned the truth; then they told how they lived in a perpetual war-whoop. The affliction of the child was born of this tension. When they ceased to fight among themselves, the child immediately recovered. Often we send our children into the world marked for life by our needless failure.

Then, there are other times when we rob them even more disastrously by the breaking up of the home altogether. Every child has a right to the security of a home. Every child has a right to a father and mother. But through our failures thousands of children are cheated year by year. It is these children as a rule that fill up our reformatory. It is these children from whose ranks the criminals and the prostitutes are so often recruited. How your marriage turns out is of vast importance to your children.

3. Then the marriage question is of supreme importance to society as a whole. Our national life will never rise higher than our home life. What the home is determines the church, the city, the state, the nation, the world.
Our homes are but so many fountains that are constantly pouring their streams into the great Mississippi of our national life. If the source is poisonous, the stream will also be poisonous. If the source is pure, the great stream will also be pure. Our homes will either make or wreck society.

What is the foundation of this important institution we call the home? It is the marriage tie. Every home is founded upon marriage. If the marriage tie is weak, the home will be correspondingly weak. If the foundation upon which the home rests is a thing of sand, then when the floods come and the rains descend and the winds blow and beat upon that home it will fall and complete will be the wreck of it. Therefore, all our dearest hopes, all the dearest hopes and possibilities for our children, all the dearest hopes and possibilities of the church and of the nation are bound up in marriage, because the marriage tie is the foundation of the home and the home is the source of every good as of every evil.

II

How then shall we think of marriage? There are many worldly voices that are clamoring for our attention. A few years ago a certain judge, wise in many respects, advocated a superb absurdity. He suggested as a remedy for our domestic ills trial marriage. That is, a young couple were to live together for a while; if they got on well, they would make their companionship perpetual. If not, they could break off and seek another companion. This was as hideous as it was silly. It is hideous from the standpoint of morality. It is silly from every standpoint.

How can we begin any enterprise with the hope of success? We can only begin that enterprise with the determination to carry on even if everything does not come to us right side up. I do not care how trivial or how easy the task might be to which you set yourself, if you decide to quit at the first
obstacle you encounter, then you are already defeated. Nobody could learn to play mumble-peg under such conditions. Successful marriage is about the finest achievement possible for us. It is, therefore, not to be expected that we shall win without some conflict, without some difficulty. Those who marry with their minds made up to quit at the first difficulty are already hopelessly defeated.

Then there are those who seek to remedy the situation by easy divorce. Of course, that remedy is purely negative. Such a law would only give an easier and simpler way for wrecking marriage. What is needed is not to make it easier for husband and wife to get apart. What is needed is something that will make them willing and glad to stay together. I believe that uniform divorce laws would be a decided advantage, but we are never going to heal the sores of marriage by improving our methods of wrecking it.

Then there are many who take their cue for the ills of marriage from Hollywood. What their marriages lack in quality, they seek to atone for by increasing their quantity. Hence, they are multitudinously married. They flit from mate to mate as birds flit from branch to branch in the boughs of a tree. There are those who think they are perfectly right in doing this. I think they are wrong because it is my conviction that such conduct is humanly hurtful; it is hurtful to themselves, their children, and hurtful to society as a whole.

Among the clamoring and discordant voices, do you not think it would be sane for us who call ourselves Christian to sit for a little while at the feet of Him Whom we call Lord and Master? Jesus had very definite convictions about marriage. On this matter as upon all others that He discussed, He spoke with authority. It was not the authority that was arbitrary; it was the authority of truth. What He said was in my opinion as true as the Law of Gravitation is true and as the multiplication table is true. His plan of marriage is right because it works.
What then does Jesus say about marriage? Listen again to His words:

"For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." In these simple words, Jesus makes four definite and specific declarations regarding marriage.

1. He declares that marriage is a divine institution— that it is a part of the divine plan. By this He does not mean that all marriages are made in Heaven. I am quite confident that some are made elsewhere. But He does mean that marriage belongs to the eternal fitness of things. He means that man is one hemisphere and the woman is the other hemisphere of our common humanity that reach their best in union.

He meant further that marriage is His plan for the propagating of the race. "He set the solitary in families." It was thus He sought to give the child and to give society its best possible chance. The first marriage is pictured in that immortal poem of Genesis as taking place in Eden. God Himself officiated at the Holy Altar. Since then we have been taught to say "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder."

Now since marriage is part of the divine plan and since the wedded pair is conceived to have been joined by God Himself, marriage is not to be entered upon except for reasons upon which God Himself can smile. I am afraid I have officiated in weddings where to say "what God hath joined together let not man put asunder" was little short of mockery. Some people marry for convenience. Some marry for money. Some marry for social position. Some marry for a thrill. Some marry because they are drunk. Of all such it would be truer to say "What the devil has joined together let not man put asunder." They will get asunder
themselves, given a bit of time.

What are the reasons upon which God can smile? It is when a couple marries because of the love of a man for a woman and of a woman for a man. Of course, this means more than a mere romantic attachment. It means a love that has in it genuine friendship. It means a love also that is founded upon mutual respect. For mark me it is altogether possible to love one for whom you have no manner of respect. Some will deny this, but it is true none the less. Goldsmith was right in comparing love with ivy. Thus he says, "Like ivy it is too often seen to cling around a worthless thing." When a man and woman genuinely love and respect each other enough to desire to belong to each other, then there is hope for success.

2. Jesus declares further that marriage is the most sacred and binding of all human relationships. Because it is the most sacred and binding, it is to take precedence over that of friend to friend, or even of parent to child or child to parent. This Book has the highest estimate of the responsibility of child to parent. It says, "Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." "Honor thy father and thy mother," for that is the first commandment with a promise attached. A stern proverb declares, "The eye that mocketh at his father and refuses to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pluck it out and the young eagle shall eat it." But there is a relationship more binding than this. It is a relationship of husband to wife and of wife to husband. "For this cause," says He, "shall a man leave father and mother and be joined unto his wife." Since this is the case with the wife, the husband is always to come first. With the husband the wife is always to come first. If somebody has proposed marriage to you and you find that while you are a bit in love with him, you are more in love with your parents and with your home, then for your sake and for his stay with them. If you are thinking of proposing to a girl and you discover that you are not willing to leave your father and
mother for her, then do not ask her. Whenever anybody comes between husband and wife, then tragedy begins. I care not who that somebody may be. Marriage is the most binding of all human relationships.

3. Marriage according to Jesus makes the wedded pair one. "Wherefore they are no more twain but one flesh." This oneness is more than a figure of speech. It becomes increasingly true as these two lovers live together. Take those, for instance, who have celebrated their golden wedding, how they have grown into each other, how they have come to think alike and be alike on almost every question. The husband says in the face of some situation, "I knew exactly what Mary was thinking." And Mary says, "I knew exactly what John was thinking." Then by and by when one of these slips away, the other usually goes very quickly because they have grown so into each other that they are a part of each other.

(1) The wedded pair is to be one in their mutual self-giving. Each is to give his all to the other. When I asked the girl who married me to become the wife of a penniless preacher, I knew I was asking a great deal. I was asking her to give up the companionship of father and mother. I was asking her to give up her childhood home, those dear scenes which from day to day had caught the color of her life and sympathized with her joys and sorrows. I was asking her to give up her name—that name that suggested all that was manly in her father and all that was queenly in her mother. I was asking her to give up her very self.

But in spite of this exacting request, she responded. There were those who thought she was crazy. Personally, I never did. But I knew it put a heavy responsibility on me. I knew that if I played the game according to the rules, I must give in proportion to her giving. I speak of her today after more than thirty years as my wife. She has a right to speak of me as her husband. In a profound sense she owns me. I no more own this right hand than she owns me. We are one in our mutual self-giving.
Now we have all seen instances in which this was not the case. I have seen young folks get married when both of them were in love with the same one. Sometimes both were in love with the husband; sometimes both were in love with the wife. But the fortunate one in either case was exceedingly unfortunate. There is no building a happy marriage, no building a happy home on such one-sided giving. "If all roads lead to Rome", and you think you are Rome, then the little rift has already begun within the lute that will soon reduce the music of your marriage into utter discord. You are to be one in your self-giving.

(2) Then in so far as possible you are to be one in your economic relations. Many happy marriages have been made where a penniless girl married a well-to-do man, but few indeed have been the happy marriages where a poor young man married a well-to-do girl—that is, unless he was manly enough to forego her money and pay his own expenses and hers too. It is a good thing when a young couple have to face poverty together and make a living together. They learn to share. Every right-thinking husband realizes that, though he may earn a salary while his wife runs the home, half of every dollar is hers. If he is lavish with himself and a skinflint with her, he is not playing the game according to the rules. You and your wife ought to be partners.

Naturally, I am saying this on the assumption that you married a sensible woman. Of course, if you picked out a nut, then I have to put on the soft-pedal here. There are some women that look upon their husbands as an unlimited checking account. If your husband is poor, you ought to be glad to share his poverty with him. You ought to be glad to "costl; your habit as his purse can buy". If you are not willing to do this, you are headed for trouble. Many a man has made a financial failure because of his wife. Many a man has gone to the penitentiary because of an extravagant wife. Many a wife has gone to a suicide's grave for the same reason. You ought to be one in your mutual
self-giving and one in your economic interests.

(3) Finally, the wedded pair ought to be one in their devotion to God. What a pity when we share all the other intimacies of life and yet fail to share in the deepest values of the human heart. Martin Luther had the Cross inscribed upon his wedding ring. It was altogether fitting. Marriage is a Christian institution. It is mutual faith and loyalty to God that give it the strongest guarantee of success.

Now, my young girl, it may be that the man who married you is a Christian while you are not. In these days when the sea of life is smooth and every moment seems jeweled with a joy it does not seem to matter, but believe me the time will come when it will. The time will likely come when you will desire a Christian for a husband above all else in the world. Bear this in mind that if you do not join with your husband in his effort to be Christian, he is likely to give it up. I have seen many a woman go into the church and take every chick and child with her, but it is rare indeed to see a husband remain true to God without the backing of his wife.

But I am aware that far more often it is the husband who is at fault here than the wife. Let me beg of you not to cheat your wife in this respect. She has a right to your help here as she has a right to your help in all other matters. I have met men who feel that they discharge their whole duty by simply paying the bills, but a hen makes that much provision for her chickens. She feeds them. No man has a right to push the weight of the responsibility for the religion of the home on the shoulders of his wife. To do so is either to be very blind, or it is to be so selfish that you are willing to be a bit of a slacker and a coward. The wedded pair is to be one in their mutual self-giving, one in their economic relationships, one in their devotion to God.

4. Finally, Jesus says that marriage is for life. Doesn't Jesus allow divorce with remarriage on any condition. According to Matthew, He does not.
If the husband is unfaithful to the wife, or the wife unfaithful to the husband—that is, if either one gives themselves to another—then this holy compact is reckoned as broken and the innocent party has the right to marry. But there is no divorce that is right for both parties save that written in terms of green grass on the grave of either the husband or wife. Marriage is for life. Therefore, the flowers that the bride carries on her wedding day are as sacred and solemn as those that will rest on her still heart when life's fitful fever is over.

Here then are the words of Jesus. Marriage is a divine institution. It is the supreme human relationship. It makes the wedded pair one. It is for life. That is the ideal plan. Does it fit into human need or does it not? Convince me that the Hollywood ideal contributes a larger happiness to the husband and wife, to the children, to society as a whole, then I will concede that Jesus is wrong. But I am convinced that the opposite is true. Who find the most in life? As I have watched it across the years, they are the husbands and wives who are so prosaic and commonplace that they sometimes celebrate their golden weddings. Whose children have the better chance at full and rich living? Not the children of the free, of those who flit from mate to mate, but the children of these same prosaic souls who remain married for life. Who make the largest contribution to society? The answer is the same. To make such a marriage then is to give the most but it is to receive the most. Such a marriage nothing can wreck. The harder the tempests that beat upon it, the closer the two are drawn together. Sidney Lanier brings that out in one of the sweetest songs, to which most of us, thank God, can say amen.

"In the heart of the Hills of Life, I know
Two springs that with unbroken flow
Forever pour their lucent streams
Into my soul's far Lake of Dreams.

Not larger than two eyes, they lie
Beneath the many-changing sky
And mirror all of life and time,
—Serene and dainty pantomime."
Shot through with lights of stars and dawns,
And shadowed sweet by ferns and fawns,
Thus heaven and earth together vie
Their shining depths to sanctify.

O Love, O Wife, thine eyes are they,
—My springs from out whose shining gray
Issue the sweet celestial streams
That feed my life’s bright Lake of Dreams.

Oval and large and passion-pure
And gray and wise and honor-sure;
Soft as a dying violet-breath
Yet calmly unafraid of death;

Thronged, like two dove-cotes of gray doves,
With wife’s and mother’s and poor-folk’s loves,

And loves for all that God and man
In art and nature make or plan.

...And loves for God and God’s bare truth,
And loves for Magdalen and Ruth,

Dear eyes, dear eyes and rare complete—
Being heavenly-sweet and earthly-sweet,
—I marvel that God made you mine,
For when He frowns, ‘tis then ye shine!”
SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE

"For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Matthew 19:5-6

I.

In studying the marriage question, we must agree that we are studying a question of vital importance. In fact, it would be impossible to overstate the importance of this question to the individual and to society as a whole. It lies at the very foundation of our dearest joys and hopes. Its success all but guarantees the success of whatever we deem lovely and best. Its failure means the failure as a rule of what gives to life its supreme worth.

1. The importance of marriage is at once recognized when we realize that this relationship is the foundation of the home. It is the basis upon which every home is built. Naturally no house can be stronger or more stable than the foundation upon which it rests. If the foundation is a thing of mud, superstructure will have only the strength of mud however beautiful this material. If marriage is a thing of sand then when the rains descend and the floods come and the winds blow and beat upon that house it will fall and complete will be the wreck of it. No home can be stronger than the foundation upon which it rests. That means that no home can be stronger than the marriage tie.
"Successful Marriage"

Now since the stability of marriage conditions the stability of the home, it conditions about everything in our civilization. Neither the school nor the church can rise above the home-life. The home is the making or the breaking of our civilization. The home is the Lake Itasca from which flow the rivulets that make up the great Mississippi of our national life. If the fountain is pure, the stream will also be pure. If the sources are polluted the stream will naturally share in that pollution. Since the marriage conditions the home and the home conditions our civilization, this then that we are discussing is a most vital matter.

2. Marriage is of immeasurable importance to those immediately concerned. It is most important for instance to the husband and wife. There is not a human choice that you will make more vital than this. This is true in spite of the fact that marriage is often a matter of jest. It is hard to discuss with a public audience because so often such a discussion is born in a grin and smothered in a laugh. But those that have made a success of it have made the supreme success. But for those who have finally failed at it, there is no compensation. It means that the deepest and sweetest secret of human blessedness has whispered to them and then forever passed them by. As vital as this is to the husband and wife, it is, if possible, more vital to the children that they share with God in creating. Every child has a right to be well born. Every child has a right to home-life that will give him or her the best possible chance of growing into a clean and moral and Christ-like personality. In homes where there is no respect for the permanency of the marriage relationship children do not have that chance. It is of immeasurable importance, therefore, to the children that their parents make a success out of their marriage relation.

II.

How then shall we make a go of this high adventure?
When we seek an answer to this question we hear many clamorous voices. There are those who tell us frankly that success is impossible. That the marriage relation is nothing more than a failure. They find fault with the institution rather than with those who enter upon it. But those taking this position are not likely to win a great following. They are fighting the tides. They might as well undertake to induce the sun to rise in the West as to keep men and women from meeting and loving each other and dreaming that they can find their highest happiness in sharing life each with the other.

Then there are those who believe in trial marriage. This of course, is at once an insult to decency and to all common sense. Such experiments before marriage almost unfailingly put a stick of dynamite under the adventure rather than afford it a firm foundation upon which to build. It is the worst possible psychology to venture upon any undertaking with your mind made up that you are going to quit as soon as you run into a difficulty. It is to guarantee defeat before you begin.

