This psalm contains the picture of a blessed man as contrasted with one who is not. It is a contrast between the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad, the blessed and the God-like, the saved and the unsaved. If it contains the secret of blessedness, it also contains the secret of wretchedness. If it paints the picture of the happy man, it also gives a picture of the miserable, the unhappy.

There are three contrasts brought out in the picture. First, there is a contrast in the love of the two classes. The first class, the unhappy, the unholy, love basely. They walk in the counsel of the ungodly. They do so because they want to, because they are in love with that sort of counsel. This marks the beginning of the downward way. He has not sought vile companionship as yet. He has only begun to be influenced by the wicked, to love their ways of life in his heart. Their manner of life has begun to appeal to him that he has begun to use their standards, to follow their example, to live their life.

Having proved traitor to God and the right in his heart, he soon seeks the companionship of kindred spirits. He stands in the way of sinners. You will notice that he does not actively participate in their ill conduct at first. He just stands. He simply runs with the crowd. He is with the gang. He is there because it suits him to be there. He likes it. That is what he loves.

But there is nothing stationary in the life of the Godless. They continually go down. Having renounced the right, having proved traitor to it, he becomes fixed in his sin. He takes his seat there. He has become a fixture. Right has been renounced by him. If he would not be tormented by
that thought he must come to look upon the right as a little thing, as a
contemptible thing. He next becomes a scorner. Here he has reached the
very bottom. Beginning by the love of the counsel of the wicked, he passes
to the love of their company, thence to the love of their scorn. He takes
his place in the seat of the scornful.

Now, I know no sure mark of littleness, heartlessness, all round
meanness, than is scorn. It begins with the scorn of people and ends in the
scorn of God. Or rather, the opposite is true. It begins with the scorn of
God, the scorn of the right, and ends with the scorn of our brother. But
wherever it is found it is the badge of littleness. It is most highly de-
veloped in the savage and the barbarian. It is a sure mark at once of a
dwarfed intellect and of a dwarfed soul.

Did you ever see anybody that thought they showed their superior-
ity by making fun of some one else? Did you ever hear them make sport of
their being rube's, of their use of bad grammar, of their lack of knowledge
of the little niceties of society? Now I believe in all these things. But
I want to tell you this: Whenever you hear anyone ridiculing another, mak-
ing sport of another they are very defective in some, if not all, of these
matters themselves. Never yet have I heard one person mock at the ignorance
of another, but I have found that man to be himself an ignoramus.

On one occasion I entertained three people in my home. One of them
had grown to manhood in those hard days during and just following the War.
He was unlearned. The other had grown up since. Had had the advantages of
good society and knew a little of its usage. Therefore they took great del-
ight in remarking about the blunders of their elder fellow guest. And at
times they made slight, veiled remarks that he could not help but understand.
But of them he took no notice. One day they were laughing to me of how he
at with his knife, I was disgusted, and I merely remarked that I had seen some very uncultured people who ate with their forks. The fact in the business, I continued, my idea of culture is one who knows how to make himself agreeable. They saw the point and of course resented it. But I do not care to number such folks among my friends. Mark what I say. It is the uncultured in heart, mind and soul that mocks.

I have seen these mockers in the house of God. I have seen them so scorn him that they would scorn his people. And do not for a moment think that you can scorn God's people, the smallest and meanest, without mocking God. I have seen the lip that would curl at the cut of another's coat or the style of another's hat. I used to know a poor old woman in Ft. Worth who stayed at home for years because some of these mockers made sport of her old sun bonnet. Of course she was wrong. But the poor old soul was wearing the best she had. And poverty is sensitive.

The seat of the scornful. Where is that shameful, brainless, heartless seat? In the house of shame? Often, but not always. In the saloon? Not always. In the theater? Not always. Where? Often it is in the church. Often it is in the house dedicated and consecrated to the worship of God. O the tragedy, the wickedness, the littleness of coming to God's house to sit in the seat of the scornful. And yet they come. They come to see God in his own house. I have seen them go so far as to nudge each other and talk, not simply while the preacher was preaching, but while some one was trying to pray. I have heard it here. In that holy, in that solemn, in that sublime hour when some trembling soul is trying to mount up on the wings of prayer to see somebody's hat awry and nudge each other and talk.

The scorn is a compound of ignorance, heartlessness and devilishness. The reason he mocks is found in all of these. The note that is
always turning up. It's mortgaged of the devil and is larger than the heart and the brain that is back of it. My friends, we would never scorn if we only understood. The other day a mother lay sick in a miserable tenement. Everything that could be pawned was given up. The few dishes had gone and at last even the wedding ring from the faded finger. Mother was going to have to be taken away to the charity hospital. Far little Susie that was next to death itself. She thought of what else could be pawned. At last she thought the problem solved. She went into the corner and got the little maimed doll that charity had given her almost a year ago. She loved it next to mother. It was her baby doll. She wrapped it carefully and took it away to the pawn shop. The man unwrapped it, looked it over, laughed a scornful laugh and dashed it into fragments upon the floor.

Now there is scorn in all its bald badness. Here is the scowner in the full glare of the light. Look at his ignorance. He is too stupid to recognize heroism and sacrifice when he sees them. He is too heartless to care even though he recognizes them. The beauty of the fact that this little girl has offered the dearest treasure of her heart upon the altar of her devotion is only matter for scorn to him, because the doll is worth nothing in the markets of the world. The fact that the breaking of a doll means also the breaking of a heart is of no consequence to him. So long as it is the heart of a forlorn and ragged little girl. He is a scowler. "Surely God scorneth the scowler," says the Bible. There is just one man that we are justified in scorning, in having a contempt for and that is the scowler.

Look now at the love of the other. His delight. Hear the word. "His delight." So there is something that delights this man. There is something that gives him real pleasure. There is something that he loves. His delight is not sin. It is not foul companionship. It is not the seat of the scornful.
His delight is in the law of the Lord. He does not yawn over it, go to sleep over it, is not bored by it. His delight, pleasure, joy is in the law of the Lord. Now that means that this man loves not simply God's Book. He loves it, but it means also that he loves the right. That he loves the truth. That he loves goodness and purity. His delight is in the law of the Lord which is the law of Love. His delight is to be a blessing to help to serve to heal to win to woo back to God. It is his delight. His joy, his song, his benediction.

