GENESIS

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For many centuries the Nile overflowed Egypt every year, bringing to it fertility and fruitful harvests, but during all these centuries, the sources of the Nile were not known. In recent years, they have been discovered, but the fact that we now know where the Nile rises does not make its overflow one whit more of a blessing to Egypt than it did in the long ago when its sources were a mystery.

Here then is a book—Genesis, by name. It is called Genesis because it is a book of beginnings. Naturally in a book of beginnings, we do not expect to find finalities. Many pious readers read into certain books of the Old Testament the message of the New. But this book does not propose to tell the whole story of man. It tells of his beginnings. It undertakes to tell of his fall and the beginnings of his recovery. The book has three natural divisions: First, the Story of Creation; Second, the Story of the Fall; and Third, the Story of the Beginnings of God's Movement Toward
Redemption. That you may remember these divisions the easier I am going to give them three names. These names are not original—Generation, Degeneration, Regeneration.

I.

The story opens with that majestic sentence, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The author makes no effort to tell us when the beginning was. The Bible has been accused of being wrong in that it declares the world to be far younger than it is, but the Bible makes no such statement. The only date it gives is "in the beginning." Here as in so many other respects the mistakes of the Bible are the mistakes that we read into it. The assertion here then is that God is the creator of all things. Naturally, that declaration does not sound revolutionary to us, but it was revolutionary in the distant day in which it was written. There then a multitude of gods. Almost every created thing had its own god. Religious people were in constant fear lest they should offend some god without knowing it. Even the cultivated city of Athens, having builded an altar to every god that it knew, fearing that one may have been left out, built an altar to the Unknown God. But this declaration vanished all the lesser gods as the sunrise vanishes the stars.

It was this high faith that made possible a universe instead of the heavens and the earth being thrown into shreds by a multitude of conflicting gods. It was this faith that laid the foundation for all modern science. Since one God is back of creation, the world has unity. It is dependable. There can be no science in a world of chance. Science is only possible in a world of order. It is this declaration that saved men from the deadly fears that constantly dogged the steps of those who believed in many gods.
As to how man was created, the author does not undertake to say. He is not concerned with the how but with the fact. It is not how man was created, but Who created him that concerns him. The only hint as to the method of creation is that it seemed to have been a process of beginning with the lower and rising into the higher. At last God created man in His own image. He created him as the climax of His work.

It is evident that the author believed that man is a grand creature. There are two accounts of creation. One simply says that God said, "Let us make man in Our own image, after Our own likeness." The second account says that God made man of the dust of the earth, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul. This combination of dust and deity was not made to be a plaything of his environment. He was made for mastery. He was to have dominion over the earth.

But while man was a grand creature, he was grand in his possibilities rather than in his actual achievement. We sometimes picture to ourselves the perfection of this first pair, but according to this author, man came from God's hand perfect as only a healthful baby is perfect. Man as God made him was innocent, but he was not holy. We are born innocent, but character must be achieved. This innocent man was placed in a garden and commanded to care for it; that is, he was given a job to do. He had a clean environment, a fine ancestry, and a worthwhile task. That gave him a fine opportunity to develop a worthy character. But the outcome was disappointing. He made a failure.

II

Look at this failure. How did the fall come about? It came about as all falls do—through a wrong choice. There are those who are accustomed to find fault with God for making such a fall as this pictured in Genesis.
a possibility, but there must be such possibility in order for man to be man. An oyster cannot fall. Here is one saying, "Out, out! damned spot! Out, out!" You may know that creature is not an oyster. He cannot suffer in that fashion, but he pays a terrible price for his exemption. If he cannot suffer, neither can he rejoice. If he cannot say, "Oh, wretched man that I am!" neither can he say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ!" This innocent man had the experience that is common to the race. He was subject to temptation. For him as for ourselves the road was constantly forked. He had the privilege of taking a right choice and climbing upward and ever upward in his God-likeness. He also had the privilege of taking a wrong choice and dipping downward and ever downward.

The guise in which temptation came was that of a serpent. Of course, the author does not mean to say that a snake stood upright and talked. This is the language of poetry. When he pictures temptation as coming as a serpent, he means that it is a subtle something, that it takes us by surprise. It glides into life. It does not sound a trumpet of warning. It does not wave a red rag in our faces. It takes us by surprise. See how adroitly the approach is made.

First, it begins with a question. If God said we cannot eat of every tree in the garden, the shrewdest way of awaking doubt and fear the safest is not by an affirmation but by a question. If I state a false statement about you, I might be dragged into court and sued for libel, but if I merely ask a question—"Does he pay his debts? Is he loyal to his wife? Has he ever been to the penitentiary?"—then I can get all the effect of a slander without any of its dangers. One result of this question was to focus the attention of the tempted on the forbidden.
The answer is at first clear and decisive. "We can eat of every tree but one. That is the tree of Knowledge of Good and of Evil." Innocence of course can’t eat of that tree. We can only know real good through the choice of good. We can only know evil through the choice of evil. We are not to know evil as an experience. If we do, said He, we die. There is this advantage that the tempted has. She at first sees the facts and sees them clearly. Next, the tempter makes a statement. It is a very shrewd statement: "Ye shall not surely die; instead you shall become as gods knowing good and evil." That is, sin is not deadly; it is life-giving. The way to be free is not through obedience to law, but it is through violation of law. That is an old assertion, but it is as new as anything the devil has in his repertoire today. There are still millions who believe that the way of freedom is the way of lawlessness—that by clinging to life we save it instead of losing it as Jesus said.

Having heard this bold statement and having decided God was trying to beat her out of something, the woman took the plunge. It is the history of sin in practically every life—the abiding doubt we have that God is trying to beat us out of something, that we could live much more freely, much more fully, if we could only get Him out of the way. We make our choice as this primitive woman and with the same tragic results.

What happened? This guilty pair came to fear the One Whom they had once loved. Their garden was changed into a wilderness. They were separated from God. Their children were born outside Eden. Being separated from God, these became separated from each other. Though they had sinned individually, their sin involved others. They set in motion a stream of evil that rose higher and higher until it culminated in the tragedy of the flood.

III

But though man fell, God could not let him alone. When this sinner
went in terror from the presence of the Lord, we might have expected him
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Even when the writers of the New Testament want to tell us what religion
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To lean one's back against the mighty promises of God and face all that life
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After Abraham comes Isaac, a good man but rather weak and ineffective.
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Here then is a book of religion. It has at least this meaning. It pictures a truth that is practically universal. As this primitive pair came from God's hands in innocency so do you and I. As they were tempted so are we tempted. As they fell so do many of us fall. We fall because we believe the voices of the serpent rather than the voice of God. We yield to our baser selves rather than to our higher selves, but when we fall God still does not leave us alone. He is coming now far more clearly than in the long ago, seeking to save that which is lost. The book then is in a profound sense a hint and a foreshadowing of our Christian Gospel.
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Tonight we begin the study of that sacred library known as the Bible. It is a book whose supreme purpose is not to teach history or science, but religion. It is a book of the heart. It is God's message to the human soul. It is written by some forty different authors. These authors were separated from each other by fourteen or fifteen centuries in time. They belong to every stratum of society, from the shepherd to the king. These wrote both prose and poetry, biography and history. But the supreme purpose of the book is religious. To read it with open mind and heart is to become wiser in many directions. It is certain to become wise in salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus.

The first book of this library is Genesis. As its name indicates, it is a book of beginnings. We, therefore, misunderstand its purpose if we make it a book of finalities. In our study, we are concerned with its spiritual message. The critical questions, we leave to those who are competent to handle them. We shall concern ourselves little as to date and authorship. These are interesting questions, but they are not fundamental. For many centuries the River Nile overflowed its banks year by year and gave Egypt her fertility. During all those long years, no man knew the sources of the Nile. In recent years, its sources have been discovered. The discovery has satisfied our curiosity, but it has not made the harvest of Egypt any more abundant. The matter of vital importance to those dwelling in Egypt is the river itself with its annual overflow. The matter of vital importance to us is the book with its message.

The Book of Genesis has three natural divisions. As a certain preacher that I knew as a boy used to say, "My sermon falls naturally into three parts." I always had a feeling that it fell and was a bit like a sad sack. This book has three parts though it does not fall...
Chapters one and two tell the story of creation, chapters three to eleven inclusive, the story of the fall, ending in the tragedy of the flood; chapters twelve to fifty, the story of God's movement toward world redemption. One author gives these divisions the following names, that I pass on to you because they make it a little easier for us to remember. The Story of Creation, he calls 'Generation,' the Story of the Fall, 'Degeneration,' the Story of Recovery, 'Regeneration.' So there you have the three divisions, generation, degeneration, regeneration.

I.

The story of creation opens with one of the most sublime sentences in literature. "In the Beginning, God created the Heaven and the earth." Here is the first and supreme disclosure of the book of Genesis. In its first sentence, it brings us face to face with God. It shows us God as the creator of all things. It declares what John says in the beginning of his Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made." To declare that God is the creator of all things does not sound striking and revolutionary to us. We have been reared in this state. But how amazing it must have been in the century in which it was first uttered! At that time, there was a multitude of gods. They were almost as numberless as the sands. There were gods of the sea and of the land, of the sky, of the forest, of the rivers and of the fountains. These gods did not see eye to eye. They were constantly at war with each other and were at cross purposes one with another. It was impossible to be in harmony with all of them. Even the cultured Greeks after erecting altars to all that they knew by name must needs erect an altar to the unknown God. Men lived in an atmosphere of fear because they could never know when they might be destroyed by some god that they
had angered without knowing it. But the faith of this man who declares that God is the Creator of all destroyed these lesser gods as the sunrise puts out the stars.

This faith also gave to man a unified world. It gave him a universe that was the product of a single Divine intelligence. Therefore, it was a universe that was law-abiding. There could be laws of nature, as we call them, in this God-made universe. But such laws were utterly impossible in a universe that was made by an infinite number of gods. Here then is a declaration that lays the foundation for the discovery of science. But science cannot work make progress in a world of chance.

Now as to the method of God in creation, the writer of Genesis is not greatly concerned. His supreme interest is not in the method of man's creation, but in the fact that God created it. There is, however, some hint in this book as to God's way of working. It seems to be the faith of the writer that creation was not the work of an instant, but that it was a process. It is, also, hinted that God made progress from the lower to the higher. God formed man from the dust of the earth. That is, he took the lower and touched it into the higher. We can easily believe this because that is what he is doing here and now. This making of man out of dust indicates our kinship with the lower orders of life. It may seem humiliating to some how closely the skeleton of man resembles that of the anthropoid ape. But it restores our self-respect to know that in spite of our common kinship to the dust, we are yet separated from them by spaces infinitely wider than those between the stars. For it is said of man, God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul. My dog can enjoy the same food that I enjoy. He can drink from the same spring. He can thrill in the hunt, but he cannot sob over his sins, nor rejoice in the discovery of God. We, and we alone are in God's
Now this old story tells us that man made in the image of God fell. He fell in spite of the fact that his circumstances were all in his favor.

First, he was placed in a garden. That must be an ideal environment. He was given a job. That was a further safe-guard. Work, you see, was not sent on man as a curse as we used to be told. God works from eternity to eternity. Work is one of the supreme blessings of life that now is, and we are sure that it is going to be so in the life that is to come. First—then, work is an age at a sitting as Kipling tells us. Idleness is terribly trying as many are learning to their sorrow in these desperate days. Then Adam had a companion. The Bible gives her an old-fashioned name that we do not use any more. She was a helpmeet. That is a suitable helper, companion and friend. Here is the foundation of that dream of Tennyson's, "Two heads in counsel; two beside the heart; two in the tangled business of the world."

But in spite of all these favorable circumstances man fell. There are those who tend to quarrel with God because he made us capable of falling, but this is the price we pay for our capacity to rise. The oyster has no capacity to fall, but what a price it pays for that easy road. It pays a tremendous price of being incapacitated to rise into fellowship with God. We are accustomed to attribute to this ancient prayer a glory of which the Bible gives no hint. In fact, it is practically amazing how many declarations we make about scriptural matters which have no scripture warrant. It is practically safe to say that most of the controversies about the Bible grow out of making claims for the book that it does not make for itself. The best that can be said about Adam and Eve was this—that they were innocent. But a state of innocence is
by no means the highest. The face of a baby is beautiful, but it
is not so beautiful as the face of one who has lived and suffered and
achieved through grace of Christ-like character. A blank piece of
paper has a certain type of beauty, but it is far more beautiful after
some Tennyson has stained it with a poem like "Crossing the Bar."

Now one may be born with innocence, but character must be
achieved, and the only place that it can be achieved is in the realm
of choice. Man was put where he had to make a choice. He had to be
subject to temptation. This condition is represented as coming in the
guise of a serpent. That is, temptation is not something that sounds
a trumpet before it or waves a red flag of warning into our faces.
It glides into our life; it takes us unaware. "You don't mean to tell
me that you cannot eat of any tree in the garden", is the question.
"Everything is forbidden," the serpent seems to say, "You are fettered
and bound and you can't do anything." Here is an exaggeration of what
was prohibited. Instead of every tree being prohibited, only one was.
Then, there is in the very question a hint of the utter unresponsible-
ness of prohibition of any kind.

"We can eat of every tree but one", is the answer, "and
that is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If we eat of that
we shall surely die." And the serpent is fairly amazed that one should
be so easily duped. "You shall not surely die," is the emphatic denial.
"Freedom and life are not to be found in conformity to law, but in its
violation. The way we really live is to fling away from God." How
true that is. (As this has happened to Adam and Eve, it is certainly
happening to you and me.) We believe this lie from generation to
generation. Jesus had to face it in His day, and He is having to do so
at this present moment, calling to us in our stupid faith in lawlessness
and saying, "The thief cometh not but to steal and to kill and to
destroy. I am come that they may have life and that they may have
it in abundance.
Eve believed the serpent and took the fruit of the tree of knowledge. She is represented as the aggressor. In matters of the spiritual through the centuries woman has been the leader. What this fruit was, the writer does not say. Isn't it rather queer that everybody has said that it was an apple, and yet Jesus gives no hint that such was the case. Just as everybody says that there were three wise men that came to see Jesus, yet no New Testament writer gives the slightest hint as to how many there were. What this author is saying is that this pair made a wrong choice and came to know evil as personal experience. What were the results? They at once became afraid of the one whom they should have loved the most. I remember as a boy how I used to go out on the road to watch for my father when he had been to town, but there was one time when I did not. I did not wish to see him when he came. The reason was that I had done something in his absence of which I knew he could not approve. Not only did they become afraid, but they were driven from the garden. The garden of innocence closes first upon him who is conscious of sin. This too, is your experience and mine.

But when man was driven out of the garden, God did not lose interest in him. Nor did man's sin cut him off from all hope. Nor did the fact that he had sinned make impossible all moral progress. There are those who are offended by the doctrine of the Fall because man has been making progress upward through the centuries. But the world does not mean that man became wholly bad, as the Calvinists used to teach. If man were wholly bad, all efforts to save would be a sheer futility. But the Bible is written on the assumption that there is in man something of good to which the eternal goodness must appeal.

But while man did not become wholly bad, and while even in the worst days of moral and spiritual decline, there were some good men
such as Noah, who walked with God. Yet there did follow a period of such tremendous spiritual decline that the surgeon's knife had to be applied, and the issue was the flood. Practically every ancient Nation has a tradition of the flood. It is only the book of Genesis that gives the religious interpretation. This book teaches that the tragedy of the flood was not that a certain civilization ceased to live, but that it ceased to be fit to live.

III.

Man had no sooner fallen than he set himself to his recovery. When he was conscious of his nakedness, it was God who provided him with a covering. The first movement towards man's salvation is always of God. The first voice that Adam heard after his sin was the voice of his God, who was out seeking him. "Adam, where art thou?" And the call was not the call of anger, but the call of love, and the gates of Eden were no more closed than the promise was made, "Today the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." But it is the conviction of this author that God's purpose for man began its positive realization in the call of Abraham.

Abraham is the most heroic character in the book, not even excepting Joseph. He dwelt in the rich and populous city of Chaldea. Here he heard the voice of God. How God spoke to him, we do not know. We may be sure of this, that God was broadcasting then as he is broadcasting today. The reason Abraham heard him was not because he was a favorite of God's, but because he tuned in on him. God is always speaking, but it is only the man who is willing to tune in that catches the message.

And what was God's call to Abraham? "Get thee out from thy kingdom and from thy father's house, and I will bless thee and thou shall be a blessing." And what a miracle is the vision of this writer! To whom is this solitary stranger preaching for God, here and there in
the wilderness to be a blessing? He is to be a blessing to his own tribe. He is to be a blessing to the Nation that is going to grow out of that tribe. But here is something that cannot be accounted for except for the presence of God in the heart of the man. He is to be a blessing to all the Nations of the earth. Speaking of miracles, the raising of the dead is a small thing in comparison with a man whose heart and mind are so illuminated that he can get a glimpse of God's interest in all mankind and of that good day which is yet ahead of us when man shall act as sons of a common father all around the world.

Here then is the message of the book of Genesis. Man is not the product of plant forces that had no prevision of what they were created, as Bertram Russell tells us. Such a view shocks the reason as much as it outrages the heart. Man is a child of God. This man has lost and is constantly losing his innocence through sin, but in spite of his sin, God still loves him, still hopes for him, still believes that he can have something infinitely better than innocence. He can have a character strong and Christ-like. He believed that this man sinned through a wrong choice, and through faith in God, an all Christ-like character can do a Christ-like service. He can share the high mission of Abraham, the father of the faithful. In him, too, can all the families of the earth be blessed. So if you and I hear God's call as we devote ourselves to Him and to our fellows for love's sake, we make good His promise to us - "I will bless thee and thou wilt be a blessing." We should, therefore, thank God for this wonderful book of beginnings. It is a book that is infinitely rich in hope, in spite of the stains of the tragedy that is upon it.
EXODUS

This book takes its name from the story that it tells. It is a record of the passing of the children of Israel out of Egypt to become a nation. The word "exodus" is the same that Jesus used on the Mount of Transfiguration when He spoke of His coming death. Did it ever strike you how vastly different the view of the average Christian regarding death is from that of Jesus? Generally speaking, to us death is the final tragedy. It is a kind of grim stop-light that puts an end to the traffic of living TRAVEL. But with Jesus it was far different. I am quite sure it was no more to Him than the passing from one village to another. It was not a finitude. It was an exodus. It was a passing out of one room in God's House to another and a larger room.

The book of Exodus as a story is one of superb interest. The author is writing this story from a religious motive. He is also writing as a Jewish patriot. There were some things that the Jews did that he feels called upon to justify even though they were wrong. He justifies them by blaming them on God. Folks do the same today. I have known people who excused certain wrong turns and wrong attitudes by claiming divine guidance. I have constantly been slow to claim the guidance of God for all my blundering life. I have done too many wrong and stupid things. When these Israelites were leaving, they borrowed heavily from their neighbors and absconded without paying back. The author indicates that they did this at the command of God, but, of course, he is wrong.

Do not let it shock you that all of the Old Testament is not on a par from the ethical standpoint with the New. Bear in mind that it was Jesus who pointed this out long before any of the modern critics discovered it. The Old Testament is constantly to be read in the light of the New. When
you find it saying what you know Jesus would not say, lay the fault not to
God but to human frailty. A good friend asked me what I thought about God's
telling the Israelites to steal from the Egyptians. I said that I was abso-
lutely certain that God said no such thing. He remained silent so long that
I had to ask him what he thought. His rather shocking reply was, "I would
hate to think that the record was incorrect." Believe me, I would hate to
think otherwise! If the record is incorrect, it only reflects on a faulty
human being, but if it is correct, it means we have a dishonest God. That
would be tragic indeed. Remember the words of Whittier: "Nothing can be
good in Him that evil is in me."

But while we have this treasure in earthen vessels, while there is some
bit of chaff in the book, there is also an abundance of golden wheat. Let us
look then at the story and find something of its abiding worth. It was
evidently the conviction of this author that God purposed that the Israelites
should go into Egypt. This seemed needful for two reasons. The family of
Abraham must continue to be a separated family. Separation would have been
more difficult had they remained in Canaan because the Canaanites would
have had no scruples in marrying with them. But Egyptians had an aversion
to foreigners. They especially looked down on shepherds. Therefore, Israel
stood the best chance of remaining a separated people by going into Egypt.
Second, this ignorant tribe needed to go to Egypt for cultural reasons.
They were ignorant Bedouins, but the Egypt of that day was the most cultured
country in the world. It was the university to which this young and ignorant
tribe needed to go for a bit of education.

But how were they to get into Egypt seeing that, as the story said, a
shepherd was an abomination unto the Egyptians? There was a twofold
preparation. Egypt was prepared through a revolution. A new dynasty came
to the throne known as the Shepherd Kings. These were naturally more
tolerant to foreign shepherds. Then, there was a further preparation made by Joseph. You remember how this brilliant lad was sold into Egyptian slavery. In the house of Potiphar he became the victim of a scandal. From this house of slavery he went to prison. From the prison he went to become a favorite of the king and the most powerful man in Egypt.

Not only did Egypt have to be prepared, but this tribe had to be prepared as well. How were they made willing to give up their roving life in order to settle in Egypt? They were scourged out of the old life by a famine. News came to them that there was bread in Egypt. Also there came an invitation from the prime minister Joseph. Thus, they made their way into this land of wealth, wickedness, and culture.

This brings us to the beginning of our story. Exodus is a continuation of Genesis. The book has three natural divisions. Chapter I tells of how this people grew from a few to be a multitude. So great did they become that the Egyptians became frightened of them, and for their own protection brought them into servitude. Then, came the deliverance. This story takes up Chapters 2 - 19, inclusive. The remaining 21 chapters give the legislation that was enacted for this emerging nation. To assist your memory, you might name the three divisions as follows: Degredation, Emancipation, and Legislation.

Degredation! When this small tribe of Israelites went to Egypt, they were a free people. In Egypt they multiplied and prospered. Prosperity seems always to have been an achievement of this amazing people. It would seem that the more they prospered the more blind they became to the quest upon which their father Abraham had set out. The more they prospered, the more dead they became to their sense of mission. It would seem that their first tragedy was that they became in large measure materialists with little
sense of God and of God's purpose for their lives.

This spiritual slavery was followed by physical slavery. The Egyptians at first sought to keep this growing people from becoming a threat to themselves. Then, they decided to use them. They made them slaves. The boy babies were ordered exposed. This might have happened even had the same dynasty remained in power, but it was hastened by the fact that another king rose that "knew not Joseph." They had no sense of the service that these people had rendered. They were, therefore, reduced to bondage.

As this writer thinks back over this black chapter in the life of his nation, he sees a purpose in it. He would not have laid their slavery upon God, but he believed that God used that slavery for the accomplishment of His purpose. We can see the truth of this. Had they continued to prosper, the chances are that they would never have left Egypt. This rich and cultured land of their adoption would have been to them a kind of Vanity Fair where they would have forgotten their high quest, and thus have failed to become the religious teachers of the nations as they have. This degredation, therefore, while a terrible tragedy was yet a blessing in disguise. It was one of those "all things that work together for good" for those who are willing to live within the will of God. It was this slavery that made them willing to be delivered.

II

Then came deliverance. How was this deliverance wrought? Of course, over all is the guiding hand of God. He was the prime mover in the bringing about of their freedom. God ever makes the first move toward the salvation of His people. But while this is the case, He moves through human instrumentality. If anything is done toward the bringing in of His Kingdom in this generation, you and I who claim to be Christians are the ones through
whom this is to be accomplished. How did God move toward freeing Israel?

1. He chose a leader. This leader was born in a slave cabin. As all other boy babies of that age, he was born under sentence of death, but he was such a beautiful child that his parents could not give him up. How humanly the story is told: "By faith Moses was hid three months of his parents because they saw that he was a proper child." The word "proper" means that he was a beautiful child. Literally, it means he was a "citified" child. When they looked at him, they said, "This is no clodhopper." He already had the marks of culture and refinement that belonged to the city. So, they took a basket and lined it with pitch and prayer and hid him among the reeds that grew along the Nile. Here then is our beginning. We have a baby. But children are not so much born as made. How did this baby become the Moses that we know? He had three definite courses of training.

First, he was trained by his pious parents. The father and mother of Moses were slaves, but they were possessed of a vital faith. They hid their lad in the faith that God would spare him. His bright-eyed sister was set to watch him. One day she saw a company of women making their way to the very spot where the baby was hidden. More tragic still, the leader of that group of women was the Princess. The strange vessel was found, but as they towed it to the shore, it became a battleship. When it was uncovered, the little fellow cannonaded the Princess by his beauty, bombarded her with his winsome weakness until she surrendered and took him to her heart.

Then it was that wise little Miriam acted. She hurried from her hiding place, bowed low in the presence of the Princess. "Would you like for me to get a nurse for the baby?" she said. The haughty Princess looked into the eager face and made a twofold decision. First, she decided that the baby was to live. That was very important, but her second decision was even more important. She decided that not only should Moses live, but he
should be trained by his own mother. But for that great decision he would have worshiped the gods of Egypt and the Moses whom we know would never have existed.