Then there are those who seek to doctor our sick marriage relations by methods of divorce. This is of course purely negative. You cannot help marriage by making it easier to get out of. You can only help it by helping those who enter into it, not to desire to get out of it.

Now with these voices ringing in our ears, would it not be wise for us to clearify our thinking by turning to him whom we call Lord and Master? It is acknowledged that Jesus had the clearest insight into human need of any man that ever lived. Let us see what he has to say. The authority of his word is not an arbitrary authority. His is an authority of the truth. What he says is binding as the law of gravitation is binding. It has authority as the multiplication table has authority. What He says is right, not because he said it. But because it is right in the nature of things. Dr. Watkins gives an excellent guide by
which we may test the difference between right and wrong. Here it is, "Whatever is humanly hurtful is wrong." "Whatever is humanly helpful is right." What Jesus said about marriage if lived up to would, I am confident be most humanly helpful and therefore most right.

III.

What has Jesus to say then about this important matter?

He made four very definite and specific declarations.

1. Jesus declared that marriage is a divine institution. By that He means that marriage is a part of the divine plan. It fits into human need. It is a roadway to the highest good for those who are married. It is God's way of perpetuating the race. When he spoke of marriage, therefore, he went back to that beautiful poem in Genesis. He pictured the first pair as married in Eden. He pictured God himself as officiating at the altar. Since then, we have been taught to say, "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

This is of course a beautiful ideal. It would make all marriages impossible except for reasons upon which God could smile. It would make possible only those that spring from good and right reasons. This would rule out at once a great many of our marriages. There are those who marry for convenience. There are those that marry for position. There are those who marry for a thrill. There are those who marry while they are drunk. I have performed marriage ceremonies that when I came to that place to say "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder" was little less than mockery. It might have been more fitting to say, what the devil hath joined together, let no man put asunder. They will get asunder themselves if you will only give them a little time.

But a real marriage is to be based upon a real and right reason. That reason is fundamentally this, the love of a man for a woman and the love of a woman for a man. Of course, there are other things that enter in. A mere romantic infatuation is not enough. We must take into consideration temper, tradition, background.
We must take into consideration both families. You ought to love the girl that you marry. But you ought to respect her too. She ought to be your friend as well as your lover. If you are guided alone by a romantic infatuation you are likely to throw dust in the eyes of reason and spit in the face of commonsense. To be married a right is to be married for a right and profound reason. One that can bear the very sanction of God.

2. Jesus declared that the marriage relation is the supreme human relationship. A man’s relation to his wife and a woman’s relation to her husband is to take precedence over all others. How intimate is that relation that exists between parent and child. "Honor thy father and mother" is a fundamental law. It is a roadway to long and successful living. "The eye that mocketh at his father and refuseth to obey his mother, behold the ravens of the field shall pluck it out and the young eagles shall eat it." That is disloyalty to parents is to be visited by swift punishment, for the relation between child and parent is one that is high and holy.

But the marriage relation is more holy still. It is to come first. If, therefore, you find that you love your father and mother better than the man that has proposed marriage to you, you had better turn him down and stay at home. If you find that as a young man you are more drawn to your parents than to the girl that you are thinking of marrying, give her up. When I see a young couple that cannot leave home, I always get uneasy. On general principles it is a great misappropriation of rivers and mountains and seas not to put some of them between you and your in-laws. With everything, wife and husband is to come first. When this is not the case the whole adventure is likely to fail.

3. Jesus said that the marriage tie makes the wedded pair one. "They twain shall be one flesh." This is more than a mere figure of suggestion. Man is one hemisphere of our human race and woman is the other. It takes them both to make
the most beautiful and perfect whole.

(1) The wedded pair is to be one in their mutual self-giving. I speak of the one that married me as my wife, she is mine, not by compulsion, but because she gave herself to me. In so doing she realized that she had to give her very name. That name that suggested all that was manly in her father and queenly and beautiful in her mother. She had to give up her childhood home. Those dear scenes which from day to day had caught the color of her life and sympathized with her joys and sorrows. She had to give me her very self. Her self-giving was complete.

Therefore, if I am to play the game according to the rules, my self-giving to her must be equally complete. For one to hold out on the other is to cheat, and such cheating is all-too-common. I have seen men who expected all from his wife, while he gave only a fraction of himself. Sometimes it is the other way round. That way tragedy lies. Sometimes both parties are in love with the same one. Sometimes both are in love with the husband. Sometimes both are in love with the wife. Hence, all the giving was on one side. Success requires mutual self-giving. Nothing less will do. If you hold out on the one who is giving all, you are a fraud.

(2) This means also that we are to be off in our material relationships. There may be times when this does not seem practical, but those who trust each other enough to give themselves, ought to trust each other enough to share their possessions. In my opinion marriage can only reach its best when what she has is his and what he has is hers. Our marriage ceremony recognized this need, therefore, we say, "With this ring I thee wed, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow." When I said that, there wasn't much endowing done. But it was all I had. The men that spends lavishly upon himself and niggardly upon her is only a more or less intelligent pig. What you have is hers.

Of course, this is based upon the assumption that you married a sensible
woman who loves you and is willing to play fair. You and your husband are partners. Therefore you ought to be willing to "costly your habit as his purse can buy." If he is poor, you ought to count it a privilege to share his poverty with him. Some wives are not willing to do this, therefore there are husbands who are divorced, that are in the penitentiary, or in a suicide's grave because their wives were not willing to cooperate. We are to be partners one in our mutual giving, one in our mutual sharing.

(2) Then we are to be one in our devotion to God. Now there have been successful marriages between people of differing religions or between men and women, one of whom was religious and the other not. But such marriages are rare indeed. Since marriage is a divine institution, since it is in harmony with the law and purpose of God, mutual devotion to God lies at its very foundation. Martin Luther had the Cross of Christ engraved upon his wedding ring. It was altogether fitting. There is no surer guarantee of the successful marriage than a mutual loyalty to God on the part of both the contracting parties.

It may be, my young girl, that your prospective husband is a Christian, but you are not. Bear this in mind, there is no surer guarantee of the loyalty and fidelity of your husband than loyalty to Christ. However, unnecessary it seems now, there will come a time when you would give all the world for your husband to be a Christian. Many a woman can carry on religiously without any help from her husband. But it is rare indeed that a man can carry on without his wife. If your husband is a Christian and you do not help him, you are likely to be on the road to heartbreak.

But far more often it is the other way around. Husbands are willing to share all else with their wife except their religious faith. They are willing to share all other responsibilities except that which is supreme and fundamental. No man has the right to put the whole responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the home upon the shoulders of his wife. Fail to share the faith of the one
you marry is to cheat yourself and to cheat her, and to cheat your children as well. Husband and wife ought to be one in their devotion to God.

4. The final declaration of Jesus concerning marriage is that it is permanent. It is for life. "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Does Jesus allow divorce on any ground? He does, he allows it on the ground of infidelity on the part of one of the contracting parties. This intimate act is taken as a symbol of complete surrender, therefore, the party sinned against has a right to divorce and a right to remarry. But there is no right to divorce, I mean right for both parties, according to Jesus, save that one written in terms of green grass on the grave of one of the contracting parties.

Marriage is to last, not until the first quarrel, not until the first misunderstanding. It is to last, not until you run up against some cruel treatment. It is to last not until you meet a more beautiful woman than your wife, or a more charming man than your husband. It is to last until death. "For better or for worst, for richer or poorer, in sickness or health, until death do us part." The flowers that the bride carries on her wedding day are just as solemn and sacred as those that will rest on her still heart when life's fitful fever is over.

Here then is Jesus' philosophy of marriage. It is a divine institution. It is not to be entered into except for reasons that are right and holy. It is the supreme human relationship. It makes the wedded pair one. One in their mutual self-giving, one in their material substance, one in their devotion to God. It is for life. It is a permanent relationship. I ask you then if we take Jesus seriously, will we have a better chance at happiness? Will our children have a better chance than if we listen to the clamoring voices today? I say that Jesus is right because His way is the most humanly helpful of all which we can possibly see. Millions who have dared it have found it works in their own experiences. Here is the testimony of one whose name was Sidney Lanier. Many can read it and say, "Amen."
THE BUSINESS OF BEING A HUSBAND

For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife and they twain shall be one flesh....Matthew 19:5.

The first step in the direction of being a successful husband is to come to a right conclusion of what the marriage relationship ought to be. Now the best help I know, in the reaching of the right conclusion, is the Word of God. I am quite aware of the fact that there are many who feel that they could improve upon God's plan. There have always been such men. Centuries ago we find old Omar Khayyam wishing that he 'might grasp this sorry scheme of things entire, that he might wreck it and mold it nearer to the heart's desire'. That is, he could build a much better world than God's if he only had the power. He is wiser than God, but not quite so strong.

Then, we have a certain judge who is much before the public, who is eager to debate with any and all comers, that he can improve upon the marriage laws of the Bible. Now I do not doubt in the least that he could make laws that would appeal more to the lax views of this day than the laws that are found in the Word of God, but I am furthest possible from being convinced that he could make laws that would improve upon the laws of the Old and New Testament. I am old-fashioned enough to believe that these laws are the ones that are most conducive both to the highest happiness and highest usefulness.
My reasons for so thinking are many. I believe this, in the first place, because I believe in Jesus Christ. I believe that he spoke the truth when he said, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father". I believe Paul was speaking the truth when he declared that "In Him dwells all the fulness of wisdom and knowledge". In short, I dare to believe that Jesus Christ understands the needs of modern society quite as well as this wise judge. I also believe He is quite as much interested in our well-being as is this judge. I even believe that He is perfect in His love and infinite in His knowledge. Therefore, I do not regard myself as acting either stupidly or blindly when I accept the divine conception of marriage instead of that offered by any man or by any set of men.

I

What is this divine conception?

1. Marriage is a divine institution. It is a civil contract, I know, but it is more. It is of divine origin. Marriage is a part of the divine plan. In the beginning, God said, "It is not good for man to dwell alone". In the beginning it was God that brought man and woman together in that high and holy companionship that we call marriage.

2. Jesus teaches that marriage is the highest of all relationships. The relation of parent to child is one that is very sacred: it involves tremendous responsibilities. The relation of child to parent is also very sacred. We are commanded to obey our parents and are told that it is the first
Commandment with promise. The wise man says, "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pluck it out, and the young eagles shall eat it".

But, as sacred and binding as is this relationship, that of the husband and wife is even more so. "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife". Of course, Christ does not mean that upon entering into the marriage relationship, we are to have less love for father or mother, but he does mean that if there is a conflict in loyalty, if we must decide between husband or wife or between our parents, our decision is to go in favor of the one to whom we are married.

3. Jesus teaches that this supreme relationship is so intimate that the husband and wife become one. "They twain shall be one flesh". They are to be one in their mutual self-giving; they are to be one in their material interests. What one has is to belong to the other. They are to be one in their mutual devotion and loyalty to God.

4. This relationship is to be permanent. It is not to last until you meet your 'affinity'; it is not to last until that gilded buzzard, known as your 'soul-mate' comes along; it is not to last simply during life's springtime, it is to last until the end of the journey. It is "for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health; 'til death do us part".
II

The next step towards the business of being a husband is getting married in the grip of this right conception of what marriage means. If we approach the marriage altar with any lesser or meaner conception, we thereby weaken our chances of making a success of that supreme adventure of our lives.

1. If the divine conception of marriage grips us, we will not unfit ourselves for its duties and privileges and responsibilities before we reach the marriage altar. We will not throw away the wedding ring before we slip it upon the finger of the girl that we are asking to share our life. And this is too often done, you know. Many a man so sacrifices upon the wayside altar that when he comes to the supreme sacramental moment of life, he has nothing to give. A few years ago there was a fine young fellow, a student of Harvard University who stepped aside into paths that are forbidden. He declared, and I believe him, that it was his only experience, but it was one time too many. He was later married to a charming girl. He was a lover of home and of children but his wife is an invalid and his home is childless. He is to blame and he knows it. This is his living hell: the realization that his own sin has meant the wrecking of the happiness of his home. There are other times when it would be better if no children were born. Those that come are branded by a father's shame. They are poisoned by a sin not their own. Now I maintain that every child has a right to be well born. I am convinced,
therefore, that there are few greater crimes than that of standing at the upstairs window of life and pouring red hot acid into the faces of the children that are to come after you.

2. Not only do I believe in preparation for marriage, but I believe in actually getting married. There have been some notable old bachelors but they have usually remained single for some worthy cause. The man who remains single because he has become a cynic and lost confidence in everybody, is usually a moral leper, and the man who remains single because he has fallen in love with his money is little better. We find such, here and there. Miserliness has taken the place of wife and children. Greed has become a leech of his soul and has sucked it until it is as hollow as a drum. Yes, I believe in getting married, but I believe in putting some bit of common sense into the enterprise.

For this reason, I am opposed to the hasty marriage. There are hundreds of people marrying today who are little more than rank strangers. I married a couple not long ago who were at each other's throats in less than forty-eight hours. They came to me about their difficulties and I found that they had only known each other for four days. Truly, there is one born every minute! I believe any law that would make the buying of the license and the publishing of the engagement necessary from ten to thirty days before the marriage is performed, would be an exceedingly helpful law.

3. Then if you are going to marry according to the divine conception, there is only one right motive and that is,
that you love the woman that you marry. If you marry her because of love of her money, or because you love her social position, or because you love her fine clothing, you are playing the fool. Then, if you marry her merely because she has that overworked something that we call "sex-appeal", you are the double distilled extract of pure idiocy. See to it that she has qualities that will wear. Life is more than one dashing escapade. It has not only bright mornings, but it has bleak evenings; it has not only June, with its wealth of flowers, but December, with its killing frosts.

Seek therefore, a girl that you can love not only in the springtime of life, but in its wintertime as well. Seek one that can become increasingly dearer in the passing years. Seek one to whom you can say when the last rose petal has fallen from her cheek and when her face is ploughed with wrinkles. "Behold! thou art fair, my love, thou art fair!"

III

Then, having married according to divine conception, seek to live it out.

1. Continue to be a gentleman. Don't degenerate into a snarling grouch just because some girl has been trustful enough to marry you. Do not cultivate the fault finding habit. When you get up on the wrong side of bed, do not give yourself the pleasure of snarling. When you find your nerves a bit on edge, do not reserve the right to speak your mind. "Oh," you say, "but my wife speaks hers
The Business of
Being a Husband- Page 7.

"quite freely". Maybe so. There are some nagging women, but it takes two to make a quarrel. If you don't help, there won't be much of it done, and mark me, quarrelling is no insignificant matter. A quarrel over a trifle is oftentimes the thin point of the entering wedge that sunders two lives that might have been very happy together.

2. Then, you will recognize that your wife has certain rights just as you have. You will not undertake to compel her to see everything just as you see it and to agree with you on every point. The divine idea of marriage is not that you shall be the sun and your wife a satellite to revolve around you; you are to be equals in a high and holy partnership. "Two heads in council, two beside the hearth, two in the tangled business of the world".

3. Then, you will not expect the marital machine to run by itself. This is the history of so many marriages. There is a brief honeymoon, then the husband parks his wife at home and he plunges into business. Hereafter there is small fellowship between them. There are some husbands and wives that could not carry on a thirty minute conversation together unless they were arguing over something without being intolerably bored. What is the matter? They have simply grown apart. This they have done, not because of any unfaithfulness on the part of either, they have simply neglected each other and in this matter of neglect, the husband is usually to blame.

Now, you must be aware of this fact, that the best way to kill anything is just to let it alone. In order to starve, you do not have to wreck the food supply of the world,
just let it alone. In order to lose the best friend you have, it is not necessary that you insult him. All that is necessary is that you leave off association, that you leave off writing. Any friendship will die if the friends let each other alone and in order to wreck marital happiness, all that is necessary is for the husband simply to let his wife alone.