The next is the contrast of the characters to which these two loves lead. The one we are told is like a tree, a planted tree. The other is like chaff. Tree planted, chaff. Could there be greater contrast? The planted tree implies fixedness. You will not put it aside with a thrust. You will not move it with a breath. It is fixed. The storms have wrestled with it. The roots have nipped. The lightnings have flashed about its tall head. But it is planted. So with the man whose roots take deep hold on the soil of God. Look at Joseph amidst the luxuries and sinful life of Egypt. He is a peasant of genuine in a high place. What effect will it have upon him? You know what it did for the peasant Robert Burns. It ruined him. Hear him as the awful Euphrosyd of temptation sweeps down upon him as he crouches above the roar of the storm.

"Shall I do this great evil and sin against God?" There is the tree planted. It is good to be near a tree like that when the storm is on.

But chaff. There is a piece on your shoulder. Let us get the nippers and see if we can pull it off. Let us get a block and tackle and try to lift it. Let us blast it with dynamite. It is not necessary. I simply walk up to you and say there is a piece of chaff on you shoulder. Poof! And it is gone. It is not fixed. What are you doing here? Chaff. A breeze dashes by. "I am not here. I am yonder." It cries and is gone. It subject to the caprices of the wind. If it blows in the direction of the church alright. If in the direction of the circus, alright.

"Like a tree planted. Then if it planted there is a purpose in it. If..."
did not just happen to be there. It is there to fulfill the purpose of its planter. There is a purpose in its life. It can look into the face of earth and heaven and hell without apology. It is here for a purpose. The really good man is a purposeful man. The purposeful men shape the world. Look at that stripling in Babylon, in what is he different from the millions about him that have been forgotten these long centuries? He has a purpose. And there comes a day when proud Babylon follows at his heels. And the centuries have paused under his open window to gather courage and inspiration and purpose from his prayer.

But the chaff? Has it a purpose? None but this. It will not go again to the wind. It will not undertake the difficult task of the drifting, the chaffy lives, in the church and out. The men and women, young and old, with no great presiding purpose. These are our worst hindrances. These often make our worst criminals. Not that they intend to do so. They have no purpose save to take the easiest way. You see a picture of this type of chaff in Tito Malama. The one thing that made him one of the most loathsome characters in literature was his effort to escape the difficult and unpleasant.

Like a planted tree that bringeth forth fruit. That's what the tree is for. It is a fruit bearing tree. It is not simply to look at. It is to bear fruit, to bless the world, to feed the hungry souls of men. It brings forth fruit. And if you do not do something of fruit bearing you are not the planting of God.

The chaff. What increase does it bring? What fruit does it yield? You know. It yields none. It is dead. It can do nothing but rot. And getting it helps to rot the thing it touches. The life of chaff, the man in sin cannot bear fruit for God. He is dead. He can only help the world down. He cannot add to its disintergration.

Next, this tree of the Lord is an evergreen tree. Its leaf also
shall not wither." Did you ever watch the evergreen tree? There used to be one up the Pig Pen Hollow near home. I have seen it in the glory of the budding springtime. Then it did not seem so wonderful. There were many trees that were more beautiful. I have seen it in the glory of the moonlit bush of midsummer. Still there was nothing of marvellous beauty about it. In the gorgeous gold of autumn it looked commonplace, but by and by the testing of the blasts of winter would come. Then I have seen the bared branches of the other trees wave in the winds like the ghastly arms of a skeleton, then it was that the birds learned that it was a good thing to build their nests in the branches of the evergreen.

And there are evergreen lives. Lives whose roots take deep hold on the abiding rivers of God. The drouths of misfortune cannot parch them. The blasts of winter cannot rob them of their virtue. They are green in life and green amidst the chilling breezes of death. They are evergreens. They are abiding, eternal, "for he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." But there is nothing abiding in chaff. Suppose I were to tell you that I saw a piece of chaff down on the railroad last summer and were to propose to you to go down and find it. Would you go? No you wouldn't say that it is gone long ago. The wicked do not abide. "I have seen the wicked in great power, spreading himself like a green bay tree." Yes, that is all true. But there is the tragedy of the second look. "I looked again and lo he was not. Yea, I sought him diligently and he could not be found.

And this man shall have eternal prosperity, whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. This does not mean that whatever he touches will turn to gold. It may do just the opposite. But it means that there is no real calamity can come to him who trusts in God, that all things work together for good to them that love him.

The meaning for the wicked is just the opposite. I mean that what-
ever he does he shall not finally prosper. However well he may succeed for a while, that life must end in awful and tragic failure. That he may be crowed for a while, but at last death will un crown him. That he may be powerful for a while, but death will make him powerless. He may be victorious for a while, but he will at last meet his Waterloo, and then the lone death on some wreck, St. Helena, gift of the raging seas of hopelessness and despair.

Then comes the contrast in destiny. "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous." He knows it, guides it, protects. At times it is full of difficulty. But at last it leads up the steep hill and into the wide open gateway where God waits for us and where the breezes are fresh from the sea. The ungodly shall not stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. Among the bloodwashed there shall not be one who walks in the council of the ungodly. Not one who sits in the seat of the scornful. Not one who stands in the way of sinners. If you stand with them here you must stand with them by and by.

"For the way of the ungodly shall perish." That is, it is a road that does not lead home. It may be broad and bordered with flowers to begin with, it may be full of charming company. But there will come a time when the road will utterly fail you and you will plunge into hell's blackness alone.
HOW TO PROSPER

"......Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

The fact that the whole of Jackson has not turned out to hear this sermon this morning is due to either one or two reasons. It is possible that some of them do not know that I am going to point out the way to prosperity. Therefore, they are absent not because they are not interested in prosperity—everybody is. We are eager to know how to prosper ourselves. We are eager for our children to prosper. We are often greatly interested and excited over those who do prosper. Being thus interested, these would surely have come if they had known I was going to point out the road. Many of them have not prospered, but they have never given up. They are still longing to find how this treasure may become their own.

Then there is a second group who have failed to come. These have not stayed away from lack of interest. They are just as eager to prosper as their fellows, but they failed to come because they did not take me seriously. Perhaps they did not believe that I could speak with authority on the subject. But had everybody in Jackson known that I was going to tell folks how to prosper, and had they been convinced that I really knew that of which I was undertaking to speak, no house in the city could have held more than a small fraction of the congregation. This is the case, I repeat, because everybody wants to know how to prosper.