I can imagine something of the joy with which this ancient slave mother received her child back into her arms. I can imagine the diligence with which she trained him. She was to have him for only a few years; then he would go away to become the adopted son of the Egyptian Princess. What she did, she must do quickly, and she did her work well. Listen again to the writer of the Hebrews: "By faith Moses was hid three months of his parents!"—that was his parents' faith. "By faith when he was come to years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter"—that was his own faith, a faith that he had learned in the arms of his mother.

His second course of training was at the palace of the Pharaoh and at the Royal University. Here he was prepared for the great destiny that was ahead. He was one of the best trained men in the Old Testament. The writer of the Acts tells the story in this fashion: "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and of the Chaldeans and was mighty in word and deed."

This training at the Royal University was very important. It helped to equip him for his great work, but it was powerless to break down his faith.

Third, his final course was in the Midian desert. You remember how he came to attend this strange school. One day he had gone to visit his people. He saw an Egyptian imposing upon an Israelite. In hot anger he struck the bully. Evidently the blow was far harder than he intended. The Egyptian toppled and lay still. A shallow grave was dug, and the sand was shovelled on him. Nobody had seen but the Israelites. Moses, therefore, was not afraid. He was sure that they would recognize the fact that the blow was struck for them and would keep his secret.
But when a few days later he made a second visit he saw two Israelites fighting. In amazed indignation he undertook to stop them. "Why do you fight?" he said. "You are brothers. You ought to make common cause against a common foe." "Who made you a judge?" one of the contenders asked in indignation. "Do you mean to kill us like you did the Egyptian?" At that Moses' knees went weak. He saw that these people were not only slaves physically, but they were slaves spiritually. They had rotted down in their inner lives. They did not even want to be free. Therefore, he fled the country and made his way to the Midian desert. Here he married quite suddenly. Here he broke his heart for a while over the great dreams he had given up. This is indicated by the name he gave his first-born son. The name signifies, "I have been a stranger in a strange land."

But by and by he began to feel at home. He began to love the quiet of it all. The needs of his enslaved people were almost forgotten. When conscience would disturb him, he would say, "Well, I tried once, but they did not want to be free." Thus, for long years he went on gathering wisdom, brooding over God's strange ordering of his life becoming more and more contented to be the shepherd of another man's sheep rather than the shepherd of a new nation.

Then one morning he went out in front of the sheep as he had gone hundreds of mornings before, but this day was to be different. On the back side of the desert he looked to see a certain bush on the mountainside that was aflame. What astonished him about this bush was not that it burned. That which amazed him was that it kept on burning. "I will now turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not consumed." It was as he thus turned aside that God spoke to him. You can see the fitness of this symbol. The fact that it burned reminded Moses of how once he had burned with a great passion for the freedom of his people. It also reminded him of how the fire had gone out long ago. Why did this bush continue to burn?
God was in it. Why had he lost all his passion? Why had the fire died to dull gray ashes on the altar of his heart? He had lost his sense of God. Then came the call: "I have seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt. I have heard their groanings. I know their sorrows. Come now, I must send thee to Pharaoh." Everybody has a Pharaoh. God is always eager to send us to our own. Moses was very timid, very reluctant to go. He pled his inability. "What is that in thy hand?" God asked.

"Just a stick—a shepherd's crook!"

"Throw it down!"

Moses threw it down and it became a serpent, by which the author indicates that gifts prostituted become destructive.

"Pick it up!"

As Moses picked up this stick now a serpent, it became a shepherd's crook again. It was the same and yet different. It came to be known as the rod of God. It had the might of God in it because it was a dedicated rod. When we become dedicated, the power of God may flow through us to a needy world.

2. It was armed with this shepherd's crook he invaded single-handed the greatest nation in the then world. Arrived in Egypt, he demanded of the Pharaoh the freedom of his people but his demand was refused. The author has a great fondness for miracle. There followed ten plagues, each a bit more severe than the other. During each plague, the Pharaoh would make a promise. This promise he would break as soon as the peril was passed. He represents that type that never cares for religion except in the presence of danger. Then came the final plague, the death of the first-born. From all the other nine plagues, the Hebrews were protected without any effort on their part, but not so with this tenth plague. They had to slay a lamb and sprinkle the blood over the door-posts and remain in the house during
the night. It was from this experience that the Jews derived their most impressive celebration—the Feast of the Passover. They were instructed to tell their children in after days its deep meaning. God had said, "When I see the blood I will pass over you." Jesus was celebrating this ancient feast with his disciples when he pushed the Paschal Lamb out of its place and substituted Himself, saying, "This is my body which is given for you.... This is my blood which was shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins; do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me."

It was after this final plague that the Israelites were hurried on their journey, but even then before they had gone far, the Pharaoh repented. When this frightened horde came on the shores of the Red Sea, the powerful army of Egypt was hard upon their heels, but the waters of the Sea were divided. The Israelites passed through, but the Egyptians were overwhelmed. The writer to the Hebrews graphically pictures the scene: "By faith the Israelites pass through the Red Sea as by dry land, which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned." He, as we are, is interested in the fact that always the man of faith is passing through difficulties that overwhelm the man who has no faith. The next day these free people were celebrating their victory with songs on the further side of the Red Sea. Then follows the march through the wilderness to Sinai.

III

Here we come to the third part of the story—Legislation. This legislation has two natural divisions.

1. There is that that was temporary and passing. Minute orders are given for the building of the tabernacle and for the ritual of worship. This has little meaning for us. That tabernacle was a symbol of the Divine Presence. We have the Divine Presence Himself. "The Word has become flesh
and tabernacled among us so that we have been privileged to behold His glory.

2. Then, there is that code of law that is abiding—the Ten Commandments. These laws have been written into the code of practically every civilized nation in the world. They can no more be ignored than the law of gravitation or the law of sowing and reaping. 

IV

What does this story mean to us? Its supreme lesson I think is what our fathers would call the sovereignty of God along with the freedom of man. The author of this book had a profound sense of God's almightiness. He said with holy joy and holy awe, "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!" He had the conception that belonged to the prophet Isaiah when he pictures God as speaking to a certain despot in his day: "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger and the staff in their hand is mine indignation." God is over all this scene, using both the good and the evil for the accomplishment of His purpose.

But while God is King, man is free. Since man is free, he may thwart God's purpose in his own life. That is what the Pharaoh did. Did you notice how often it says, "God hardened Pharaoh's heart." It also said that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. Both these statements are true. God hardens hearts today. He does so by giving us opportunities that we reject. Whenever I hear the truth and fail to respond to it, my heart grows harder. God has fixed it that way, but the fault is all mine. God loved the Pharaoh just as much as he loved Moses, but life ended in tragedy for Pharaoh and in triumph for Moses. This was the case because while Moses yielded to the will of God, the Pharaoh resisted.

But while I may reject God's plan for my own life and thereby wreck myself, I cannot by my rejection defeat God in His ultimate triumph. In spite of the Pharaoh's rebellion, He used him for the accomplishment of His purpose. Whether we yield to him or resist Him, He is going to march
on to victory. He makes even the wrath of man to praise Him. Not even Hitler is going to be a dead loss! It is a heartening privilege in times like this to fall back on the Kingship of God. As we read this old story, we sing with the psalmist: "The Lord reigneth! Let the earth tremble, for every wicked thing is to be cast out." We sing also, "The Lord reigneth; let the people rejoice." Our God is King—that is the message of the book.
"EXODUS"

The Book of Exodus takes its name from the leading event recorded in the story - the passing of the Israelites out of Egypt into Canaan. It is the same word that Jesus used on the Mount of Transfiguration when He spoke of His coming death. He spoke of it as the exodus that He was to accomplish at Jerusalem. It is a beautiful and suggestive word. To Him, death meant the passing out of one room in God's house into another just as the Israelites went from one nation or one country to another.

This book is a continuation of the story begun in Genesis. It is a part of the epoch of a nation. As a story, it is one of the most fascinating in literature. Remember that it was handed down from father to son and from generation to generation long before it was put in writing. These stories were committed to writing some eight and a half or nine centuries before Christ. They passed through a good many hands. They were edited again and again. They took their present form about 400 B.C.

In reading these stories, it is well to bear in mind that you are not to look for perfect historical accuracy, nor are we to expect the high ethical standards that we find in the New Testament. One verse in the first chapter of the book represents Israel as a great and growing people. The very next verse reports them as so small that two midwives were sufficient to look after the mothers of the whole tribe. Then there are touches that indicate a low state of morals. For instance, the Israelites were to borrow from the Egyptians and absorb without repaying them.

Some time ago, a friend of mine who is a minister and a very consecrated one asked me what I thought of the Lord telling the Israelites to do this dishonest thing. I said that I did not think the Lord told them to do anything of the kind. He sat in perfect silence. At last, I asked him, "What do you think?" "I would hate," he replied, "to think that the record was not accurate." What an astounding word! I should hate very desperately to think that the record is accurate. To say that it is inaccurate is to say simply that it was written by faulty human hands way back in the kindergarten of the
race. But to say it is accurate is to say we have a dishonest God who would be guilty of deeds of which an ordinary worldling would be ashamed. Yes, there is some chaff here, but there is also some real wheat among the chaff and it is upon that that we are to fix our attention.

As we said of Genesis, this book has three natural divisions. The first chapter tells of the slavery of the people. Chapters two to nineteen, inclusive, tell of their emancipation. Chapters twenty to forty, inclusive, tell of the laws that were passed to govern this emerging nation. To make it easier to remember, we may speak of these three divisions as degradation, emancipation, and legislation.

I.

Look at the story of Israel's degradation.

To understand it, we must go back a bit into Genesis. How did the Israelites come to be in Egypt? They were a tribe of Bedouins, shepherds, the author tells us, and as such they were an abomination to the Egyptians. How then did they get into Egypt? There was a two-fold preparation, according to this writer. There was a revolution that brought in a reign of the shepherd kings. These being Bedouins themselves, naturally had no great antipathy to the Israelites who were also nomads of the desert.

A further step in preparation was made by Joseph. This brilliant youth was sold into slavery, you remember. He became a slave in the House of Potiphar. Here the slander of a woman caused him to be sent to prison. He came, through the King's butler, into royal favor. Soon, he was the most powerful and influential man in Egypt. Were we writing about him today, we would name the book, "From a Nomad's Tent to a Palace on the Nile."

But not only did Egypt have to be prepared, the Israelites themselves needed to be prepared for entrance into Egypt. How were they induced to give up life
in Canaan to go down into this, the most cultured country in the world? They were
scurraged in by a famine. They had to go there to keep from being exterminated by
starvation.

Once in Egypt, they began to prosper and to multiply. That has been
their history through the centuries. They have always been a thrifty people. "Then a
king arose," says the writer, "that knew not Joseph." This king began to fear the grow-
ing power of these foreigners. He realized that in case of war, they might be a heavy
handicap. For this reason, they were reduced to slavery and all boy babies were to
be exposed. This brings us to and through the opening chapter of the book.

II.

The second division is the emancipation. Bear in mind that the author
of this story is writing for religious and patriotic reasons. The two meant the same
thing to him. He is undertaking to show God's movement in the making of his people.
How then were these slaves, greatly outnumbered by the Egyptian people, set free? How
did they emerge into a nation?

1. The first step was the raising up and training of a leader. That
leader was Moses. He, as others, was born under sentence of death. But the writer says
that he was hidden three months by his parents who saw that he was a proper child. That
was well-spoken. He was so beautiful that they could not allow him to be killed, so
they took a basket and lined it with pitch and prayer and hid him among the rushes of
the Nile. His sister, Miriam, was set to guard him. One day as she watched, something
appeared that caused her girlish heart almost to stand still. She saw the Egyptian
princess with her ladies in waiting coming to bathe in the River Nile. They were making
straight for the spot where the baby was hidden. At once, they sighted the strange
vessel, towed it to land, and what a cargo! There was a baby. At once, the boat be-
came a battleship and its crew pelted the heart of the princess with his weakness, his
tears, and his beauty till she capitulated and surrendered unconditionally.
Meantime, Miriam was watching. When she saw the princess take the little fellow in her arms, she knew that the psychological moment had come, so dashing from her hiding place, hurried to the princess, made her obeisance and said, "May I get a nurse for your baby?" "You may," was the haughty reply. And she dashed away to tell her Mother. Now it so happened that this mother was just preparing to go to the movies and could not come. No! It was the best news she had ever heard. She hurried to the princess to have her baby put back into her arms with this command, "take this child away and nurse him for me and I will give thee thy wages."

That was a tremendous decision that this princess made. She not only decided that this gifted baby should live, but she decided something of what manner of man he was to be. She decided that he was to be reared in the faith of Jehovah rather than in the faith of the gods of Egypt. But for that momentous decision, Moses of this story would never have been known. The first, then, and most important part of the training of this child was in the home of a slave mother.

2. The second course of training was at the royal university and at the palace. Here he was brought into contact with the best educational opportunities of his day. He was perhaps the best trained man of the Old Testament. The writer of the Book of Acts tells us that he was trained in all the wisdom of Egypt and the Chaldees and was mighty in word and deed.

It was while living in the palace as the adopted son of a princess that he went one day to visit his people. He saw an Egyptian imposing upon a Hebrew. He was evidently a man of fiery temper. In hot indignation, he smote him dead and buried him in the sand. Then he went to the palace feeling secure. Nobody had seen the deed but his fellow-Jews and he was sure that they would appreciate the fact that he had struck the blow for them. But when he went out next day, he saw two Hebrews fighting. When he interfered, one of them said, "Who made you a judge? Do you mean to kill me as you did that Egyptian?"
When Moses heard this, his knees went weak and his heart turned sick. He saw that these kinsmen of his were not only slaves in body, but in soul as well. They would not do to trust. They had no gratitude. They did not even wish to be free. They would not keep a secret, therefore, there was nothing for him to do but to leave the country. Therefore, he fled for his life to the Median desert.

3. This brings us to the third course of training that Moses had for his work. In this Median desert, he married and became a shepherd of the sheep of his father-in-law. Here, little by little, he forgot the big dreams of his youth. Here he learned new humility, new patience, new courage. But the deciding factor of this period was his meeting with God and his definite call to undertake the emancipation of his people.

I hope you have read this beautiful story. One day, Moses sat out to his task just as he had done for thousands of other days during his forty years sojourn in this wilderness. On the back side of the desert, his attention was drawn to a bush that was aflame of fire. There was nothing surprising in that a dry bush should burn, but the fact that amazed Moses was that it did not fall into gray ashes, it continued to burn. "I will now turn aside," he said, "and see this great sight why the bush is not consumed." What was there in this vision to speak especially to his heart? The bush kept on burning, he discovered, because God was in it. Then, he remembered a time when he had been all ablaze for his people, but the fire had gone out long ago. Why? What he needed was God.

That is a truth that is as much at home in the twentieth century as in this distant day. We need God today just as did Moses, to give us staying power. It is after this that the writer to the Hebrews said of Moses that "he endured as seeing Him who is invisible." Some ignored him, but he endured. Some fought him, but he endured. His hopes were long deferred and his dreams never quite came true, but he endured. There is nothing like God to get us a staying power. "I have set the Lord
always before me. Because He is my right hand, I shall not be moved."

"I have seen the affliction of my people that are in Israel," was
God's declaration. "I know their sorrows, and I have come down to deliver them." But
how? Here is the answer: Through Moses! "Come now," he said, "I will send thee to
Pharaoh." Every man has a Pharaoh. God has no way of meeting the needs of His world
except through those who are obedient to Him. Moses felt his unfitness. He was extremely
reluctant to accept this perfectly impossible task. "What is that in thine hand?" God
asks. "Only a staff, a shepherd's crook," he replied. "That is all I have." "Fling
it down," God commanded, and when Moses obeyed the stick becomes a serpent. "Pick it
up!" Once more it is a rod, but there is this difference, it is a rod that has been
dedicated. Henceforth, it is called the Rod of God. Anything becomes shot through with
something of God's Almightyness when we give it to Him. It was with this Rod of God
in his hand that this lone man set out to invade Egypt.

Then follows the story of Moses dealing with the king. There is a great
love in the story for the miraculous. Of course, some of these so-called miracles are
natural phenomena in Egypt. We are not concerned with the historical accuracy. The
psychology of the story is exceedingly accurate. In Pharaoh, we find a man who is in-
clined to obedience only when he is frightened. When the pressure of fear is withdrawn,
he lapses back into his old life.

According to the writer, ten plagues were sent on Egypt. From nine of
these plagues the Israelites were spared without any effort on their part. The tenth
plague, involving the death of the first-born was different. They had to do something
for themselves. They had to sprinkle the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and take
shelter behind it. This, says the writer, was the beginning of the feasts of the Pass-
over. "When I see the blood," God said, "I will pass over you." Jesus was celebrating
this feast with his disciples when he pushed the paschal lamb out of its place and put
Himself there, when He said, "This is my body which is given for you."
With the death of the first-born, Israel was allowed to go. Moses led them to the shores of the Red Sea. Here, with the Egyptians pressing them hard, their doom seemed assured, but the east wind blew the waters back and opened a way for their passage. When the Egyptians tried to cross at this same place, they were engulfed. The writer to the Hebrews draws a lesson from this that is abiding. "By faith the Israelites crossed over the Red Sea as by dry land, which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned." It is abidingly true that faith crosses over difficulties that overwhelm the man without faith. Thus, these people won their freedom and made their way first to Mount Sinai where the law was given and from thence into Canaan.

III.

The last division of the book is given to legislation. Much of this legislation has to do with the building of the tabernacle and with the setting up of the ritual for worship. It is of interest to the antiquarians, but not of abiding interest to ourselves. But there is one part of this legislation that is fundamental and abiding. That is the Ten Words, or the Ten Commandments. All of our laws today are based fundamentally upon them.

Recently, I read an article in which the author urged that instead of following the Ten Commandments, we make laws of our own. It is a statement that sounds wise, but in reality, it strikes me as the height of foolishness. We would not tolerate such a silly bit of advice anywhere except in the realm of morals. Here, for instance, is a youth who is going to be a chemist, but he declares emphatically, "I am not going to pay any attention to books of chemistry or of the scientists and what they have learned before me. I am going to make my own rules." Here is a surgeon who is preparing to operate on my boy. "I have never read a book on surgery," he declares proudly, "I paid no attention to those who have performed operations before me, I am making my own rules." Having said that, I should see to it that he did not operate on
my boy. But in the realm of morals, we decide to act as if the wisdom of the ages was of no value at all. Look briefly at these Ten Words.

1. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Why? Because that is the only way to have God in reality at all. If you do not put God first, you really do not know Him. This is the old way of stating what Jesus put in plainer words when He said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." God is virtually saying, "I am offering myself to you, but you can only accept my offer by giving me first place in your life."

2. You are not to make any image or likeness to God. What is the purpose of an image? It is not a thing to be worshiped. It was intended as an aid to worship. But they who used such aids tended to transfer their worship to the image, therefore, they took the means for the end. That is a common blunder. The purpose of worship today is communion with God, but many of us satisfy ourselves with the means rather than going on to the end. We eat in order to live, but many fix all their attention on the means rather than the end and live in order to eat. This law is, therefore, pertinent today.

3. We are not to take the name of the Lord in vain. What is forbidden here is not swearing, as is commonly believed, though that might be included. But the real purpose of the command is to prevent lying. It is to promote truth-telling. Do not call God to witness to the truth of your statement when it is not true. At the time of Jesus, a man was hardly expected to tell the truth except under oath. He was not even expected to tell it under every kind of oath. There were certain oaths that were binding and certain that were not. This all tended to the most outrageous lying. And truth-telling today is as needful and more so as in that more primitive time.

4. The fourth Word has to do with the keeping of the Sabbath. The purpose of this was two-fold. It afforded an opportunity for worship. It was also humane. It was for protection of the laborer. It gave him a chance to rest. And if a
Sabbath of rest was needed in that primitive time, it is needed far more desperately in the hectic days in which our lot is cast.

5. The fifth commandment is "Honor thy father and thy mother." This commandment is for the protection of childhood. I know we usually look at it as a protection to the father and the mother, but that is not its primary purpose. In those days, it was presumed that old people knew more than children. Of course, we have given up that idea. They were supposed from actual experience to know where the most beautiful gardens grew and where the lovely springs were. They knew the difference between poison oak and a Virginia creeper, between violets and nettles. Those who profited by their wisdom had the promise of living long on the earth. This they were to do not as a reward for obedience, but as a consequence of obedience. Those that obey do live longer than those who disobey. Obedience is more necessary today than it was then.

6. The sixth commandment is for the safeguarding of property. "Thou shalt not steal." A man has a right to what is his own. This law has been written into the statute books of every nation under heaven.

7. The seventh is for the protection of the home, the sanctity of marriage, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." The more complex civilization becomes, the more this law is needed. Where it is disregarded, just in that proportion does civilization rot down.

8. The eighth safeguards human life, "Thou shalt not kill." Everybody recognizes the sanity and abiding importance of that law. This is notwithstanding the fact that we have some 12,000 homicides a year in the United States.

9. The ninth safeguards our reputation. It is a law against slander. We can steal a man's good name as well as his property. "Good name in man or woman, my Lord, is the immediate jewels of their souls, but mine as his, has been slaves to thousands, but he that filches from me my good name taketh that which not enriches him but makes me poor indeed!"
10. The tenth safeguards the inner life - the citadel of the soul.

"Thou shalt not covet!" Covetness consists in desiring to possess what is another's without an adequate reward. It is a source of endless suffering. It is the motive of the war that Japan is now waging on China. It has slain countless millions and is as deadly to the individual as it is to the group. It was, therefore, to safeguard the individual and society that the Lord said, "Thou shalt not covet." Bud Robinson was keeping this command when after a day sight-seeing in New York, he devoutly thanked God that he had not seen a single thing that he wanted.

IV.

In conclusion, what is the one supreme lesson that the author would teach his own people in this story? It is a record of what God is doing and how He uses men in the performing and the carrying on of His work. Here we get a view of what our fathers called the sovereignty of God. God is King. He reigns. This He does in spite of the fact that men are free.

Look how this worked out in the case of two men - Moses and Pharaoh. God does not play favorites. He did not prefer Moses to Pharaoh, yet over and over again, the record says that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. It also says that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. Both statements are true. God appealed to Pharaoh, Pharaoh refused to obey, till he lost his capacity for obedience. In thus repealing, he defeated God so far as his own life was concerned, but he did not defeat Him in His ultimate purpose of freeing His people.

Moses, on the other hand entered into the will of God. God, therefore, used him for the accomplishment of His purpose in the world. He also brought Moses to his highest possibilities personally. God is King. He makes even the wrath of men to praise Him. You may resist Him. In so doing, you will wreck yourself. You will delay
the accomplishment of His purpose, but you will not finally defeat Him. This author would have shouted with the Psalmist, "The Lord reigneth, let the people rejoice!"
EXODUS.

Exodus is a continuation of the book of Genesis. It takes up exactly where Genesis leaves off. Genesis, we said, was divided into three parts: Generation, Degeneration, and Regeneration. God began his work of regeneration by choosing one man to become the father of a nation. He is conducting that work in the book of Exodus.

Broadly speaking, Exodus falls naturally into two parts: that which is historic, chapters 1-19 inclusive; and that which is legislative, chapters 20-40 inclusive. Chapter 1, the story of the people in bondage; II to XIX, the story of their deliverance and emergence into a nation. To assist you in remembering, we will divide the book, therefore, into three sections: degradation, emancipation, and legislation.

I. Degradation.

It is necessary to go back somewhat and see how it came about that these chosen people are now in bondage in Egypt. It seems evident from the story that it was God's will that they should go into Egypt. He had told Abraham of this event years before. But they were not only to go into Egypt, they were also to come out. How God brought this about is a marvelously thrilling story.

1. Why was it needful that they go to Egypt? This nation is now only a weak tribe. It is necessary that they keep separated from the heathen nations about them if God
is to work his purpose through them. Where is the safest place for them to go? Not Canaan. The Canaanites have no special antipathy to strangers. They are the safest in Egypt. First, because the Egyptians hate strangers and second, because they are especially antagonistic to shepherds. A shepherd, the story tells us, was an abomination to the Egyptians and these Israelites were shepherds. Therefore, it will be easier for Israel to station a separate people in Egypt than anywhere else.

Then this baby Israel is very ignorant. He needs to go to school. Where is the best school of the day? It is Egypt. Egypt was the most cultured country of the world at that time. God is training a people for spiritual leadership. Some of them, at least, must be brought into contact with the best culture of the world. These are the reasons, I think, why God desired Israel to come into Egypt.

But how is Israel to get there? There must be a twofold preparation. First, there must be a preparation of Egypt. A little handful of shepherds cannot get into a country that despises them without some help. How is it brought about? By two agencies:

(1) There was a revolution. The old dynasty was driven out and a new took their place. These new were called the shepherd kings. They themselves being shepherds, therefore, would not have the antipathy to Israel that the old dynasty had.