The common sense of this is easily seen.

How did you come to love each other to begin with? It was by association. You did not fall in love with her picture, you went to see her. You were courteous and entertaining. You were interested in whatever she had to say. But, now when you come home from the office, you are about as communicative as a mummy. Your wife is eager to ask a hundred questions about what has been going on in the office; she wants to tell you what has been going on in the nursery, but you crouch down behind your paper and the most she can get out of you is a grunt. Then, when you have finished the paper, you go to the lodge or the club, or maybe to see some friend on business. That is the road to failure. You may never divorce each other but your married life is sure to become stale and drab and colorless.

4. Finally, after you married, you have foreclosed your mind against the possibility of falling in love with any other woman. Before marriage you were at liberty to look upon every woman with whom you associated in the light of a possible wife, but when you lead the woman of your choice to the altar, all that was past. The man who, after that, engages
in unholy flirtations, is not only a selfish liar, but he is utterly disregardful of the laws both of man and of God. To drag your relationship with some sweetly pure woman in the dust in this fashion is certainly one of the most detestable and hellish pieces of conduct of which any man is capable.

Yet, the homes that have been wrecked in this fashion in the past, are almost without number. I know that many times there has not been an open rupture. Sometimes the wife has gone on for the sake of the children or for the sake of appearances. Sometimes he has tried to atone for his sin by lavish expenditure of money but all her lovely dresses are but so many shrouds for the deaths that she died daily. The rustle of her silks is but the hissing of the adder that dogged her steps.

The woman of tomorrow is not going to be so patient and I am not saying that she ought to be. She is in a position to demand more; she has a right to demand more and she ought to demand more. The day of the new woman has its dangers but I am glad that the time at last has come when a clean woman will be no more compelled to live with a foul and fearful man than a clean man is to live with a foul and fearful woman.

Finally, let me say that the husband and wife who work together to make a real success out of this holy relationship, will reap a reward of exceedingly great richness. To be happily married is the finest privilege in the world, this side of having your soul mated to Jesus Christ.
Browning wrote all his great poetry while he was privileged
to enjoy the inspiring companionship of his wife, Elizabeth.
With her going, the lamp of his genius seems to have been
dimmed, if not utterly put out. Her presence was the sweetest
joy of the life that now is; the hope of meeting her on the
other side was to bring the richest joys of Heaven.

I was ever a fighter, so one fight more, the best and the last.
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes and forbear.
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it
Like my peers, the heroes of old, at one moment
Paid glad life's arrears of pain, darkness and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave.
The black minute's at end and the elements rage.
And the fiend voices that howl shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall become a peace out of pain.
Then thy breast, Oh thou soul of my soul!
I shall clasp thee again and with God be the rest.
MODERN MOTHERS

She looketh well to the ways of her household.

Proverbs 31-27

The text is a bit of a pin picture drawn by a great artist of the long ago. He did not see fit to label his picture. He trusted to our intelligence to give to his work of art its proper name. Had he labeled it, I am quite sure of the name that he would have given it. It is a name that to us sounds very commonplace. Yet, it is one that embodies our finest memories, our richest relationships, and our dearest hopes. He would have called her whose picture he paints so fascinatingly, The Ideal Woman. Here, he says, is womanhood at its best.

I.

Now the first fact that impresses us about this sweet-faced woman of the long ago is that she is a wife and mother. This is not surprising. This artist lived in a distant day when the only honorable vocation open to women was that of wife and mother. Everywhere in the ancient world, woman was regarded as an inferior. She reached her height among the Jewish people. But even here, she was never put upon an equality with men. I have reminded you that every Jewish boy was taught to pray this prayer daily:—"God I thank Thee that that I was not born a Gentile, a leper, or a woman." Even when men traced the geneology of
Jesus, though they claim that he was virgin born, they traced that geneology through Joseph and not through Mary.

With the coming of Christianity, the position of woman was greatly improved. Jesus stands alone among the great religious leaders in this—he made no distinction in his teaching between men and women. He never said to a group of men what he could not have said to a group of women. Nor did he ever lay restrictions on women that he did not lay upon men. This is absolutely unique. All other founders of religion did make such distinctions. It was in the realization of this fact that Paul said, "In Christ Jesus there was neither male nor female, bond nor free." That is, neither servitude nor sex is a barrier to the grace and faith of God.

Since this is the case, it is not a matter of wonder that Christianity spread most rapidly among these two underprivileged classes—women and slaves. They flocked to the banner of Christ because he gave them a new standing. He gave them the right to respect themselves and to be respected by others. But this freedom so powerfully experienced in the early days of Christianity was short-lived. Soon it was crushed, in a large measure, by the up-springing in the church of a rigid ecclesiasticism that was controlled almost altogether by men. By and by the pope decreed that priests should not marry. By this, he wanted that the marriage relationship was a bit less moral than celibacy. For this woman was to blame. Even as wise a man as St. Augustine said that while he believed women would rise from the dead, they would no longer be capable of tempting men. All responsibility was put on the shoulders of the woman, none of it on the men.

Under these conditions the position of women again became one of inferiority. Their range of occupation was narrowed to two. She could be the bride of the church, a nun, or she could be the bride of some man. To fail to marry at all was to have practically no position in society. On the walls
of the old home of Sir Walter Scott I saw the pin picture representing a scene in the life of one of his ancestors. A young lord went into dinner, lifting the platter from the meat dish to find two spurs instead of the roast beef or lamb that he expected. This meant that the larder was empty and that he must hustle his food. While undertaking a bit of cattle hustling, he was arrested, thrown in a dungeon, and sentenced to be hanged. But the lord who arrested him had three young daughters. The eldest, Mucklemouth by name, was looked upon as having a rather slim chance of marrying; therefore, the mother and father proposed to the young man that he might go free if he would marry Mucklemouth. He agreed to look her over. Having done so he said, "I will be hanged." But she ministered to him so gently in his last hours that he relented and they lived happy ever after. They became the ancestors of Sir Walter Scott.

This inferiority lasted till a few years within our own day. But now it is all changed. The modern woman is free. Some resent the fact, while others glory in it. But be our attitude what it may, the facts are before us. Today roadways lead directly from the woman's door into almost every vocation into which men are entering. As far back as 1920, there were 572 gainful occupations and women had entered 337 of these. That is, there were only thirty-five vocations that were distinctly masculine.

Nor has this come about through the influence of militant suffragettes. It has not come about because of conscious rebellion on the part of women. This freedom is the natural outcome of Christian religion. It is also the natural outcome of the economic forces that have taken place in recent years. There are some blind enough still to lift that old battle cry "back to the kitchen." But such a one might as well stand in front of a cyclone and say "Boo" and expect it to turn aside. Women are working outside the home today because they must. The tasks that they once performed in the home, weaving, sewing, baking, the making of bedding, the scores of other household articles
have been carried outside the home. She has had to follow her task or remain idle altogether. I for one rejoice in those who are giving a good account of themselves in vocations outside the home. I am sure if our artist were to come back he would share my joy, but he would still give the supreme crown to motherhood. He would still believe, and most of us would agree with him, that women reaches her best here. He would believe that the woman who deliberately turns aside from this high vocation abdicates her supreme thrown and stops her ears to the deepest and sweetest of human blessedness.

II.

Why does this artist look upon this wife and mother as ideal?

Let it be said at once that it is not so, because she is a mother. For many years, especially since the inauguration of Mother’s Day, we have spoken much sentimental slush on the subject of motherhood. Mother’s Day has, at times, been such a slushy and over-sweet occasion it has reminded us of a bon-bon topped in honey. On this day we come together with our tears standing at the very brink of our eyes, like a runner waiting for the signal to be off. We have acted on the assumption that a woman becomes a bit angelic by merely giving birth to a child. Of course, this is the farthest possible from the truth. Motherhood at its best is about the most beautiful something that this world can know. But motherhood is not always at its best.

We cannot therefore praise a woman simply because she is a mother. There are some mothers who are flip and cheap. There are some that are ignorant and stupid. They know nothing about either the physiology or the psychology of a child, and they do not care enough to learn. There are some that are merely gossiping, giddy, gadabouts. They are more at home in cocktail parties than they are in the nursery. There are children who are half wrecked from
their birth because their mothers are so blind and self-centered. For some women to become mothers is tragic beyond all words.

For instance, a good many years ago, a worthless man by the name of Juke married a woman who was, if possible, even more worthless than himself. There was a large family. In the course of five generations, this couple produced some twelve hundred children. Of these, four hundred of the women were prostitutes, practically everyone of the men became either paupers or petty criminals. They cost their native state millions of dollars in actual cash. They cost far more in terms of uncleanness and debauchery. Mrs. Juke was a mother, but her motherhood was an unmeasured curse rather than a blessing. Her evil influence has flowed through the years leaving wreckage in its tracks like a stream of hot lava from a volcano.

It was not therefore the mere fact that this woman was a mother that made her ideal, it was because she was the right kind of mother. There is no influence in the life of a child that is so abiding as that of the mother. If she is the right kind of woman, there is no measuring her power for good. If she is the wrong kind, there is no measuring her power for evil. An old brick was brought back from the Orient sometime ago that was nearly five thousand years old. Yet, that brick bore upon its surface the finger marks of the hand that had molded it into shape fifty centuries ago. Even so, your child will bear upon its soul for good or ill, for weal or woe your finger marks throughout the centuries. This woman then is to be praised because she is the right kind of mother.

III.

What kind of mother was she?

This ancient artist mentions a number of characteristics. I am selecting four that seem to me outstanding.

1. She was a strong woman. "Strength and dignity," he declares, "are her glory." This does not mean of necessity that she was a double-fisted Amazon.
A woman is not so strong physically as a man. Many a woman has given a great account of herself with little physical strength at all. But it is vastly important for a woman to be physically strong. Here a modern woman has a great advantage over her sister. She is more athletic. She can take part in all sorts of sports. She develops a vigorous and sound body. That is all to her good. Others things being equal, a woman who is in good health makes a better mother than the one who is a physical wreck.

Then this ideal mother was a woman of intelligence. She is wise enough to realize the importance of her task. Here again the modern mother has it over her sister. More has been taught and written on the subject of child nurture in the last fifty years than in the previous fifty thousand. The modern mother who will not inform herself thus to better fit herself to a high task, is failing to do her duty. She is lacking in wisdom. This woman was strong mentally.

Finally, she was strong spiritually. Here women often surpass men. Somehow they have a strength and a courage to be loyal to the best they know that many seem men lack. How rare, for instance, to see a husband and father carry on religiously without the backing of his wife. I had a friend years ago who married a girl that was about as strong morally as a cobweb. She was not antagonistic to religion, she was simply not interested. But weak as she was she was strong enough to woo him away from the Church altogether. But over and over we see a mother take every chick and child with her into the church. Not only without the backing of her husband, but often times when he is antagonistic. She was a strong woman physically, intellectually, and spiritually.

2. She was kind. How strange that this artist should mention so commonplace a virtue as kindness. Yet, how imperfect the picture would have been without it. This woman was kind to those outside her home. "She stretcheth forth her hands to the needy," the sick, the handicapped, the poor found in her a friend. My mother was like that. I used to watch her minister to the sick
till I felt that I should have been willing to have had their infirmities to have been the recipient of her gracious and tender courtesy.

Of course, the modern woman lives in a bigger neighborhood than this one of long ago. Hers was a small world. She was shut in with her own people. Our neighbors have come to be not only those living in the same block, but those living in the same world. The modern mother must stretch forth her hands to all the needy. She must also teach her children that same beautiful kindness. To fail to do this is deadly dangerous. The child that fails to learn kindly consideration for other peoples and other nations maybe destroyed by those other peoples and nations through war. Motherhood at its best has the world view. She has a generosity that takes in all the needy.

3. But while being interested outside her home, she does not get so interested there that she neglects those nearest to her. She puts first things first, therefore, the great artist tells us "she looketh well to the ways of her household." To look well to the ways of your club, or your church, or your business, is perfectly right and in order. But your first and supreme duty always is to look well to the ways of your household. To get so interested in the far duties that you neglect the near spells tragedy.

But this is a common failure. I remember a neighbor of ours who was so busy organizing or addressing parent teachers clubs that she had no time for her own children. I think I have reminded you of a cartoon published in one of our papers a few years ago. A rooster was standing by a nest full of eggs. Those eggs were just on the point of hatching. From the broken shells some of the little chicks were about to crawl. But as the rooster looked on big tears rolled down his cheeks. "Where is your wife?" a friend asked. "She is down at the club," he answered through his sobs, "delivering a lecture on How To Hatch Eggs." "She looketh well to the ways of her household."

How narrowing! No it is not narrowing, it is as broad as the world and as
endless as need. The right kind of narrowness is the only way to the truest breadth. Jesus was narrow. His ministry was confined to three brief years. He shut himself up to one little country no larger than some counties. He through gave himself mainly to twelve men. But, those twelve men he has touched all the world. Women may serve in many ways, but their biggest contribution is to give to the world the right kind of sons and daughters.

To do this, is of course costly. Everything that is worth doing is costly. The most priceless something in the world is motherhood at its best. Therefore, it is about the most costly thing in the world. "There stood by the cross of Jesus, Mary, his mother." And mothers have always stood by the cross. There have been the greatest sacrifices. In consequence, there have been the brightest crowns.

To take the cheap way is to fail. I read recently of a lad, while playing with his companions, was accidentally shot. He came and sat on the front steps of his own home and slowly bled to death. A physician could have easily saved him, but he was so afraid of his mother, or he trusted her so little, believed so little in her sympathy and understanding, that he bled to death without telling her that he was wounded. This is an exceptional case I know, yet, multitudes die to what is highest and best because they have mothers and fathers who do not understand. They have parents who are willing to give their children anything except themselves.

"In the house of Too Much Trouble
There lived a little boy,
He was eager for a playmate
And was hungry for a toy,
But was always Too Much Trouble.
Too much worry, too much noise,
For the house of Too Much Trouble
Was not made for little boys.

In the house of Too Much Trouble
There was little room for him.

So he never had a playmate and he never owned a pet,
In the house of Too Much Trouble,
Things aren't peaceful as yet
In the house of Too Much Trouble,
He is quiet and at rest
In the house of Too Much Trouble
With a lily on his breast.

This picture is only better through. We are willing to give our children toys, movies, almost anything, but some of us are afraid to give them ourselves. When it comes to the big things, our's is a House of Too Much Trouble. What is the supreme need of your child. It is the right kind of religion. It is an appreciation of those values that last. How early does a child get its conception of God and of the values that are worthwhile? The best psychologists tell us that they do so by the time they are seven years of age.

Because this is true, every mother and every father too, ought to see to it that this last brief characteristic ascribed to this mother of long ago is true of themselves. She was a woman that feared the Lord. That is, she was a woman who had a sense of God in her life. She was \textit{very} religious. It was for this, above all else, that her children called her blessed. I think in your own mother the thing that brings its soul to its knees after all these years is not her cleverness and beauty, but her tenderness, her genuine Christ-likeness. That is true of all of us.

As I think of my own mother I think of a woman vivacious and loveable. When I knew her, she was not as beautiful physically as she once had been, I was her youngest born. By the time I came she had shared her strength with other children. She was a woman of radiant face and with eyes full of laughter. She was an Irish mother and she would always find something over which to laugh even amidst her tears. But above all else, she was a woman of beautiful saintliness. And when she lay in her last sleep, her minister, with fine understanding used this old poetry at her funeral. And we who knew her and loved her felt it was unusually fitting. She too was strong, kindly, looking well to the ways of her household, sweetly conscious of God. Therefore, her children
rose up and called her blessed. God grant that it may be so with every mother here present, and with every father as well.
She looked well to the way of her household.