I

Now it so happens that I do know whereof I speak. I come, not simply on my own responsibility, but backed by a great authority. Here is one who makes this bold declaration: "Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Now it sounds as if this psalmist is declaring that under certain conditions, given a right character, everything that such a man undertakes will come to a successful conclusion. Everything
that this good man touches will turn to gold. In fact, it was the predominant faith of the Jews that a good man always enjoyed prosperity, both material and spiritual, while a bad man always went to the wall. Therefore, whenever tragedy came such as that which overtook Job they sought the explanation for that tragedy in Job's own sin. "It must be that way," they said, "for whoever suffered, being innocent?"

But we have come to a saner faith. We cannot say that because a man is good, he will be uniformly successful. Experience constantly tears that false faith into shreds. That does not mean that, other things being equal, a good man stands a better chance to prosper than a bad man. It is true of the individual. It is even truer of the group. When Jesus said, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added," he was speaking, not so much to one individual, as to all men. He is declaring that if you will receive the Kingdom of God, then every need of the individual will be met. That is true. Think of what we are destroying in war. We will burn up in these few years enough to have met the needs of the world for far on toward a century.

"Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Is that true or not? It is not true. This wise man did not claim it to be true. The correct translation of what the psalmist said is this: "In whatsoever he doeth, he shall prosper." Now that is universally true. Given righteousness with God, a man may fail financially. He may trust the wrong bank. The drouth may get his crops. He may sell on a credit and his business go to the wall. His wealth may fail, but he himself will prosper. Nothing can destroy his inward wealth.

Now this is a secret supremely worth knowing. This is the case in the first place because no outward prosperity would count for much unless one prospered inwardly. The rich farmer was vastly prosperous in things, but he was poor in soul. A few years ago a young actress died in Hollywood, conspicuous for her beauty and for the vast wealth she had accumulated before she had reached her thirties. But to those who knew her best, she was still more conspicuous for her restlessness and wretchedness. It is possible, therefore, to prosper in purse and to be poverty-
stricken in the wealth of the soul.

On the other hand, it is possible to be poor in things and rich in the values that really count now and count forever. Paul was too poor to afford a new cloak, yet he declared that he made many rich. Jesus was so poor that he was more destitute than the foxes and more homeless than the birds of the air, yet never another lived so richly. One tells of a poor old English woman who sat down alone to a meagre dinner. But one who was privileged to watch her heard her exclaim, "Just to think that I have all this and God too!"

Here then is a prosperity that is open to every one of us. Life may deal harshly with us. It may wreck our business. It may spoil something of our best dreams. If we live long enough, it will weaken and batter our bodies, but our essential selves can still prosper. We think again of the answer of John Quincy Adams when a friend greeted him. "How are you this morning, John Quincy?" "John Quincy Adams is quite all right," came the answer. Of course the house in which he lives is gradually falling into ruins. Its walls are tottering on its foundation. Soon I am going to have to move out of this house into another not made with hands, but John Quincy Adams is quite all right."

II

How is this prosperity to become ours? The psalmist indicates that the road to it is shut within limitations. It is a narrow road. That is not surprising. The road to every worthwhile undertaking, I have reminded you before, is a narrow road. If a train desires to reach its destination, narrow is the way. If a ship sails for Liverpool, narrow is the way. If you desire to find real prosperity, there are certain refusals you must make. There are certain possibilities that you must embrace with all your heart.

1. Look at these refusals. The man who would prosper must not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. Who are the ungodly? They are not of necessity the vicious, the crooked, the criminal. They are those who reckon without God. They are the practical atheists. There are very few avowed atheists, but there are many practical
If there is nothing, then for all practical purposes you are an atheist. This man walks as the godless walk. Beginning to walk as in the counsel of the ungodly, this man passes on to a more dangerous position. "He stands in the way of sinners." As long as one keeps walking, he might pass beyond the confines of a present evil into a purer place. But when he stands, that means a loss of sensitiveness. That means he is no longer shocked, no longer afraid of the unclean thing. He has begun to buzz about the questionable as a candle-fly about a candle. If we are to prosper, we must avoid standing in the way of sinners.

Finally, we must avoid sitting in the seat of the scornful. The pet horror of the Bible is the scorners. "Surely God scorneth the scorners." The scorners have become a cynic. He has learned to laugh at convictions that once filled him with strength and reverence. Here, for instance, is a young man who has recently moved from the country into the city. He came from a Christian home. He came from an active life in the church. But here he has made friends with the wrong crowd. Today he is at home with the companionship that once would have disgusted him. He can laugh at what once would have filled him with shame. He has come to sit in the seat of the scornful.

I have seen the same thing happen to a lovely girl. I am thinking of one now who was once a volunteer for mission service, but she slipped into a wrong companionship. Today she can laugh at what once would have filled her with horror. She has forgotten how to blush save as she buys them at the beauty parlor. That is a sad loss. A blush is the crimson flag that modesty waves above the citadel of the soul to show that that soul has not yet capitulated to the God of the coarse, that it has not yet come to sit in the seat of the scornful.

Walking, standing, sitting—it is progressive. We are born on an incline. There is no standing still for the individual or for the group. There are many churches today who are trying to dig in and stand a siege, but the church that is not aggressive will die. The Christian that is not aggressive will die. We go up gradually. We also
go down gradually. This man began by walking in the wrong crowd. He came to take his stand among the godless. By and by he sat among them. Thus he became a fixture.

One day when I was a small boy, my father came home with a wee lamb under his arm. It was an ugly, lean, and pitiful looking creature. He told me that I could have the lamb if I would teach him to drink milk from a bottle. I took him in hand and soon he was one of the most beautiful and playful creatures imaginable. We had many romps together. He would answer me whenever I called however far away he was. Sometimes I would call him repeatedly just to hear him answer, and he would answer louder and louder at each call as if to say in impatience, "Are you deaf?" Then one day some old sheep came up and jumped over into his pasture. They associated for a little while and then the sheep jumped the fence again and went back into the forest. My lamb looked after them with interest for awhile and then forgot. But they came up again and again, until one day my lamb jumped the fence with them. He was gone, however, for only a few hours. Then he came home again, seemingly with great eagerness. Then he went out another time and stayed longer and yet longer. At last he came not at all. I found his brown wool where the dogs had got him. He went away little by little, even as you and I.