(2) Then a further preparation was made by Joseph. Joseph, as a seventeen year old boy, was sold into
slavery. He became a slave in the household of Potiphar. There, through the lying of a woman, he falls into disgrace and was cast into prison. In the prison he interprets the dream of the king's butler. This causes him to be brought later before the king. Ultimately it brings him to a palace on the Nile. He is the most influential man in Egypt except the king himself.

It might be well to state here the supreme lesson of the book, and that is the sovereignty of God, along with the freedom of man. You cannot read Exodus without marveling at the power and wisdom of God in the shaping of human affairs. He uses revolutions, obedience and disobedience of man for the carrying on of his purpose. The cruelty of Joseph's brothers, the lying of the wife of Potiphar. He uses these for the accomplishment of his purpose, not that these things were the less wrong for this reason. Joseph stated the whole case when he said "You meant it unto me for evil, but God meant it for good."

Now that Egypt is prepared, how is Israel to be brought into Egypt? This is brought about by a famine in the land of Canaan. God takes this famine and uses it as a means of bringing his people into the place where he at that time desired that they should be.

In Egypt they prospered. They became rich. They forgot God. They became bond slaves to things. They ceased almost altogether to remember the high quest that Abraham and his followers had pursued. If one had invited them the journey from Egypt to Canaan, they would have made a cool response indeed.
But there came another revolution. The story tells us; there rose another king that knew not Joseph. They began at once to oppress this foreign people. They began to bring them into a physical bondage that corresponded to the material bondage, which their forgetfulness of God had already plunged them. And here we find them, as the first chapter tells us; no longer free but oppressed to the point of degradation.

II.

EMANCIPATION.

This degradation was the first step on the road to freedom. They had to realize their forgetfulness of God, in suffering. That it meant bondage before they would seek to be free. In their prosperity they thought little of God. When adversity came; they began to cry to him.

Notice now how God goes towards the emancipation of his people.

1. First, there must be a leader. When God goes in search of a leader; he goes to a pious home. Every boy baby was to be murdered, but when the angel of suffering came to one home the little fellow seemed such a wonderful child that its mother simply could not give him up. She had faith to believe that God had some great work for him to do. So she took a basket and lined it with pitch and briers, and hid the little fellow among the rushes of the Nile. That was an act of faith. Meriam was set to watch him.

One day the princess came to bathe. She found this strange vessel. It was towed to land. When it was opened this little fellow laid siege to the heart of the princess. He
melted her with his tears and appealed to her by his bewitching weakness. She capitulated and took him to her heart.

2. The next step towards freedom is the training of this leader. He went through three schools.

(1) He was trained by his mother. She had him for fourteen years. These were the years that told on his entire after life. If she had not been faithful then, she would have lost her chance forever.

(2) He was trained in the court of Egypt. We learn in the book of Acts that he was learned in all the wisdom of Egyptians and Caladeans, and was mighty in word and deed.

(3) Finally, he was trained forty years in the Midian Desert. This training culminated in a vision of God that sent him to his task.

3. The next step towards emancipation, was the invasion of Egypt by this leader. He, with his brother Aaron as spokesman, went to the king and commanded him, on the authority of God, to set Israel free. The king had a great opportunity. He was facing the possibility of sharing with Moses in the building of a nation, but he refused with the supercilious question, "Who is God?"

Then followed the plagues. Through these the king was frightened at times but he quickly recovered when the danger was removed. By some positive refusal he was brought to offer a compromise. First he proposed to let the men go. Then he proposed to let all the people go, provided they would leave
6--Exodus:

their flocks and their herds. The devil is always willing for the grown folks to be in church if they only let the children alone. He is also willing that we should be in church on Sunday, if we leave our business in the devil's possession.

The final plague was the death of the first born. Up to this time Israel had been faced without any effort on its own part. But now they had to do something themselves. A lamb must be slain with the blood sprinkled on the door posts and on the lintel. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." Thus was instituted the feast of the Passover. This is the clearest lesson on the doctrine of atonement that we have had so far.

4. The fourth step in their deliverance was their actual departure from Egypt. This death of the first born was such an arresting calamity that the Egyptians were eager that those who had once served them should be gone. But here again the repentance of the king was short lived. He soon repented of having allowed them to go. Not only so, but he gathered his men of war and set out in pursuit. He overtook them on the shores of the Red Sea. The Israelites were filled with terror. The Egyptians felt sure of triumph.

Then follows the final step in their deliverance. In response to the faith of Moses, a way is opened through the Red Sea. The Egyptians undertake to follow but are overwhelmed. The difference in the outcome of their efforts, the writer to the Hebrews tells us was faith. "By faith the children of Israel passed over—which the Egyptians assaying to do disarmed."

Thus the people of Israel, with songs of joy, continued their
journey until they came to Mt. Sinai.

III.

The following chapters of the book are taken up with legislation. This legislation falls, broadly speaking, into two divisions.

1. There is a legislation concerning their daily living. The heart of this legislation is stated in the ten commandments. These laws are just as fundamental today as they were when they were first delivered. If you read them you recognize the fact that they were made for one purpose, and that is for the safe-guarding of ourselves.

2. The last section concerns itself mainly, with the building of the tabernacle and directions for worship. This tabernacle, of course, being a type of him who, in later years, was to become flesh and tabernacle among us, so that we might behold his glory.

In connection, bear in mind, the main thought of the book is the sovereignty of God and the freedom of man. Moses and Pharaoh had an equal chance in entering into God's plans. Moses obeyed and God used him for his purpose. Pharaoh refused. God used him in spite of his refusal, but he did not use him as he longed to use him.

"For this reason have I raised thee up that I might show forth my power in you. But it was power to destroy rather than to bless." It was God's desire to show forth his
power to save. Pharaoh, by his rebellion, forces him to show forth his power to destroy. The last we see of this unfortunate king is as a corpse upon the shores of the Red Sea. He did not defeat God's purpose for the world, he only defeated his purpose so far as his own life was concerned.

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The book of Exodus is one of the most thrilling in literature. If you love a story that moves rapidly and grandly to a climax, you can not but enjoy this story. However, to understand it fully you must read it in the light of what has gone before. It is closely connected with the book of Genesis. It is simply the second chapter in the story that we read there.

The book opens with Israel in Egypt. There is a story of a pious Hebrew mother who has hidden her baby from the soldiers of the murderous king who was at that time on the throne. The baby is found by the Egyptian princess, is adopted by her, is named Moses. The baby is then given over to his own mother to be nursed by her. Later he is educated in the king's court. At the age of forty he goes out to visit his people. In his white-heat indignation he kills an Egyptian that is imposing upon a certain Jew. For this crime he is forced to leave the country.

He makes his escape into the Midian desert. There he marries the daughter of a prosperous gentleman and becomes a shepherd. At this task he works for forty years. Then one day, as he is walking at the back side of the desert, he sees a bush aflame. Now the remarkable thing about this bush was that it was not consumed. Moses had flamed like that once, but he had gone out. So he turns aside to see why the bush is not burned. God speaks to him out of the bush. It keeps on burning, then, because God is in it. God's message to him is that He has heard the cries of his people, Israel, and has come down to deliver them. "Come now therefore", He says, "and I will send thee to Egypt."

And into Egypt Moses goes, armed only with his shepherd's crook and with his faith in God. Aaron meets him on the way, and together they gain the presence of the king. Then follows that strenuous conflict between Pharaoh, the man of force, and Moses, the man of faith. Ten plagues are brought upon Egypt the culmination of which was the plague of death, the death of the first born.

This tenth plague is the climax. In all the other calamities that had come to Egypt the Israelites had been divinely protected without any effort on their part, but not so when death came. There was something that they had to do. They were to take a lamb and kill it and sprinkle the blood on the two door posts and on the lintel of the door. Behind this blood they were to take shelter. For God said, "When I see the blood I will pass over you." Hence the feast by which they celebrated this event was the Feast of the Passover.

After this midnight raid of death the Israelites were allowed to depart. But even then their troubles were by no means at an end. They were pursued and overtaken at the Red Sea. However, Moses lifted his rod over the waters and a pathway through the Sea was made. The Israelites made their way to the other side, but Pharaoh and his hosts were swallowed up. This great victory was celebrated by the wonderful song that we read in the 15th chapter. There are indications that we are going to sing this song in Heaven, for they sing there the song of Moses and the lamb.
From the Red Sea the Israelites marched to Mt. Sinai. At Sinai God made a covenant with His people. He gave them His law, the Ten Commandments. These were given to Moses on the mountain top. The people promised to keep the covenant that God had made with them. But Moses was a long time in returning and they gave up his ever coming back. They appeal to Aaron to make them a golden calf, and in sinful weakness he consented. Moses came a little later and smashed the table of the law to pieces and had three thousand of the worst of the sinners put to the sword. He then returned to the mountain and received a second table of law and secured for his sinning and rebellious people the pardon of God.

The remainder of the book is taken up with the tabernacle. The most minute instructions are given for its building and for the conduct of worship. By the end of the book the tabernacle has been built and God has come to dwell among them, His presence being manifest by a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

What are the lessons that this book teaches? The very heart of it, I think, is this, the sovereignty of God. It shows us God, the king, God, who rules in wisdom and in power. We do not hear much of the sovereignty of God today. We have not that conception of a God of infinite power who moves constantly to the accomplishment of His purpose, whether man obeys or whether man disobeys. But you can not read this book of Exodus without being brought face to face with God, the king.

First, we see the method of the King. There is His method with the race, His method with man, His method with the world. The story of Exodus is of God choosing and calling a certain nation to be a peculiar people to Himself. But why does He choose these people? Why does He select them? It is not that He loves them better than He does others. It is not that they may be petted and pampered. He chooses them as the instruments through which He is to make known His saving grace to all nations. God's method through all time is to make His truth known through certain agencies. This nation, then, was chosen not to be served, but to serve.

This book also is a revelation of God's method with the instrument or agency through which He is determined to make known His will. What is His method with the Hebrew people? It is this, He gives them a growing revelation of Himself. Mark you, it is a growing revelation. The face of God does not shine out as clearly in the early days of the Old Testament as it does in the New. The Bible is the story of a gradual revelation of God.

In this story, for instance, God is first revealed to Moses "As I am"; that is, He is absolute being. Later He is revealed as the Lord Jehovah; that is, as the one who is able to meet his people's needs. He is revealed as a God who knows and as a God who cares. He is revealed as a personal God. He is shown also to be a God slow to anger and plenteous in mercy, who will forgive the iniquities of those who repent, but who will in no wise spare the guilty.

This is God's method with the agents of His will throughout all times. To the man whom He is to use He makes known Himself, -
"I have appeared unto thee", said Jesus to Paul, "for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of the things which thou hast seen and of those things in which I will shortly appear unto thee." That is, Paul was to bear testimony to the truth that God had revealed to him, and his message was to be a growing message because he was to have a growing revelation.

This story is also a wonderful revelation of the wisdom and might of the King. It is perfectly fascinating to see how God moves on to the accomplishment of His purpose, using the obedience of man, if he will be obedient. If he refuses to obey, He uses even his disobedience. "For He makes the wrath of man to praise Him."

To go back a little beyond the beginning of Exodus, God told Abraham that He was going to call His people out of Egypt. It was God's purpose, then, that Israel should go to Egypt. Why? First, in Egypt they would stand a better chance to remain a separated people. The Egyptians had a great antipathy to foreigners. The Israelites would be little tempted to mix with the Egyptians if for no other reason than that the Egyptians would not allow it. In the second place, in Egypt the Jews would have a better chance in developing into a worthwhile people. The Egyptians of that day were the most refined and cultured and enlightened people in the world. The Hebrews needed to be brought into contact with that enlightenment. They would have a far better chance in Egypt than they would among these semi-barbarous and unclean people of Canaan.

But how is God to get His people into Egypt? The Egyptians are the mightiest military nation in the world. The Jews are the merest handful. There are only seventy of them. How can they hope to get a footing in Egypt? God prepares the way. The preparation was two-fold. First, Egypt had to be prepared.

How was Egypt prepared? The first step in preparation was a revolution. The native kings of Egypt were driven from the throne. A foreign dynasty, known as the "shepherd kings", won their place. Naturally they did not have the old-time hatred of foreigners that belonged to their predecessors. Neither did they have any hatred for shepherds, being shepherds themselves. But a shepherd, the story tells us, was an abomination to the Egyptians.

This was the first step in the preparation of Egypt. The second step was the coming of Joseph. Now, God did not send Joseph direct, telling him just what his task was. Joseph was sent to Egypt through the envy and hate of his brothers. He was sent from Potiphar's house through the lust and lying of a woman. He was brought from his imprisonment by the gratitude of a friend. He was seated next to pharaoh on the throne by his God-given wisdom. Thus God used the wickedness of Joseph's brothers, as well as his own fidelity and good sense, to prepare a place for His people in Egypt.

Then when Israel had everything in readiness God saw to it that Israel should be willing to come into Egypt. He simply sent a famine. And the famine took a scourge of starvation and drove them into Egypt like a flock of sheep.
In Egypt they prospered. They grew from a little crowd of seventy into a people of no less than two million. How are they to be brought out of Egypt? God has said that they were to come out. Had you gone among these prosperous Israelites and invited them to move up into Canaan, they would have laughed at you. How did God accomplish His purpose?

Again there is a preparation. First, the people themselves are prepared to leave. How? In the eighth verse of the first chapter it says, "A new king arose that knew not Joseph." This new king belonged not to the dynasty of the shepherd kings, but to the old dynasty. He was a native Egyptian. He had all the natives' hatred of the foreigner. No sooner, therefore, had a native king come to the throne than the Jews lost their position of favor.

"Come let us deal wisely with them", said the king. And this wise dealing meant oppression. It meant the determination on the part of the king to kill all the boy babies in the land. And it was through this bitter persecution that the Jews' love for Egypt changed into hatred. It was through this oppression that they were led to cry to God for deliverance. Thus God used the tyranny of a wicked king for the furthering of His purpose.

He used this same tyranny in another direction. If Israel is to go out the people must have a leader. The man who is to lead must be a man of highest ability and of highest faith and of highest training. How was God to get hold of such a leader? He needs a man with the faith of the Hebrews and with the culture of the Egyptians, and then with the sturdy patience and courage of one who has suffered and waited. How can such a leader be found?

Look how God moves toward His purpose. In a pious home a little boy is born. But a death sentence has been pronounced against him. But his mother believes there is a high destiny for him and by faith she hides him. The king's daughter finds him, loves him and adopts him. His own mother is chosen as his nurse. She has him in her sole care for fourteen years. He comes to share in his mother's faith. Thus God saw to it that the future leader should be trained in the religion of the Jews.

At the end of fourteen years he was taken into the king's court and treated as the king's son. He was educated in the royal schools. He became learned in all the religion of the Egyptians and the Chaldeans. He mixed with the most cultured men and women of the day. He became mighty in word and in deed. Thus God saw to it that his future leader should have not only the faith of the Hebrews, but the training of the Egyptians.

But even yet Moses is not fit for his task. He needs to attend one more university. Moses does not know it. None of his people know it. God knows it. And here again with wisdom and might God proceeds to the accomplishment of His task. Moses murders an Egyptian. It was a wicked and foolish thing to do. God uses even this ugly blunder for the accomplishment of His purpose. By this Moses is driven into the wilderness and becomes a shepherd.

Here, I think, is where Moses got the training that possibly
In the desert with the flock he learned patience. A sheep is a foolish animal. He who deals with them must be greatly gifted with the rare grace of patience. Here, too, he learned courage. The shepherd’s life is beset with dangers. Here he learned self sacrifice for the shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” Thus God prepared His leader.

Then, last of all, Pharaoh must be prepared to let the people go. Naturally he does not want them to go. They are a little more than slaves, and they have been profitable to him. Had he yielded willingly to the will of God he might have become a monument of God’s power to bless, but he resisted. But in spite of his resistance, God moved on to the accomplishment of His purpose, and Israel was free.

So you see that the very heart and marrow of the story is this, God is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We need that conception more and more today. I am afraid many of us worship a weak and emasculated God. A mighty God makes mighty men, but a weak God can only make weak men.

It was the Exodus conception of God that the Psalmist had in mind when he said, “The Lord reigneth; let the earth tremble.” For every weak thing and every unclean thing shall be trodden down, defeated, blasted, blighted, destroyed, utterly dammed.” It was that same Exodus conception which made him say again, “The Lord reigneth; let the people rejoice.” Let them rejoice with the joy of those who look with eager and hungry hearts to the day when evil shall be finally dethroned and God shall be recognized as king from the rivers to the ends of the earth. This story is also a revelation of the fact that God’s sovereignty does not in any way interfere with the freedom of man. God uses man’s obedience and man’s disobedience for the accomplishment of His purposes. Some are ready to ask then, “If God uses the disobedience of man for the accomplishment of His purpose, why is man to blame?” Simply because his motive is wrong. The merit of a deed depends on its motive. If I knock you down with a rock and in falling you stick a pebble in your hand and find that pebble to be a thousand dollar diamond you do not thank me for it.

How did Moses become the man that he did become? Not because God forced him. God gave him the privilege of choice. Through faith Moses chose the right. A right choice led to a right character. And a right character culminated in a right destiny. The same privilege of choice was given to Pharaoh. He refused to choose the best. I know it says that God hardened His heart, but He did so only by constantly giving this man a renewed opportunity to sin against the right. The reason Pharaoh failed was because through unbelief he refused to make a right choice, and therefore refused to form a right character and to obtain a right destiny. God is king. A man only reaps the benefits of that kingship by faith that leads to obedience. you see that in Exodus, as in Genesis, man is saved by faith.
"The Messages of the Books."

Leviticus.

If you have undertaken to read this book I feel sure that you did not find it thrillingly interesting. It is a book dealing with directions for worship. It is full of the most minute details regarding the ancient ritual of the Jews. There are also rules governing hygiene. One physician of international reputation has said that these hygienic rules alone are enough to prove the inspiration of the book. However, all in all I feel sure your reading gave you the impression that the book of Leviticus is far removed from any practical and everyday interest.

Yet a close study of the book will bring you another conviction. There are truths taught by all this seemingly dull and uninteresting ritualism that are abiding and eternal. Two supreme facts stand out clearly, facts that are new and thoroughly up to date. First, the book brings us face to face with the fact of sin. And second, with the fact of redemption.

The first message of the book of Leviticus, then, for the modern man is a message concerning the reality of sin. In this book we face sin as a fact. It is a great, grim reality. Not that the author argues about it, not that he seeks by any concise and close logic to prove the reality of sin, - he does not. But sin is assumed everywhere. The priests, the offerings, the tabernacle are necessary only on the assumption of the fact of sin. If there is no sin, then this book is the merest jungle of nonsense.

Not only are we brought here face to face with the fact of sin, we are made to understand something of what sin is. You remember, I suppose, the definition of sin as given in the New Testament. There are three. Sin is a transgression of the law: "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." That is, sin is failure in duty. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." That is, sin is doing the questionable. But the idea of sin as given in Leviticus, while agreeing with these, goes deeper. Here sin, as another has pointed out, is represented as wrong done to God. Now, I think it highly important that we look at sin in this way. It matters greatly whether you regard sin as simply a wrong done to one of your fellows or as a wrong done to God. To leave God out of the question is to have a blunted sense of the horror and guilt of sin. Then, too, it is to measure the guilt of our sin in terms of the person against whom it is committed.

That, you know, has been one of the soiled and stained chapters of all history. A Roman master murdered his slave if he cared to without any guilt. However, he was guilty if he murdered a fellow citizen. What was wrong to one man was not wrong to another simply because they had lost the conception of sin as being wrong done to God.

In "The Tale of Two Cities" you remember the horrible and ugly chapter with which the book opens. A girl dying in her shame, her
brother coldly murdered in his effort to defend her, the physician stolen and then hidden away in the Bastile. But this was done coolly, deliberately because those who suffer belong to the peasantry and not to the nobility. And even we share in some measure the same tendency. We do not feel the same oftentimes toward a foreigner as we do toward one of ourselves. Recently I received a letter from a preacher in a certain community. A Chinese boy had gone from this city, and from this church, and had presented his letter on a certain Sunday morning. The mayor of the town waited on the preacher the next day and protested against receiving the young Chinaman into membership. And the preacher was greatly perplexed. He would never have thought of treating one of his neighbors in such a fashion. He would have felt that it was doing wrong, but he was not doing wrong in so treating a Chinaman.

Now, how are we to overcome this tendency to respect the persons of men? It is only by having this proper and scriptural idea of sin. Sin is, first of all, and fundamentally, against God. We can no more wrong one man than another because both of them are God's children. Both of them are made in His image. Both of them have been purchased by the blood of the Cross. And we are to see in everyone of them a brother for whom Christ died and realize that in wounding them we wound Him.

Our supreme sin is against God even when we injure ourselves. When I impair my usefulness, when I wreck my body and my mind I am sinning against myself, but I am not the supreme sufferer. The supreme sufferer is God.

It is easy to understand how this is true. Did you ever know a tender and high-souled mother who had in her home a godless and wicked boy? Did you ever watch that boy slowly wreck himself? In doing so he suffers, but the mother suffers far more than he. She is more sensitive. She has a greater horror of ugliness. She suffers more because she is greater.

And in our sin God suffers as much more than we as He Himself is greater than we. The truth of the matter is that the agony of the Cross is not what God suffered once, but what He suffers continually. God is being constantly wounded, constantly wronged, pained by your sin and mine.

The Psalmist, then, had the true idea of sin when he made that wonderful confession, - "Against thee, thee only have I sinned." David had sinned against Bathsheba. He had sinned deeply against Uriah. He had sinned against the nation. He had sinned against his own home. But all those against whom he had sinned were God's children. And he was God's child, and because He loved everyone and suffered infinitely, He was the supreme sufferer. The supreme wrong was against Himself. Oh I know that sin will become more hateful to us if we thought of it in this way, as bringing pain and anguish to the heart of God.

The Book also gives us some insight into the results of sin. What does all this ritualism, all these sacrifices mean? They are provided as a way for man to get back to God. Therefore they imply that man by his sin has been separated from God. Sin always means
separation. That is the picture we get of it when it first appears upon the scene in Genesis. There it comes as a divider and a divider it is still, separating man from God, separating man from man, separating man from his better self.

Now, because sin means separation from God, it always results in ignorance of God. Man separated from God ceases to know Him. That is the reason so many do not know Him today. That is the reason God is so unreal to many. That is the reason our prayers are so powerless and useless. Our sins have separated between us and God and we no longer know Him. We no longer have any sense of His presence.

And because we no longer know Him, we become unlike Him. Sin brings separation. Separation brings ignorance of God. And ignorance of God results in unlikeness to God. Men become like that upon which they gaze. As the youth, in Hawthorne's story of "The Great Stone Face", was transformed by his wistful gaze into that face, so we, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory. One awful result of sin is just this, that it makes us unholy, that it keeps us from being like God.

Now, as clearly as the fact of sin is taught, so clearly also is taught the fact of redemption. This whole book teaches that it is God's purpose to redeem man. But while love is not mentioned in the book, we can not read it intelligently without knowing that God's purpose of redemption was born of His love. He was not simply seeking to vindicate the law, as some old theologians have said. He could have done that by annihilating man. He was seeking to save man. He was doing so because He loved him.

We are taught in this book that redemption is based on righteousness. We are taught also that the end of redemption is holiness. Man is not redeemed simply that he may escape the penalty of his sins. By this redemption he may do that. But the great end of redemption is that man shall become better, that he shall become God-like, and that through this likeness to God he may be brought again into fellowship with Him, that he may once more be made like Him.

The book also clearly tells us the method of redemption. Man is to be redeemed not by himself, not by his own good works, but by the shedding of blood. This book teaches very clearly what the writer to the Hebrews taught when he said, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." The whole idea of the book is that in order for sins to be forgiven, an innocent life must be laid down in the place of the guilty.

This, as you know, is what is called vicarious suffering. It is one suffering in the place of another. It is the law of the Cross. It is the law we find running through all nature. In order for a harvest of wheat the corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die. The leaves of this spring grow green from the death of the leaves of other springtime. Life never comes except out of death.

We can trace this idea also in almost all primitive religions. Before any victory could be won a life must be sacrificed. When a
city was to be founded the foundation could only be laid permanently in human blood. When the great Chinese bell was to be made it could only ring with perfect clearness by the same process. Its metal must be mingled with human blood. It was their way of saying that "without the shedding of blood there is not only no remission of sins, but there is nothing of achievement that is worth while.

And this fact of one suffering for another is the great saving force in life today. The reason that it is hard oftentimes for a boy to go wrong is because he breaks his father's heart and his mother's heart by so doing. If you stop the good suffering for the bad you will do away with one of the greatest restraints in human life today. If you and I can be brought to realize that God suffers in our wrong doing beyond the capacity of any human heart to suffer, sin will lose much of its fascination.

You can not read this book of blood and fire and then look upon sin as a trifle. It has here in its ugly and sometimes horrible symbols the great message of the Cross, the great message of the ages, the message that is as new today as your last heart's beat. And that message is this, sin is a terrible and damning reality. It is so terrible that it can only be atoned for by the laying down of life. "Without the shedding of blood, even the blood of the Cross, there is no remission of sins."
LEVITICUS.