Proverbs 31:27

The text is a bit of a pin picture, painted long centuries ago. The man who drew the sketch was a real artist. He did not label his picture. It was so well drawn that a label was not necessary. Had he given the picture a name, however, it is not difficult to know what that name would be. He would have called it a name that to us might sound a bit commonplace. Yet, I use it for lack of a better. He would have called this picture the "Ideal Woman".

I

Why was she his ideal?

1. She was ideal because she was a wife and a mother. It is quite natural that living so long ago he should have made the wife and mother his ideal. In that distant day only one honorable vocation was open to women. That was the vocation of wifehood and motherhood. Practically all other doors were closed in front of her face.

Not only was this the case in his far off day, but it was the case for many centuries later. In all ancient countries, woman was looked upon as an inferior. In many countries she was little better than a chattel and a slave. Her position was the highest among the ancient Israelites. But, even here she was in no sense equal to man. This is evidenced by the fact that every Jewish boy was taught to pray this prayer "I thank God that I was not born a Gentile, a leper or a woman." It is further evidenced
by the fact that the wife and mother won what consideration she had through her husband and her children, rather than through what she was as an individual. The genealogy was always traced through the father, never through the mother. Matthew and Luke tell us that Jesus was virgin born, yet strange to say, when they began to trace his genealogy they traced it through Joseph instead of Mary the mother.

With the coming of Christianity, woman had a new chance. The Gospel of Jesus teaches that in Christ there is neither male nor female, bond nor free. That is, that neither slavery nor sex is a barrier to the favor of God. No wonder this new religion spread rapidly among these two underprivileged classes, women and slaves. It brought to them a new birth of freedom.

But this freedom for woman was short lived. This was the case because there soon sprang up in the church a rigid ecclesiastism that was controlled wholly by men. Women again came to be looked upon as inferior. By and by the Pope forbade the clergy to marry. Marriage was looked upon as an estate morally inferior to that of celibacy. Marriage was just a little bit unclean. For this, the woman was held responsible. Even as great a saint as Augustine declared that he thought women might rise from the dead. But, if they did they would no longer be capable of tempting men. It seems never to have occurred to this saint that the temptation might be sometime the other way around.

During these days, and many years after, about the only vocation opened to women was that of a nun or a wife. She had either to be the bride of the church or the bride of some man. To fail at this was to have no place in the scheme of things. In the home of Sir Walter Scott, I saw a sketch on the wall portraying an event in the life of his ancestor. A certain young lord on going into dinner, lifted the cover from the meat dish to discover two spurs instead of the desired roast beef.

There was no mistaking the meaning of this. The larder was empty and
he must hunt in order to fill it. He went therefore on an expedition to a neighboring lord. But he was caught in the act, thrown into prison and sentenced to be hanged. Now it so happened that there were three daughters in the family. The eldest whose name was Mucklemouth, seemed to the mother to have little chance of getting off. Therefore, she proposed to pardon the prisoner if he would promise to marry this eldest daughter. The young lord agreed to look her over. When he saw her, he said, "I'll be hanged." But she ministered to him so tenderly in his last hours that he relented, and they lived happy ever after. They became the ancestors of Sir Walter Scott.

This conviction of inferiority on the part of women has come down almost to our day. In fact a recent writer in one of our magazines declared that there are only three things that a woman can beat a man doing. One is being a mother, the second is singing soprano, the third is keeping her face smooth without shaving. It has been only about three-quarters of a century ago that the medical association in Philadelphia voted to excommunicate any physician who would lecture in an institution that would allow prospective women physicians to attend. Women then were shut up to just one or two vocations.

But today all this is changed. Almost every vocation that is open to man is now open to women. Not only so, but she is entering those vocations and is giving a good account of her self. In doing so she is not in rebellion as some fancy, she is only following the tasks that she once performed in the home and doing them now outside the home. Today she enjoys a freedom of which this ancient writer never dreamed.

Now, while this is the case, I am persuaded that if this ancient writer were to come back to our modern world he would not feel moved to change his portrait of the ideal woman. He would doubtless be amazed beyond words at the progress we have made in the realm of science and invention. He
would be amazed and gratified that our schools, that our churches and hospitals have made such progress. He would doubtless rejoice in this larger freedom that has come to women. But he would still be convinced that woman reaches her highest and best as a wife and mother. And I am old fashioned enough to be in perfect agreement with him.

II

But why did he regard this wife and mother as the ideal woman? We may be sure at once that he did not do so merely because she is a wife and mother. Since the inauguration of Mother's day, I am persuaded that we have spoken much nonsense to the effect that mere motherhood in itself merits a halo. We have at once grown tearful to the point of absolute hysteria over the mere fact that a woman has given birth to a child. But what we need to realize is that merely to be a mother is not necessarily a badge of character or of any kind of moral worth.

There are mothers, for instance, whose contribution through motherhood is a curse rather than a blessing. There are mothers who would have left the world far better off if they had never been mothers at all. One of the worst highwaymen that ever operated in the South reformed in a measure after years of staining himself both with theft and blood. He declared that he owed his career to his mother. The first crime he ever committed was under her direction. He bungled the job and got caught. She punished him, not for the crime but for bungling it. Since then, he said, "I have left my tracks cold." This he did at the price of not a few murders.

The old story of the Juke family is to the point. A number of years ago a worthless rascal in Indiana married a woman who was, if possible, more worthless than himself. She became a mother. In the course of five generations she gave to the world twelve-hundred men and women. Of those
children, four hundred of the women were prostitutes. Almost everyone
of the men was either a pauper or a petty criminal. They cost their state
millions of dollars in money. They cost it far more as they trailed a
path of slime and disease wherever they went. Motherhood is therefore not
in itself a blessing. It may be in a measureless curse.

Why then did this ancient artist regard this wife and mother as the
ideal woman? It was because she was not only a mother, but she made a
success of her job. Now honor is due the woman who makes a success of any
worthy enterprise. We honor those who achieve in music, art, literature,
in politics and on the stage. We rejoice in the wide range of our opportunities.
But the woman who gives to the world the right kind of sons and daughters
renders the highest service and finds the secret of life's supremest joys.
It is not necessary to argue this point. This is the case for the simple
reason that we know today that the supreme values are not in things, but in
personalities. The woman, therefore, who gives to the world stalwart sons
and daughters has rendered to her world the highest possible service.

III

Now since this woman made a success of the greatest of all vocations,
it is naturally of interest to us to know how she did it. I have tried to
show you that successful marriages do not simply happen, they are made.
Successful musicians do not happen, nor successful ministers, nor successful
anything else. The rule is that as we sow we reap. This is also true in the
case of a mother. The success of this mother was not a mere matter of chance.
It grew out of the kind of woman that she was and what she did about it. What
kind of woman was she?

1. She was a strong woman. Of course, that does not necessarily
mean that she was strong physically. However, health is a great asset. It is a tremendous step toward success. It is mighty hard for an invalid to be a successful mother. It does not mean that she was a husky double-fisted matron. Men are far stronger physically than women. It means that she was possessed of strength mentally and spiritually.

In this respect women often surpass men. For instance, it is a rare thing to find a husband and father who would carry on religiously without the cooperation of his wife. While I was pastor in Washington, I had a steward, a most excellent young man, who married a girl who was bitten by the society bug. She was neither wayward nor wicked, she was simply not interested in the church. She was not a strong woman morally, she was about the texture of a good cobweb. But little by little she weaned her husband from the church and they reared their children as pagans.

But, how many times have you seen the wife and mother stand true and carry every chick and child with her into the church when her husband was not only indifferent, but positively antagonistic. One of the most lovely characters in the New Testament is Timothy. Timothy's father was not a Jew but a Greek. He was not a Christian, he was a pagan. Timothy owed what he was to the faith of his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice. She had strength to hold her son to the faith in spite of this. So it was with this strong woman.

2. She was kind. How common-place that sounds. Kindness is not a scintillating virtue. It does not sparkle. It does not possess the glamour of some that we know. Yet none is more useful.

'Tis something when the day draws to its close
To know, that, though I have born a troubled mind,
Have tasted neither rapture nor repose,
To all men, friends or foes, I have been kind.
'Tis something when I shall hear death's awful tread
upon the stair,
To know that His keen eye shall see upon my heart
Old wounds that oft did bleed for others,
But no heart I injured I have been kind.

This woman was kind to those outside her home. "She reaches forth her hands to the needy." That was an outstanding characteristic of my mother. I used to watch her prepare dishes for the sick in the community, and would feel I would be willing to have had their infirmities to have also enjoyed such delicate kindness. The unfriended, the lonely, the sorrowing, the desperate found in this good woman a friend. "She stretches forth her hands to the needy." She was not only kind in deed, but in word. That is sometimes even more difficult. I used to have a woman in my church who was unsparing in her deeds of kindness. But often, after being kind with her hands, she would slash things to pieces with her tongue. Frankly there was no telling what she was going to say. But the tongue of this mother was a law abiding tongue. And what law governed it? It was kindness, "In her tongue is the law of kindness."

It is hard to be a successful mother and a tearjerk at the same time. I think I was a grown man teaching school before I discovered that all mothers were not gentle and kindly in the use of their tongues. I remember going one day to talk to a mother about her daughter. This daughter was a student of mine and had been guilty of some kind of ill behavior that I thought it would be wise to discuss with her mother. I brought the matter up as tactfully as I could, expecting perfect understanding. But I found I had touched off a volcano. The burning lava and hot ashes rained on me with such fury the next thirty minutes that I was glad to escape with my life.
This mother was not kind.

3. She was a good homemaker. Listen to this touch, "She looketh well to the ways of her household." I do not see how you can beat that as a vocation. She might have looked well to the way of her club. To that nobody objects. She might have looked well to the ways of politics. That too is wise. She might have looked well to the way of her bridge party. We are not going to rave about that. She might have looked well to the way of her church. Some of these things are good and necessary. Some are useless. But all of them fall short of the best. Her first duty is to her home.

This woman took time to live with her own children. That does not mean that she never got outside the house. A mother needs a regular vacation just the same as others. But it does mean that she put her home making first. She did not sing "Where is my wondering boy to night?" She made it her business to know. I used to have a neighbor who was very interested in her community, but seemingly had no interest at all in her own home. She reminded me of a cartoon a certain magazine carried a year or so ago. A rooster was standing by a nest full of eggs that were just hatching, but there was no hen in sight. A friend came by and saw the rooster's face wet with tears. Where is your wife? He was asked. As he choked back the sobs, he answered, "She is down at the City hall delivering a lecture on "How to Hatch Eggs."

There was never a time when we have so much help available for the right kind of training of our children. More has been taught and written on the subject of the child during the last fifty years than during the previous five thousand. We have marvelous helps, but there is no substitution for the mother. "There stood by Jesus, Mary his mother." The mother's place is always by the cross. She has to go through the valley of the shadow of death to lift her child into life. She has to give years in his training through his tender years. The mother's place is never easy. She knows as no other the meaning
of the cross. Therefore, she wears as no other life's brightest crown.

4. The crowning secret of this woman's success was that she was genuinely religious. If that was necessary in that simple day long ago, it is even more necessary in the complex days in which we live. Many mothers who have grown careless, who by process of drifting have lost their religion, or discovering this, some are turning back to God because they realize that the task of rearing a family is entirely too big and important for them to undertake alone. God pity the child who is born into a home whose windows have no lookout into the eternity. God pity the child that is born into a home where nobody prays.

A few years ago some excavators brought back from the Orient an old brick that was more than forty centuries old. Yet that brick had upon its face the finger marks of the work that had molded it into shape four-thousand years ago. That bit of clay came to his hands plastic. He gave it the bent and shape that it has kept all through the years. It is into the mother's hands above all else that is entrusted plastic clay of babyhood. It is her hands above all others that mold it into shape. You bear on your soul and will bear through eternity the finger marks of your mother and so do I, so will your child. If that hand is strong, kind, and Christian, you will mold your child for God. And these children, instead of wasting their own lives and breaking their own hearts will one day rise up and call you blessed. Thank God for the brave women that serve in all departments of life. But above all else we can thank God for the mothers who make homes.
A MODERN DAD

"Master, I have brought unto thee my son."

Mark 9:17

Here is a beautiful and touching scene. It is as fresh as the morning. It is as tender as a caress of a loving hand. Here is one kneeling in the presence of Christ. It is a parent and that parent has a laddy by the hand. It is the hour of prayer, but the prayer that is being offered is not on behalf of the one who is praying, but on behalf of the boy. "Master, I have brought unto thee my son." The gracious and tender scene moves us to this hour.

1.

Who is this that is thus kneeling in the presence of Jesus? I know the answer that everyone would naturally expect. "It is some devoted mother" you will say. But, believe it or not, you are wrong. The one thus engaged in prayer on the behalf of his son is not a mother but a father. This is a bit astonishing in any day. It is doubly so in the day on which our lot is cast. This is the case because the modern Dad has lost his reputation. He seems either to have abdicated after the order of Edward VIII, or to have had the scepter wrench from his hands.

There was a time when Dad counted for something. They called him "the head of the house." That sounds quite amusing, doesn't it? He was really an important member of the family group. But, "How are the mighty fallen." Today he is almost as useless as a bridegroom at an ordinary wedding. We hardly
think of him at all, and when we do, it is only to laugh.

This was impressed upon my mind by an experience a few years ago. We had just celebrated Mother's Day. The house was jammed by an eager and expectant congregation. Fountains of tears were very close to the surface. We had a most gracious time. Many went home from that service, saying joyfully "I had a good cry." Mark you, I am not averse to shedding tears. I remember coming from a service with Bishop Hughes on one occasion. We had all wept together. The Bishop said wisely "It helps me to cry like that. It almost purges something mean out of me." So we had a helpful and tearful service.

Naturally, I was eager to have another service that would be equally helpful. Therefore, I decided that on the following Sunday we would celebrate Father's Day. But, the adventure was disappointing. The congregation was not so large, nor so expectant, nor so emotional. For Mother's Day, it was easy to find songs delightfully tender and sentimental. But the poet had failed to grow enthusiastic over father. I could find no songs to celebrate him. After long searching, the best I could do was "Everybody works but father."

Then there was another one that ran something like this:

Dad, Dad, Dad, the dear, old worthless gesser,

The fusses I have had with that old patients teaser

His lacks the spirit of a mouse,

Most anyone can down him,

We let him hang around the house-

'Tis cheaper than to drown him.

Now, it is my conviction that Dad's loss of reputation is a loss to the whole family. Someway, I believe that the whole group gets on better when Dad has a better standing. Then, I believe that a little more honor might be helpful to Dad himself. You know the old saying about giving the dog a bad name - he tends to justify it. So I rear with Dad. Of course, I should
never think of giving him a beautiful golden crown like mother wears. But, I have thought that a nice little tin halo might be in order. He would appreciate it and in the process of wearing it, might become increasingly worthy. Of course, I know that some fathers are liabilities rather than assets. But that is not true of all fathers. It is not true of the one whom we meet in the story of which our text is a part.

I.

"Master, I have brought unto thee my son." What does this simple prayer tell us about this father of the long ago? It leaves unsaid a great many things about which we might be curious. It does not tell us whether this man was educated or uneducated. It does not tell us whether he lived in a palace or a cottage. It does not tell us whether he was successful, as the world terms success, or whether he was a bit of a failure. It does not even tell us his name. But, while not satisfying our curiosity fully, it does tell us certain facts about him that are good.

1. This prayer indicates that this father was a religious man. He was a man of faith. The mother usually gets the credit for having all the religion in the family. Too often that is the case. But it was not so here. The first time we meet this man, the only time we get a view of this father's face, we find him upon his knees and that face is upturned to the Master in prayer.

I appreciate that fact, and as I see this man upon his knees, he reminds me of my father. The one I knew. The house in which I grew to boyhood is untenanted now, and is falling into ruins. But I could go back there today and almost find the knee-prints, who for far long toward half-century kept the fires burning upon the family altar. I have many gracious memories of him, but none more precious than the fact that he was a man of
prayer.