2. But no life can be strong merely from negatives. The prosperous man does not simply make certain firm refusals. He makes positive acceptances. "His delight is in the law of the Lord." Notice the word is "delight." He does not enter upon the business of following God sorrowfully. He does not enter with vast boredom. He is joyous, eager, delighted. His delight has at least three solid objects.

First, he delights in the law of the Lord. That is, he delights in the Bible. He delights in God's Word. That means that he reads it. That means that he reads it enough to understand it. He permits it to speak its message to his own heart. Of course, his Bible was not so rich and full as ours. Therefore, we are less excusable than he if we do not make this Holy Book our joy. Everybody ought to take delight in the Bible because it is the greatest piece of literature bound in one volume. We ought to take delight in it because it is God's message to the human soul.
Second, but this means more than that this man took delight in the Bible. He took delight in what the Bible reveals. He took delight in doing the will of God. He could say with another of the psalmists, "I delight to do thy will." He had learned with Paul that the will of God is a good and acceptable and perfect will. It was his joy as it was the joy of Jesus to say, "Not my will but thine be done."

Third, finally, he delighted in the will of God and the law of God because he delighted in God Himself. Long before Wesley he could sing with that great saint, "Thou, O Christ, art all I want, More than all in Thee, I find."

Therefore, this prosperous man prospered, not simply because he refused the low, but because he joyously and wholeheartedly embraced the highest and the best. "His delight is in the law of the Lord and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

III

Naturally such a man prospered. What is the content of his prosperity? Of course, this does not tell all the story, but it tells a rich part of it. The man who thus delights himself in the Lord prospers in at least four particulars.

1. "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water. The emphatic word here is "planted". There are some trees that are growing where they are because the birds or the winds have scattered the seed and they have grown up somewhat by accident. But a planted tree has intelligence behind it. It is a creature of purpose. The prosperous man has a sense of mission. He believes there is meaning in life, that there is deep meaning in his own life. He can joyously look up from his task and say, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world."

2. Not only is the prosperous man one who is girded with a sense of mission, but he is a steadfast man. The fact that this tree is planted implies fixedness. You cannot be rid of a tree by boooing at it. You cannot frighten it. You cannot bribe it. You cannot laugh it out of its position. It stands there facing the winds, wrestling the tempests, exposing its head to the thunder-bolt. It is sturdy, staunch, steadfast.
How we need such men today! We have a man in our history who earned the nick-
name of Stonewall. Another we call Old Hickory. God's real saints are sturdy people.
They are not like the chaff that the wind drives away.

"God give us men. The time demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and willing hands,
Men whom the lust of office cannot kill,
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy,
Men who possess convictions and a will,
Men who have honor, men who will not lie."

3. The prosperous man is fruitful. "He bringeth forth his fruit in his season.
Always the supreme crime in the mind of Jesus is to do nothing. It would seem that
the deepest damnation will come to the man whose crime is to have come and grown
and gone and never have known the majesty and mirth of being of service. "I am the
true vine," said Jesus, "and my Father is the husbandmen. Every branch in me that
beareth not fruit he taketh it away." To be of service is the poetry of living.
"I will bless, thee," said God to Abraham, "and thou shalt be a blessing." "That is
the only vocation," "Bishop Quayle used to say, "that everybody can work at and succeed."
The prosperous man does not only bring prosperity to himself, but he brings prosperity
to others.

4. Finally, this sturdy tree of God's planting is an evergreen. "His leaf also
shall not wither." It was Jerome K. Jerome who taught me how to appreciate the ever-
green. I remember a lowly holly that grew on the hillside above my old home. I
have gone to this tree during the fresh days of springtime when the other trees
were just decking themselves in their Easter finery. There was then little about
the evergreen to attract attention. Then I have gone in the noon-tide hush of mid-
summer and I could not see how that the holly was one whit bitter than its neighbors.
Then I have gone again when autumn had made other trees glamorous with the colors of
the rainbow and my holly looked almost commonplace. But when the hoar-frosts and
the winter winds came and cut the leaves from other trees, and they waved their
branches like the hands of a skeleton, then the holly came into its own. Then
the birds saw that it was good to build their nests in the boughs of the evergreens.
There are evergreen lives too, thank God! Men and women who are girded by a high and holy purpose, who are steadfast, who are fruitful, and whose leaves do not wither. However often December comes, they always have June-tide in their hearts. These prosper in time—they prosper in eternity. The psalmist was right in saying, that such a man is truly blessed.
"His leaf also shall not wither."

The first Psalm is a description of the happy man in contrast with the one who is not happy. It pictures the man who has found the best over against the man who has missed the mark. Who is this man that has found that which makes life truly worth living? Who is he that can truly say, "I have found the best?" Can you say it or are you among those who have found life a disappointingly disappointing and pathetic failure?

PART I.

The first way in which the happy man is contrasted with the one who is not is in the matter of choices. God has given to every man the power to choose. You have the capacity to turn to the left or to the right, to go up or down, to say yes or no. What you are today is the result of the choices you made yesterday. What you will become tomorrow depends upon the choices you make today.

1. This man who missed the happiness that might have been his did so because of a wrong choice. What was his choice? He chose to do what the happy man refused to do. He chose to walk in the counsel of the ungodly, to stand in the way of sinners and to sit in the seat of the scornful. That is, he chose to turn his back on God. He chose to desert the path in which he knew he ought to walk. He chose to neglect the duty that he knew he ought to do, to commit himself to a course that he knew was wrong.

Now having made a wrong choice he went down step at a time. A choice may be the matter of a second, but the carrying out of that
choice is a matter of days and months and years. You did not go to the bad all at once. The devil himself does not ask us to spring into the pit at one leap. We go away from God step at a time.

(1) This man began by walking in the counsel of the ungodly. The expression denotes a brief and passing fellowship with wrong-doers. The man began by trifling with evil. He began by satisfying his curiosity. He began by seeking the thrill of one single adventure that he did not intend ever to repeat. "Just for this time," he said to himself, "I will try the ways of the world, I will take just one glimpse at life."