If you have managed to read Leviticus with interest, then you need have no uneasiness about any other book of the Bible. I have no hesitancy in saying that to the average reader, this book makes about the hardest reading of any to be found in the sacred library. It seems to the casual reader, little more than a jumble of ritualistic rules that are of no practical interest to us of today.

But when we take into consideration the fact that in this book God is undertaking to train a new nation in spiritual matters, it becomes a bit more interesting. There is that in the story, with its bloody sacrifices, that of course does not appeal very strongly to us of today, but we must remember that this is a record of God's dealing with Israel in its very childhood.

Now, just as Exodus follows naturally upon the heels of Genesis, so does Leviticus come naturally after Exodus. The last section of Genesis begins the story of God's effort for the world's regeneration. A man is chosen to become the leader of a nation. This nation goes into Egypt, becomes, first, the bondslave of materialism, then sinks into physical bondage. God then provides the leader who brings them out from the house of bondage. He then passes laws for their government. The last division of Exodus is legislation. Leviticus simply continues this divine legislation.

This book is divided, roughly speaking, into four parts. The law of offerings, Chapters 1 to 7; the law governing priesthood, Chapters 8 to 10; the laws governing cleanliness, Chapters 10 to 16; the laws
This first section brings before us the offerings that God required at the hands of His people. These, briefly speaking, are of three kinds.

1. There were the sin and trespass offerings. These two, while not absolutely identical, may be classed as one. The trespass offering carried the added idea of restitution. The method of this offering was the putting of the offer of sin on to some innocent victim that was then put to death in the sinner's place. The lesson was that pardon was bought in this fashion through the death of the innocent victim.

2. The second was the burnt offering. Here the one making the sacrifice, put his hand upon the head of the victim, the victim was then slain and blood sprinkled over the altar and his body burned. The smoke of the burning victim rose towards heaven to symbolize, to the worshipper, the rising of his own soul to God. This offering was an act of consecration.

3. The third offering was known as the peace offering, where the victim was not burned, but eaten in company with others. God Himself was supposed to be one of the guests. It was a communion service. It was the natural outcome of pardon and self-surrender, that was symbolized through the two former offerings. When we obtain pardon, when we consecrate ourselves to God, then we are prepared, and do, enter into His fellowship.
Now, these offerings may seem a very dull study, but they emphasized therein certain truths that abide and are of permanent value to ourselves.

1. They declare, emphatically, the fact of sin.

2. They also declare that sin is not only a fact that separates from God. The man who sins, becomes estranged from God and ceases to walk in his fellowship.

3. It emphasizes the nature of sin. It tells us that sin is essentially against God; it is not simply a wrong done by one man to another. It is a wrong done to God Himself.

It is important that we keep this fact in mind today. If we fail to do so, the degree of our guilt in wrong doing will depend upon the importance of the individual to whom the wrong is done. For instance, a Roman can kill his slave and be guiltless. If he killed a fellow-citizen he would be guilty.

During the days just preceding the French Revolution, a wrong done by the nobility to the peasantry was no wrong at all. That is a hideous chapter that we find at the beginning of "A Tale of Two Cities". A girl who has been wronged, is dying; her brother who tries to avenge her, is ruthlessly murdered; the physician that is called to attend her is shut up in the Bastille. Those who do these deeds feel no wrong because of the low estate of the ones thus wronged.

We have not fully recovered to this day. We do not regard an injustice to some poor and defenseless creature with the same eyes that we regard injustice to one in better circumstances. For instance, there are thousands among us that would do an injustice to a colored man that they would be ashamed to do to a white man. This grows out
of the fact that we believe the guilt of the sin depends upon the
worth of the one sinned against.

But God has no such standard. We are all his children. He
loves us all with the same tender love. Therefore, He grieves alike
over the wrongs of the highest and of the lowest because He suffers
in the suffering of every child of His. Every sin we commit against
that child is against Him. The Psalmist had the right idea when he
prayed, "Against Thee, Thee alone, have I sinned". Had he not wronged
Uriah? He had. Had he not wronged his wife? He had, desperately.
But, his supreme sin was against God. God's suffering was as much
greater than the sufferings of these victims as He was greater than
themselves. 

II

Next, there is God's will concerning his ministry.

There were three outstanding requirements of those who were to
minister before the Lord.

1. The priest was to be a separated man. He was to be set
aside for this work and for this work only. It is well for this to be kept in mind by the minister today. He must be a man of one work. He must heed Paul's wise exhortation to Timothy: "Give thyself wholly to it". The preacher who can succeed in something else besides preaching is mighty apt to make a failure of his preaching.

2. The priest was to be obedient. He was to make the offerings, not according to his own whims, but according to the plan and purpose of God. There were two sons of Aaron who presumed to offer strange fire upon God's altar. They were destroyed. Happy is the minister today who refuses to presume upon God. He is to hear the word from God's lips and warn men from Him.

3. The priest was to be a man of clean and exemplary life. Even wine was not to be drunk by the priest. God has never been able to do much toward building a holy world through unholy men. He recognized this fact. Therefore he said, "I keep unto my body and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, after I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway".

III

Then, God required of the people that they should be clean. The laws of sanitation and hygiene that are recorded here are perfectly marvelous when viewed in the light of the day, in which they were written. One physician, with an international reputation, said that these laws governing health were in themselves enough to prove the divine origin of the Book. In this section we learn something of the truth of that old saying that "Cleanliness is next to Godliness".
What is God seeking through these laws? He is seeking a healthy family. It is every man's duty to be just as sound and strong physically as he can. I am not at all sure that the man who does seemingly the most innocent thing, when that thing impairs his health, is not guilty before God. Both your mind and your soul have a better chance if they live in a healthy body.

Now, in this matter of health, He prescribed what the people were to eat. There were some foods that were forbidden. Hog meat, for instance. Too much pig is not good in any country. It would have been disastrous in the country in which the Israelites were then living. The council of God is, that food that impairs your health, let it alone. If you find that even as innocent things as coffee and tobacco are likely to take five or ten years off your life, you had better give them up.

Then there are many directions as to keeping their homes clean. It is awfully easy to get sick in a filthy house. It is quite easy to die there. I do not mean that you are to have your houses so clean that we have to remove our shoes at the door, but filth is conducive to disease, both physical and moral.

IV

Now the purpose of redemption, and the purpose of the other laws, is just this: to make these people holy. Holiness is one of the keywords of this book. It occurs more than one hundred and fifty times.

What is it to be holy? There is a twofold idea. First, it is
to be separated from all that is unclean. It is to do no wrong, but of course that is not full-orbed holiness. If that is all that is meant to be holy, you might have a holy wax figure.

The second idea of holiness is to be fully given up to God. The purpose of the redemption that had come through sacrifice, the purpose of all God's dealings with His people, was that they would be completely given up to His service. They were to be His, and His alone. They were to be healthy in their bodies. They were also to be healthy in their spiritual life, for holiness and health come from the same root word.

Thus, you see, the purpose with which God is moving. He is seeking to have His people clean and strong in body, clean and strong in soul, given up to His service. In order to accomplish this, He must lead them to recognize sin; He must lead them to know that the wages of sin is death; He must show them that sin may only be put away by the shedding of blood. The doctrine of atonement here taught runs through the whole Bible. It was the faith of Isaiah, it was the faith of the writers of the new testament.

But, it is more than the doctrine of the Bible, it is a fact of experience. One of the greatest moral values to this day is what is known as vicarious suffering. That is, the innocent suffering for the guilty. How much harder it is for a boy to sin when he realizes the fact that by so doing he is breaking his mother's heart!

Then, the fact that one suffers and dies for another, makes the most irresistible appeal that is known. Christ recognized this fact when he said "And if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me". (The great Chinese battle).
If you really enjoy Leviticus, you need not be uneasy about the rest of the Bible. For the ordinary reader a glance into Leviticus is about as inviting as a trudge through a desert. To say the book is dry is to put it mildly. It is positively parched. Yet when read understandingly, it becomes far more interesting than at first glance. This is the case because a study of the book reveals its real purpose. It is a book of pictures. It abounds in symbols. Its purpose is to teach religion to a primitive people. The author of this book is not talking to adults in the religious life; he is talking to those that are in the kindergarten. Hence he makes large use of symbols.

Naturally, we know something of the value of the symbols. We make considerable use of them ourselves. Some symbols are precious to us. For instance, when I perform a wedding ceremony, I put a ring in the hands of the bridegroom and he repeats after me, "With this ring I thee wed, and with all my wedded love I thee endow, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." By and by should days of sorrow come to that wedded pair, by and by should the husband be called into the Land Unknown, the wife would still cherish her wedding ring. Should poverty come, should she have to sell some of her choicest belongings, she would doubtless let her wedding ring go last. This would be the case not because of what it was worth in itself, but because it signified their wedded love. As a piece of jewelry it might be worth little. As a symbol it might be priceless.

In these tempestuous days, we think with unaccustomed devotion of the flag. Of course we honor it at all times, but today we turn to it with a peculiar devotion. This is the case whether it is an elaborate flag of
silk or a bit of cheese-cloth. What is the secret of our devotion? It is not what the flag is in itself. It is that for which the flag stands. It is a symbol of the nation. When we salute the flag, we salute all our fellow patriots. We salute those who are today dying that this nation might live.

When we dedicate our children to God, or when those come to be received into the church in maturer years who have not been dedicated in infancy, we sprinkle a bit of water upon their heads. What is the good of this water? From a practical point of view, no good at all! Nothing could be more worthless! But it is a practice of the church because of what it symbolizes. It is the outward symbol of an inward cleansing. John said, "I indeed baptize with water, but He that cometh after me shall baptize with the Holy Spirit." How did Jesus baptize with the Holy Spirit? Answer: The Holy Spirit fell on all them. "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." When we baptize, therefore, using water instead of the Spirit we pour out the water. But the significant fact is that this water outpoured is a symbol of the outpoured Spirit.

Naturally, we think of the most precious service of the church—the Communion Service. What is the good of taking a bit of bread and grape juice? For practical purposes, no good at all! If one were hungry before Communion, he would be just as hungry afterward. But this service is precious because as we take the bread, it is a symbol of the broken body of our Lord; as we take the wine, it is a symbol of life laid down for us. This book of Leviticus then is in large measure a book of symbols.

When we begin to read we are brought face to face with bloody sacrifices. To look at it in its crass literalness, it is not beautiful—the slaughter of animals, the sprinkling of their blood, the burning of the flesh.
upon the altar. I am not interested in going into these different types of sacrifices, but they had for those who participated in them a real meaning. They stood for something far more profound than the mere ugliness that meets the eye. What were these sacrifices saying to this primitive people?

1. They were emphasizing the fact of sin. All morally earnest people have had a profound sense of sin. In fact where there is no sense of sin, there is no sense of God. Whenever the individual or a group become conscious of God, that individual or group becomes conscious also of sin. When humble Isaiah went into the temple and had a vision of the Lord, high and lifted up, his first reaction was this: "I am a man of unclean lips and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips."

Not only did these sacrifices remind the ancient worshiper of the fact of sin, but they impressed upon him that sin was no light matter. It told him that it was a terrible thing—that it meant separation from God, that when a man sinned he lost God. It meant that man ceased to be like God. It told him further that sin involved penalty. The slaughter of animals was the worshiper's way of saying in symbol what Paul said centuries later: "The wages of sin is death."

2. Not only did these sacrifices declare man's sin; they also declared the possibility of redemption. Though man had sinned and had become separated from God, though he was under the penalty of death, that penalty might be escaped; sinful man might be forgiven; an estranged man might be restored to the divine fellowship. When the sinner brought his lamb, he put his hands upon it, which was an act of laying his sins upon the lamb. Then it was slain, or, if there were two lambs, one was led far away and turned loose in the wilderness. This is where we got those old terms that we do not use any more, but that meant a great deal to these ancient people.
They meant a great deal to some of our fathers. There was the idea of substitution. The lamb died in the place of the sinner. Isaiah had that in mind when he wrote one of the finest passages in the Bible: "He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed."

Then, there was the word "Imputation". It came to be greatly misused, but the offerer thought of himself as putting his guilt upon another. Then, followed the death of the victim in whose death the offerer symbolically died. Having thus paid the penalty for his sin, he was free.

3. Not only was there an emphasis upon the fact of sin and redemption, but of consecration and fellowship. When the animal was burned upon the altar, the ascending smoke went up to God. That animal represented the offerer. The smoke symbolized that the offerer himself was ascending to God in consecration. Sometimes a part of the offered animal was eaten. In this case, it became a communion; God was represented as joining in the feast. There is nothing here said that is not better said somewhere else, but this was a dim foreshadowing of the fact that man estranged by sin might through forgiveness be brought back into the divine fellowship.

II

As a result of these sacrifices, man was not set free and forgiven to live his own life. Having been forgiven through sacrifice, he was commanded to live a life of holiness. He was to be holy because God was holy. The word "holy" as used in this book carries the idea of separation. He was to keep himself free from ceremonial and moral defilement. The idea of this ancient worshiper with regard to ceremony does not appeal to us today. But his conception of a holy life when viewed in the light of that ancient day
was wonderfully wise.

In obeying the law of holiness a man was to have a holy body. This book is deeply concerned about the laws of health. It was interested in sanitation. Of course, we recognize that one may be very sound physically and at the same time rotten morally. We also recognize the fact that one may be in desperately bad health physically and be very strong spiritually, but other things being equal a sound body is a great asset in the living of a vigorous spiritual life. It is far more difficult to be strong spiritually if we have to live in a shack of a body that is tortured by ill health. These people realized that it was just as correct to speak of a holy body and a healthful soul as it is to speak of a healthful body and a holy soul. The two ought to go together so far as possible.

2. Not only does the book insist upon the observance of the laws of health, but it insists upon right living. The Book has a surprisingly high code of ethics.

(1). It is in this prosaic book that we find the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Of course we must bear in mind that the writer of this law did not mean by neighbor what Jesus meant by it. This law enjoined one Jew to love his fellow Jew. It also enjoined a Jew to love the alien or the foreigner that had settled down among them and become a part of their nation.

(2). The law forbade dishonesty. A man was not to over-reach his neighbor in a trade. If he found a lost article, he must return it to its owner. If he won anything by fraud by any kind of wrong-doing, he must make restitution. The sacrifice he offered therefore was not a substitute for right living. Not only must the worshiper make restitution, but he must add one-fifth to it for good measure. If he had beaten his neighbor out of one hundred dollars, he must give him back one hundred twenty dollars.
It is quite remarkable I think to find a law like this in so ancient a book. Of course the law of restitution is insisted upon in the New Testament. It is easy to see the reason for it. It is a mark of moral earnestness.

You perhaps recall the gentlemen who told his friend that he had been to a revival meeting where he was soundly converted. "Well," said his neighbor, "I suppose you will be paying me that ten dollars you owe me." "No," came the prompt reply, "the Lord forgave me that along with my other sins." But God does not transact business that way. Shakespeare, who read the human heart about as clearly as anybody that ever lived, shows us the impossibility of any vital religious life without a willingness to correct the past so far as it is within our power.

You remember when Hamlet's uncle, who had killed his brother and had stolen by that murder at once his brother's wife and crown, was trying to pray he could not make a go of it. Listen to him:

"But, O! what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder?
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardon'd, and retain t'is offence?
In the corrupted currents of this world,
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;
And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law; but 'tis not so above;
There is no shuffling, there the action lies
In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence. What then? what rests?
Try what repentance can? What can it not?
Yet what can it, when one can not repent?
O, wretched state! O bosom, black as death!
O, lined soul! that, struggling to be free,
Art more engag'd."

(3). Then there were laws protecting the poor. Wonderfully wise laws! For instance when a wealthy man cut his grain, he was not allowed to cut it clean; some had to be left for the gleaners. They followed the
Reapers to reap some grain for themselves. That was far better than the rich man's doing the reaping and giving the poor the grain. That would have been charity. This system gave the poor a chance to work. Then if the poor was working for wages, he did not have to wait for his hire.

There was a law that compelled his employer to pay him off every night. This kept him from going in debt. It kept him from going hungry if it so happened that his credit was not good.

(4) Then there was a humane law that protected those that had become so unfortunate as to lose their all and become slaves. At that time slavery was a universal evil, and if a Hebrew had become a slave, his owner was not allowed to treat him as a slave. He had to treat him as a hired servant and on the seventh year he was to be set free. If he had been a land-owner and had lost his estate, every fifty years that estate must be restored to its original owner if he were living or to his family. "The land," Moffatt translates it, "shall not be sold in perpetuity for the land is mine and you are my guests." If you lodge a guest for the night you do not expect him to claim the room henceforth as his own. God forbade their claiming the land as their own. This prevented the building up of vast landed estates for the enrichment of the few and the impoverishment of the many.

(5) Last of all there was the law of the tithes. Every man was to give one tenth of his net income in acknowledgment of the divine ownership. He was not to give this tithe at the close of the year after he had met all other obligations. He was to give it as soon as it came into his hands. "The first fruits are the Lord's." Not only was he to give it, but he was to bring it in. Malachi had this law in mind when he said, "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse."

What then is the permanent value of this book? What is there in it that is abiding? It has nothing to say that is altogether new and original.
The truths that it teaches are made more clear in other books of the Bible. But it did teach a primitive people at least three fundamental doctrines that are pertinent today and every day.

(1) It taught them the reality of sin and its horrible consequences. Sin in the mind of this ancient author involved separation from God. It involves unlikeness to God. It is against God. What stake does God have in your sin and mine? Why should he complain? Millions have asked that question. Job asked it when he was on the rack: "If I sin what is that to thee, oh, Thou Spy upon mankind." God suffers in our sin because sin is anti-social. It always hurts the sinner; it always hurts others. God is a Father. A father suffers in the suffering of his children. God suffers in our suffering; therefore, the psalmist was right when he said, "Against Thee, and Thee only have I sinned."

(2) The book teaches the possibility of redemption. Sin may be forgiven. This means far more than the remission of a penalty. It means the restoration of fellowship. The forgiveness of sin is costly. The purer the forgiver the greater the cost. But when God forgives he takes us into his confidence once more. When he forgives, He forgets. The only somethings in the universe that God ever forgets is your sin and mine. "I will forgive their transgressions and their iniquities will I remember no more." This holy and healing faith is dearly taught in this book.

(3) This book teaches that having been redeemed at a price, we are to live holy lives. It points to that high faith of St. Paul, "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God." We are to glorify Him by sharing his mind and by doing His work. So this book with its sometimes grim and horrible pictures had a glimmering of the sweetest story ever told—the story of the Gospel of the saving grace of God.
Leviticus

When we begin to teach our children, we give them picture books. Much of this dry and uninteresting book of Leviticus is a book of symbols. It was meant for little children, for primitive people, who were vastly ignorant of spiritual things. These symbols therefore ugly and offensive as they are to some of us, contained for them fundamental truths of abiding value. Even in our advanced civilization we teach by certain symbols. These are not valuable in themselves. They are of value because of what they represent.

Here for instance, is a woman who is wearing a plain little ring. In the markets of the world its value would be very small. Maybe her husband has died and left her with very little upon which to live. But when poverty comes, though she might part with the furniture, she would be very slow to sell her wedding ring.

This would be the case, because of its intrinsic value, but because of what it represents. It is a symbol of her wedded love. For this reason, while of little worth to others, it is priceless to her.

The same is true of the flag. Whether the flag is made of silk or a bit of cheese cloth matters little. That which gives value to the flag is what it represents. It is a symbol of the nation. During the World War a German Jew was kidnapped out in a little Iowa town, carried to the hall of a certain organization and told to spit upon the German flag. He was commanded to do this under penalty of death. He refused, saying "You cannot make me hate Germany anymore than you can make me hate you. I had rather die than to hate either one of you. Therefore I will not insult a great people by spitting on their flag." His respect was not for a bit of cloth, but for human personality.

We have certain religious symbols today that are very dear to us, and full of meaning. But to the outsider who might drop in from Mars they would mean nothing at all. Take baptism, for instance. Here stands a man at the alter. The minister dips his hand into a chalice and drops a bit of water upon his head. How utterly useless. What does it accomplish? The answer is simply nothing at all. Yet we believe that there is value in this rite, not for what it is in itself, but because of
that for which it stands. It is an outward symbol of an inward cleansing. It means that the baptised is declaring before the world his faith in the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit. Thus we value baptism, not for what it is in itself, but because of what it symbolizes.

The same is true of the most beautiful sacrament of the church, The Lords Supper. Nothing could be much less useless in itself than a Communion Service. We take a bit of bread with the smallest sip of grape juice. If we were hungry we should be just as hungry after this communion as before. But this broken bread and this wine stand for something. Jesus said, "This is my body which is given for you." This bread and wine are the symbols of life laid down. of the spirit of One who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. Thus this bread and wine, though trivial in itself remains through the centuries unspeakably precious to every follower of Christ.

Now if we need symbols today, they were even more needful to those who were in the kindergarten of spiritual development. These sacrifices, this slaughtering of animals, this smearing of blood, this burning of flesh, all these seem a bit horrible to us, but they symbolized to these primitive people certain fundamental truths that they need to know. They are truths that are just as valid today as then, though we do not express them in exactly the same fashion.

What were the meaning of these sacrifices? There were two fundamental facts taught by them.

1. These offerings were a recognition of the fact of sin. The whole process becomes silly and meaningless unless this is the case. Some time ago a minister told his family story. It ran like this. "There was a cry of fire. The family fled the house without saving anything. But the wife and mother had an antique dresser, a fine old air loom that she was eager to save. The father and son rushed into the burning building, the father pulling and the son pushing, they got the antique to the door, where it stuck fast. Unable to move it either out or in, there was nothing for the father to do, but to take the ax and slash the antique in order
to save his son. The story did not seem to go over. The minister questioned his wife about it on his return home. "The people did not seem to understand the story."
The answer was, "You forgot to tell them that the house was on fire."

That is the purpose of these bloody sacrifices, to inform these people that the house was on fire. They declared and helped to make real the grim fact of sin. They told something of the nature of sin. Sin was unlikeness to God. It led to ignorance and separation from God. Its issue was death. This shedding of blood declared to them in simple language what Paul said centuries later, "The wages of sin is death."

2. These sacrifices not only declared the fact of sin, but also the heartening fact of redemption. They declared that while man had sinned and had lost God, while he had incurred the penalty of death, he might be forgiven and brought back into the divine favor. The process was very simple. They were forgiven on the basis of life laid down. There were three steps in this process.

(1) Substitution
   An innocent victim was found to take the sinner's place.

(2) Imputation
   That is the sinner laid his sins on this intended victim.

(3) The animal was slain.
   In case there were two animals, one of them was slain and the other was turned loose in the wilderness. Thus they were taught that not only could their sins be forgiven, but they were carried so far away as not to prove harmful anymore.

This idea of the removal of sin through sacrifice is one that runs all through the Old Testament. "As far as the East is from the West, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." Another sings, "He cast all our sins in the depths of the sea." This was perhaps what Jeremiah had in mind when he said, "He will forgive your iniquities and sins and will remember no more."

But while forgiveness was a fact of these ancient people, they were taught through these sacrifices that it could only come through the shedding of blood, that is, through life laid down. That too, is the teaching of the New Testament. It is the idea embodied in about the most priceless version in the Gospels. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth
in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Further, the costliness of forgiveness is also emphasized by the fact that restitution must be made by the sinner in so far as possible. If one had stolen or defrauded, his ill gotten gains must be restored in order for forgiveness. Not only so, but a fifth must be added to it.

Now it strikes me that this shows remarkable insight for so early a stage in moral and spiritual development. There are many, even today, who do not recognize the necessity of restitution in order to forgiveness. But that is at once sound psychology, as well as sound theology. Shakespeare, who was of all men perhaps the most deeply schooled in the things of the heart, brings out that fact in the "Tragedy of Hamlet." The king who had stolen his brother's wife and his brother's kingdom is trying to pray, but he cannot make a go of it. "Ah, what prayer can serve my term, forgive me my foul murder. That cannot be sins I am still possessing of those effects for which I did the murder. My crown, my own ambitions and my kin. May one be pardoned and retain the offer in the corrupt current of this world of guilded hands? May show by justice and oft is seen the wicked price itself buy out the law. But it is not so above. And strange to say, these primitive people in the long ago discovered this truth.

Then there was the burnt offering, where too there was a substitution. The hands of the offerer were placed on the animals head. The beast was then slain and his flesh burned upon the alter. This burning beast represented the offerer. As the smoke ascended to heaven, it signified the life of this redeemed sinner up to God. It signifies his consecration to God. Then there was a significance here, the flesh was not burned but eaten. This was a communion service. God, himself was suppose to share the feast. It meant that the flesh broken by sin was restored, because sin had been put away through sacrifice.

II

Now the issues of redemption was a life of holiness. This holiness had to do with the whole of life not just a part of it.
1. It had to do with the idea of health. There were strict rules regarding sanitation. There were rules governing what the people should eat. There were rules regarding the sanitary conditions of their homes. It was profound insight that discovered that God was not only concerned with healthy souls, but with healthy bodies as well. We can see now the good sense of this. One may be sound physically and rotten spiritually. But it is far harder to have a generally healthy soul and a torched and torn down body. One may live in a clean environment and be clean, but it is hard to be clean amidst utter filth.