Just how this father came to be a man of prayer, we do not know. It might have been a habit of a life-time. But, as we read between the lines, I have an idea that prayer became a reality to him because of the needs of his boy. He had a son upon whose tender life the hand of affliction had been laid. His boy had needs. His boy had possibilities, yet, this father was sure he could not realize without the help of Christ. Therefore, he brought him to the Master. How many times that has happened. Many a father might have gone his self-sufficient way but for the fact that he was arrested and brought to his knees by the needs of his child. The responsibility of fatherhood ought to bring every man to his knees.

To feel his little hand in mine, so clinging and so warm,
To know he thinks I am strong enough to keep him safe from harm,
To see his simple faith in all that I can say or do-
It sorta shames a fellow-But it makes him better too.
And I would not disappoint his trust for anything on earth,
Nor let him know how little I just naturally am worth,
And I fancy it is easier that brighter road to climb
With his little hands behind me to push me all the time,
And I fancy, I'm a better man than what I used to be
Because I have this chap at home that thinks the world of me.

This father was a religious man. He came to Jesus partly from his own sense of need, but I think the greatest reason was that he wanted help for his boy.

2. "Master, I have brought unto thee my son." This prayer, not only indicates that he was a religious man, it indicates further that he was a lover. He cared for this afflicted son of his. Here again, we are encroaching upon the mother's domain. We usually give her the credit
of doing all the loving that is done in a family. And mark me, there is no
discounting her love. It is about the most beautiful, God-like something
that this world knows. But what we need to remember is, that many fathers
love too. He is usually a bit awkward in expressing it. He may remain to the
end just an over-grown boy. But we misunderstand him when we see nothing in
him but a grudging check book or a more or less ample meal ticket.

I had a mother whose touch was as delicate and tender as the petals of
a rose. She was an Irish mother with heart and eyes full of laughter. Situ­
ations never grew so serious that she could not find something in them over
which to smile. My father was a rugged old Puritan. He laughed at times,
but not often. In certain attitudes, he seemed as hard as nails. Had you
looked at them casually, you might have concluded that mother was the one
lover of the family.

But, we who lived in the home knew that such was not the case. We knew
that while father might be all granite on the outside, he was tenderness with­
in. As a lad of ten, I came very close to the crossing with pneumonia. One
night the doctor informed father and mother that I would not live till morn­
ing. Who came to tell me about it? It was not mother, it was father. He
came to put a hand on each side of my pillow and to bend low over me to tell
me that I might pass into the presence of Jesus. It was he, that as best he
could, took me in his loving arms to hand me over into the arms of Infinite
Love.

A certain physician told this story. In Denver, Colorado, he went one
day to see a patient who was slowly dying. After careful examination the
doctor knew there was nothing organically wrong. At last he said to the pa­
tient, "There is nothing organically wrong with you, yet as you know, you
are dying. What is the matter? Have you had some great sorrow?" The patient
smiled and said, "Twenty years ago, my son committed a crime, I made his guilt
appear as mine. For twenty years I have been a fugitive from justice. During this score of years, I have been separated from all that I love. It has broken my heart, but I have had the joy of saving my boy." This father, as some others was a lover.

3. "Master, I have brought unto thee my son." This indicates that this father was a man of fine good sense. When he desired to have his son brought into contact with Jesus, when he was eager for something to be done for his boy that he knew nobody but Christ could do, he did not send him by the hand of the pastor. He did not even send him by the hand of the boy's mother. He took it upon himself. There is a manly ring in this declaration. "Master, I have brought unto you my son."

Now, there is no measuring the power for good on the part of a consecrated mother. But in the dealing with our boys, the influence of the father is often even more abiding. If there is any difference in our love for our fathers and mothers, the mother may perhaps have the advantage, though not always. But, it is to the father that the laddy as a rule gives his admiration. He knows that he will never grow into a woman. But he is sure he will become a man. He yearns to be like his father. Therefore, there is no measuring the influence for good that the right kind of a father can bring to bear upon his son. This father took the religious responsibility of his son upon himself. What a wise good man he was.

This, you will see brings us face to face with one of the greatest sins of the modern Dad. Life has grown more crowded and complex with the passing of years. Fathers have to bestir themselves so often from early morning until late at night in order to keep the wolf from the door. They do not think of leaving the responsibility of the feeding and clothing of their children to charity. They take that upon themselves. But, so often, they shirk all responsibility for the moral and spiritual welfare of their children. The mo-
The Modern Dad is especially good at the old American custom of passing the buck.

Sometime ago, a father who was a man of fine character, said to me, "You know I am hardly acquainted with my own children. I have to get up in the morning and go to my business so early that I do not get to see them at breakfast. I get home so late at night that they have already gone to bed." This man was greatly interested in his family. He was eager to provide for them. He was making money rapidly. He was discharging some of his responsibility, but he was neglecting the weightier part of it. It is not enough for the Dad to give the son things, he must give him some bit of himself as well.

Now, there was never a time when it was easier for Dads to pass the buck than it is today. There are so many agencies that are willing to cooperate with us in the training of our children. Therefore, we too often stand under altogether. But in countless instances, this spells tragedy. In the second book of Kings, there is a very up-to-date story. A little boy went out at harvesttime to be with his father in the fields. The sun blazed down upon him with such fury, "My head, my head" he cried as he ran to his father. But the father was busy and the barley must be garnered. "Take him to his mother" was the command of his father. The mother received him. But this was the said ending. He sat on her lap till noon, then died. Died, perchance because the father was too busy.

That was David's blunder. He loved his wayward son Absalom with passionate devotion. He put the safety for that son in the hands of officers that he felt he could trust. "Deal gently with the young man" he warns. The battle has now been fought and David who is far more a father than a king is desperate over his son. Yonder is a runner coming. He tells of victory, but the father is not concerned about victory. He is only concerned about his boy. Then there is a second messenger, and the king learns that his son is dead. "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom, my son, my son." What is the matter? He
passed the buck and in so doing he wrecked his boy.

This, I repeat, is perhaps the supreme danger of the modern Dad. In the rush of things, we fail to set a right example. In the rush of things, we give our children everything but ourselves. While I was pastor in Memphis, a son of one of the most prominent families in the city was brought home in handcuffs. His broken father was amazed. He said, "I used to leave a five dollar bill on his table every morning before I went to work." That was the trouble. He gave him far too much money and far too little of himself. Our boys can get on with very little if we take time to give them our consecrated selves.

He is the best thing, Daddy is
When he aint got the rheumatiz'
Gives me pennies and good advise
About staying clean and acting nice,
Being quiet and don't deceive,
Hankerchief instead of sleeve.
It seems just like 'at Daddy knew
He was a small boy too.

Anyway, he always says,
"Give the kid the best there is."
And when Ma sends me off to bed,
He always takes the light ahead,
And holds my hand and talks, maybe-
About the things that used to be
When he and Uncie was little boys,
And all about their games and toys,
What am I going to be? Gee whiz
I'm going to be like Daddy is.
I'd rather be like him, By jing!

As president or anything.

He is like Ma says angels is,

When he aint got the rheumatiz'.

III.

"Master, I have brought unto thee my son." What came of it all? Here is a man who learned to pray. Here is a man who was crowned. Here is a man who took his son's need upon himself. He refused to pass the buck. He gave his boy food and clothing. But he gave him vastly more. He gave him himself. Possibly by so doing, another man made the sale. Possibly by so doing, he did not hold the front of the procession. But even then he was not cheated.

What did he win? He won his boy. He introduced that son to Jesus and Jesus laid his healing hand on him. What would this boy have said when he grew to manhood? He would have told you with a strange shyness perhaps how gracious his mother was. But, then he would have looked up with deepening gratitude. "But my old Dad, God bless him, he wasn't very handsome. He wasn't vastly successful in winning worldly goods and honors, but he loved me and gave me my best chance." This man saved his boy and in so doing gave the best account of himself.

It is this kind of father that you will remember with tender gratitude.

It is such that I am remembering. I shall never forget the first year I spent away at school. At the close of the long year, My father came to meet me at the station which was twenty-five miles from home. We drove down the winding road together amidst the silence of the templed hills. We were in the old fashioned wagon. Now and then we would meet a farmer. Then my father would say with a casualness that showed his pride;—"Here is my boy, he is just coming back home." And who knows that if I am so fortunate as to live as he lived,
we may meet on life's other side. Then father would say in the presence of our common Lord. "Master, I have brought unto thee my son. I submit to you that nothing could be bigger and finer than that.
PROBLEM PARENTS

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he
will not depart from it."

Proverbs 22:6

Here is an old fashioned word that we can hear without any great excite-
ment. "Of course," some of us say as we stifle a yawn. There are others who
hear such a word with resentment. "It is not true," they declare indignantly.
"I tried to train my child aright, God knows I did, but I missed it. In spite
of all my efforts he has been a disappointment to himself, he has been a liability
to society, he has broken my heart." Yet, this quiet word still speaks its mes-
sage. In spite of all failures it holds in its hands at this moment, the supreme
hopes both of ourselves, of our children, and of our world. It would be hard
for me to say anything more important this morning than just this word. "Train
up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from
it."

I.

I am ready to confess at once that this is a tremendous declaration. If
it is true it would be hard to find any truth that is quite so important. It
is important for the parents, it is important for the child, it is important
for society, it is important today, it is important as we face tomorrow, it has
in its hands both the promise of the life that now is as well as that which is
to come. But is it true or false? This author is affirming that children are
not so much born as made. What evidence have we that this writer is speaking the truth?

1. This is the testimony of the Bible as a whole. There seems nothing about which the writers both of the Old and the New Testaments are in more complete agreement than just this fact—that children are not so much born as made. The Old Testament is a frolic with children. Some of those children rise to beautiful heights, some descend into desperate depths. But always the writers make it plain that what they became, for good or ill, was largely the result of the training given them by the agencies and environment that touched their lives. The same truth is emphasized in the New Testament. It finds its supreme emphasis upon the lips of Jesus. It was he who said that it was better that we should have a millstone about our necks and be drowned in the depths of the sea than to cause one of these little ones to go wrong. By this he was affirming that what a child becomes depends upon the training that child receives at our hands.

2. But we are not so ready to accept the authority of the Bible as were our fathers. The scriptures were to them a final word. Such is not the case with ourselves. Frankly, I believe our view of the Bible is more sane than theirs. A thing is not true simply because it is in the Bible. But this is put in the Bible because it is true. To the voice of Scripture is added another voice that does speak to our day with peculiar authority. That is the voice of science. If there is a word upon which modern psychologists agree it is this—that children are not so much born as made. These scientists by numerous experiments have come to the unshaken conviction that a child's character depends upon the kind of training it receives.

3. Then the testimony of the Bible and the testimony of science are backed by the testimony of common-sense. There is a law that we call the law of sowing
and reaping. This law affirms that we live in an ordered world where certain causes may be counted upon for bringing about certain effects. We can therefore determine the quality of the harvest that we are to reap in our fields. When we sow wheat we are sure that we are not going to reap corn or oats or rye, we are going to reap wheat. Some of us are interested in the growing of flowers. We know that here too we reap according to our sowing. When we graft one rose bush with another we are certain the reap is not going to be sour dock or burr weeds, but roses. The same law holds in the development of our stock. It holds in their training. One of the greatest dog trainers in America when asked for his method of procedure, declared that he got hold of the dog when he was a pup and got him into perfect control. He believed that the kind of dog he had depended upon his training.

Now it would be a strange sort of world if we could determine the quality of our harvest, if we could determine the quality of our live-stock, and yet could have no assurance of the kind of men and women we are going to grow out of our boys and girls. If what we sow in our fields we reap, what we sow in the hearts of our children we also reap. This does not mean of course that all earnest people succeed. Sometimes the most honest of us make mistakes. Sometimes we fail rightly to understand our children. But the right kind of sowing does result here as elsewhere in the right kind of reaping. If we cannot by proper training determine the characters of our children, then this is the only realm in the whole universe where the law of sowing and reaping does not operate.

4. Finally, the testimony of scripture, the testimony of science, and of common-sense is backed up by experience. "What manner of child shall this be?" is a question that was asked about a cradle many centuries ago. Can anyone give a definite answer? The Jewish people believe that they can. As they look into the face of their babies, they declare without the least uncertainty
that this child is going to grow up to be a Jewish man or woman. This is also the firm faith of the Catholic Church. For centuries they have put major emphasis upon the importance of the right training of children. They believe that by proper training they can make the child into a Catholic man or a Catholic woman. But the answer of Protestantism to this question is often very uncertain. Yet, there is no truth that has a more emphatic sanction of experience than this, that children are not so much born as made. Therefore, we may say in our busy days, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it." This means that the problem of the child is one of training and not of the child itself.

II.

Since what our children become is a matter of training who is to have charge of this supremely important task? Whose hands shape the plastic lives of the boys and girls of every generation throng our world? There are a number of agencies that enter into this training. I am going to group them roughly under three heads.

1. There is the big outer world of which the child is a part. By this I mean the day-school, the city, the streets of the city where the child lives. All these play their part in molding the child's character. Our public schools are doing a credible piece of work, but they can give little definitely religious training. No more can we depend upon the training that comes through the movies and through the games upon our streets. Our city streets have not yet become conspicuously safe. A certain clear-eyed prophet foresaw a golden age that he described in this language, "The city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." That is, that city should be so free of bootleg joints, so free of night spots, so free of reckless and drunken drivers that the children should find it safe to be on the streets. But that day has
"Problem Parents"

not fully come as yet. We cannot look to the big outer world to do much toward the religious training of our boys and girls.

2. A second agency to which many look for help in the training of their children is the Church. This important agency has appreciated the worth of the child as no other institution. It has given a more or less intelligent attention to them for many centuries. It is perhaps doing a better job at it today than ever before. The Church can be of great help, especially when it has the backing of the parents. But, of course, the Church is not enough. It has too little opportunity. Often what training a Church gives is confined to a brief thirty minutes each week. More than twenty-five millions of our youth never have a chance even at this brief training.

3. This puts the major responsibility upon the home. It is the home that always is either the saviour or the wrecker of society. The whole world must begin in some mother's arms. The home is the little lakelet from which flows the great stream of our national life. We are what our home life makes us. What our home life makes us depends upon the father and the mother. Mark you, I say it depends not upon the father alone, nor upon the mother alone. It depends upon both. If tomorrow is to be better than today it will be because we who are parents today have brought it to pass. What our children become depends upon ourselves more than upon all other influences in the world. The child problem, then, is the problem of the parent.

III.

Let me then venture to give you a few guideposts that will prevent your becoming a problem parent.

1. If you are to measure up to your high privileges and responsibilities as a parent you must realize that the problem is up to you. One way to become a problem parent is to try to stand from under. It is to pass the buck. Here
fathers are often more guilty than mothers. Many a father has a fancy that he has discharged his obligation to his child when he has provided for his physical needs. "I see to it," one said, "that they have plenty of meat and bread." A hen makes that much preparation for her chickens. You remember that little chap we read about in the II book of Kings. He went out one day to visit his father in the field. He was taken suddenly ill. He rushed to his daddy crying, "My head, my head." But the father was too busy. He passed the buck. "Take him to his mother."

Sometimes even mothers get so busy with their social or club duties that they have little time for their own children. I have told you about the hen that allowed her own hatching chicks to die because she was away lecturing on how to hatch eggs. I believe that every mother ought to be intelligently interested in her church and in her community. But nothing can justify the neglect of the home. Whatever we give to our children we fail uttering if we refuse to give ourselves. We need therefore to face this fact, what our children become in tomorrow depends upon me as a father and upon me as a mother.

2. Then if we are to make the best out of our boys and girls we need not only to live with them, but so to live with them as to have understanding hearts. The Golden Rule needs to be practiced everywhere, but there is no better place to begin it than in relationship to your own child. Sometimes fathers and mothers forget that they were ever young. Those who do so are likely to become harsh and despotic. They may even come to rule with an iron hand. Such parents can make home life ugly so that the child will get away at the earliest day possible. How tragic to grow old so blindly and so stupidly as to forget that you were ever young.