(2) But the fling that he told himself would be his first and last was not his last. Every sin tends to repeat itself. It has been wisely said that it is easier to find a man who has never sinned at all than to find one who has committed a certain sin once and once only. So this man who set out to see life once only repeated his experience. Having visited the slime pits once he went again. Having taken one drink he took another. Having sworn one oath he swore another. Having gone once with the godless crowds to do evil he felt less shy of them till he came to the place where he could stand in the way of sinners.

This standing in the way of sinners denotes a greater permanency in his indulgence of evil. He was more at home in an atmosphere that was unclean. He did not shrink from sin as in other days. I wonder if that is not the experience of some to whom I speak. When you came a fresh young girl to the city a few years ago there were certain crowds that offended and embarrassed you. Are you somewhat at ease among them now? There were certain companionships that were regarded as impossible, are they becomming more tolerable and more pleasing?
Be ware of standing in the way of sinners for if you persist in this it will bring you to the next tragic step - you will sit in the seat of the scornful.

(3) This marks the lower step. Sitting in the seat of the scornful means first of all that you have chosen not only the worst crowd in the world, but that you have taken up an abode there. You have become a fixture, you have come to feel at home among the scoffers and among the scorners. That is, you have not only ceased to struggle for goodness, that you have come to laugh at it as a thing either undesirable or impossible.

This seat of the scornful is a very roomy seat. It is a full assembly. It is occupied by a multitude. Some of the scorners are very bright and very witty. Some of them write books. Some of them publish magazines. Some of them are merely stupid. But all of them laugh at ideals that they once held dear and many of them sneer at convictions that once were the very voice of God speaking within their souls. If you have reached the place where you can sneer at your early idealisms, if you have reached the place where you can scoff at your mother's Bible and at your mother's God, then you are coming close to the bottom. (Dan Matthews.)

Now I am aware of the fact that it may be yet a long road from your first choice or even to the seat of the scornful, but the road that you have taken certainly leads to that goal. When I was a boy my father came home one day bringing a little lamb in his arms that was pitifully small and helpless. He told me how the mother had died and that the wee bit of starvation might be mine if I would take
care of it. I undertook the task. Before many weeks it was one of the fattest and most beautiful and playful little fellows you ever saw. It had a coat of lovely brown and would answer my call more readily than a child.

But one day there came a new experience into the life of this lamb. Older sheep from the big outside world came and jumped over the fence into his pasture. He was shy of them at first, but soon they were on friendly terms and they leaped the fence to return to the world of which he knew nothing. He followed and watched them as they vanished among the trees. They came again and again till one day he leaped the fence for the first time and went with them a little distance in the forest only to hurry back home. Then he was gone for a day, and then for several days. I found him once amidst strange scenes and at my call he came eagerly, but at last he went and never came again. We found his brown coat scattered about over the ground. He had made his home in the wilds and had paid the price.

2. But the man of God makes the higher choice. His delight is in the law of the Lord. Understand there is no compulsion in his goodness. He does not go to the prayer meeting like a slave scourged to his dungeon, and to the dance with glad and eager feet. He delights in goodness. He is in love with the highest. The spell of Jesus Christ is upon him. His religion is not the slavery born of fear but the freedom born of love.

His delight is in the law of the Lord. You can tell what a man is by what he loves. If you delight in the course and the common
and the unclean then you are unclean. If a spiritual sermon bores you and a salacious picture pleases you, then there is something wrong.

If you can laugh gleefully over a suggestive and filthy story you had better be on your guard. Whenever I hear a man telling a dirty story regardless of who that man is, regardless of how clean he is in his outer life, if he persists in the telling of such stories I am forced to conclude that he is dirty on the inside.

This man makes the law of God his choice. He does right because thru the grace of Christ he loves the right. Not only does he delight in the law of the Lord as the law of righteousness but it means that he loves the Word of God, he loves the Bible, he loves the gospel, he loves the old old story. He reads it and meditates upon it. Most of us are in too great a hurry to do that today. He allows it to take root in his heart. He allows it to become the very soil from which his whole being draws sustenance and life and power.

PART II.

Next this Psalm shows us the contrasting characters that grow naturally out of these contrasting choices. A man who makes a wrong choice travels in an opposite direction from a man who makes a right choice. A man who makes a wrong choice naturally develops a different sort of character from the man who makes a right choice. The man who chooses Jesus Christ becomes different in his entire being from the man who chooses to reject Him. What kind of man does God make of him who really fixes his choice upon Him?

1. The real Christian is a steadfast man. He is like a tree
planted by the rivers of water. The word planted implies fixedness. You cannot brush a tree aside as a mere worthless trifle. It is fixed. It breasts the tempest. It wrestles with the storm. It stands firm amidst the crash of the lightning and the roar of the thunder. And God can take men who are in themselves frail and weak and make them into steadfast men, staunch men, men who can say with sturdy character, "Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."

How we need steadfast men and women today! How we love and admire staunchness; all of us. I remember walking down the banks of the Tennessee river and there at the very extreme edge of a rugged cliff stood a tree. It had anchored itself in the little soil that was to be found among those rugged boulders. It did not have much chance, but there it stood holding its position amidst all opposition. And there are men and women like that. They are not moved by the winds of custom. They are not up-rooted by the tempest of opposition or of adversity. They are rooted in God, they are staunch and steadfast.

Now the Psalmist said, the Christless man is the opposite. This does not mean that he in himself of necessity is a weakling. There are many who are not Christians who have strong wills. But the strength of the right kind is not in what he is in himself, but what he is thru the grace of God. He is anchored to the Almighty. The Godless man has no such anchorage. Therefore, he is like the chaff which the wind driveth away. You do not have to use dynamite to blast a piece of chaff in order to get it out of your way, one puff of your breath and it is gone.

2. The man who makes God his choice is fruitful. He brings forth
THE EVERGREEN

his fruit in his season. When he farms wheat fields grow golden, when he works the deserts become a garden, when he works the flowers bloom and the birds sing and the air is sweet with perfume. Blessed of God he becomes a blessing.

The life of the goodless, on the other hand is fruitless and what tragedy can be greater than that of mere uselessness. What is worse than to have come and grown and gone and never to have known the majesty and mirth of lifting another's load, of drying another's tears. The barren fig tree was cursed into eternal barrenness. This was the case not because it bore poison but because it failed to give account of itself in terms of fruit.