2. But the idea of holiness had to do also with the definitely religious life of the people. It carried a two-fold idea, this word holiness. It meant:

(1) Separation
It laid much emphasis on separation from ceremonial defilement, that of course, does not appeal to us today. But it also required separation from positive wrong.

These Israelites were not to indulge in evil practice. The writer warns them against this.

For instance, there they come to possess this good land. It was through the moral failures of its former inhabitants that had become so based, so utterly corrupt that in the language of the writer the land had vomited them out. So he says it will happen to you as you become guilty of their sins. You are a choice people, but you are chosen only so long as you make yourself chosen. To fail to be separated, also to incur drought, pestilence, famine, fear and exile.

Not only was holiness separated from the unclean, it was dedication to God. Paul in his letter to the Romans gives something of the idea. He begins by saying, "Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ, separated unto the Gospel of God, that is, he is not emphasizing what he has had to give up, but what he has found. These people were separated unto God, and unto the keeping of his laws. Some of the laws seem a bit trivial to us, but changed in the light of their day, they are wonderful, helpful and human.

3. Look now at some of the laws that these people are to keep.

(1) Here we find for the first time the law enjoining that we are to
love our neighbor as ourselves. This is the human side of that. Their law of love which Jesus said was the first and great commandment, of course, they did not understand by neighbor what we understand by it. Neighbor meant to them a fellow Jew. It meant also an alien who had settled among them and had come to be one with them.

(2) There were laws favoring the poor. When a farmer cut his wheat or gathered his grapes, he was to leave some for the poor. He was not to gather the wheat or the grapes for them. That would be charity. That is our method today, and it is a bad method. Their system gave the poor not only a chance to eat, but a chance to work as well, and working is just as important as eating.

(3) There was a humane law that required the employer to pay the employee his wages as soon as the days work was done. He could not even wait till the morning. What a lesson in the prompt payment of bills. If we could sit at the feet of this primitive people in the conducting of our business today in this respect, especially as regarding the church, instead of paying when due we pay when we have to.

(4) Then there was a law enjoining the humane treatment of slaves. This was really a remarkable law. Slavery was everywhere in those days. It was cross and cruel. But if a Hebrew became a slave he was not to be treated as such. He was to be treated as a hired servant and at the air of jubilee he was to be set free.

(5) Then there was a law that gave distressed and defeated people a new start. Every fifty years, not only were all slaves set free, but all land was returned to its original owner. This proved helpful. Instead of few getting everything, everyone got something. This law was based on the divine ownership. Here is one of the finest declarations in the Bible whether in the Old or New Testament. I give Moffatt's translation, "The land shall be sold in perpetuity, the land is mine. Ye are my guests, passing wayfarers, since God owns the land they are not to treat it as if it were theirs anymore than a guest in your home is to act as if their room you had given him for the night was his own for all time."
Another law growing out of the divine ownership, was the law of tithe. Since God owned everything that ownership was to be acknowledged. It was to be acknowledged not in the interest of God, but in the interest of man. If man failed to acknowledge God's ownership, he would come to forget it all together. The method of acknowledging was by the setting aside of the tenth of his income as honor unto the Lord. This is a very ancient law but to this day it remains the best that has ever been tried on a large scale.

What good is the abiding lesson of this rather dry and primitive book? It sets forth dimly three fundamental truths. It has no final word to say. All that it teaches is more clearly taught elsewhere. But these truths, some vaguely, were abiding in growing clearness through all the centuries. They are these. The fact of sin as unlikeness to God, as separated from him, as being against him.

2. The fact of redemption. Through substitution, imputation and life laid down.

3. The necessity for a life of holiness growing out and resulting from our redemption from sin. These are laws that are not only timely, they are also timeless.
NUMBERS

The book of Numbers follows hard upon that of Exodus. In fact, they are only one month apart. Leviticus you remember is not a part of the story of the movement of the Hebrew people toward national life. It is a part of the legislation that makes up a part of the book of Exodus. The last historical event in the book of Exodus is set in the first month of the second year after the departure of Israel from Egypt. The book of Numbers begins with the second month of the second year.

This book takes its name from the numbering of the people in the first and the last part of the book. Naturally when these people left Egypt they were little more than a herd of slaves. They were more of a mob than an organization. But as they drew near to the land that they were to possess, organization was necessary. The men had to be numbered and trained for fighting. It is this numbering from which the book takes its name. They are on the road to take the land that according to their faith God had promised them. But while He was giving it they must by their own effort receive the gift. These possessions were reckoned as theirs, but they had to possess their possessions.

Naturally the ethics of this book raises a question in our modern minds. Was it right for the Israelites to dispossess the Canaanites? In considering this question, we need to bear in mind that national morality is of very late development. Up to just a few years ago the right of a stronger nation to take over a weaker one was hardly questioned. Our fathers did not find this country without owners when they came, but they dispossessed those owners. They robbed the Indians of their Happy Hunting Ground, but though
we are a Christian nation we have not disturbed our consciences much about it. We have had a feeling right or wrong that in spite of the many evils that we inflicted upon the Indians our possession of the land fits better into the purpose of God than for it to be possessed by the Indians.

We cannot but recognize the fact further that, however wrong it may have been for the Israelites to drive out the Canaanites and other tribes that were there, the results have been good. The author had some understanding of the ethics involved. He, therefore, makes it plain that these inhabitants were expelled not because of the goodness of the Israelites but because of their own badness. He declares that the land vomited them up. He also draws a solemn warning for his own people. He declares that if they are unfaithful to God they also will be vomited up. And that, by the way, is just what has happened as the centuries have come and gone. This book then is written on the assumption that it was God's plan to fulfill the promise that He had made to Abraham by giving the Israelites this land. Certainly in their possessing it they became an unspeakable blessing to the world. It was the little nation started here that became the supreme teacher of religion.

The book has three natural divisions: First, the numbering of the people and their march to Kadesh-Barnea. The second division has to do with their failure to possess their possessions. The third division is a record of the tragic consequences of this failure and of God's movement toward giving them a second chance. It is not my purpose to discuss these three divisions in their order. I am rather going to confine myself to the story of the book that is the failure of these people to claim their own. The book of Numbers might be called the story of the Lost Generation. How did this generation lose itself? The first step was in the appointing of a committee. How can a good cause has been committed to death! But this was an altogether wise committee if they had understood their real function.
Their purpose was very simple. They set out on the assumption that God had promised them the land. They were safe in assuming further that God was able to make good His promise. They set out on the further assumption that the land that was promised was worth possessing. God never gives us what is not worth having. Their one business was, therefore, to decide this question: How can we best come to possess the good land which God has given us? But if this was the motive with which they set out, there was soon a division. Therefore, when they reported back, they brought in a majority and a minority report.

1. Look first at this majority report. It makes sad reading. I do not wonder that the people burst into tears as they heard it. Put in everyday language, it would read something like this: "Whereas we have spied out the land and whereas we have discovered that it bristles with impossibilities—in fact, that it simply cannot be taken; and whereas we have discovered that it is not worth taking anyway and that God had led us on a fool's errand, be it resolved that we trek back to Egypt." What a report and how like many another church report it sounds! Look at what it says.

(1) It declares that the land simply cannot be taken. "The cities are great with walls up to the sky. Every fortress is manned by giants." The fact that God has promised the land is sheer mockery. There is no pot of gold at the end of the rainbow in the first place, but even if there were what is the use when the nimble goddess of mist flees with her treasure faster than our blundering feet can go. God's promises may be good, but they are impossible of realization.

That position may sound very quaint, but it is as up to date as the last newscast. How many millions have looked wistfully at other promises of God and recognized their worth but have ended by shaking their heads and saying, "It is impossible." Of course it is beautiful to live by the Golden
Rule. Of course the Sermon on the Mount is the gem of ethics. Of course it would be a great privilege to be born anew. Of course it is fine to have a mighty Savor who is with us always—even unto the end of the age. But "It is impossible," we say, "so far as we are concerned." So these ten looked over the situation and said, "It is a land we simply cannot possess.

(2) Having reached this conclusion, they made a second blunder. They hardly dared report back flatly that God had misled them, that He had promised more than He could make good. Still less did they dare to tell the plain facts in the case, by saying "The land is an exceedingly good land, but we have not the gallantry and the grit to take it. It is highly desirable, but it will cost more than we are willing to pay. Had they done that, they would have been accused of being cowards. Therefore, as bad as that would have been, they took an even worse course. They began to rationalize.

How did they do this? Not being honest enough to face the fact either about the land or about themselves, not daring to tell how good the land was and how ordinarily easy it was, they found it easier to slander the land. They persuaded themselves that the land was no good anyway. They began to talk it down—to say that it eats up the inhabitants. "We are not in favor of going forward another step. This is not the case because we are afraid to sacrifice. This is not the case because we do not wish to give ourselves any trouble. This is the case because the land is really no good."

Do you remember that fox of which Aesop tells us. One day he discovered a bunch of grapes that were so luscious they made his mouth water, but he discovered that in order to possess those grapes he would have to climb. Now climbing for a fox is troublesome and dangerous. This fox decided that for him it was too dangerous. Therefore, instead of saying, "Those are wonderful grapes, but I have not the grit to possess them," he said, "They are sour grapes. I do not want them anyway. They are really not worth having."
Thus he concealed his own cowardice by slandering the graves.

That too is as up to date as the last newscast. Again and again we face opportunities that are great and appealing, but often to take advantage of those opportunities costs us more than we are willing to pay; therefore, we talk them down. Many a man stands face to face with the privileges and obligations of the church. He knows that the church represents the remedy while those apart from the church represent the disease. They know that they ought to be a part of the remedy, but to be a part of the remedy costs a price that they are not willing to pay; therefore, they ease their consciences by criticising the church. They tell how full it is of hypocrites. Even if they are right in their criticism, the fact that the church is not all it ought to be is all the more reason for their coming in to help. There are few things easier and few things more deadly than to offer cheap criticism as a substitute for the doing of duty.

"Upon a rock stands prone my soul
A diver, lean, undressed,
And looks and fears the shock
And turns and hides its shame
In some poor, sorry jest."

(3) Having slandered the land and having come to believe their own slander, they took a third downward step. They lost all sense of high purpose and mission. They had set out under God's guidance. They had set out to claim God's promise, but they had persuaded themselves that it was impossible to claim it—that it was not worth the claim even if it were possible. Therefore, they lost their self-respect. And losing their self-respect, they lost the respect of their enemies. "We were in your own eyes as grasshoppers, and so were we in their eyes." Nothing is more tragic than a grasshopper saint. There are some people that lay claim to such great humility that you cannot get them to do anything worthwhile or any worthwhile work of any description. They
are too humble. That is not humility. That is a sickening cowardly cari-
cature of humility. Jesus was humble. But He was not too humble to under-
take to save the world. There are few things the modern church needs more
than a fresh baptism of 'self-respect.

(4) Since the land was impossible and no good, since they themselves
did not count, it was all God's fault. God had told them He would give them
the land. He had sent them undergirded by a sense of mission to possess it,
but He had disappointed them. God, therefore, did not count any more than
they. Therefore, there was nothing for them to do but to chuck the whole
enterprise and trek back to the bondage of Egypt. What a report!

2. But there was a minority report. Thank God for the minorities!
They have been the hope of the world through the centuries. They are the
hope of the world still. It is always the few in any age that carry the
torch—never the many. In the desperate days through which Isaiah lived,
he always pinned his faith not to the multitude but to the remnant. This
minority here was made up of two—Caleb and Joshua. They said, "Whereas
we have sailed out the land, we have found it an exceedingly good land. We
are well able to take it. Let us begin now." Look at their claim.

(1) "The land is good. It is well to get thus far if we go no further."
Assuming that Christianity is for ourselves personally impossible, assuming
that this world can never be saved, assuming that the Kingdom of God can never
come, assuming that the Preacher was right when he said, "What has been will
be. The crooked can never be made straight—even then let us face the fact
that such a consummation is desirable. The promises of God are worth realization
however impossible they may be.

(2) "Not only is the land a good land, but we are well able to take
it. This is the case not simply because of what we are in ourselves. It
is because God has promised it to us, and what He has promised He
is able also to perform. We are going as His representatives. We are going in His name. We are going undergirded with a high and holy self-respect. We are going in the faith that the Eternal God never sends His servants on a fool's errand."

(3) "In our going, we are not forgetting the difficulties. The ten are perfectly right in saying that 'the cities are great and walled up to the sky.' They are right in affirming that there are giants in the land. But these difficulties instead of hindering will help us. These giants will be bread for us." Caleb and Joshua were wise enough to know that men grew strong not by difficulties dodged, but by difficulties met and overcome. A gentle south breeze may be good to sleep under, but we need the north winds to lash us into heroes.

(4) "Because the land is good and because it can be possessed, its very difficulties will strengthen us rather than weaken us. Since God is on our side, let us act. Let us act now. Let us go up at once and possess it!"

But the crowd voted for the majority report. The vote was so overwhelming that Caleb and Joshua seemed to count for nothing.

II

What was the result?

1. The majority having won, they did not shout over their victory. They rather wailed. Having decided of their own choice to take the easy way regardless of consequences, they became wretched.

2. Having refused to take the land that God had given them, they missed it. They missed it the very day they turned it down. They missed it to the end of the chapter. The best that God can do for any of us is to offer us His gifts. He can never compel us to take them.

3. Having refused to go forward, they became wanderers. Having refused
to go forward, they went backward. We are born on an incline. We live our lives on an incline. To refuse to go upward is to go downward. To refuse to become better is to become worse. To refuse to grow is to die.

4. The final result of their failure was that they died without attaining. God Himself had to delay His purpose until the last member of this generation had slipped into his coffin. We sometimes hear this unkind remark about a certain church: "What that church needs is a few first-class funerals!"

Well, that was what this church in the wilderness had to have. It could not go forward until the last member of that faithless generation had died.

III

This book has some very definite and bracing lessons: First, it teaches moral retribution. Here is a solemn fact that the author discovered: "Be sure your sin will find you out." That is true for the individual. It is true for the group. These ten spies sinned in bringing up their false report but their sin found them out. The people sinned in believing them; their sin found them out.

One of the most amazing characters in the Old Testament comes upon the scene in this book. His name is Balaam. His story is magnificently told in Chapters 22, 23, and 24. They will repay a careful reading. From the standpoint of English, they are magnificent. As an illustration of this text—"Be sure your sin will find you out"—Balaam is an outstanding example.

Glance at him briefly. He was a prophet of prominence and power. One day a delegation came to him from King Balak. This delegation brought a splendid bribe: "Curse me the people of Israel" was the request of this ancient king. It was his faith that Balaam could curse whomever he pleased and that the curse would work.

Having received this request, Balaam prayed over it. He was seeking to know the will of God. God forbade his cursing Israel, saying, "Israel
is blessed." This ended the matter for the present. The distinguished delegation that had come from the King went back to their master to report the futility of their efforts.

But a few days later another far more distinguished delegation came to wait on Balaam. They brought richer rewards. "Let nothing hinder you from coming," said the King. Then what did Balaam do? Instead of saying to these people, "I told you once that what you ask of me is wrong. If it was wrong yesterday, it is wrong today."—the reward appealed to him greatly; therefore, he went to pray over it again. How human and yet how dangerous!
The first time he prayed because he wanted to know the will of God. This time he was asking God for permission to do wrong.

What was the outcome? Mental and spiritual confusion! A first glance at this story may be a bit perplexing. Here is Angel of the Lord telling Balaam not to go, yet getting angry at him for going. It but represents the confusion of a man whose eye is at single. The prophet is restless and wretched and tempest. When his donkey presses against the wall and wounds the prophet's foot the Preacher goes into a great rage and wishes he might kill the donkey. Then the donkey speaks. A queer story indeed, but it has this very plain lesson—that the man who refuses to see loses his capacity to see. We have a way of saying that our first impressions are always the best, and generally speaking that is true. There are few wrong things that we do that we cannot by persistence persuade ourselves that we are right. A gangster was killed in New York sometime ago. "They found a confession in his pocket that said he never meant anybody any harm—that he had always tried to do the right thing. This is another way of saying that a man can look into the face of the light until his eyes go out. It tells how one may commit the unpardonable sin.
2. But if a man's sin finds him out so does his goodness. If tares grow in our world, so do wheat and flowers. Caleb and Joshua suffered in the failure of their people. The sins of their fellows cheated then in some measure, but it could not cheat them finally. Though every member of their generation died outside the Land of Promise these two arrived. There is nobody that can rub you of your reward but yourself.

Then, there is this final lesson. Through their own choice this generation refused God's plan. By refusing, they lost their opportunity. They threw away their chance. They delayed God's purpose. But through they delayed God's purpose, they did not bring it to final defeat. Thwarted by that generation, he moved forward upon the feet of another. Thus God always moves to final victory. Today we may fail to enter into His purpose. Today we may bring His finest hopes to naught so far as we are concerned, but He always moves toward a better tomorrow. There is nothing more amazing in this book: "He shall not fail nor be discouraged." As we go forward with Him we enter into this benediction: "The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace."
NUMBERS

The Book of Numbers takes up the story where Exodus left off. The story of Exodus ends with the first month of the second year after the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt. The Book of Numbers begins with the second month of the second year. So between the ending of the Book of Exodus and the beginning of the Book of Numbers, there is only one month.

There are two ways of dividing Numbers. First, a division according to geography and second, a division according to history. If you use the former, the first division is Chapter 1 to 10th Chapter and 10th Verse, the second, 10:11 to 21st Chapter and the third is Chapter 23 to Chapter 36. My preference however, is to divide it according to its history. This would make the first division the same as above, the second 10:11 to 14 and the third 15 to 36.

Thus divided, the three main divisions of the book are: first, preparation for entrance into the Kingdom; second, their failure and third, preparation for the second chance.

I

PREPARATION

In order that these people, fresh from slavery, might be able to claim their birthright, it was necessary that they be organised. There was to be some fighting necessary, hence the fighting force must be organised. The name of every man who was
twenty years old or older, was taken. This and the second census at the close of the book, is what gives this book its name. Every first born belonged to the Lord, but those were redeemed by the substitution of a Levite for each first born.

Not only were these organized but each tribe was assigned a particular place in the line of march. Judah, the strongest tribe, was to march in front. Gad, the next strongest, was to bring up the rear. The weaker tribes were to march in between.

2. As a second part of this preparation, definite directions were given for their guidance. They were not to march at the command of any leader except the Lord Himself. When the cloud was lifted from the Tabernacle, then it was that they were to begin the march. When the cloud rested upon the Tabernacle, they were to cease. Thus, every step of the way was to be under the direct guidance of God Himself.

3. The final step in the preparation for setting out was the celebration of the Passover. That was very natural and fitting. The Passover would call to their minds exceedingly important events that they needed to remember. It would remind them of how when death claimed every first born in Egypt, they found shelter behind the blood. It would remind them further that they had been delivered from bondage not in their own strength but through the power of God. Thus remembering His help in the past, they would be strengthened to believe in His help in the future.
II

The second division is the story of the failure. It is tragic to think how these people who had experienced so many marvelous deliverances, failed so utterly here. They began the march, as recorded in the 10th Chapter and 11th Verse. They continued to the very border of the land of their dreams. Then, when God was calling them to possess their possessions, they appointed a committee to investigate, not how best to accomplish the task, but whether the task could be accomplished at all or not. They decided that it could not be accomplished.

Why did these people fail? There were certain very definite reasons that stood out in the reading of the book.

1. They were a mixed multitude. They were not of one heart and of one soul. Some of them were not even Israelites. Some of them had no sense of the high task in which they were engaged. Some were mere camp followers. They were in the enterprise for what they could get out of it.

We have made much progress since that day, but our Church still suffers from the same disease. We too are a mixed multitude. There are many of us who have never been converted. There are many of us who never pay. There are many who seldom pray. There are many who never come. There are more who never work.

2. They failed for lack of faith. They had such a keen eye for their difficulties that they had no eye at all for their resources. They became so intent upon the hinderances to be
overcome that they forgot the power by which they alone could conquer. They had such a keen vision of the opposition that they lost their vision of God altogether.

3. A third reason why they failed was the lack of a wholesome and bracing self-respect. "We were in our own eyes as grasshoppers." That is their pathetic expression. Such people will never win any land of promise for an army made up of Uriah Heeps is sure to be defeated. If you are a member of a church do not apologize for it. If you are a Christian, do not be embarrassed. You are engaged in the biggest and most worth while task that ever engaged a human soul. You have a right to respect yourself. May God give us as Christians a holy self esteem.

4. The final reason why these people failed was because of their moral infancy. They may have been great and husky physically, but spiritually they were a great bunch of babies. This is evidence:

(1) By the fact that they were always crying. Their normal tone was a whine. They could burst into tears on any occasion. Over and over again we hear them complaining against God and complaining against Moses. Over and over again they are saying that they wish they had died in Egypt.

What a trying individual is the persistent whiner. How annoying is a crybaby. I have known one here and there who would get in a pet and say, "Oh I wish I were dead!" Such talk is absolutely silly and the next time you catch yourself saying anything of that kind, have the good sense to tell yourself that you are lying. You don't wish anything of the kind.
You are only showing yourself a moral dwarf.

(2) Then their moral littleness is shown by the fact that they were always bewailing a good that was gone and desparing what was at hand. To hear them talk you would think that they lived in the palace with Pharaoh as long as they stayed in Egypt. In what glowing terms they tell of the onions and garlic and cucumbers that they used to have. If they could only get back to the good old times when they were by the flesh pots of Egypt.

Now in so speaking, they were flagrantly dishonest. I am not disputing the fact that they had onions and garlic, but even then they were not so very well off. They did not remember how early they had to get up and how late they had to work in order to make the required number of brick. They had forgotten how cutting was the lash of the taskmaster. Everything was fine yesterday just because it’s gone. Everything is vile today just because it’s at hand. The wise man was right when he said a fool’s eyes are at the ends of the earth.

In order to be free, they naturally had to give up something. So do we. Paul declared that to be a Christian had cost him the loss of all things. But he was not bewailing the fact. He said he counted them but as refuse that he might win Christ. If you find that you can be a better Christian by leaving off certain harmless pastimes, do not whine about it. If Christianity is worth anything, it is worth giving up something for.

(3) Then, they showed their infancy by their fear. They were afraid to put themselves to any trouble. They were afraid to go up against any hardship. They could not realize that it
was impossible for them to be carried into the land of promise in a Pullman palace. They, as many today, were bent on being carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease. But the man who is unwilling to fight will never win. They is the reason that the Master says "Strive to enter". If there is no cross in your experience, you had better examine your guide posts for the chances are that you are on the wrong road.

The outcome of all this was that they failed to possess their possessions. Nobody can give you what you refuse to take. God Himself cannot slip moral worth into your pockets while you sleep. Your father can expose you to an education, but he cannot make you take it. Christ can hold out eternal life to you, but He cannot compel you to accept it. Therefore, He cries today as He did on yesterday, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." These people threw away their birthright. They did it because they refused to accept it.

III

What was the outcome of this failure? God did not give up His plan for the nation. There were many individuals that thwarted His purpose in their lives. That is always a possibility. You may give your life to the task of fighting against the Church. You will not thereby wreck the Church, you will only wreck yourself. Having failed in this first attempt to get His people into the land that He had given them, He started at once to preparing them for a second effort. This He did in the following manner:
1. Not on the heels of their failure He announced certain laws that they were to keep when they had come into their inheritance. Thus, He indicated that He had not given them up as a nation. He was still going to work His will through them. He was still going to make them a blessing to the world as He had promised to Abraham.

2. He set about to give them a further education. This He did in two ways.

(1). By supplying all their needs. In the wilderness where food and water were sometimes not abundant their needs were met through Him.

(2). He educated them by allowing them to suffer for their sins. It is in this book that we read the sentence: "Be sure your sins will find you out". The truth of that statement is illustrated again and again.

On one occasion the people turned with a vengeance to their old habit of murmuring. The story says that the Lord sent fiery serpents among them. This does not mean that the serpents were made of fire. It may have reference to their color, it is more likely that it has reference to the burning fever that was the result of their venom. Perpetual faultfinders are always poison. They poison themselves. In answering Moses' prayer, God gave a remedy. Jesus used the story in His conversation with Nicodemus. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up. That whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life".

Then one day Moses lost all patience. He was
the meekest of men but he failed at his strongest point. That is often the case. Anger and unbelief get the better of him for a moment. In bringing water from the rock he had to strike it twice. The result was that he never realized his dream of getting his people into Canaan. Then there is the strange story where Baalim is employed to curse Israel. Baalim is a strange mixture of angel and devil; of star dust and mud. He will not curse Israel by word of mouth because God has forbidden it but he told the people how to make them curse themselves. They were lead into idolatry and into adultery. For this they were punished by a plague being sent upon them.