Among the many tragic blunders made by such parents is that they tend to become harshly critical. They are the ones that constantly remind their children of how much better they themselves were when they were boys and girls. They
keep them posted on the fact that they are going to the dogs. Last fall a
typical young savage came home from college. He walked into the office of
his hard working old dad. That worthy gentleman looked him over with dis-
approval. "George," he said, "you look like a perfect idiot." At that time
a man came in who had known the father since he was a baby. "George, you
are the spit and image of your daddy." "That was what father was telling me
just when you came in," was the quiet answer. Put yourself in the place of
your child, and sometimes when he stands at the forks of the road, when he
needs a friend, he may come to you instead of going to the roadhouse.

3. Then if you are to discharge your obligation you must lead a disci-
plined life and thus teach discipline to your child. Here we come to a very
sensitive point. It is a point upon which psychologists do not agree. That
is they do not agree as to how this discipline is to be brought about. But
I think almost every person of intelligence will agree that discipline is
needed. How this is to be brought about I am not discussing at present. But
the necessity for it I am affirming with all the conviction of my heart. There
is nothing that our children need to be taught more than the right kind of dis-
cipline.

This is good not simply for some far-off tomorrow, it is good for the
child of today. In one of our leading magazines there was an article some
months ago on "The Burden of Choice." It spoke of the conflict that adults
had to pass in the making of choices. That burden is too heavy to be born
on the tender shoulders of childhood. If you want your child to be happy you
must not allow him to have his way in every particular. I put it down as a
fundamental fact that no child is ever happy whose will is never crossed.

A spoiled and undisciplined child then is a burden to himself. He is a
burden to those that have to deal with him. He is a burden and embarrassment
to his parents. He is also headed for many a hard bump in the future from
which you might have spared him. He may discover in his dealing with you that by crying loud enough, and whining long enough, and stomping his foot hard enough, he can get anything that you have in your power to give him. But the big world in which he must go one day will pay little attention to his yelling and stomping and whining except either to turn their backs upon him or to slap him in the face. The outlaw in society was not born that way, he was made so by undisciplined parents.

4. If you are to give your child the right sort of training you must be possessed yourself of a vital religion. The saddest failures are made by the parents who lack an adequate religion. Modern science tells us that children who attend church and Sunday-school have a higher personality rating than those who do not. Not only so, but it tells us that children of parents who attend church have a higher personality rating than the children of parents who do not. In other words, religion is a fundamental need. Your child can no more come to its best without religion than he can come to its best without an adequate diet. Every child needs religion as well as it needs its daily bread.

How is this to be brought about? Religion can be taught. That sounds like truism, but it is not. We would never think of leaving the clothing and feeding of our children to mere chance. We would never think of leaving their secular education to chance. But countless thousands leave all religious training to chance. Religion must be taught just as every other subject must be taught.

I am conscious of some of the difficulties that modern parents have to confront. In my upbringing the family was much together. We all worked at a common task, we had our meals together, we sat around the fireside together. At the close of the day, together we sang and together we prayed.

There is little use in speaking to the modern family about religious worship today after this fashion. Your children do not work at a common task. They arise at odd hours, they go to school or to work at odd hours. But in spite of
this there ought to be at least one night in every week definitely set aside for the family to get together. If you have not begun this you cannot begin it now very well if some of your boys and girls are grown. But it can be begun by those of you who still have your children about you. Then you can teach religion by saying grace at the table. That is possible even in our hurried day. There are many helps today. Remember that your child will doubtless know about religion just what he is taught.

But not only can religion be taught, but it can be caught. That is the best way of teaching. What you tell your child may mean much or little. The life you live before him will mean almost everything. Remember that there is nothing else in all the world quite so sensitive as the mind of a child. If the atmosphere of your home is torn by discord and strife that tension will tell on your child. He will doubtless grow up nervous and restless. A three weeks old baby that was a bottle baby suddenly began to lose its appetite and to sleep badly. It was discovered that the nurse who was caring for it was passing through a period of conflict. When the nurse was changed, the child at once began to recover its appetite and to sleep well.

Here is the testimony of a modern scientist, "My mother," he said, "was very religious when I was born, and for three years thereafter. During this period she used to put me to sleep with the great old hymns of the Church. Of course I did not understand them. But somehow they gave to me a sense of peace and security. When I was three, she broke under the strain of living with a brilliant husband who was an atheist. All hymn singing in our home ceased. But five years later when mother was very ill I went alone and spoke in childish faith to that Friend who had brought me peace and security in other days, and He heard me. And I am convinced that my mother was spared to me in answer to that childish prayer." His religion was not so much taught as it was caught.

Then this closing word, what I have said to parents does not mean that
there rests no responsibility upon you as boys and girls. God is trying
to do his best for you and me. But we can resist him as to thwart his
high purpose in our lives. We can thus resist the very best efforts on the
part of our fathers and mothers. Perhaps you live in a home that is none too
happy. Perhaps you feel that you are not well understood by those who should
understand you the best. But bear this in mind, in spite of all their fail-
ures, your parents love you best of anybody else in the world. Try to be
patient and understanding. Remember that the worries that you are causing
will be the same kind that you will be suffering thirty years from now. Make
your best response for love's sake. There is an old word that says, "Children
obey your parents for this is the first commandment." That has a promise at-
tached, "that thy days may be long upon the earth." This is not something
arbitrary. It assumes the wisdom of your parents. In responding to that wis-
dom you find life here. In your refusing to respond, you miss it.

As you go then from this service on this Mother's Day take with you the
fine grace of appreciation. If your parents are still with you, appreciate
them. If they are with you in the beauty of young manhood and womanhood, thank
God for them. If they are with you as faded old men and women, mauled and
bruised by the heavy fists of the years, be gentle with them. Smooth a way
for the old feet, they have taken many a step for you. Put your arm around
the old stooped shoulders they have carried many a load for you. Make it pos-
sible for them to thank God for the sacrifices that they have made on your be-
half. Then when they lie asleep you will find blooming at their graves some-
thing finer than spring violets and sweeter than the lily of the valley. It
will be a father and mother who could bless you in their Home-going.
PROBLEM PARENTS

"The daughter of my people has become cruel like the ostriches of the wilderness." (Lamentations 4:3)

The cruelty here judged is not of the aggressive type. The trouble with Mr. and Mrs. Ostrich is that they simply cannot be bothered. When their eggs are laid they are at once off to the movies, caring not, as the Scripture puts it, whether a foot might crush them or wild beasts might break them, they are hardened against their own young as if they were not theirs. One of the surest of all sure ways of wrecking a child is through that easy method of neglect.

I

In speaking to you of problem parents my emphasis is upon the child. The most important individual in any generation is the child. This we are prone to forget. This the Bible never forgets. Faith in the inspiration of this book might be bolstered mightily by this fact. It gives such a large place to the child. It alone of all ancient books gives the child in some measure the place that its importance demands.

This is true even of the Old Testament. While other ancient books looked upon childhood as a troublesome passage to worthwhile adulthood, this old book frolics and laughs with children. It urges upon parents their supreme worth and the supreme importance of training them right. The Jews through the centuries have been great home builders. While I was pastor of First Church, Birmingham, among the hundreds of delinquents
that passed through the juvenile courts in that city not one single one of them was a Jewish child.

But it was left to Jesus to emphasize the importance of the child as none other. A recent writer said it was left to the twentieth century to discover the value of the child. The writer was some nineteen centuries behind the times. When the disciples asked Jesus who was greatest he did not point to any king or to any military hero. He did not point even to a great religious teacher. He took a child and set him in the midst and declared that the child was the greatest of all.

So great is the child that Jesus declares: "In heaven there are angels who always behold the face of my Father." This refers to the old faith that each child had its guardian angel. It was the angels closest to God, highest in rank, who were trusted with the care of children. That is Jesus' way of saying that the most important task in the eyes of God himself is the task of caring for children.

Of such great worth is the child that Jesus identifies himself with him: "Who so receiveth one such little child in my name, receiveth me." To grip the hand of a child is to take on the nail pierced hand of Jesus. The Sunday School teacher who brings the most neglected child in the community into her class is not simply entertaining angels unawares, but according to Jesus, the Lord himself.

Since the child is of such superb value Jesus warns against despising it. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones." To despise is to undervalue. Take heed that ye do not undervalue the child. That is what we are prone to do. Out in Dallas, Texas, they have every year a great State Fair. One year visitors interested in livestock were impressed by a certain hog that took the blue ribbon. That hog was about all that a hog ought to be. His hoofs were manicured, his hair was parted in the middle. It was a pleasure to look at him. The hog was in the care of a small boy, the son of the man who had raised him. Now while the hog was the
best hog in the state, the boy was about the poorest specimen to be found. It was impressive that this farmer who read books about hogs and attended hog conventions, who gave diligence to raising hogs was allowing his boy to grow up with practically no training at all. He got his values mixed. He was despising his boy.

Naturally aside from the Bible the recognition of the supreme importance of the child is just plain common sense. The child is the maker of tomorrow. The child in a profound sense is tomorrow. If there is to be any improvement in our tortured and bleeding world it must come at the hands of a better trained generation of boys and girls. Thus in dealing with the child we are dealing with the most important creature in the world.

II

Now is there any way of determining the future of this most important individual? Let me reminding you of a fact that I have mentioned before. That is, that what a child becomes depends upon his training; in other words, children are not so much born as made. There are four proofs of this that I have mentioned before. I mention them again because people need not so much to be instructed as to be reminded. In proof of the fact that children become what they are trained to become I call four witnesses.

1. First, the Bible. This book says, "Train up a child in the way it should go and when it is old it will not depart from thee." How did this wise man make that discovery. He did not think it out in some cloister. He discovered it by watching people live. As he saw young life come to manhood he learned from them that children are not so much born as made.

2. This is the contention of science. Modern psychologists agree that a child becomes what it is trained to become.

3. The third witness I call is the law of sowing and reaping. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." That is true in your garden,
in your field, among the livestock. It would be a cruel world if law reigned everywhere but in the highest and most important of all realms. You may be sure that the Bible and modern science are right in affirming that what you sow in the heart of your child you will also reap.

Some years ago they found an old brick in the Orient that was more than four thousand years old. Yet the finger marks of the hand that molded that brick into shape were still clearly visible upon it. The finger marks that you put upon the soul of your child will be there tomorrow and through the eternal tomorrows. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth in the heart of his child that shall he also reap.

4. The final witness I call is that of experience. "What manner of child shall this be," asks a group clustered about an ancient cradle. Is that a sane question? It is when the Jew asks it they give the unflinching answer: This child is going to grow up a Jew. When the Catholic asks it they give an almost certain answer, but when the Protestant asks it we often answer, "The Lord only knows." But experience on an individual and national scale has told us over and over that what a child becomes is the result of its training.

III

Now since this is the case we can make of our children Christians if we are willing to pay the price.

This is the case first because a child can become a Christian. I know that it is late in the day to make an assertion like that. I know that to most of you it will sound like a truism and a rather foolish truism at that. "Of course a child can be a Christian," you answer. Yet there are tens of thousands that do not really believe it. This in spite of the fact that Jesus not only affirmed that a child could become a Christian, but sets him up as the model Christian, warning us that unless we are con-
verted and become as a little child we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. A child then can be a Christian.

2. Not only can a child become a Christian but he can become a Christian as a child easier than at any other time in all his life. This is true for many reasons. First it is true because the characteristics that go to make a Christian are inherent in the life of every child. God put them there.

Take faith for instance. There is no salvation without faith. The doctrine of salvation or justification by faith is fundamental to our religion. When is faith easiest? Not in middle life, not in old age, but in childhood. The truth is that a child will believe anything we tell them until by deceiving them we teach them to believe otherwise.

Now often we thoughtlessly begin to train our children in unbelief. We are guilty of petty deceptions in dealing with them. Sometimes we promise them rewards that we fail to make good. Sometimes we promise discipline that we fail to carry through. I am thinking now of a bright boy who is a thoroughgoing pest. Yet he is definitely the product of his training. I have heard his father make promise after promise to him with not the slightest intention of carrying it out.

A mother sat sewing the other day. She did not wish her child to go out in the street. Therefore she warned him that if he went the buggar man would get him. This young man was an explorer. He was desperately afraid of the buggar man but he was almost equally desperate to see him. At last he ventured a little closer and a little closer to the forbidden territory and then boldly he dared and there was no buggar man. He knew what his mother had told him yet he said nothing about it. Again we say, "Don't do that or I'll skin you alive." That would be very painful. But the child proceeds to take the risk and comes up with the usual amount of cuticle. You remember the child who said she was six years old when she went to school but four when she rode on the train.

Blessed is the child whose parents tell him the truth. Moody tells of
working in his cellar one day. It was a bit dark down there. He looked up and saw his little girl peaking over trying to see him. She could not but to put her to the test he said, "Jump, Emma, daddy will catch you." Instantly almost before he was prepared, she jumped. An adult would not do that. It is our privilege to take this faith that is natural in the heart of a child and to direct it toward our Father in heaven.

Then a child naturally learns on a power. It is teachable. It realizes its weakness. I saw a little chap running ahead of its mother the other day but when he reached a street crossing he reached up for her hand. The way our children learn upon us and trust us and are willing to be helped by us ought to be a means of grace.

"To feel his little hand in mine,
So clinging and so warm,
To know he thinks I'm strong enough
To keep him safe from harm,

To see his simple faith
In all that I can say or do,
It sorta shames a fellow
But it makes him better too.

And I fancy I'm a better man
Than what I used to be,
Because I have this chap at home
That thinks the world of me."

"Daddy," said a little chap, "is God as nice as you are?" "Ever so much nicer," he answered. "Gee," said the little chap, awed by the very thought of it, "he must be awfully nice." How beautiful to take this faith and this willingness to learn on a high power and direct it toward God.

Then a child is naturally loyal to what it loves. We do not have to grow very old before we begin to grow proud. We give up our democracy, become conscious of our social position or conscious of our superior race, but a child has none of that. You might be flattered by the attention of Queen Elizabeth of England but a child would turn from her to hug the neck of an old black mammy if she loved that old black mammy. A child is not ashamed to be loyal to what he loves.

(The girl who visited the Pennsylvania State Prison)
3. Not only can a child become a Christian and become a Christian easier as a child than ever again, but those who become Christian as children make the best Christians. It is useless to argue that. If you would take out of this church or any other church all those who were converted after they were thirty there would not be enough left to carry on. The best scholars and the best athletes, the best men and women are those who began in their young and tender years.

4. Finally, if our boys and girls do not become Christian as boys and girls the chances are that they never will. No large part of an adult population has ever been converted in any generation in human history. It is a question of now or never generally speaking with our boys and girls. All my ministry I have been an evangelistic pastor. In two pastorates alone I have received more than six thousand into the church. But I have never seen any man unite with the church who was not in some measure touched by religion in his youthful years.

While I was pastor in Dallas I went to conduct a meeting in a neighboring town. Contrary to my wishes I was assigned to a home instead of to a hotel. I discovered the cause a bit later. The man with whom I was saying was an alcoholic. He had given up a good position in the city trying to cure himself. He would be sober for a little while then he would be gone from six to eight weeks in a debauch. The first two or three days I was there he was conspicuous by his absence.

Then one night he came to the church to bring the family and myself home. The family was made up of his wife and a son about ten years of age. He stopped in front of the door of his home and ordered us all out. Mother and son got out but I stayed. I insisted on helping him put up the car. He insisted that he could do without me but I went anyway. "That is a fine boy you have," I said. "Yes, he replied with warmth. He is a fine boy." "I suppose you want him to grow up the kind of man you are." "That is just what I do not want," he answered, indignantly. And with that the conversation...
ended, but the next night he was converted. After his conversion we dis-
covered in spite of the fact that we thought he was an utter pagan that
he had had a religious up-bringing. In fact, he had gone to Sunday School
for sixteen years without missing but one Sunday. It is a question of now
or never with your boys and girls.