3. The life anchored in God has unfailing supplies of life and vigor. "His leaf also shall not wither." The trees of God's planting are evergreens, all of them. It is also safe to say that all others wither and die. "If a man abide not in me he is cast forth as a branch and is withered." The Bible speaks of a man who had a withered hand. There are far more who have withered hearts, withered and dwarfed souls. There are those whose love has withered, whose hopes are withered, whose faith is sear and dead.

But if we have hold of God we might never wither. His trees never shed their leaves and never bid the spring adieu. I remember an evergreen tree of my boyhood. It was not conspicuous in the spring time, when every other tree was fresh and green. Nor was it conspicuous in the summer. It even looked a bit commonplace in autumn when other trees were dressed in crimson and gold. But when the wind came then it was known for what it was. And there are evergreen lives
HOW TO PROSPER

He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Psalm 1:3

Prosperity is a word to awaken interest and quicken our pulse a bit. It has a universal appeal. Everybody is eager to prosper. Nobody wants to fail. The way to prosperity is what every individual and every nation is trying in some measure to find. Most of us are missing the way, yet, none of us need miss it.

The word prosperity suggests to most of us the aspiring of material values. Of course, this word goes far deeper than that. It was the faith of the Jewish people that loyalty to God would bring prosperity. Wherever, therefore, there was success there was also righteousness. Wherever there was failure and break-down there was wickedness. When Job lost his all and went to the wall his friends were uncertain as to the nature of his sin, but they were absolutely sure of the fact that he had sinned. "Whoever suffered," they answered, "were unclean." The implication is that to live a right life always brings material success without a single exception.

Now, we have come to a scene of faith. We have seen some genuinely good men go to the wall. We have known some really righteous men to trust the wrong bank, to dig a dry hole, or to make a wrong investment. All good men do not prosper in a material way. But while this is the case, loyalty to God,
other things being equal, is far more likely to receive prosperity than dis-
loyalty. This is true of the individual, it is even more true of the group.
The gifts of the world are ample for the needs of every living soul, but many
are in want because we selfishly burn up so much of our wealth fighting one
against another. But prosperity, as here used, means something far richer than
material success. This text, as I have announced, is a mistranslation. This
Psalmist does not say whatever he doeth shall prosper. Had he said that he
would not have been telling the truth. Good men do make wrong investments, and
good men fail in business. What the Psalmist really says is this "In whatever
he doeth, he shall prosper." His business may go to the wall, his health may
fail, his loved ones may disappoint him, but he himself in his inner life shall
still prosper. That loving God all things will work for his good.

Now, of course, this inward prosperity is the only prosperity that is of
abiding worth. It is only a truism to say that material success does not always
bring genuine well being. Some of the most miserable people that I have ever
met have been highly successful business people. An actress died a few months
ago who was greatly distinguished for her beauty, but among those who knew her
best she was even more distinguished for her wretchedness. On the other hand
all of us know those whom life seems to have cheated of almost every pleasure
who still manage to find the fullness of life. Some time ago I was preaching in
a town in Tennessee. The pastor invited me to visit a member of his church. As
we walked down the street he told me of the terrible tragedy that had come into
her life. In her early twenties she was afflicted with some terrible disease.
She was confined to her bed with a fifty pound weight swung over her chin. I
was prepared to make some sort of desperate effort to comfort the poor soul, but
when I was ushered into the room I saw a face that was full of sweetness and
life. Her nimble fingers were moving rapidly as she was doing a delicate piece
needle of work. "Excuse me," she said, "for working, but it does not interfere with my
conversation. And besides," she said modestly, "I am keeping a young man in college, educating him for the ministry, and this is the only way I have of making money." She was a rarely prosperous young woman.

When I was pastor in Texas I met a fine old friend who was one of the most radiantly beautiful characters I have ever known. There was a terrible drought on and he was a farmer. The crop upon which he depended was cotton.

"How is your cotton?" I asked. He smiled at me serenely and said, "I am not going to make a thing. I was out in the field the other day and the blossoms were raining on the ground." "I am so sorry," I said, and I meant every word of it. But he answered, "You know what I did when I saw those blossoms falling? I said, "Lord I thought you were going to take care of me this year by means of cotton, evidently you have some other plan." His cotton failed, he did not. He proved true the words of this Psalmist "In what ever he doeth, he shall prosper."

Now the good news that I have for you this morning is this:—Everybody may prosper after the fashion that is here promised by the Psalmist. There are certain types of prosperity that are beyond the reach of my hand. I never intend to be rich in material wealth. That is not at all necessary. I never intend to be rich in fame. It is not necessary to my prosperity that everybody think me a great preacher. Most types of prosperity are beyond the reach of your hands and mine, but here is the kind of prosperity that alone is satisfying and abiding. And that is possible for everyone. There is no use for me to tell you how we all may become rich, but using this word of this Psalmist I can surely put you on the road. How then can we prosper?

I.

The Psalmist begins by telling certain things that the man who would prosper
cannot do. I am aware that this will offend some of you. Our day is one that is particularly antagonistic to any sort of restraint. We are half insulted about having anyone say "can't" to us about anything. But the supreme authority in the realm of the spiritual said "Narrow is the way." That is true. Not because he deliberately made it narrow, it is true in the nature of things. The road to everything great is narrow.

Suppose for instance you desire to write excellent prose, narrow is the way. If you desire to paint a worthwhile picture, I must say again, narrow is the way. If you desire to build up a beautiful married life, narrow is the way. If you desire to play the violin, narrow is the way. I tried it out once. But suppose I had asked a great master to teach me, he would have started me to fingering the scales, and I should have resented it. "When I get ready to play I want to play." I would have said to him indignantly. "I want to start in with some classical Master piece. I do not want anybody telling me what I can do and what I cannot." But he would have said, "narrow is the way." If you are out to find spiritual prosperity, if you desire to live clean in our day, there are certain refusals that you must make. The Psalmist names three.

1. If you are going to live richly you must refuse to walk in the council of the ungodly. What do we mean by the ungodly? They are not necessarily criminals, nor crooks, nor outcasts. They are people who reckon without God. They do not hate religion, they are indifferent to it. They are not antagonistic to God, they just ignore Him. They act as if the Bible were a myth, or as if the supreme fact of the universe is a lie.