3. The final step in God's preparation of His people to make their second effort to enter Canaan was the raising up of a new leader in Joshua. Under this new leader was also a new generation. The last member of the old had died with the exception of Joshua and Caleb. The hope of the world then was in its youth. It is the same today. Every generation God sweeps the world clean of the old and gives it a new chance. If we would only Christianize the children, we would soon Christianize the world.

The outstanding lessons of the book are first, the tragedy of sin. It was sin that robbed this generation. It was sin that kept them from realizing their possibilities. It was sin that prevented them from possessing their possessions. Sin is doing the same thing today.

There was also a lesson of comfort. God is not defeated by the failure of one individual or of many individuals. He is not defeated by the failure of one generation. He is not defeated by the failure of a century. In spite of many a foe, He still continues to build His Church and to demonstrate that
the gates of hell shall not prevail against Him. He still moves majestically onward toward that good day when the Kingdoms of the world shall become the Kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ.
"Messages of the Books."

Numbers.

The Book of Numbers is a continuation of the story recorded in Exodus. If you remember, the Book of Exodus ended with the building of the tabernacle, and with the coming of God to dwell within. The tabernacle was finished upon the first day of the first month of the second year. Now, if you will notice the opening of the Book of Numbers, it resumes the story on the first day of the second month of the second year. That is, there is only a month between the ending of the Book of Exodus and the beginning of the Book of Numbers.

Since your reading of this Book what in your opinion is its supreme lesson? For remember it is not our purpose to undertake to state in one brief lecture every lesson of the Book. We are simply trying to get at the heart of its message. To my mind the Book of Numbers instead of being names for the census that was taken at the beginning of the book, might be aptly called "The Tragedy of Disobedience."

We are brought face to face with disobedience and its tragic results again and again. There is, for instance, the disobedience of the people during the absence of Moses on the mountain. There is the cowardly disobedience of Aaron in hearing their request for the making for them of a golden calf. There is the disobedience of Moses in his bringing water from the rock, a disobedience which resulted in his being excluded from the Land of Promise. But the supreme instance of disobedience is that recorded of the people as a whole in their refusal to enter Canaan when they had come to Kadesh-Barnea. The whole Book centers around this one big event.

Let us look at it once more. God had emancipated His people. He had led them out of Egypt, not simply that they might be free from an Egyptian bondage. He had brought them out of Egypt that He might bring them into Canaan. That is God's method always. He doesn't ask you to give up any single wrong practice simply for the sake of giving it up. You are to give it up in order that you may be free to do something better. You are to empty your hands of thorns that they may be filled with flowers. You are to give up wrong doing for right doing. You are to turn away from the love of the base in order that the love of whatsoever is good and high and pure may fill your heart.

So God was seeking to bring His people into the land of Canaan. By this time He had led them almost to the border land of the country that they were to possess. His plan for them, the command He laid upon them was not that they should speculate about the land, not that they should pass resolutions about it or argue about it, but that they should possess it. It was toward that goal that God had been moving through long slow centuries. It was for that purpose that Abraham had been called from Ur of the Chaldees. It was for that purpose that Moses had been raised up of God. It was for that purpose that God had laid bare His arm in power in Egypt. It was for that purpose that God had led them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

Having come thus far, I say, their one duty was to obey God.
Obedience to God involved taking what He had already given them. For mark you, it is eternally true that God's gifts, just as your gifts and mine, must be possessed. You may offer me the choicest of jewels, but if I will not have them, then I simply deprive myself of them. God offers to you and me persistently the rich gift of pardon, of fulness of power in Himself. We may disobey Him by refusing to accept His gift. In that case it will never become really ours.

You remember the story of the young fellow who ran away from home in his early youth. For years he was not heard from. The head of his widowed mother turned gray long before the time. At last a man in middle life, he came home to sob out his request for forgiveness upon his mother's breast. And what said the mother? "You were forgiven years ago. I have been waiting for half a lifetime for you to come and claim your forgiveness." And so God waits for us to claim His gifts, for us to possess our possessions.

And in order for us to do this it is simply necessary for us to obey. Every gift of God is conditioned on that. "We are His witnesses as is also the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey Him." Now, God's commandments are given that they may be obeyed. That sounds trite, I know, but it is a fact that we seem to forget. Many times we act as did these Israelites. We seem to feel that God's commands are to be talked about, that they are to be argued over, that they serve as splendid texts for sermons, but that it is not necessary to really obey them. But God demands obedience. He demanded it in the long ago. He demands it still.

But what response did these people give to God's commands? They appointed a committee to decide upon the advisability of carrying them out. Aren't they blood brothers to ourselves, these ancient people? They sent this committee to see whether or not it is possible to obey God. And they came back with a majority report and a minority report. And you know this dismal majority report. The ten said that the commandment of God was an utter impossibility.

They spoke somewhat after this fashion; "We have looked the land over. It is thoroughly desirable. We certainly wish it were ours. Of course we are aware of the fact that God has promised it to us, but He made the promise in great rashness. He did not take into consideration either the strength of the enemy or the weakness of ourselves. It would be a great land if we could only get it, but we can't get it."

That sounds almost blasphemous, doesn't it? And yet we talk that way very many of us today. And we have infinitely more light than they had. But we look at the riches of grace that are offered to us in Christ Jesus our Lord and say, "Yes, it is all very beautiful, very wonderful, in fact. It is all much to be desired, but in my circumstances it is impossible for me. I can not do it. I'm a Christian, but I'm a mighty poor sort of a Christian. I belong to the church, but I am weak and worthless. But I am doing the best I can." And you mean by that that you are doing your part and the Lord won't do His, and that Canaan is a splendid Utopia, but for all practical purposes is an impossibility.
Numbers

Now, since Canaan, though desirable, was impossible, they refused to make any effort to possess it. They flatly refused to obey the definite and direct command of God. Why did they do it? They did it, in the first place, for lack of faith in God. They believed in God so little that they thought He would command a thing that was impossible. My friend, if God tells you and me what in the nature of things it is impossible for us to do, then He is not a loving Heavenly Father. He is an infinite tyrant. He is a cruel monster. He is far worse than I would be if I were to chain my boy to a tree and then command him to come to me, and then beat him for not coming.

Their lack of faith not only blinded them to the fairness and justice of God, but to the might of God. They saw only the seen. They were so absorbed with the giants that they had no sense of the presence and power of God at all. Of course that always means defeat. How is it that Elisha was so cool and courageous at Dothan while his servant was so panic stricken? Just this, Elisha had faith, a faith that could see the unseen while his servant was utterly blind to everything but the seen.

And it is well to remember that the church has never gone forward, that no victory has ever been won except at the hands of those men and women who saw their difficulties in the light of the divine presence. The people who walk by sight never walk very far toward conquest. Had the early church seen only the things that are seen it would certainly have died in its cradle. They had foes that seemed absolutely unconquerable. They were opposed by barriers that the eye of flesh would have said could never be passed. And yet they overcame their foes. They surmounted every difficulty. They did it because they had faith. It was by this power and this faith that they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, quenched the violence of fire, stopped the mouths of lions, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Having no faith, which means no sense of God, they had no sense of their own worth as the people of God. They were wanting in a consecrated self respect. They were deficient in a high and holy self esteem. They cringed and cowed in the presence of their enemies. They apologized and said they were only grass-hoppers. Men do not act so who feel within them the powers of the life to come. Men do not act so who have faith in God. They stand rather as did Elijah before Ahab with a noble dignity, as an ambassador of the King Eternal. There is an echo of royalty in their utterance as they say, "As the Lord God liveth before whom I stand."

Not only did their lack of faith lead them to a false and unworthy and sickening humility, it led them to an utter cowardice that was unwilling to fight. These men might have gone into Canaan if they had only had the courage to pay the price. But they wanted the Land of Promise thrust into their hands while they did nothing. But that is impossible. God Himself can not slip character into your pockets while you sleep. There is no pullman palace leading from Egypt into Canaan. If you win you must win at the price of conflict. If you get hold of God's gifts you must give yourself the trouble of taking them.
Then look finally at the fatal results of their disobedience. Look at the tragic outcome. By this rebellion they were changed from pilgrims into wanderers. They ceased to be crusaders and became vagrants. Up to this time they had been going forward under the inspiration of a fixed purpose. They had been marching toward a definite goal. Now they became people of many purposes, of no purpose at all. So much driftwood, so many derelicts driven here and there upon that gloomy sea that we call the wilderness.

Disobedience did that for the men of yesterday. It does that for the men of today. How many folks there are in the church who are merely drifting. They are dominated by mixed motives and mixed purposes. They are going nowhere in particular. They can not say, "This one thing I do." They have lost the unifying power of a big and dominating purpose. If all the spiritual vagrants that are in our land were arrested today I do not know that there would be enough of us left loose to feed those who were in captivity.

Not only did their disobedience leave them purposeless. It also left them joyless. The night that the committee came back and gave in its report was a wretched night. The people wept aloud. But that was only the beginning of many wretched nights. The rebelling Christian is never a happy Christian. He is always in the dark. He is being constantly disappointed. Disobedience is the most fruitful source of wretchedness that I know. And if you who are here tonight are not enjoying your church life, ask yourself this question: Is it not because I have refused to obey God? Is it not because my obedience has been only partial? Is not the secret found in the fact that there is something in my life to which God objects? Or that there is some duty to which He calls me that I have not been willing to take up? If you are to be a happy Christian you must be an obedient Christian.

This rebellion, in the third place, led to powerlessness. In the presence of their foes they were without power. God can not make us mighty without we obey Him. Rebellion always means weakness because it means sin, and sin is ever weak. It is only purity that is strong.

"My good blade carves the casts of men;
My quick lance thrust is sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten
Because my heart is pure."

The final result of this disobedience was failure. God had planned a better life for them than the life of wanderers. He had made something better possible for them than that they be wretched vagrants. But they rebelled against Him. They refused to obey Him. And the beautiful plans that He had for them were unrealized. Every rebel of them died without reaching the Land of their Promise.

It is encouraging for us to note that their failure did not defeat God in His ultimate purpose. We can not do that ever. In
Exodus we discovered that God is not to be thwarted by His enemies. In Numbers we discover that God is not to be thwarted by His own people. You and I may fail, but God moves on to the accomplishment of His ultimate purpose in human history. But while that is true, this much is also made clear. Although our rebellion may absolutely defeat God's blessed purposes for ourselves, if you come to the realization of that fine ideal that God has for you, it is absolutely necessary that you obey Him.

Now, let us face this great and solemn fact. This ancient people, this generation of long ago had their chance and through faithless disobedience they threw it away. They did it not because God desired that they should do so, they did it in spite of His love, in spite of His purpose, in spite of all the providences that He could bring to bear upon them. Today we as a church, as a nation, as individuals have our chance. We stand face to face with our Promised Land. God is saying to us, "Go up at once and possess it." We must do one of two things. We must obey or disobey. To obey means victory. To disobey means spiritual purposelessness, a life without joy, a life without power, a life of ultimate and final defeat and failure.
"NUMBERS"

The book of Numbers is a continuation of the Hebrew people. It begins where the book of Exodus left off. In the 17th verse of the 40th Chapter of Exodus an event is recorded which took place in the first month of the second year after the departure of the Hebrew people from Egypt. The book of Leviticus does not continue this story. It, as we said, is a picture book. It is a record of God's effort to teach His people true symbols. The book of Numbers begins with an event that took place on the second month of the second year after the exodus. There is, therefore, only one month between the story recorded in the book of Exodus and the one with which Numbers begins.

The book of Numbers is a record of history, written from the religious point of view. We are not however to expect from this ancient book the high ethics of the New Testament. The authors of this book felt that his people were divinely led to destroy another people and rob them of their land. Of course, in this respect he was a bit mistaken. Our God is a righteous God, he, therefore, never smiles upon anything that is unrighteous.

But, while the ethics of this book are not the ethics of Jesus. We are not to throw up our hands in holy horror. National morality is a very recent development, in fact, it is not strong enough now to be effective. Italy can still destroy Ethiopia, and Japan can out range China. Many times other nations look on with horror, but our horror would be far less were our own nation involved. We believe that the hand of God has guided our American nation, Yet, many a crime was committed against its original owners before it became ours. It well becomes us, therefore, to look askance at the low morality of this nation of the long ago.

The book has three natural division.

The Preparation for Entrance into the New Land.

There is a record of failure.

There is a preparation for a second chance.
I.

The author recognizes the fact that this hord of slaves needed some preparation before they were ready to take possession of the land that they had set out to take and own. They were disorganized, they had little fitness for the new freedom that had come to them. Therefore, they had to be trained. To this end they were numbered and ordered into companies fit for fighting. It is this number of the people here and in the third division of the story that gives the book its name "The Book of Numbers". Having been organized, they were further instructed to look for and expect the leadership of God in their movements. This leadership was indicated in an outward and visible way. They were led by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

Thus organized they pursued their journey till they came to Cadesh Barnea. This was at the very border of the land of their hopes. They have come now to that hour for which all other hours were made. They have come to where they must possess or fail to possess the land that they had set out to claim. They have reached that tide in their affairs that taken into flood will lead them onto victory, but omitted will plunge them into shallows and in miseries. They must decide as to whether they will claim their goal or refusing to claim it, invite failure.

II.

The hour did not bring them victory, it brought them defeat and failure. The manner in which they missed their opportunity and disinherited themselves is plainly written.

1. They appointed committees. That is sometimes exceedingly sensible, but many a good cause has been committed to death. This committee might have rendered a real service, but for the fact that some of them misunderstood what they were to do. Their one task was to spy out the land and to discover the best way in which to take it. That it was desirable, that it could and must be taken was assumed by their very
presence. It was this conviction that had begun their enterprise, but they forgot all this when they went to spy out the land.

For this reason two reports were brought in. A majority and a minority report. This minority report makes dreary reading. It indicates that its office had forgotten their purpose all together. Their report went somewhat as follows: Whereas we have spied out the land and whereas we have discovered that it cannot be taken — that we have come on a fools errand. Be it resolved — that we trek back to Egypt. It is not surprising that there was loud wailing when they read this report and that with very few exception the whole multitude was thrown into tearful confusion.

There were three disastrous contentions in this report.

1. They declared that the land could not be taken. This was the case because it was possessed by men so much stronger than themselves. They saw there of the sons of Anak, these were giants in whose presence they felt mere paguies. They so fixed their gaze upon the difficulties that they had no eyes for their advantages at all. Looking at their fears they lost their faith. They declared no good against those that seemed so much stronger than themselves.

2. Having substituted fear for faith they took the next downward step. Instead of reporting back that they had found the land good, but did not have the gallantry and grit to take it, they slandered the land in order to protect themselves. They declared not to tell the truth about the beautiful country they had seen, otherwise they would have been convicted of sheer cowardise. Lacking the courage to claim what they desired, they talked it down. They said, "It was not worth claiming."

What a common practice that is, you remember the fox who saw a lovely bunch of grapes that made his mouth water, but when he set himself to possess the grapes he found that a skill and courage was required that he did not possess. Therefore he persuaded himself that the grapes were not worth possessing. He declared that they were sour. Many a man has talked down the church, not because it is useless, but because he is to selfish and cowardly to live up to its demands. Tithing is a plan of
giving. It is repudiated by many and talked down as an Old Testament law, simply because they haven’t the gallantry to live up to it. It is awful easy to laugh a price out of court that we destroy in possession.

Upon a rock stands prone my soul,  
A diver lean undressed  
And looks and fears the shock,  
And turns and hides it shame  
In some poor sorry jest.

3. This third step in the failure of this majority was that having slandered the land to conceal their own cowardise they came to believe their own lies. It is possible to do that. The whole enterprise was a cheap and worthless thing. There are multitudes that have reached that depth with regard to the program of Jesus. They have trifled with it till it is beneath their contempt. Having pledged to him our solemn allegiance they treated the whole affair as no more than a stale joke.

4. The final tragedy was, that having convinced themselves that they had engaged in a trifling enterprise, they came to having contempt for themselves. "We were in our own eyes as grasshoppers," they said. They were utterly lacking in self respect. When a man reaches that depth, his days of usefulness are over. There is nothing the church needs more today than a fresh baptism of self respect. As Christians, we need to believe that we are the salt of the earth, the light of the world. That institution without which black night and utter rottenness envelopes our civilization.

But as poor and depressing as was his majority report, it did not take the heart out of a very small minority. We ought to thank God for the minority, they are always the hope of the world. Now and then we glory in crowds. We have a great tendency to worship the God of statistics. But what everybody is doing is seldom worth doing, and the man who goes with the crowd usually goes in the wrong direction. This minority was made up of two men, Caleb and Joshua. They brought in a report that thrills us to this day.

1. They declared that the land was an exceedingly good land. We may never have the gallantry to take it, they seemed to say, but if we do not, it will
be because of our own blindness and cowardise, not because it is not worth the
taking. That is a step in the right direction. A lot of folks may lack the courage
to help build the Kingdom of God, but it is at least that they are more hopeful,
if they face the fact that the kingdom is a beautiful place that should be realized.
So many have failed at the beautiful and exacting truth of marriage that some are
ready to fling it out the door. But, it is still something infinitely worth while
in spite of the selfishness and blindness of some who have made it a failure for
themselves and others. It is the truth.

2. It is an exceedingly good land. Let us face that fact whether we have
the right to claim it or not. But this gallant minority not only believed that the
land was worth possessing, but they believed that it could be possessed. We be
well able to take it, is our heartening assurance. This, they said, in spite of
the fact that they saw all the difficulties that the majority had seen. They faced
the same giants that the minority faced, but the majority had left God out of the
reckoning. They looked at God through the difficulties. But this minority reckoned
with God. They saw their difficulties through him. Therefore, the difficulties
seemed small and fully capable of being overcome.

3. Not only were they not being cowed by the difficulties, they believed
that would help rather than hinder giants, but what of it? They will be bread for
us. They will not only defeat us, they will minister to our strength. And here is
an abiding truth. We are strong, not by the difficulties dodged, but by the diffi-
culties met and overcome. Every strong soul has been made strong in part through
conflict. A warm tropical climate may be a good place to sleep, but we need the
poundings of the rude winter wind of the north to lash us into vikings.

4. Now in view of the fact that the land was good, that it was within
our reach, that its very disadvantages could be turned to advantages, that called
for immediate action. "Let us go up at once and possess it." In spite of their
gallantry they were voted down overwhelming. They had their plans thrown into
discard. They had to wait for years for that which might have been theirs for the
taking... Let this be written to their credit. Though they were out voted when they were right, they did not become embittered, they did not quit, they did not give up the enterprise.

III.

What was the result of this failure?

Here was a nation that came to a moment of decision. They made a wrong decision. What became of them?

1. They became victims of retrodevelopment. They made no further progress. Not only so, but they began to decline. We are born on an incline, we must either ascend or descend. There is no standing still. If we refuse to go forward, by that very refusal we go backward. If we refuse to climb toward the highest goal, inevitably we slip toward the depth. When these people died at last, they died further from the goal than they were at the hour of this wrong decision.

2. Having refused to claim the land, they lost their sense of mission. They forgot the high quest upon which they had set out. Life ceased to be a crusade and degenerated into a mere vagrancy. They no longer traveled toward an alluring goal, but began to wander in the wilderness. As a boy, I used to meet a worthless old chap, who, when asked where he was going, gave an answer like this, "I am just knocking about." That became the case with this nation. It is true with an unusually large number today. Life has lost its sense of worth, lost its tang. We are marching — we are milling.

But all the while God was preparing the nation for a second chance. How did this opportunity come about? It came about wholly through the death of those who had failed. It was that the whole generation had slipped into its coffin, that this nation was ready to possess its possessions. This generation was largely a lost generation, it defeated itself. It came to its hour of decision and made a wrong choice. This is always a possibility for the individual in the group. It spells tragedy. For God himself cannot give us what we refuse to take. The punishment
of the generation was not the aim of God. It was that it missed what it might have possessed.

IV.

This book contains two outstanding lessons.

1. It has a sentence that has haunted the centuries. Hidden in this ancient book there is a throb of life because it is so universally true. Here it is - "Be sure your sins will find you out." That is as true as the multiplication table, it is as true as the law of gravitation. To ignore this fact is to throw dust into the eyes of reason and spit in the face of common sense.

Notice what it says, "Be Sure" here then is a certainty, here is something that you can count on. Whether there is another depression coming or not, I do not know and you do not know. Whether Roosevelt will want to run for a third term, I do not know and you do not know. Whether the United States will stay out of war in the next ten years, I do not know and you do not know. Whether the sun will rise tomorrow or not I do not know and you do not know. But here is a certainty "Be sure your sins will find you out."

Mark you, it does not say that the sheriff will find you out. It does not say that the G-Men will always learn the truth. It does not say that your friends will find you out. It does not even say that your nearest loved ones will find you out. What it does say, is that your sins will. It will find others out of course. My sin hurts you and your sin hurts me. But sometimes I can escape something of the concern of others, but my own sin never fails to find me out and your sin never fails to find you out.

Just how this comes about it is not my purpose to say. Sin finds a person out in a thousand ways. It finds him out in physical bodies. It finds him out in his twisted mind. It finds him out in a tortured conscience, or worse still of one that is dead. It finds him out in his loss of love. In his spiritual plane, in his murdered idealism, in his blinded usefulness, it finds him out in eternity. "Be
sure" says the author of this book, speaking out of experience of his own and other persons sins. Your sins will find you out. So it was with the nation, so it was with every individual that composed the nation.

2. A second truth that we get from this book is most . It teaches us that though our sins find us out, though our sins may thwart the purpose of God, so far as we as individuals are concerned, yet it cannot thwart its final purpose for the nation and the world. God is here to set up his kingdom. If you follow in His plan, he will enrich your life and use you for his high purpose. If you refuse, you may destroy yourself. You may break your own heart, as well as that of your Father in Heaven, but you will not defeat the final accomplishment of his purpose.

When will these wondering tribes cease to wonder and become a nation. It is impossible to give the exact time. When will the kingdom of this world become the kingdom of our Lord? It is impossible to say. But Jesus was perfectly confident that the final victory would be on his side. Therefore, we can shout with Paul "The victory is ours, Thank God". The future individuals and nations may thwart God for a century or for a millennium. But at the last, His victory is sure.

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.
- NUMBERS -

The book of Numbers follows hard upon that of Exodus. They are in fact only one month apart. Exodus ends with the setting up of the tabernacle which took place on the first day of the first month of the second year after the departure from Egypt. Numbers opens upon the second month of this same year. The book is a story of tragedy and of triumph, of crime, of high heroism and shameful cowardice, a winsome victory and disastrous defeat, but sad to say the tragic note is in the ascendancy. There are certain gallant souls in the story that stand out like rugged oaks against that distant sky. But about them is a rather ignominious crowd of narrow vision and puny courage. They are terribly disappointing. We watch them with a certain horror as they ruthlessly fling away from God, loot their own treasure, and flatly demand their own impoverishment when they might have gallantly possessed their possessions.

I.

How did this generation come to fail? We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that they did not fail through an utter indifference to God’s plan and purpose for them. They believed in the land of promise, and desired to possess it. They were even willing to make some effort in that direction. Nor did they fail because certain hard and fatal circumstances robbed them of their possibilities. Neither did they fail because of any forgetfulness or neglect or misunderstanding on the part of God. They failed Him, he never once failed them. Therefore, when they refused to possess their possessions, their failure, as is ever the case, was their very own.

The first step toward disaster was taken through the differing
views of the Committee that was appointed to spy out the land. When
these people came to the border of the land of their hopes, you
remember, Moses appointed a Committee to go over and investigate the
country that they were to claim. There were two members of this Com-
mittee who had correct views of the thing they were sent to do. They
knew that God had said that the land was theirs for the taking. Their
function, therefore, was not to decide whether it was possible to take
the land, nor was it to determine whether it was desirable to take the
land. They were to be sure from the beginning that God was not send-
ing them on a fool’s errand. Their sole function was to ascertain
how best the commands of God might be carried out.

The ten members of this Committee had a different view.
They knew God’s plan and purpose, but instead of confining their inves-
tigations to the how, they went further and asked, “Can the land be
possessed, and is it desirable to possess it?” We have many such Com-
mittees today. Sometimes they conduct such investigations, for instance,
in regard to our missionary task. Faced by the fact that Jesus has
given us a definite command to disciple the nations, they report back,
first, that the nations cannot be discipled; second, that they have
their own religion, that they do not need Christ; third, that there
are too many heathen at home. Thus they tell Christ, flatly to His
face that He has misunderstood His own world, and failed utterly to
rightly comprehend His own plan for its salvation.

Now, this Committee going out with differing viewpoints,
quite naturally brought back differing reports. The majority report
makes rather dreary and depressing reading. Yet those who presented
it had an idea that they were very sane, that they were daring to
look facts in the face; that they were not being swept off their feet
by vague and disappointing dreams as were the two who signed the
the minority report. They would have told you frankly, "We are looking at this question as hard-headed business men", for no doubt, even in that day, every business man was expected to have a hard head.