IV

What then are you going to do about it? The problem is not with the
child. It is with the parents. If you are going to avoid being problem
parents you must take certain definite steps. First, you must take the
responsibility for the Christianizing of your home and yourselves. It is
quite evident that nobody can do this important work but you. If you do not
do it it simply will not be done. The mother cannot fully do it alone.
The father cannot do it alone. But the two of you working together can.

Then you must take the responsibility for the right training of your
children upon yourselves. Other agencies can help but upon you rests the
burden of the responsibility. A few years ago it became fashionable for
parents who had had a normal religious up-bringing to take a position like
this. I am not going to bias my child one way or the other. I am
going to wait and let him make his own choice. These discovered that to
fail. Then you must take the responsibility for the right training of your
children upon yourself. Other fail the biased child toward right was to
let somebody else bias him towards wrong. Such a course is contrary to all
common sense. You might as well say, "I am not going to bias my child with
regard to the toys with which it plays. I am going to get it horses, dogs,
dynamite, loaded revolvers, and razors and let him work it out for himself.
In selecting his food I am going to set before him lysol, liquor, cyanide,
spinach and sweet milk. He can decide for himself. But the trouble is
that the child has not enough data to go on to make a decision in the matter
either in toys or food. Neither does he have in matters of religion. If you dare not leave his feeding to chance how dare you leave his moral training to chance. But this you do when you refuse to take any of the task upon yourself.

Then if you are not going to be a problem parent you must realize that religion can be taught. We have to teach our children how to talk. We have to teach them grammar. We have to teach them the multiplication table. Is it then strange that we have to teach them in matters of religion. We must teach them the difference between right and wrong. We must teach them about the church. We must teach them something of the historic Jesus who reveals to us the eternal God. Religion can be taught. If you are not to become a problem parent you must teach it.

Not only can religion be taught but what is more important still it can be talked. What you say about religion may be of vast or of trifling importance but what you do about it is of supreme importance. Your child will watch to see what place religion occupies in your life. He will watch with very clear eyes not as a critic but because he honors you. If he sees that religion counts for you it is likely to count for him. If he sees a beauty in your life that only religion can put there, he is apt to desire it.

Here is a story from a scientist. My mother was an earnest Christian while my father was a devout atheist. When I was a wee chap my mother used to put me to sleep in the twilight with the great old hymns of the church. Somehow as she sang I caught something of her peace. There stole into my babyish heart a sense of security as if we both had a When I was three years of age her faith broke and she joined my father in his atheism. Five years later when I was eight she came very close to the gates of death. I went alone and played to that unseen Source about whom I had heard her sing, and it is my conviction that that Friend heard and gave my mother back in answer to my childish prayer." His religion was not talked, it was caught.

Now if you are serious about your children becoming Christian, you can
help them not only through the home but also through the church. If your child expresses a desire to unite with the church don't give him a slight and thoughtless answer. Don't tell him you don't know what you are talking about. If he doesn't know what are you for except to explain it. Remember that the church is the place for every child. It is not necessary to be sick in order to be well. It is not necessary to spend so many years in the far country among the swine in order to feel at home in your Father's house. Of course there is much that the children will not know about the church but in the church is the best place to learn. If you refuse the child at his time, how do you know that he will be willing at your time.

Here then we are dealing with the most important citizens of the day, the child. The most important member of modern society, the child. If we are to have a better tomorrow it will grow out of better trained children. A child is the product of his training. Since that is the case we can make our children Christian if we will. This is true because a child can become a Christian and can become a Christian easier as a child than at any other time. The agencies for Christianizing a child are first of all the home. If the child has a Christian home the chances are overwhelmingly great that he will become a Christian. But the child can only have a Christian home if the parents make it Christian. Then in this great undertaking the parents also have the help of the church. Training your children for the church and through the church. This is the way to deep joy for you and the only road toward better tomorrows.
"CHILDISH FOLKS"

"Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation, and to what are they like? They are like unto children that sit in the marketplace, and call one to another; who say, We piped unto you and ye did not dance; we wailed and ye did not weep."

Luke 7: 31-32

I.

The text is a sharp and cutting rebuke directed against the religious leaders of that day. It is not the first time that Jesus has rebuked these Pharisees and doctors of the law. The sharpest shafts he ever shot, the hottest thunderbolts he ever hurled were directed against them. It seemed he could find nothing too hard to say about them. He said they were like unto whitened sepulchres, which outwardly appeared beautiful, but inwardly were full of rottenness. He accused them of robbing widows houses and of atoning for their sins by making long public prayers. He accused them of shutting the Kingdom of Heaven against men by not only refusing to enter themselves but by being dogs in the manger, shutting the door upon others who were seeking to enter. So intense was His disapproval that He wondered in the white heat of His moral indignation how they could escape the damnation of hell.

But the accusation He brings against them here is altogether unique. He has never said anything like this before. Here He accuses them of being like children. That is startling. If Jesus has a pet aversion in all the world, it is the spirit exemplified by the Pharisees. If he has a favorite, it is the child. Jesus was constantly extolling the virtues of the child. When His disciples were having one of their periodical arguments over who was greatest, He took a little child and set in their midst telling them that if they desired to be truly great they must be like this little child. Yet here is Jesus saying that the group that He most disapproved is like to those that met with his heartiest approval.

How are we to account for this? We may be sure at once that Jesus is not accusing the Pharisees of being like children at their best. Had such been the case, they would have entered the kingdom and have changed the history possibly of their nation. They were not like normal happy children. They were rather like children that were fretful
and peevish, and spoiled. They were like children in that they were childish, instead of child-like. Now childishness and childlikeness are as far apart as life and death, as far apart as heaven from earth. Childlikeness is one of the most beautiful virtues, while childishness is unspeakably ugly. In fact, there are few worse tragedies than the tragedy of never growing up - of being childish to the end of the day. This was the accusation brought against these Pharisees.

II.

What is the basis of this accusation? How did Jesus come to make it? It grew out of His own experience with them. In His effort to compel them to see themselves, He told them a rather playful story. They had no idea what they themselves looked like. That was one mark of their childishness. They were living in a world of make-believe. The story He told was very homely and one perchance He had just witnessed.

"While I was passing through the marketplace just now," He seems to say, "I noticed a group of children." The marketplace was the only playground that village children had at that time. They had to play on the street just as many of ours do. "But these children," said Jesus, "were not playing." Now when children are not playing, there is always something wrong. Every normal child plays. If your child has no desire to play, there is something wrong with him, he is sick or abnormal. I saw a little chap the other day playing with a group of children. The other children were shouting and laughing and he was quietly weeping. He had no desire to play, he had a father complex. "These children," said Jesus, "were not playing. I was at once interested. 'Why are you not playing?' I asked. 'Why do you stand there looking sullenly at each other, being miserable to yourselves and helping to make the others miserable?' 'They won't play,' one little chap answered angrily. 'You won't play yourself,' came the equally angry retort. 'We tried to get you to play wedding. We told you you could be the bridegroom and Rachel would be the bride, and I would be the priest, but you said you didn't want to play that - it was too gay. Then, let us play funeral, we said. You can be the corpse if you want to and I will be the
undertaker, but you didn’t want to play that because you said that it was too sad.' One game was too cheerful and one was too tearful and so they were playing nothing."

"Now," said Jesus, "you Pharisees are like that. A few months ago, there came a prophet among you with a ringing message. With glowing earnestness, he called all men to repentance and yet even now the axe lieth at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. He rebuked sin unsparringingly. This he did when he preached to the great multitudes in the wilderness. This he did when in high places. His rebuke of Herod and the godless woman who were living in sin was so sharp that it cost him his life. His head was brought in a dish out of which he might have eaten dainty vines if he had been less stern and more sparing of sin."

"As stern and rugged as he was in his message, he was equally so in his personality. He was a man of the wide open spaces. He had grown up amidst the austerities of the wilderness. He had lived a hard and simple life. He was not a social man but an aesthetic. He was not a good handshaker. He never went out to dinner. He never belonged or spoke to a civic group. He was a stern and rugged solitary. And what was your attitude toward this man and his message? You would have nothing to do with him. You turned from you in scorn saying only that he was possessed of the devil."

"After him came a prophet of a vastly different type. He too called men to repentance, but He based His word not so much upon the awfulness of sin as upon the bitterness of holiness. His emphasis was not upon what must be given up but upon what might be attained. He claimed the power to make all things new. He claimed ability to give men new freedom, new power to love, new hope, new life. The central purpose of His coming was that men might have life and have it in abundance. His message was good news about men and good news about God. He declared that God was a loving Father who invited all his children to the feast of the fullness of life."

As much as this preacher differed in message, so much He differed in His
personality. John was a man of the solitudes. Jesus was a man of the crowds. He was accessible to everybody. He loved everybody. He rubbed elbows with all sorts and conditions of men. He was friendly toward outcasts and toward little children. He was as joyous as John was sad. There was a radiance of the wedding feast in His face, just as there was the gloom of the funeral in that of John. But that was your response to Him, you said, "He was too joyous. He is too much of a handshaker. He is too accessible. Why he is friend of publicans and sinners." Therefore, they stood aloof both from John and from Jesus.

Why was this the case? It was not because these two men did not speak the truth. It was not because discipleship for them was impossible. It was not because they were childlike. It was because they were childish. They were big babies. How a little baby is one of the sweetest things in the world. It is one of the most charming. But a big baby is one of the most ugly and offensive. A baby that weighs eight pounds is something to shout over, but a baby that weighs one hundred and fifty pounds is something to sob over. When a little baby kicks, it is only a means of growth; but when a big baby kicks, he does not help himself, he only hurts others.

III.

Now, when Jesus accused these learned religious leaders of being childish, he was preferring a charge that is applicable to many of our own day. In fact, one of the greatest tragedies of modern life is the failure of so many of us to grow up. We act so like babies. This is true in our international relationships. It is so often true in our church life and in our home life and in our relation to each other. The select draft during the World War yielded a distressing lack of maturity. The average age mentality of the four million men that were drafted into the United States Army was only twelve years. There were many, of course, that were far more mature. That means that there were others that were not more than four or five or six years of age.
"Childish Folks"

Such immaturity spells tragedy.

What are some of the marks of childishness? There are many but I shall only mention a few. To begin with, most all children like to show off. How often when company comes, the child gets too much in evidence. He wants attention. He is eager to occupy the center of the stage, therefore, he puts on a show. I was calling at a certain home some time ago and was having a delightful visit with the father and mother. Suddenly the youngster came on the scene. He had some potatoes or stones in a tin bucket and he got right in between us and turned loose with a noise a bit like a hardware store washing away in a thunderstorm. Of course, the visit broke up in confusion. The parents did not shoot the little fellow. They were able to excuse him somewhat because he was "just a child."

But showing off on the part of mature folks is harder to forgive. How many silly things, how many hurtful and even vicious things we do just because we are trying to show off. The most popular hypocrisy of our day is that that makes its possessor seek to appear worse than he is. How many girls have taken to cigarette smoking, how many young women have taken to liquor drinking just out of a desire to swagger, to show off, to display how modern they are, how free, how determined to live their own lives. But such conduct is not manly nor womanly, it is childish.

This desire to swagger, to attract attention at its best is silly and it is even criminal. Psychologists tell us that much of the crime that is committed is committed by childish egotists who are so desperate for attention that if they cannot get it in an honorable way, they will get it in a dishonorable way. All inclination to show off, to impress others with our bigness and our superiority is an indication that we are creatures of arrested development, we have just failed to grow up.

The second mark of childishness is self-centeredness. Every child is selfish by nature. A baby has no regard for others. Here is a little youngster whose mother is sick. She can eat nothing but oranges and there is only one orange in the house. Yet
the little savage will eat it all himself without the slightest compunction. He cannot
be bothered at thinking about the needs of others, not even of his mother.

The other day, I saw a rather frail looking little woman leading a husky
lad of some two summers. This youngster made up his mind that he had enough exercise
and that a ride was in order. So he began to call on his frail and weary mother to
carry him. She tried to explain that mother was too tired, but he ran round in front of
her, grabbed her by the knees and yelled like a Commanche and would not allow her to
proceed another step. So at last she loaded herself down with one who was far able to
walk than herself. Of course, we find it in our hearts to forgive him, that is some of
us do, but personally I would have given him a sound spanking and made him walk. But we
can pardon him simply because he was a child. What about these big babies? What about
the folks who have to be carried constantly?

There are tens of thousands that profit by the cleaned and better atmosphere
created by the church, but they will accept no responsibility for creating such an atmosp-
here. There are thousands that actually belong to the church but who never do one
single stroke of work and who never contribute one single cent. They have to be carried
every step of the way. They are morally and spiritually parasites, deadweights, huge
stones like across the mouth of the sepulchre where Christ is trying to raise somebody
from the dead.

Then I saw another mother with a little fellow who turned loose her hand,
waked a few steps and fell down. It was not a hard fall, but he raised a terrific
yell. "Get up," she said sweetly. But instead of using his energy to get up, he em-
ployed it all in kicking and yelling. She walked on and left him for a few steps but at
last she gave in and turned back and had to pick him up. How to pick up a baby that
weighs twenty pounds is permissible, though I do not think it is always the best thing
to do. But to pick up a big baby who could get up himself, that spells disaster. Yet
there are possibly more folks waiting for somebody to pick them up and carry them today
than at any other time in the history of our nation.

Then this self-centeredness means death to gratitude. It leads to making folks a means to an end rather than an end in themselves. Some time ago a visitor came to a certain home. This visitor was always welcome, but the youngsters knew he seldom failed to bring them candy. But on this occasion he failed and the youngest of the group said to him when he found out his traffic neglect, "I had just as soon you'd not come as not to have brought me some candy." The visitor was not good in himself, he was only good as a means to an end. To make any man a means to an end instead of an end in himself is the height of selfishness.

Not only are big, self-centered babies without gratitude, they are without obligation as well. I remember carrying my first-born for hours one night when he had the colic. At last I put him to bed but he didn't thank me he just yelled. Suppose he grows up like that. Suppose when he gets into life he is keen and capable but never learns to say, "I owe," "I ought," and "I must." Suppose he never learns to take his part of the load, then in the supreme things that go to make a man, he is still a baby - a poor moral dwarf, that never grew up.

The final mark of childishness I mention is the tendency to quit the game and pout when things fail to go your way. That is what these Pharisees were doing. That is what some of these children were doing. That is what many present-day babies are doing. They are keen and quick with their criticism of the church. The whole program is wrong. It is either too glad or too sad. Now the church is not above criticism. But no man has a right to criticize without offering a better plan. If you think the funeral is too sad and the wedding too glad, then it is up to you to suggest some other game. If you think the church is out of the running and has no contribution to make, then it is up to you to tell another and better way for building the Kingdom of God. Otherwise, your fault-finding is but the pouting of a spoiled child who will not play because everything is not to his liking.
"Childish Folks"

IV.

Now what is the remedy to this tragedy of childishness? Surely there is not one of us that deliberately desires to play the baby. The supreme antidote of childishness is childlikeness. Here is a man who played in both roles. His name is Naaman. Naaman began by being truly childish. When he came to the Prophet to be cured of his leprosy, the Prophet gave him simple directions. "Go dip in the Jordan seven times." But Naaman was outraged. The game didn’t suit him at all. Therefore, he made up his mind he didn’t want to play so he set out home carrying his deadly disease with him.

How was he saved? A wise servant saw how babish he was and coaxed him out of it. "If the Prophet," he said, "had bid you do some great thing, would you not have done it? Suppose He had told you to do some conspicuous thing, some difficult thing, to strut, to put on a show, to do something nobody else could do, would you not have done it?" "Sure!" "How much rather then when He sayeth to you wash and be cleansed." Naaman saw the point, did the childlike thing, and found healing.