Now you will realize that this is a great multitude. There are many people not only outside the church, but within it who in the practical management of life take no account of God whatever. What are you doing today that you would not dream of doing but for the fact of God. What is there in your life that would not be there, simply could not be there except for your faith in God. If there
is nothing good whatever in your profession maybe you are walking in the counsel of the ungodly. Then you have missed the road to prosperity. The man who reckons without the law of gravitation breaks his bones. The man who reckons without God breaks his heart.

2. The man on the road to richness of life refuses to stand in the way of sinners. A Godless man is one who simply ignores God. A sinner is one who violates the law of God. The great safeguard to right living is faith in God. The man who begins by ignoring God easily passes on to positive wrong doing. He becomes a sinner. That is he becomes a transgressor of the law. This lawlessness is the natural outgrowth of walking in the council of the ungodly.

3. The man who would live richly must refuse to sit in the seat of the scornful. The scorner is the pet horror of the Bible. We can understand why this is the case when we see what these writers of the scriptures mean by a scorner. A scorner is a cynic. The cynic is dog-like in that he snarls. The cynic never looks up. This is the case because in his blindness and conceit there is nothing for him to look up to. He is continuously looking down. He looks down upon his fellows. He even looks down upon God.

The Psalmist is evidently calling our attention to the fact that the direction of life is most important. What you are means much, but what you are becoming means far more. This man who missed the road to prosperity began by taking the wrong direction. Taking a wrong direction he traveled downward a step at a time. He began by walking in the council of the ungodly. That is dangerous, but the man who is walking may pass beyond confines of evil that encircles him and make his escape. But notice he began to stand. That denotes weariness of the fight, a loss of sensitiveness toward evil, a growing familiarity with the unclean. He stands in the way of sinners. Finally, he passed to that last tragic position, the seat of the scornful.
Notice his seemingly harmless beginning. He begins with a thought of the council of the ungodly. He passes on to a practice, the way of the sinner. He ends in a wrong crowd, the seat of the scornful. He takes that seat because he is a scorner. This marks the very climax of wrong-doing. The scorner sits. He takes no part in the big business of remaking the world. He does not play the game, he merely sits in the grandstand and criticizes the other players. Sitting he scorns, and scorning he sits. The picture is not overdrawn, we have seen it happen in the lives of those about us. We may have seen it even in ourselves.

Here for instance is a young chap who came from a lovely Christian home. He reached the city undergirded by holy memories. But with a kiss of a Christian mother scarcely dried upon his lips he began to drift. Today he is at home with a crowd that would have once filled him with disgust and shame. Today he can laugh at ideals that once brought his soul to his knees. He became at last to sit in the seat of the scornful.

Here is a woman who had beauty and charm. Soon after her arrival in the city she found that there was an easier way to success than the prosaic way she was traveling. Today she has flung away from old convictions, laughs at old ideals as mere prudery, nothing embarrasses her anymore, a blush, that crimson banner which a fine sensitiveness hangs above the citadel of the soul to indicate that that soul has not yet surrendered to the god of the unclean is now impossible. Today she sits in the seat of the scornful. There is no measuring the height to which we may climb if we take the right road. There is no depth to which we may go if we take the wrong road. "Blessed is the man," says the Psalmist, "who refuses to take the wrong road."

When I was a small boy my father came home from the pasture one day with a wee-bit of a brown lamb in his arms. He put that lamb in my care telling me that his mother was dead and that if I would teach it to drink milk it would be my very
own. I undertook the task eagerly, and that lamb grew to be a thing of beauty. I could call him any hour of the day and he would answer as promptly as any child. I used to call him again and again to hear him answer. And after every call he would answer louder and louder as if to say "can't you hear anything, I am doing my best."

Now one day when that lamb was almost grown some older sheep jumped over into his pasture. He was a bit shy of these sheep at first, but little by little he came to be a bit at home with them. When a few hours later they jumped the fence and went back into the wild hills again. He looked after them as they went away with seeming wonder as to the fascinating world into which they were going. These older sheep came again and again, at last my lamb jumped over the fence, went away with them, stayed for a few hours and them seemed so very glad to get back home. But he went away again and this time he never came back. I found his brown wool scattered over the ground where the dogs had devoured him. He had gone away a step at a time just as we do. But as one of the prophets tells us, "All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way." Thus we miss the way to the life abundant.

II

But if there are certain great refusals that one would find life must make, there are also great possibilities that he must claim. We recognize, of course, that no amount of negative can make life worthwhile. To add up negatives is like adding up ciphers. They come to naked nothing at last. In fact, we can only succeed in making worthwhile refusals by the bringing in of something positive. We can only reßounce the low by the bringing in of the high. "This I say, walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." This man is able to turn from the ungodly and sinners in the seat of the scornful because he de-
lights in something else.

1. His delight is in the law of the Lord. By this, the Psalmist means first of all that his delight is in the scriptures, the Bible, what we call the Word of God. Of course, he did not have the Bible as we know it. But he found in the scriptures of his day something that gave him delight that steadied him and strengthened him.

I think there is no measuring as to what we as Christians miss by not giving ourselves a better chance at the Bible. Everybody ought to make a study of the Scriptures everyday. They ought to do so because the Bible is the greatest piece of literature in the world. We ought to do so because it is the key to the best that is in modern literature. We ought to do so above all else because it is God's inspired message to the soul. As you read it with an open mind it will make you wise to a good many things. But it will certainly make you wise unto salvation through Jesus Christ.

The Bible is a great human book. It is a book with thrilling human experiences. It is songful with poetry. If you bring to the Bible a wooden mind you will make sad work of it. If you regard it as being of an equal value and equal inspiration you will throw dust in the eyes of reason and spit in the face of common sense. These prophets tuned in on God, but some of them had better receiving sets than others. Therefore, Jesus had to set some of them right. But if you give this book a chance you will realize that he who in time past spake unto us as the prophets has in these last days spoken unto us through his Son.

Not only does this man delight in God's written word, but he delights in the will of God. He delights in God's law as revealed through his spirit to his own conscience. He believes that God's way is the best way for himself, even when he does not understand. He seeks to pray with Jesus, "Not my will,
but thine be done." His delight is in the law of the Lord and doing the will of the Lord.