Look at the findings of this majority. What do they have to say about the land to which their Lord had lead them at a great cost? They said, first, that, however much it was to be prized, it was absolutely impossible to possess it. They pointed out the difficulties, with clear-sighted candor. They tell of strong cities with walls so high they almost reach the skies. They tell of giants that so great that as they stood besides them they felt no larger than grasshoppers. "The land may be all right, they seem to say", in fact, it may be all that God claims for it, but what is the good of that since we cannot take it? The bag of gold at the end of the rainbow may be real gold, but what does that amount to if the nimble Goddess of the Hirts forever flees at our approach, taking her treasure with her?"

What lies back of this report? One cannot fail to detect in it the voice not of faith, but of fear. These men have become so absorbed in the contemplation of their difficulties that they have no eye whatever for their advantages. They have such a keen sense of the opposition that they have no appreciation whatsoever of the forces arrayed on their side. They are so taken up with the seem that they have become utterly unmindful of the unseen. They desire to possess the land—but they desire still more to dodge the difficult, to avoid all sacrifice, to shun all danger, and to go their easy, self-satisfied and self-centered way. They surrender their inheritance because they are not willing to pay the price which is necessary in order to possess it.
Having renounced their inheritance through fear, they take
the next step downward. They tell themselves, and their fellows, that
the land is not worth inheriting any way. They brought back an evil
report of the land, says the story. They affirm that it is a land that
straves its people to death. It is a land that
life is a mean shadow of itself, if it manages to survive at all. And
when we read this report, we know we are reading a story that is as new
as anything that we read in the daily news before we came to Church this
morning. That famous fox is not the only creature that ever looked at
lovely grapes that he dared not run the risk of possessing, and turned
away with the declaration that the grapes were sour and not worth the
having any way.

"Are you going into the land of promise"? we ask these ten.
"No," they answered emphatically. "Why not?" And what do they answer?
Do they say, "We are not going because we haven't the valor and the
gallantry that the enterprise requires? We are not going because we
are afraid to adventure. We are not going because we dare not?" No.
In an effort to keep their self-respect, they slander the land and make
a smoke-screen of their slander behind which to hide their cowardice.
And tens of thousands are doing that same thing as they face the Call
of Christ and His Church at this hour. How many are there who talk
down the Church? Some are within its fold, and more without. They
declare sometimes by word of mouth, more often by their conduct.
"The Church of the Living God, the high task of Kingdom building, these
are trivial things that are beneath our consideration."
But what lies back of such slander? Not a candid investigation of the fact. Not a reasoned conclusion after they have honestly thought the thing through. Men push the cause of Christ aside, give it a secondary place, or no place at all, in their thinking, in their working, in their giving, not so much because they have reached an intelligent conclusion that is futile and worthless, as because they dare not pay the price that loyalty to its teaching requires. How easy it is to speak slightingly of the prize we dare not grasp. How easy to slander the high cause that we are not follow.

"Upon a rock stands mine own soul,
A diver's, lean, undressed, and looks
And fears the shock, and turns and
Hides its shame in some poor sorry jest."

The final step in their failure was that, having slandered the land, they came to believe their own slander. It is possible to talk slightingly of the highest values till you persuade yourself that they have no value at all. These people, the story tells us, despised the land. That does not mean they hated the land, but that they undervalued it. They had no adequate appreciation of it. We despise the Church when we undervalue it, when we fail to give it the second place in our hearts. We despise it when we fail to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. The tragedy of our lives today and of every day is not an utter disregard of the higher spiritual values. It is rather that we give them second place in our thinking, and second place in our striving. God's cause is to be put first, failure to do this is to miss life's supreme prize. It is to lay hold of a poor sordid second-best when we might have the best.
But there was a minority report. Let us thank God for the minorities. They have been the saving salt of the world through all the centuries. This minority had great difficulty in gaining the attention of this wailing and defeated multitude, and when they succeeded their report was indignantly thrown aside. The crowd would not have none of it. But its rejection did not make it false. The overwhelming vote of the opposition could not rob it of its gallantry and high heroism. It makes bracing and thrilling reading, even to this day. This minority had spied out the same country that was explored by the majority, and yet how different is their report. What had they to say?

First: Let us question them with regard to the difficulties. "Is it true that there are walled cities? Is it true that those tribes are strong? Is it true that there is going to be stern and strenuous opposition?" "Indeed it is true," they answered, "But because there is opposition is no reason for saying that the enterprise is impossible. In fact, this opposition is an additional reason for seeing the adventure through; we shall be only the stronger because of the foes faced and overcome. These giants will be bread for us; that is their exhilarating declaration. It is evident, therefore, that the minority saw the strong forces arrayed against them just as clearly as did the majority. But there was an utter difference in their attitude toward the opposition. Why this difference? The majority was so taken up with the difficulties that they forgot all advantages. Standing by their strong foes, they seemed exceedingly small. They failed utterly to reckon with God. The minority, on the other hand, saw not only the difficulties, but they saw God as their friend in the meeting of these difficulties. If the majority seemed small as they stood by their foes, how small did these foes seem to
this minority as they stood beside the Infinite God? Theirs is the language of faith and courage. "We be well able to overcome," they declare proudly.

Daring to adventure to claim the land of their desire, they dare also to report the truth about it. "It is an exceedingly good land," they declare. "It is a land that flows with milk and honey." Thank God for those who report the truth of the richness of their inheritance in Christ Jesus. "It is an exceedingly good land," declared my father, as he went staunchly and courageously about life's common ways. "It is an exceedingly good land," was the report of my mother, as she grew old and wise, and pious and pure and ripe for the glory. "It is an exceedingly good land" is the report of every radiant saint whose life is as saving salt to this generation.

Let us be thankful to those who bring up a good report of the Church of the living God. There are enough engaged in stoning of the Church without our joining them. Let us talk it up in our fellowships one with another, in our daily contacts with the world. Let us talk it up in our homes. Remember that your children will likely go out in life with the estimate of the worth Church that you, as his parents, give them. If you talk it down, if you treat it as a light and half-worthless institution, so too will they. Jesus thought well of the Church. He thought so well of it that He gave His life to its upbuilding.

"I love thine Church, O Lord,
Her walls before Thee stand,
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,
And graven on Thine hand,
For Her my tears shall fall,
For Her my prayers ascend,
To Her my toils and cares be given
"Till toils and cares shall end."
So much did this minority believe in the worth of the land that had been given them that they were willing and eager to adventure their time, their energy, their very lives in an effort to possess it. "Let us go up at once, "the urge bravely. "It is not the easier way. It is going to cost. It is going to mean opposition, but we stand ready to pay the price." That is ever the attitude, and the only attitude, to be held by real Christians. It is not enough to admire Jesus Christ, it is not enough to speak beautifully and kindly of his Cause. It is not enough to look with reverence and approval upon the Church. You must dare, be ever ready to adventure, At every call of Christ, we must be willing at any price, to rise up and follow. To do this is to find victory. To do otherwise means sure defeat.

II.

When these two reports were submitted the multitude adopted the majority report. What was the outcome?

(1) They made no more progress. Not only so, but failing to go forward, they went backward. This is ever the case because there is no standing still upon the road of life. They missed their inheritance. The missed the moral and spiritual growth that would have come to them from a heroic choosing of God's plan. To the end of their story they remained spiritual dwarfs, always complaining, always whining, always on the point of renouncing the divine leadership altogether and choosing a leader of their own and heading back to the land of their slavery. At last they slipped into their graves, further from the land of their hopes than they were hour of their cowardly and fatal refusal to go forward.
(3) Failing to make progress, they lost the thrill and zest of living. No longer was theirs the gladness of the forward look and the forward step. There were no more new discoveries, no more surprising views of "happy valley hopes beyond the bend of roads". Variety was surrendered for maddening monotony; the joy of going on for the tedious task of going in circles. How mean and cheap did all their God-given opportunities come to seem. Again and again we find them taking the rich gift of life into their hands, looking at it with weary faces, then snarling up at God for having imposed upon them with so paltry a gift or for not having relieved them of the worse-than-worthless trifle long ago. "Why were all not permitted to die in Egypt?" they whine, or "why did we not die in the wilderness". What a wicked lot of pigmies they are! Surely

"There is a tide in the affairs of men, Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; Omitted, all the voyage of their life Is bound in shallows, and in miseries."

But there is a brighter side to the story. If this generation by a lack of faith and courage, disinherted itself and threw itself upon the trash-pile of worthless things, it did not and could not finally defeat God. No sooner did these fail them He began to prepare for the accomplishment of His purpose through others. We may defeat Him in our individual lives. We may take His fine plan for us and tear it into shreds, but we will not and cannot defeat Him in His purpose for the final conquest of this world. When Woodrow Wilson was near the end of his journey, a friend was talking with him about the League of Nations. "We are right," cried the dying man excitedly, "We are right, and in the end we must win. You can't defeat God." This is our faith, this is our firm conviction. If we put ourselves
in His hands, He will use us. If we fling away from Him, He will still march on in spite of us to the complete triumph of the Kingdom of God. His victory is sure:

"Jesus shall reign wher'er the sun doth its successive journeys run, His Kingdom spread from shore to shore, Till the moons shall wax and wane no more."

Because this is true we ought to think grandly of our God, and grandly of ourselves as His children. We ought to think grandly of His purpose for us and of the high tasks to which He is calling us. There is a missionary in China who is a bit of an authority on things Chinese. This became known, and a representative of the Standard Oil Company went to see him to offer him a position. "My firm," he said, "will give you $10,000.00 a year to work for the Standard Oil Company." But the missionary refused. "We will give you $20,000.00 a year," but he still refused. "We will give you $25,000.00 a year," but the missionary still said no! Then set your own price. I am to secure your services regardless of cost." Then the missionary answered coldly, "Your salary is big enough, the first you offered was plenty large, the trouble is your job is too small." That is splendid - grasshopper saints will never take this world, but it is waiting to surrender to spiritual giants such as this missionary. And just such giants God is eager to make of you and me.
NUMBERS - The Lost Chance

The book of Numbers follows hard upon that of Exodus. They are in fact only one month apart. Exodus ends with the setting up of the tabernacle which took place on the first day of the first month of the second year after the departure from Egypt. Numbers opens upon the second month of this same year. The book is a story of tragedy and of triumph, of high heroism and shameful cowardice, of winsome victory and disastrous defeat; but, sad to say, the tragic note is in the ascendancy. There are certain gallant souls in the story that stand out like rugged oaks against that distant sky. But about them is a rather pigmy crown of narrow vision and puny courage. They are terribly disappointing. We watch them with a certain horror as they ruthlessly fling away from God, loot their own treasure, and flatly demand their own impoverishment when they might have gallantly possessed their possessions.

I

How did this generation come to fail? We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that they did not fail through an utter indifference to God's plan and purpose for them. They believed in the land of promise, and desired to possess it. They were even willing to make some effort in that direction. Nor did they fail because certain hard and fatal circumstances robbed them of their possibilities. Neither did they fail because of any forgetfulness or neglect (or misunderstanding) on the part of
God. They failed Him. He never once failed them. Therefore, when they refused to possess their possessions, their failure, as is ever the case, was their very own.

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The ten members of this committee had a different view. They knew God's plan and purpose, but instead of confining their investigations to the how, they went further and asked, "Can the land be possessed, and is it desirable to possess it?" We have many such committees today. Sometimes they conduct investigations, for instance, in regard to our missionary task. Faced by the fact that Jesus has given us a definite command to disciple the nations, they report back, first, that the nations cannot be discipled; second, that they have their own religion, and therefore do not need Christ; third, that there are too many heathen at home. Thus they tell Christ flatly to His face that He has misunderstood His own world, and failed utterly to rightly comprehend His own plan for its salvation.
Now, this committee going out with differing viewpoints, quite naturally brought back differing reports. The majority report makes rather dreary and depressing reading. Yet those who presented it had an idea that they were very sane, that they were daring to look facts in the face; that they were not being swept off their feet by vague and disappointing dreams, as were the two who signed the minority report. They would have told you frankly, "We are looking at this question as hard-headed business men." for no doubt, even in that day, every business man was expected to have a hard head.

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What lies back of this report? One cannot fail to detect in it the voice not of faith, but of fear. These men have become so absorbed in the contemplation of their difficulties that they have no eye whatever for their advantages. They have such a keen sense of the opposition that they have no appreciation whatsoever of the forces arrayed on their side. They are so taken
up with the seen that they have become utterly unmindful of the unseen. They desire to possess the land, but they desire still more to dodge the difficult, to avoid all sacrifice, to shun all danger, and to go their easy, self-satisfied and self-centered way. They surrender their inheritance because they are not willing to pay the price that is necessary in order to possess it.

Having renounced their inheritance through fear, they take the next step downward. They tell themselves, and their fellows, that the land is not worth inheriting anyway. They brought back an evil report of the land, says the story. They affirm that it is a land that starves its people to death. It is a drab, dull, desolate country where life is a mean shadow of itself, if it manages to survive at all. And when we read this report, we know we are reading a story that is as new as anything that we read in the daily news before we came to church this morning. That famous fox is not the only creature that ever looked at lovely grapes that he dared not run the risk of possessing, and turned away with the declaration that the grapes were sour and not worth the having anyway.

"Are you going into the land of promise?" we ask these ten. "No," they answer emphatically. "Why not?" And what do they answer? Do they say, "We are not going because we haven't the valor and the gallantry that the enterprise requires? We are not going because we are afraid to adventure. We are not going because we dare not?" No. In an effort to keep their self-respect they slander the land and make a smoke-screen of their slander behind which to hide their cowardice. And tens of thousands are doing that same thing as they face the call of Christ and His church at this hour. How many are there who talk down the church? Some are
within its fold, and more without. They declare sometimes by word of mouth, more often by their conduct: "The church of the Living God, the high task of kingdom building, these are trivial things that are beneath our consideration."

But what lies back of such slander? Not a candid investigation of the facts. Not a reasoned conclusion after they have honestly thought the thing through. Men push the cause of Christ aside, give it a secondary place, or no place at all, in their thinking, in their working, in their giving, not so much because they have reached an intelligent conclusion that it is futile and worthless, as because they dare not pay the price that loyalty to its teaching requires. How easy it is to speak slightingly of the prize we dare not grasp. How easy to slander the high cause that we dare not follow.

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A diver, lean, undressed, and looks,
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The final step in their failure was that, having slandered the land, they came to believe their own slander. It is possible to talk slightingly of the highest values till we persuade ourselves that they have no value at all. These people, the story tells us, despised the land. That does not mean they hated the land, but that they undervalued it. They had no adequate appreciation of it. We despise the church when we undervalue it, when we fail to give it the first place in our hearts. We despise it when we fail to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. The tragedy of our lives today and of every day is not an utter disregard of the higher spiritual values. It is rather that we give them second place in our thinking, and second place in our striving. God's cause is to be put
first; Failure to do this is to miss life's supreme prize. It is
to lay hold of a poor, sordid, second-best when we might have the
best. Thus these ten, having a grasshopper view of themselves, quite
naturally gave way to grasshopper conduct.

But there was a minority report. Let us thank God for th
minorities. They have been the saving salt of the world through all
the centuries. This minority had great difficulty in gaining the
attention of this wailing and defeated multitude. But at last they
succeeded only to have their report indignantly thrown aside. The
crowd would have none of it. They rejected it overwhelmingly. But
their rejection did not make it false. The big majority vote of the
opposition did not and could not rob it of its gallantry and high
heroism. This report makes bracing and thrilling reading, even to
this day. This minority had spied out the same country that was
explored by the majority, and yet how different are their findings.
What have they to say about this slandered and much despised land?

First: Let us question them with regard to the difficulties.
"Is it true that there are walled cities? Is it true that those
tribes are strong? Is it true that there is going to be stern and
strenuous opposition?" "Indeed it is true," they answer, "but
because there is opposition is no reason for saying that the enter­
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be bread for us," is their exhilarating declaration. It is evident,
therefore, that the minority saw the strong forces arrayed against
them just as clearly as did the majority. But there was an utter
difference in their attitude toward the opposition. Why this
difference? The majority was so taken up with the difficulties that
they forgot all their advantages. Standing by their strong foes, they seemed exceedingly small. Then all their resources were in themselves for they failed utterly to reckon with God. The minority, on the other hand, saw not only the difficulties, but they saw God as their friend in the meeting of these difficulties. If the majority seemed small as they stood by their foes, how small did these foes seem to this minority as they stood beside the Infinite God? Theirs is the language of faith and courage. "We be well able to overcome," they declare proudly.

Daring to adventure to claim the land of their desire, they dare also to report the truth about it. "It is an exceedingly good land," they declare. "It is a land that flows with milk and honey." Let us thank God also for those who dare to report the truth of the richness of their inheritance in Christ Jesus. "It is an exceedingly good land," declared my father, as he went staunchly and courageously about life's common ways. "It is an exceedingly good land," was the report of my mother, as she grew old and wise, and pious and pure and ripe for the glory. "It is an exceedingly good land," is the report of every radiant saint whose life is as saving salt to this generation.

Let us make it our business, then, to bring up a good report of the Church of the Living God, in the realization that the worth of religion is proclaimed convincingly only by worthwhile saints. There are enough engaged in stoning of the church without our joining them. Let us talk it up in our fellowships one with another, in our daily contacts with the world. Let us talk it up in our homes. Remember that your children will likely go to live their lives with the estimate of the worth of the church that we, as their parents, give them. If we talk it down, if we treat it as a light and half-worthless
institution, so, too, will they. Jesus thought well of the church. He thought so well of it that He gave His life to its upbuilding.

"I love Thy Church, O God!
Her walls before Thee stand,
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,
And graven on Thine hand.

"For her my tears shall fall;
For her my prayers ascend;
To her my cares and toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end."

So much did this minority believe in the worth of the land that had been given them that they were willing and eager to adventure their time, their energy, their very lives, in an effort to possess it. "Let us go up at once," they urge bravely. "It is not the easier way; It is going to cost. It is going to mean opposition, but we stand ready to pay the price." That is ever the attitude, and the only attitude, to be held by real Christians. It is not enough to admire Jesus Christ, it is not enough to speak beautifully and kindly of His cause. It is not enough to look with reverence and approval upon the church. We must dare. We must be ever ready to adventure. At every call of Christ, we must be willing at any price, to rise up and follow. To do this is to find victory; to fail to do this means sure defeat.

II

When these two reports were submitted the multitude adopted the majority report. What was the outcome?

1. They made no more progress. Not only so, but failing to go forward, they went backward. This is ever the case. There is no standing still upon the road of life. Thus they missed possessing the land. What is worse, they missed also the moral and spiritual growth that would have come to them from a heroic choosing of God's
plan. To the end of their lives they remained spiritual dwarfs, always complaining, always whining, constantly on the point of renouncing the divine leadership altogether, choosing a leader of their own, and heading back to the land of their slavery. At last they slipped into their graves, further from the land of their hopes than they were the hour of their cowardly and fatal refusal to go forward.

2. Failing to make progress, they lost the thrill and zest of living. No longer was theirs the gladness of the forward look and the forward step. There were no more new discoveries, no more thrilling views, no more "happy valley hopes beyond the bend of roads." Variety was surrendered for maddening monotony; the joy of going on for the tedious task of going in circles. How mean and cheap did all their God-given opportunities come to seem. Again and again we find them taking the rich gift of life into their hands, looking at it with wry faces, then snarling up at God for having imposed upon them with so paltry a gift or for not having relieved them of the worse-than-worthless trifle long ago. "Why were we not permitted to die in Egypt?" they whine, or "why did we not die in the wilderness." What a wretched lot of pigmies they are! They threw away their big opportunity and thus lost it forever.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men, Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; Omitted, all the voyage of their life Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

But there is a brighter side to the story. If this generation, by a lack of faith and courage, disinherited itself and threw itself upon the trash-pile or worthless things, it did not and could not finally defeat God. No sooner did these fail than He began to prepare for the accomplishment of His purpose through others.
We may defeat Him in our individual lives. We may take His fine plan for us and tear it into shreds. But we will not, and cannot, defeat Him in His purpose for the final conquest of this world. When Woodrow Wilson was near the end of his journey, a friend was talking with him about the League of Nations. "We are right," cried the dying man excitedly, "We are right, and in the end we must win. You can't defeat God." This is our faith. This is our firm conviction. If we put ourselves in His hands, He will use us. If we fling away from Him, He will still march on in spite of us, to the complete triumph of the Kingdom of God. His victory is sure.

"Jesus shall reign wher'er the sun
Doth its successive journeys run,
His Kingdom spread from shore to shore,
Till the moon shall wax and wane no more."

Because this is true we ought to think grandly of our God, and grandly of ourselves as His children. We ought to think grandly of His purpose for us and of the high tasks to which He is calling us. There is a missionary in China who is a bit of an authority on things Chinese. This became known, and a representative of the Standard Oil Company went to see him to offer him a position. "My firm," he said, "will give you $10,000.00 a year to work for the Standard Oil Company;" But the missionary refused. "We will give you $20,000.00 a year;" But he still refused. "We will give you $25,000.00 a year." But the missionary still said no. "Then set your own price. I am to secure your services regardless of cost." Then the missionary answered calmly, "Your salary is big enough, the first you offered was plenty large. The trouble is your job is too small." That is splendid—grasshopper saints will never take this world, but it is waiting to surrender to spiritual giants such as this missionary. And just such giants God is eager to make of you and me.
Tell me what material you need, Christian? Those minority leaders thought they were leading the voice and their courage and dignity challenge our admiration. But the time has passed when we can hold up the captivity and subjection of Palestine as a Christian adventure. You speak too much as though the Church knew our own views. Truly, neither you nor I mean to know our own views. What do you mean by the Church? Do you mean that people, as a rule, hold any way you know them, people, as a rule, hold them your views. And does not the Church often change their views? How else are we to help it to see itself and mend its ways?
Any thoughtful reading of this book will convince the reader that it is truly a great book. It is great in its literary merit. It has in it splendid oratory, magnificent poetry. It is great as a book of religion. It is great in its insight. Great in its deep moral earnestness. No wonder it had a profound influence upon the Jewish people. No wonder it has a profound influence over other peoples that have read it through the centuries. This book seems to have been a favorite with our Lord. He quoted from it again and again. At Mt. Vernon I was interested in the sword with which George Washington fought his battles. This book is one of the weapons with which Jesus fought his battles against the tempter. Three times he said, "It is written". Every quotation that he used was from this book. On another occasion when a certain lawyer asked him for the greatest commandment of all, he turned to this same book, quoting, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, all thy strength and with all thy mind."

The finding of this book more than six-hundred years before Christ brought about an immediate reform. Here is a bit of the story. "And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord, Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses. And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan. And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they did it. And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the Lord, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen. Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes." It is possible that somewhat has been added to this book since that time, but the book as read resulted in an immediate revival. This book is in the nature of a sermon or rather a series of sermons. It
is purposed to be four orations delivered by Moses. The first of these orations extends from the first chapter through 44:3. The second extends from 44:4 through chapter 28. This address has two main divisions, that that is exertation and that that is legal. Even with this latter division there is mingled much preaching. The third oration includes chapter 29 and 30. The fourth includes 31 to 34. In this there are two poems accredited to Moses. What magnificent poems they are. Then follows the last chapter that gives an account of the death of the great leader.

The key word of the book is a call to remember. Remember is used in a sense of recalling the past and also in the sense of bearing in mind, refusing to forget. Over and over this earnest prophet says "remember, "See that thou forget not".

I.

Why does he urge these people to remember?

1. He does so, because they were so prone to forget. So it is with all of us, we are exceedingly forgetful. We forget names, faces, dates, kindnesses, but above all else we forget God. This is true because he is the invisible, the unseen. It was in recognition of human forgetfulness that the Jews celebrated the day of the passover. It is to help us remember that Jesus gave the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

2. He warned against forgetfulness because forgetfulness is so hurtful, it is so deadly. What we forget ceases to be of value to us. To forget our loved ones is to be as if they did not exist. To forget God is to lose him all together. No wonder that John Bunyan in speaking of the dangerous spots along the road to the City of destruction to Mt. Zion, who said, "That forgetful fear was the most deadly." No wonder then that this prophet is constantly warning "See thou forget not".

II.
What are some of the things these Israelites are to remember?

1. They are to remember God's dealings with them in the past. All their history bore the finger marks of His gracious and mighty hand. They could not tell the story of their yesterdays and leave God out. The same is true of us as a nation. It is true of each of us as individuals. These people could keep constantly before them the following facts of God's gracious dealing with them.

   (1) It was God who had set them free. He had found them in bondage and brought them out of bondage into freedom. The same is true of ourselves. "Who so committed sin", said Jesus, "is a slave" but we have been brought from bondage into freedom. It is He that has done it for us and not we ourselves. It was in the realization of this that John Newton who had once been a slave, not only physically, but spiritually, kept this verse above his study table. "Remember that thou also were in bondage in Egypt, and that the Lord thy God delivered thee".

   (2) Not only had God set them free and given them a chance at life, but he had sustained them through all the trying years. When they had thirsted in the desert he supplied water. When they had hungered he gave them food. They had nothing that they did not receive directly or indirectly from God. They were to bear that in mind. It would help us also to remember this. Not one of us have anything of value that we have not received from God. All has come to us marked by the finger prints of our Lord.