It is beautiful to be a child when you are a child, but never to grow out of it, that is tragedy. I went to a certain home for dinner in a Texas village some years ago. When I entered the gate I saw a full-grown man playing about on the lawn. To my amazement, he was wearing a checked apron such as little children wear. I learned later that he would wear nothing else. He would tear all other clothing off his body. He was full grown physically but mentally he was not ten months old. That home was under a shadow. He was missing all of life, he was inflicting unspeakable heartache upon those nearest to him.

"I was a baby once," said Paul. "When I was a child, I thought as a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, but now I am become a man I put away childish things. I have ceased to show off, to swagger, to pretend, to live in a world of make-believe. I have ceased to be self-centered, to wait for somebody else to pick me up and to carry me. I have ceased to stand on the side line and pout, to get my feelings hurt and duck out of the game when things go wrong. I have become a man. Such a man
that I can say, for me to live is Christ. Christ cannot die so long as I live." So he went on working, living out that fine Jesuit motto, "Much work can be done provided we do not know who gets the credit for it." That is manhood at its best.
Hear the text: "At evening time it shall be light." This is indeed a strange phenomenon. Light at evening time. That is the very opposite of what we expected. When you turn to the almanacs that men have made they tell you that at evening time it shall be dark. But here is a surprise. Here is a glorious thrill that we did not expect. "At evening time it shall be light."

The Bible is the only book so far as I know that tells us a bright evening. There are other books that tell us of a bright dawning. There are plenty of books that sing of the glory of the morning. There are plenty that paint the gorgeous beauty of the sunrise. There are books in plenty that tell of the glaring splendors of the noon. But it is left to the Bible alone to sing of the glories of the bright evening. "At evening time it shall be light." Thank God for the precious Book in which spectacled old age reads the promises. Thank God that it is possible that we shall have a light at eventide so winsome and so beautiful that it may even eclipse the glory of the morning.

"At evening time it shall be light." That is not the way we are accustomed to think of old age. That is rather the way we think of youth. Light is in the morning tide of life. We are reminded of this again and again.

"Oh talk not to me of a name great in story, For the days of our youth are the days of our glory. And the flowers that blossom at sweet two and twenty Are worth all your laurels, though ever so plenty.

What are laurels and wreaths to the brow that is wrinkled? 'Tis but as dead flowers with May dew besprinkled. Then away with all such from the brow that is hoary, What care I for wreaths that can only give glory?"

And what Byron is telling us here is that youth alone is beautiful. He is saying that old age is dark and tragic, regardless of all the artificial splendor with which we may seek to beautify it. And with him most people seem to agree.

"How beautiful is youth! How bright the gleam, With its illusions, aspirations, dreams. Book of beginning, story without end, Each maid a heroine, each man a friend!"

And again and again we look back into yesterday and join wistfully in singing

"Backward, turn backward, oh time in thy flight, And make me a child again, just for tonight."

We do this because of our firm conviction that the beautiful time of life is its morning.

For this reason it is not to be wondered at that many people look upon the passing of youth and the coming of old age with a kind of horror.
Our old folks

Getting old is, to many folks, little short of a hideous nightmare. So much is this the case that some of them try to conceal the fact that they are getting old even from themselves. There are people listening to me now who would not tell their ages for the world, forgetting all the while that it is being written upon their face and figure almost as legibly as it is written in the old family Bible.

Furthermore, it is not in any way surprising that people who feel this way about getting old resort to all sorts of devices in order to stay young. Now, I am not arguing that you are to get old as quickly as you can. I believe in staying young forever. I am arguing against false methods. I used to know a man who taught school in my town. On Sunday morning he came out wearing a beard beautifully glossy and black. But by Saturday afternoon his beard had grown pitifully old and gray. I have known women that thought they could buy youth down at the drug store. May the Lord have mercy on us when we know no better antidote against age than powder and paint and paste. May the Lord have mercy on the poor old saint who takes the declaration of the great apostle who says, "I die daily", to mean a mere physical performance instead of a spiritual death to sin and selfishness.

Now, there are many reasons why it is perfectly natural for one to dread growing old. There are many reasons why we find in this text a glad surprise, for light at eventide is not the natural thing. It is the supernatural. If light there is, it is to be inspite of many foes that tend to make for utter darkness. The passing years take away from us much that we would like to keep. There is no use in trying to disguise this truth from ourselves.

First, the passing years tend to steal our physical powers. However athletic you are, my young man, in this moment, if you live long enough your physical powers are going to decay. Your right hand shall lose its cunning. Your step is going to lose its elasticity. Your eye is going to lose its brightness. One day you will say, as an old body said to you as you walked with him down the street: "Not so fast. I used to could walk as fast as anybody, but I can't walk quite as fast as I used to. I have had rheumatism quite a bit." And the old body is telling you that he is getting old.

One day you are going to say to a younger friend, "Read this for me, please. I left my glasses at home. I can't read any more without my glasses. I used to have good eyes. When I was your age, my boy, nobody had better eyes than I had. But my old eyes have gone back on me. I can't see as well as I used to." Old age means the sapping of our physical strength.

And my young girl, however beautiful you may be tonight and however charming and graceful and however fair are the roses that bloom on your cheek, there will come a time when these will pass away. Your face tonight is smooth and lovely as the virgin snow. But the passing years will make tracks upon it, just as many feet track and mar the white face of the world when a snow has come. You will not always be beautiful physically. If you live long enough you will one day be a charred and wrinkled old woman.

Not only do the passing years take from us our physical power, but they steal away our intellectual sharpness as well. The most flashing intellect loses somewhat of its brilliancy. Isn't there a deep pathos in bitter-hearted Dean Swift's word as he looks over a book that he had written in the prime of his life and he exclaims in a glad wonder, "My God,
what a genius I had when I wrote that book." But the flashing sun had gone into eclipse. His mind had somewhat fallen into decay. So you will tend to do. You will get to the place where you can not remember the names of your own children. You will call Charles, Jim and Jim, William. And sometimes you will call almost the whole list before you get the right one. And you will smile and say, "My memory isn't as good as it used to be." The years rob us of some of our intellectual keenness.

Then, but by the grace of God, when you get to be old you will cease to be a dreamer of dreams and a seer of visions. Of course you know that youth is a natural dreamer. As you young folks listen to me you are seeing beckoning hands beyond the crest of the hill. You are building your castles in the air. You hear your days before you in the tumult of your life. One day success is coming to you. One day you are going to win. One day you are going to love and be loved. One day you are going to build your castle. So you sing

"Not in vain the distance beckons,
Forward, forward let us range.
Let the great world spin forever
Down the ringing grooves of change."

But the old body is not a dreamer any more except by the grace of God. Life is not before him, but behind him. He is not experiencing the thrill of expectancy as he buckles on his armor, but rather, worn and battle scarred, he is taking it off. He has not found life all romance and poetry. The castle that he builded in the air has materialized into a very ordinary house by the side of the road. Here he has reared the living, watched by the bed of the sick, kneeled with his arms locked in grief by the quiet coffins of the dead. He is in some measure disillusioned, and he has a great tendency to feel that his best days are the days that have dropped into the sunset.

Then time steals from us some of our dearest friends. It robs us of life's sweetest companionships. How rare it is to have the same arm locked in yours at seventy that was locked there at seventeen. For this reason old age tends to become lonely. For this reason if you have an old body at your home you ought to give him especial attention. If you have a faded old grandmother you ought to deal very thoughtfully with her, because if you do not she may become very lonely.

It is altogether natural for them to be so.

"They say that in his prime,
E'er the pruning kinfe of time
Cut him down,
That not a better man was found
By the crier on his round
Through the town.

Now he walks the streets
And stares at all he meets,
Sad and wan.
And he shakes his feeble head
That it seems as if he said,
'They are gone'.

"For the mossy marbles rest
O'er the lips that he had pressed
In their bloom;
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb."

And so lonely he is and oftentimes he looks wistfully into that miracle country, longing to join those who have gone before. He sings quietly to himself,

"Oh soon may I follow, when friendships decay,
And from love's shining circle the gems drop away,
When true hearts lie withered and loved ones have flown,
Oh who would inhabit this bleak world alone?"

Then the years take from us life itself. Old age tends naturally to be shattered because death is near. The sentence has already been pronounced against that aged man, a sentence as inevitable as that one pronounced against a culprit at the bar. It reads like this: *The days of your years are three score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be four score years, yet is there strength, labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off and we fly away."

But in spite of all these changes and in spite of all these treasures of which the years rob us, the Book tells us that "at evening time it shall be light." Truly there must be a real sunrise in order to banish all these shadows. It must be a light that is light indeed to utterly destroy all this night. For mark me, the eventide is not light for everybody. When God tells us that at eventide it shall be light He is not talking about all of us. He is talking only about those that have got into their lives a light that is above the brightness of the sun.

I have seen an eventide that was bright with the beauty to which the morning was a stranger. But I have also seen an evening that was dark and black as that woven out of the warp and woof of disaster and death. In fact, I do not think there is anything that we ever witness in this world so intensely tragical as Christless old age. I know of nothing so fraught with utter night and with black despair as to see a man grow old and gray with a heart that has never learned to trust and with lips that have never learned to pray.

A Christless old age is black with hopelessness, in the first place, because old age means fixedness. However sinstained youth is there is a chance of change. There is hope of transformation. But that hope grows very small indeed as life sinks deep into the rut of years. The man who has been cynical and fault-finding in his earlier years will tend to become almost unendurable as he grows older. The man who has been a votary of pleasure in the best years of his life will be all the more a slave when he is old. The man who has been a miser in life's morning and noon will be in unbreakable chains at the evening time.

I remember a man who once lived near my own home in Tennessee. He gave the best years of his life to the slavish worship of money. By and by as an old man he was paralyzed. But he had saved considerable gold. This he kept under the head of his bed and no one was allowed to touch it but himself. But when he was paralyzed his wife and daughters had to take it from him by force in order to supply the needs of the family. When my
father called to see him he expressed no slightest interest in the salvation of his soul, but spent all his time telling my father that he was living in a den of thieves and robbers; that his own wife and children were stealing his gold.

Oh the unspeakable tragedy, I repeat, of a Christless old age. I have seen old bodies lean upon their canes when I knew that their shoulders had become stooped carrying a load of vanity. I have seen their steps totter when I knew that they had become weak walking the paths of selfishness and lust. I have seen their eyes grow dim by prolonged looking into the dirt. May God save all of us from the black night of a Christless old age.

The wicked old age is pathetic, in the second place, because it is a time of special need. We feel ourselves able to get on without a Savior sometimes during the conceited days of youth. But when we get old we find the gods of this world very poor supports on which to rest. There is poor old Lord Woolsey, thrown away like a cast off garment. "Oh Cromwell, Cromwell", he cries, "had I put served my God with half the zeal with which I served my king He would not, in my old age, have left me naked to my enemies." We need God always, but how terribly we need him when the shadows grow long and we are doing the toilsome journey of the last mile.

May this be our privilege. And because that is our privilege we may have light at evening time. Light may be ours, in the first place, because of our faith in God. How radiant is the pathway of that ancient saint whose path is as the shining light, "shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

"E'en down to old age all my people shall prove
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne."

You are not afraid of the tomorrow because of the good grace of God that has been your comfort and your stay on yesterday. The fact that you are here at this hour speaks loud of the goodness of God. And in your heart you sing tonight

"Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home."

I think David was an old man when he wrote the twenty-third psalm. It is not the song of youth. It is not a melody of the morning. It belongs to the evening. It smacks of the sunset and of the evening star. But it is of an evening that is full of light. As he thinks of the gentleness that made him great, he is unafraid for the future, and sings, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." And the sunset of his life is full of brightness because of his faith in God.

The evening of the aged saint shall be light, in the second place, because of the presence of Jesus Christ. Old age, I said, tends naturally to be lonely. Many of those that you knew in life's glad morning have passed into the sunset. Some of you old bodies are living alone today just as you did when as bride and groom you crossed the threshold of your home fifty years ago. You are the same and yet different. The husband has divided his man's strength with the boys that are now mature men. The
mother has given the roses on her cheek to the daughters that are now
mothers of families of their own. You know more on the other side of the
river than you know on this. But amidst all the changing scenes and
changing faces there is one that is unchanged. And you find the evening
bright because of the fellowship of Him who "is the same yesterday, today,
and forever."

And your evening shall be bright, in the third place, because of the
light of a glorious tomorrow. We are accustomed to think of a bright
future for the young. "What a bright future he has", we say of the brilli-
ant young fellow who is just out of college. "What a bright future she
has", we say of the gifted young woman who is just beginning her life's
work. "What a bright future has that aged and toil-worn saint", says the
Word of God.

Your future is bright because of the fine service you may yet render
her. Old bodies sometimes feel a bit like they are in the way. How mis-
taken they are. Oftentimes the best work we ever do is when we get so we
are not able to work any more. How rich in blessing is a spirit-filled
old age. How some of you speak to us tonight that message of good cheer
that the aged saint uttered years ago;

"Grow old along with me; the best is yet to be;
The last of life, for which the first was made.
Our times are in His hands who saith,
'A whole I planned.' Youth shows but half.
Trust God, see all, nor be afraid."

Aged pilgrim, we thank God for you. With your immortal youthfulness,
with your shining face that bespeaks a shining heart you give us courage.
You are a wonderful preacher to us who are yet in the thick of life's toil.
You have a marvelous sermon to give us and the heart of that sermon is
this, "Only one thing is needful." You can do without great strength. You
can do without great physical powers. You can do without almost everyth-
ing but God. You tell us of His sufficiency. And as you taste in the light
of evening the rich wine of His banquet you whisper to us who are afraid to
get old, "He has kept the good wine until now."

Then your future is bring, in the second place, because you are so
near home. When Columbus was making his voyage to the discovery of the
New World he did not wring his hands with dread when the birds from a
strange new land fluttered over his ship. He rather rejoiced because he
knew the shore was near at hand. And so you walk on this evening, quietly,
cheerfully, unafraid, because you know that soon you are going to make the
port and enter into the haven of rest.

"One sweetly solemn thought
   Comes to me o'er and o'er,—
I am nearer home today
   Than I ever have been before.

Nearer my Father's house,
   Where the many mansions be;
Nearer the great white throne;
   Nearer the crystal sea;
"Nearer the bound of life,
Where we lay our burdens down;
Nearer leaving the cross;
Nearer gaining the crown.
Father, perfect my trust;
Let my spirit feel in death
That her feet are firmly set
On the rock of a living faith."

Tired heart, there is a wonderful adventure just ahead of you that is going to bring you the sweetest friendships and your greatest joys. Soon thy feet shall stand within the gates of the city of God. Soon you will lock arms with those you "have loved long since and lost awhile." Soon you shall see the King in His beauty. I congratulate you on your glorious future.

At the World's Fair a few years ago I noticed a picture that the artist must have painted from this text. It was an old dilapidated church, surrounded by tombstones that the hand of time had pushed awry. The trees that stood about were twisted and bent with the force of the wind. Water was here and there in lakelets. Everything indicated that the day had been full of storm and wind and rain. But away in the east lay in cliff-like masses the heaps of a passed-by storm cloud. And over the west the sky had cleared and the sun was bathing the whole landscape in a wealth of mellow glory. And at eventide it was light. And so it shall be for you. Oh, if your aged hand is clasping His, you are rich beyond the wealth of a million worlds.

And now if you are so fortunate as to have one of these aged pilgrims in your home, I am sure you will regard this fact not as a care, but as a wonderful blessing. Who would not be thankful to have as their constant companion some of the sweet faced old grandmothers that we know? Who would not count it a joy to have with some of these aged saints in whose hearts homes the spirit of God? Smooth the way for these aged saints. They have taken many a weary step. Be their companion and comforter. They are a bit lonely at times. Do not push the arm chair into the corner. Do not make them feel that they are in the way. Help God in the high task of bringing into their closing lives the light at eventide.