   (3) They were to remember how God had led them. They had been under the Divine Government. Now the Divine Government is a disturbed factor in life. If you have given yourself to God you may count on being disturbed by him. That near the opening of this book God is reported as saying "You have dwelt long enough in this mountain". At that command, tents must be struck and they must go on to another camping grounds.

   But if God disturbs us he disturbs us for our progress. Again and again he breaks in on our complacency and our ease. This he does, not in order to thwart us but to bring us to our possibilities. This is what the author is saying in one of
the most sublime passages in this book, or of any book, "For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." Why does the eagle stir her nest? Because there is something better for the eaglets than to be cared for by the mother. They are meant to fly, they are made for the sky-line and for the upper air. The mother therefore disturbs them to bring them to their best.

(4) Then these Israelites were to remember the chastisement of God when they had sinned, when they had failed, when they had been cowardly. They had gotten away with it. Our Lord, in His love will never let us go. No more will He ever let us off. When he chastens us it is not in anger, the author says, "As a father". His chastisement as a rule is not directly but indirectly. That is, sin finds us out in the very nature of itself.

Sometimes this takes the form of exact justice. Here is a great story by Robert Ripley "Believe or not". A Russian soldier whose regiment had suffered defeat stold a chest of gold that was to pay the soldiers and compelled his comrade to help him hide it by dropping it into a muddy river. He then told his unwilling accomplice to keep it a secret, but his accomplice did not promise, so his comrade shot him and threw the body in with the chest of gold. After the war this member became a Polish citizen. When Poland was calling in the gold, he promised that anyone revealing the whereabouts of gold should have half of it with no questions ask. This soldier came forward, told where the gold was hidden. The government sent men who built a wall about the chest, pumped out the water, but as the water subsided the skeleton hand of the murdered soldier dropped over upon the trigger of his gun, it discharged and a bullet wounded his comrade to death. He lived only long enough to tell the story. The money thus recovered was only last year turned over to the murdered soldiers' wife.
Believe it or not. But while our chastisement is seldom so deadly as this, always our sin finds us out.

2. Not only were these Israelites to remember God's dealing with them in the past, they were to face the facts about themselves. They were to bear in mind the kind of folks they were. God had not chosen them, the author insists, because of their own goodness. He had not chosen them because they were great and strong. He had chosen them in LOVE, in spite of the fact that they were rebellious and stiff-necked. You have made a poor record. You have been a troublesome bunch of pest. You still are. Face the facts about yourselves. You are a poor lot and it is only through the mercy of God that you have gotten anywhere at all.

3. Then they were to bear in mind that since disobedience brought failure and suffering in their yesterdays, so it would be tomorrow. I place before you, he said, life and good, death and evil. If you choose to do good, you will find life. If you choose to do evil, you will find death. As he looks forward he points out some of the blessings that will come to them as a result of obedience. He also points out the results from disobedience. He speaks of a woman that is so delicate that she would not put her tender foot upon the ground, but becoming so hardened that she will actually devour her own child.

III.

Why were they to remember?

1. They were to remember in order to be grateful. It was the only way they could be saved from the common and bitter sin, ingratitude. One reason we are so little grateful is because we forget. The word to think, and to thank, comes from the same Anglo-Saxon root. That is the first step toward being more thankful is to be more thoughtful. They were to remember to keep alive their gratitude.

2. They were to remember in order to save them from the sin of pride. Pride also a temptation to which the Jew was peculiarly prone. He felt himself the
chosen of the Lord. All nations have a tendency in that direction. We all are
tempted at times to pray with the Pharasee, "Thank God, that I am not as other men."
These were to bear in mind their lowly origin and their mighty dealings that they
might not become unduly proud.

3. They were to remember their yesterdays in order to gain wisdom.
We want to learn something by the very process of living. Sometimes we call somebody
a goose because we think they are a bit silly. A few years ago I went to visit Jack
Miner, the famous bird man of Canada. He showed me a trap that he had for catching
wild geese. It was so cunning that it might have even deceived a man, but he said,
"Though I turn all the geese loose that I catch after having tagged them, I have never
cought the same goose twice". But we bite at the same bate over and over.

Of course, the purpose of learning wisdom is that we might be obedient. That
we may not make the same mistake over and over again. That is the reason that the
author is so constantly insisting on our keeping in mind the commandments of God.
They are to teach these commands diligently to their children. They are to talk of
them as they sit in the house, as they lie down, as they rise up. They are to talk of
them as they walk in the way. They are to wear them upon their hands and as a frontlet
before their eyes. They are to write them upon the posts of the doors and upon their
gates. That is, they are to haunt their children night and day. Saturate them with
the words of this book of law. They are to remember that they might have the wisdom
to obey.

4. Finally they are to remember in order that we may learn to love
the God who has freed them, cared for them, guided and loved them.

IV.

This brings us to the heart of the message of this book. It contains
two outstanding
1. All God's dealings are motivated by love. Why did God ever take an interest in this, and free all slaves? Why has he made laws for them? Why has he chastened and born with them? For only one reason, because he loved them. Every warning, every "Thou shalt not," has been uttered on their behalf. Every promise has been made for their good. That was a marvelous discovery for that distant day. We can hardly believe it yet. It is a great day in any man's life when He comes to believe that all God's acts are motivated by love.

2. The two great lessons of the book is that our acts as His are also to be motivated by love. We are to love Him because He first loved us. Now love is the fulfillment of the law. Therefore, if we really love God, we seek to obey Him. If we really love the Father, we will love His children. Both for His sake and their own. Thus these Israelites were to practice devotion to God and the humane laws here laid down toward each other. It is wonderful how kindly these laws are.

    Look at a few of them. If one found a neighbor's stock astray, he was to restore it. If an animal had fallen into a ditch, he was to take it out. If a slave should run away, he was not to be restored. If a man seduced a virgin, he was to be compelled to live with her for life. Divorces were easy for others, but for him impossible. If one built a house, a wall must be put about the roof lest someone should stumble and fall. And women were not allowed to wear men's clothing and visa versa. Of course, it is not bad for a woman to wear men's clothes today, it just makes her look bad.

    Here then is a great kindly book. It is a book that tells of a God of Love. It has in it this gracious word, one of the sweetest in any language. These people were for a long time homeless wanderers, yet, says this prophet, "We are not homeless, God is our home and we are undergirded by His everlasting arms". No wonder that he felt that those were so greatly loved, should be a tender and gracious lover, no wonder.
"The Messages of the Books."

Deuteronomy.

The supreme word in religion. If you read the book of Deuteron­omy with any care you discovered the fact that it moves on a bit higher plane than any of the previous books that we have studied. Possibly you could not put your finger on the exact work that dis­tinguishes it, but you felt that there was an advance none the less. You could not fail to realize that the book was pervaded by a spirit a bit closer akin to that of the New Testament than the other books of the pentateuch.

The secret of this advance I think is found in the progress of the man to whom the authorship of the book is attributed. Deuteronomy is made up of messages from the lips of Moses. These are his last utterances to the chosen people. And the one who wrote the closing words of the book, possibly Joshua, declares of this man that there was no prophet since risen so great as Moses "whom God knew face to face."

Now, this man Moses did not stand still in his religious life. Beginning with the faith that he inherited from his mother, he went on to that larger faith that caused his face to shine so that at times people were unable to look upon it. The longer he lived the more gentle and tender and Christlike he became. The longer he lived the deeper he got into the secret of the Lord. In this book we see him at his best. He speaks as only one of the great and matured saints of God can speak.

And what think you is the supreme message of this book? As you read it you find it mainly given up to a review of Jewish history, to a resume of their laws and to prophecies regarding their future. But through it all there runs one big unifying message. It was vital and essential when uttered. It is not one whit less vital nor one whit less essential today. It is a message as fresh and up-to-date as your last heart's throb.

What is this message? It is this I think, the declaration of the fact that all the motives that prompt God to write them are the motives of love, and that the obedience that we are to give Him must be an obedience that springs from love. The importance, the supremacy of love does not come out in any of these other books of the pentateuch. Love is mentioned once in Exodus, and once in Leviticus, but on the whole it is an exceedingly lonely word. But here we find it coming in some measure into its own.

Moses reviews the history of his people to tell them that back of all God's movements toward them is the fact of His love. He makes it very plain, too, that God did not love them because of their own greatness, He did not love them because of the largeness of their numbers, He did not love them because of their goodness. They have been, and are still a stiff-necked and rebellious people. His love for them originated in His own heart. He loved them because his own nature and His name is love.

And Moses recites in their ears all God's dealings with them as a proof of His love. He shows them how they are to keep His command­ments for their good. It is important that they understand that the purpose of the laws that God has given them is not the protection of God, it is the protection of themselves. God's laws did not originate in His hardness or in His harshness or in His cruelty or in His anger.
They originated in His love. Every single "Thou shalt not" is a flower that is rooted in the rich, deep soil of love.

It is easy to see how this is true. Take the simplest of His laws. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Why? Because man needs the Sabbath. He needs it for the protection of his own body, if for no other reason. Then, he needs it for the nurture and the rebuilding of his own spiritual life.

"Thou shalt not kill." For whose protection is that law? Not for God's surely. It is to protect you. It is to protect you from being the victim of an assassin, or from what is still worse, being an assassin yourself.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery." Whose home does that fortify? About whose house does that build a wall? Not God's, but yours and mine. All God's laws are the utterances of His love. Without law man plunges inevitably into the dark.

When I was a boy there were certain things that I was not allowed to do. Sometimes I was a bit restless and rebellious under the restraint. I did not see why I should be restrained. I could not see why I had to be forbidden that pleasure. It was especially strange when I saw that certain other fathers and mothers allowed their children to do what I was not allowed to do. But in after years I came to understand that love was back of every prohibition that my father and mother put upon me. And so Moses had discovered here that the "Thou shalt nots" of God were the utterances born of His love, just as were His tenderest gifts.

Then when Moses spoke of their past history he did it for one purpose, to show how God's dealing with them in the past was a proof of His love. When they were weak He had brought them from under the bondage of a strong nation. When they did not know the way He had led them. When they were hungry He had fed them. When they had sinned He forgave them. When they had wandered from the path His hand had been heavy at times in chastisement, but all God's interest in them had been the interest of love.

I am sure you realize that exactly the same is true in your own life. Very few pious people who have come to old age fail to recognize God's tender and loving care as shown in their past history. I think they almost all would sing without a faltering voice,

"Through many dangers, toils and cares
I have already come;
His grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home."

As you look back over the yesterdays you see tokens of God's loving care in the blessings that have come to you. You see it in the transfiguration moments of life. You see it in those glad hours when every moment is jeweled with joy. And then you see it not only in the joys, but also in the sorrows. You come to realize how even your darkest days have been full of benediction to you. You have come to know that even some of life's keenest disappointments have been the source of your greatest enrichment. As

"The mountains hard by look jagged and scarred,
In the distance repose in their soft mellow robes,
Of purple and haze," so the rough present fades into the past tender, sweet and beautiful.

It was this realization on the part of David that gave birth to possibly the sweetest song ever written. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." How did David come to write that wonderful gem? He wrote it with his eye on the past. As he looked back on the yesterdays and thought of God's love and patience and tenderness and mercy, as he remembered how God had cared for him and had sought him when he had gone astray, his remembrance of the mercies of yesterday gave him unbounded hope for tomorrow. The experience of the past had made him confident of the love that would not fail him in the present or in the endless tomorrow. George Matheson was a great sufferer. But in the book of life's bitter pain he read no lesson of the carelessness of God. He read no lesson of His indiffERENCE or of His hate. He read only a lesson of His love. And as he dreamed over it there sang in his heart:

"Oh love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be."

So Moses in his farewell words brought them the fact that God's government was a government whose motive was love. He also taught that man's obedience must be an obedience born of love. The supreme commandment of the book is this, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." Of course we know, as Moses knew, that love can not be commanded. It can, however, be elicited. "We love Him because He first loved us."

Because this is true Moses urged again and again upon the people that they remember God's gracious dealing with them in the past. It is so easy to forget. It is so easy to forget a blessing at the hand of a friend. It is so easy for you to forget your mother's patience and tenderness with you when your life was as frail as a gossamer thread. It is so easy to forget those friends that have stood by us in other days. But if it is easy to forget a favor between man and man, it seems still easier to forget a favor between God and man. Moses knew this, so he kept saying "Beware lest thou forget." "Remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt." Think over it, he says. The words "think" and "thank" come from the same root word. The man who stops thinking must stop thanking. And the man who stops thanking will stop loving.

Sam Hadley tells us how he never forgot the depths to which he went, and how God lifted him. Therefore he went forth with a quenchless hope to other men. Thomas Goodwin said that whenever he found himself coming round to the Sabbath with a cold heart he always took a turn up and down among his old sins. He recalled what a sinner he had been, and what a Savior Jesus Christ had been to him. Then he said his heart was always melted and filled with love. So Moses said, "Love the Lord thy God." There is no service without that. There is no obedience without it. There is no blessing without it. But in order to love you must remember. In order to be thankful you must be thoughtful. In Bunyan's immortal allegory he tells us that the most dangerous spot on
Deuteronomy

the road from the City of Destruction to Mt. Zion is Forgetful Green. I am sure he is right. He almost always is. For on Forgetful Green is where a man loses not only his memory, but in losing that he loses his love also.

Moses also teaches that this obedience that is born of love is to spend itself in large measure toward man. Loving God he is to love his neighbor also. But this book has in it a most surprising command. It was the product of a prophet of an exclusive people you will remember. And yet it commands the Jews to love the stranger, remembering that they themselves were once strangers in Egypt. But whether they serve the stranger or their own people, whether they tithe or offer sacrifices, they are to do it for the same high motives that moved the heart of God. They are to do it for love's sake. So this is the lesson of the book of Deuteronomy. God's government is motived by love, and man's obedience must spring also from the same high motive. Nothing else will satisfy. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, it profiteth me nothing." But love, on the other hand, "is the fulfilling of the law."
DEUTERONOMY

Deuteronomy is one of the really great books of the Bible. It is great as a piece of literature. It has in it great oratory and great poetry. It has an exalted conception of God. It has profound sense of His love and mercy in His dealing with His people. It was the finding of this book centuries ago that brought about a revolution of religion among the Jewish people. "A thoughtful reading of the book makes it easy to understand how this would be the case. Here is a bit of the story:

"When they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord, Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses. And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan. And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they do it. And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the Lord, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen. Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes."

"This great book was certainly a favorite with our Lord. With a possible exception of the book of Psalms, I think he treasured it more than any other book of the Old Testament. When visiting Mount Vernon, I was interested in the sword that George Washington carried during the Revolution. Here is the sword carried by Jesus in his fight with the
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Tempter. During His struggle in the wilderness He met every onslaught of the foe with a word from this book. Tempted to make bread, He answered, "It is written man shall not live by bread alone." Challenged to fling Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, He said again, "It is written thou shalt not put the Lord thy God to the test." When offered the kingdoms of the world for one act of worship, He again drew from this priceless book, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve."

This book takes its name from the fact that it is a repetition of the law. It is made up of some three orations purporting to have been delivered by Moses. The first eight chapters deal solely with the past. Chapters nine to twenty-six inclusive concern themselves mainly with the present. Chapters twenty-seven to thirty-three inclusive look toward the future. The last chapter of the book has to do with the death of Moses.

One author has named these divisions Retrospective, Introspective, and Prospective. There is some truth in this, but the divisions overlap. It is sometimes hard to tell where one oration ends and another begins. The haunting theme of the book is "Remember." Over and over the author haunts his hearers with this word; "Take heed that you do not forget."

I

Why should these people need this solemn and haunting warning? They needed it for the same reason that we need it.

1. They needed it because they were so prone to forget. The same is true of ourselves. We are very forgetful people. I know there is a scientific sense in which we never forget. The psychologists tell us:
that every event, every experience of our lives, is written upon the tablets of our mind and that there is no blotting them out. Some have thought that the books that are to be opened by and by on life's other side are only the books of memory.

But while we may never forget from a scientific standpoint, for all practical purposes we do forget. We forget each other's names and faces, We forget our promises. We forget even our loved ones. We are especially prone to forget God. There is simply nothing of worth that we cannot forget. No wonder therefore that this wise prophet haunts us with this admonition: "Remember, take heed that you forget not."

2. Then we need this warning because forgetfulness is so hurtful. Of course, there are some things that we ought to forget. Paul calls attention to this in that memorable word, "Forgetting those things that are behind and reaching forth unto those that are before." We ought to forget our own sins once we have repented them. We even have a right to forget our own failures and follies. But to forget our loved ones is for all practical purposes to lose them. To forget God is to be without God and without hope. There is no deeper tragedy that can come to an individual or to a nation than to forget God.

II

But not only does this book call us to remember, but it tells us something of what we are to remember. What were these ancient Israelites to remember?

1. They were to remember that it was God Who had set them free. Once they had been slaves in Egypt. Now they had crossed over the Red Sea and had shaken the yoke of bondage from their necks, but they had not come to this freedom through their own initiative. They had not won it by their own strength. It was God Who had set them free. The author reminds them
of this in one of the most sublime passages in the book or out of it.

"For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him."

John Newton, one of the great preachers of England, ran away from home in his early youth. He engaged in the slave trade. And by he became a slave himself. He was bought by a Negro woman who used to make him crawl under the table and eat the crumbs. By and by he was marvelously converted and called into the ministry. But ever after that he kept a text from this book hung upon the walls of his study where he could see it: "Remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt and that the Lord thy God delivered thee." It was in memory of this experience that he wrote that hymn so dear to our fathers, "Amazing Grace How Sweet the Sound That Saved a Wretch Like Me."

2. Not only were they to remember that they had been set free by the Power of God and under the leadership of God inspired men, but they were to remember that as freedom was God's gift so the land that they were to possess was also God's gift. They were not to forget that they were possessing houses that they did not build, vineyards that they did not plant, that they were drinking from wells that they did not dig. They were to bear in mind, as we also ought to bear in mind, that all that is ours has come to us as a gift from God primarily and from our fellows.

3. They were to remember all God's merciful dealings with them. They were to bear in mind that it was God who had begun the enterprise, that it
was God Who had brought them to their goal, but not only was He the beginning and the end, but He was all the in between. He was the alpha; He was the omega; He was the whole alphabet. It was through God that they had begun. God had been in the course of their journeyings. God was to bring them to its consummation.

Thus they were to remember how they had been divinely led. Living within the will of God, it was He Who had told them when to march. It was He Who had gone before them in a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. God had led them all the way. I think every Christian realizes something of the truth of this. Though at the time of our choices we were not keenly conscious of the guiding hand of God, we realize that He did guide. I think to put it in its mildest form we can say with Shakespeare's "There is divinity that shapes our ends rough-hew them how we may."

Sometimes I look back over my ministry. A few of the appointments were such that I would never have chosen. I thought one of them would ruin me, but as I look back today every single one of them has made some contribution to me personally, and I would not change the road.

Not only had God led, but God had provided for their needs. When they were hungry and all visible supplies had failed, they had received the manna from heaven. When they were thirsty, water had gushed out of the rock; That is, in ways past their knowing and past their understanding God had provided. He had not supplied all their wishes, but He had supplied all their needs. They could join Paul in singing "Of the sufficiency of the Grace of God."

Not only had God met their material needs, but He had supplied every need of theirs. When they had been obedient, they had been rewarded with a sense of His presence. When they had been disobedient, they had suffered.
He had not hesitated to chasten them for their rebellion. That was also a mark of His love. It was thus He taught them that sin did not pay, that disobedience always brought tragedy. "Remember," this author is saying, "that sin always finds the sinner out."

4. Finally, they were to remember God's words as written in this book. This author believed that the Word of God was a great safeguard. He could sing with the psalmist, "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against Thee." Therefore, he urged upon these people the necessity of fairly saturating themselves with the Word of God. Listen: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."

III

Why is this prophet so eager that his people shall remember? What is the good of remembering?

1. He recognizes the fact that it is only by remembering that they can save themselves from the sin of pride when they prosper and of despair when they fail. There is profound good sense in His warning them not to forget when they find themselves in the midst of an abundance that has come to them through no merit of their own. It is a strangely human characteristic that our pride over our possessions and gifts is usually great in proportion to our lack of responsibility for them. By this I mean the less our possessions are stamped by our toil and merit, the greater
our tendency to swagger. Few men become unduly puffed up over money if they have had to work for it, but if they inherited it or struck oil, often you cannot live with them. Few things are more conducive to pride than physical beauty, but such beauty is always a gift. Men who have toiled hard to attain in the intellectual world are seldom conceited. But sometimes the chap who has inherited a scintillating mind for which he is not responsible at all is an incorrigible egotist.

"When you feel prone to get puffed up with pride," says this prophet, "just remember where you came from. Remember that your family tree leads back to a slave-pen, and that your freedom and your possessions are gifts."

I heard Gypsy Smith Senior tell how he always kept on his desk the knife that his father used for making clothes-pins when he lived in a Gypsy tent. It helped to keep him from a false pride. "Remember God's dealings with you," said the prophet. "Remember that you would have been blotted out had it not been for the prayers of Moses. Bear in mind that all you have has come as a gift of God and man and it will save you from being puffed up by pride."

2. Remember how all you have has come as a gift and it will not only save you from pride, but from ingratitude. Here is a psalmist who realizes that his soul has become so sluggish that it is no longer grateful; therefore, he takes that sluggish soul in hand: "Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not His benefits." When we forget, we become ungrateful. The word think and thank come from the same Anglo-Saxon root. When we begin to think, we begin to thank. "Think on God's mercies," says this man, "and you will know the joy of a grateful heart."

3. Then we need to remember God's dealings with us in order to learn wisdom. When Paul declared that he forgot the things that are
behind he did not mean that he made his past a perfect blank. There were
some lessons that life had taught him that he could not afford to forget.
He at least tried to learn not to make the same mistake twice, though I am
sorry to say that most of us are not that wise. It has been well said
that it would be easier to find a man who had never sinned than to find
a man who had not committed the same sin twice. This prophet is saying,
"Remember how you obeyed and won, how you disobeyed and lost. Do not
commit the same blunders over and over."

Sometimes when we wish to speak of one of our fellows as silly, we
call him an old goose. But that is very wide of the mark. Years ago
while on a Preaching Mission in Canada a friend took me to see Jack Miner
the Canadian bird man. His estate is a bird sanctuary. Nobody is allowed
to fire a gun within five miles of the place. He told me that he had just
the previous winter fed wild geese in transit from north to south and from
south to north three hundred bushels of shelled corn and twenty-nine hundred
bushels of shucked corn. He had a system for catching geese. There were
two large lakes connected by a small neck of water. This neck was shut in
by a wire screen. As the geese were swimming from one lake to another, he
could spring a trap and close them in. The arrangement was so perfect
that even a man might have been caught on it. Every goose that was caught,
he put an aluminum tag on his foot with a passage of scripture. He is a
very religious man. But the amazing part of the story to me is this—
that of all the thousands of geese he has caught he has never caught the
same goose twice. Do not ever throw off on a goose when you are getting
cought by the same trick every day.

4. Finally, we are to remember in order to keep alive our hope.
"When life grows hard," says this prophet, "remember you have been in hard
places before. Remember how impossible it seemed that you should ever get out of Egypt. Remember that when you stood on the shores of the Red Sea with the army of Egypt behind you you thought you were ruined; yet God made a way. Remember when you were in the wilderness you thought you would starve to death, but God fed you. Remember when the serpents were biting you God provided a remedy. And let me say to ourselves: remember how often the church has died but how always it has come to a resurrection. We need to remember God's dealings with us on yesterday in order that we might have hope for tomorrow.

IV

There are two abiding lessons in this book in addition to our call to remembrance that we ought to bear in mind.

1. All God's acts are motivated by love. This is as true of those providences that wet our faces with tears as of those that fill our mouths with laughter. It is as true of that which brings shadows over our hearts as of that which floods them with sunshine. All God's laws are for our benefit and not for His. All His dealings with us are the dealings of an Infinite Lover.

This was an amazing discovery to have been made so long ago. Yet this amazing prophet made it. It was through this conviction that he wrote one of the most tender, beautiful sentences of the Bible. These Israelites as you know were for a long time a homeless people. Other nations had homes, but they were wanderers. Yet this great soul did not feel himself destitute. Out of a great faith, he uttered this amazing word: "The Eternal God is our dwelling place. The Eternal God is our home and underneath are the Everlasting Arms." Surely that is shot through with the very highest faith of the New Testament.
2. Inasmuch as God's doings are all motivated by love so it should be with ourselves. When the lawyer tempted Jesus by asking him what was the greatest commandment of the law, Jesus answered from this book, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." That love to God was to give expression of itself in love to man. It is wonderful how humane and kind are many of the laws of this book. These Israelites were to be kind to strangers in remembrance of the fact that they had once been strangers in Egypt. Their whole lives were to be motivated by love for others. "When thou buildest a new house then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof that thou bring not blood upon thine house if any man fall from thence." "Remember," says the writer, "God is love." If you are going to be Godlike, if you are going to be His child, you must be a lover. This is a marvelous book for any age, a veritable miracle to have come out of that distant day.