3. Then this delight in God's Word and God's will culminates in his delight in God Himself. The Bible for him is of value. Not simply to look at, but to look through into the very face of God. He finds his needs met in God. He can sing, as we should be able to sing with a vaster understanding:

"Thou art all I want
More than all I want in Thee I find."

On the west coast of England is the tomb of a certain radiant saint. This tomb bears this inscription "Here lies one who was satisfied with Jesus." That inscription might serve for this blessed man of the Psalms.

III.

Now, making these refusals and finding these positive delights, what kind of man does he become?

1. He is a man with a sense of mission. "He is like a tree planted by the rivers of water." This tree is where it is because intelligence has planted it there. Its purpose is to be fruitful. So it is with God's prosperous man. While others find life a riddle, a jumble of purposeless tragedy, he says, "To this cause was I born and to this cause came I into the world." He goes on his way undergirded by the conviction that he has been divinely sent.

2. Being a man with a sense of mission, he is a steadfast man. "He shall be like a tree planted." That implies staunchness. You cannot look at a tree and say "Boo" and expect it to get out of the way. You may laugh at it, you may ridicule it, swear at it, but it does not take to its heels. It is planted. Those who know it know just where to find it. My father had that characteristic. Every man knew where he stood on a moral issue, and the winds might blow and the
storms of criticism might dash themselves against him but he was unshaken.

He was planted.

"God give us men, the times demand strong minds,
Brave hearts, true and willing hands,
Men whom the lust of office cannot kill,
Men whom the spoil of office cannot buy
Men who have honor; Men who will not lie."

3. This man made staunch by sense of purpose is a useful man. "He brought forth his fruit in his season." It is a terrible tragedy to be useless. How awful to live through an eager day like ours and withdraw from the fight as so many are doing, and refuse to do anything to help. To live in a day of battle and come out of it all without a single scar to show that we have ever lived in our sort of world is tragic. "The shock of uselessness," Huxley tells us, "is the greatest that can come to a living organization. But to be useful, that is perhaps the supreme joy of living.

A lovely old minister about four score years read me a bit of a letter the other day. Somebody had been kind enough to write him and tell him that his ministry had helped them. As he read me the letter, his voice was tendered and his eyes filled with tears. "I was leaving a town sometime ago where I had preached for a few days. I was lugging a rather heavy grip when a chap snatched it out of my hand and put his arm around me and said, "I just wanted to tell you I am a better man because you came to town." "He need not have carried my grip, I felt if I had a trunk in each hand I could have gone skipping down the street."

The man who delights in the law of the Lord is a useful man.

4. Then this man is an evergreen. "His leaf also shall not wither." He has a quality of life over which the years have no power. He is like a tree in
Ketes "Grecian Urn" that never shed their leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu. It was Jerome who taught me how to appreciate the evergreen. Some of you have perhaps read his charming little essay on this winsome subject. You cannot read it without having a peculiar reverence for the evergreen all the rest of your days.

I remember an evergreen that grew on the hillside above my home back in Tennessee. I have looked at it in the flush of Springtime when all the other trees were decked themselves in their new Easter garments. Then I have gone again when Summer was at full tide. There was still less to make the evergreen stand out as something beautifully unique. Then I have gone in the glamorous days of autumn after God had taken the magic wand of the frost and enabled the other trees to deck themselves in robes of sapphire, crimson and gold, then this evergreen seemed outmoded. It was wearing its same old dress when all the others were getting something new. Finally, I had come after the rude winds of winter had stripped off all the glamorous garments from the other trees and they were waving their branches in the wind like the hands and arms of a skeleton. Then it was that the birds discovered it was a good thing to build their nests in the branches of the evergreen.

And there are evergreen men and women, Thank God. There are those who possess a quality of life over which the passing years and the grave itself have no power. Their leaf never withers, they remain all the changing years radiant with an abiding springtime. These are as rivers of water in a dry land. As a shadow of a great rock in the weary land. And the glory of my message is this:—All of us may be men and women of this kind. It is just a matter of direction. If you are facing wrong, your road might bend downward and ever downward till at last it is the desolation of death. But if you are facing upward, life will wind upward and ever upward to where the light lingers
even when the sun is set. Blessed is the man that heads out so as to face toward God that he shall be possessed with the sense and purpose that he is steadfast, fruitful and evergreen.
MADE FOR MASTERY

"Thou madest him to have dominion."

Psalms 8:6

I.

This joyous singer in his brief song makes three affirmations in regard to man that are just as fresh and important today as when they were uttered. He is evidently writing with his soul thoroughly saturated with the first chapter of the Book of Genesis. Though his song was written so many centuries ago it has a bracing word for you and me that we cannot ignore except at our peril. The assertions that he makes with regard to man are of course commonplace of the Christian faith. Yet, I fear that many believe them without entering into the full realization of their meaning and of the privileges that they offer.

1. The first great affirmation of this song is that man is God-made. This Psalmist, as the author of Genesis, finds it impossible to account for this amazing creature called man except in terms of God. "God made man," said the author of Genesis. "Thou hast made him," says the author of this Psalm. Mark you, he is not undertaking to tell us how God made man. The Bible is not interested in the "how" but in the "who". If you turn to this Book for the study of science you will be disappointed. The saints of the last century were greatly upset over the theory of evolution. They feared that a scientist in seeking to explain God's processes did away with God. But of course, their fears were groundless. This
author makes this affirmation along with all the other writers of the Bible, that man is God-made.

2. The second affirmation of this poet is that this God-made man is a grand creature. He is no insignificant being. He shares somewhat the greatness of his Creator. "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels," is the timid translation of the Authorized Version. But the correct translation is this, "Thou hast made him a little lower than God." Man is akin to God. He is like God in that he is a personality. These are the only two beings in the world that are endowed with personality, God and man. Of course, in speaking of personality we have no reference to the physical. Personality means power to know, power to will, power to love.

In saying that man is made in God's image, and that he is thus a grand creature we are not claiming that he is perfect. If he is akin to God he is also akin to the lower orders of life. He is a strange mixture of the highest and of the depths, of dust and divinity. He has a capacity of choice. He can choose the wrong way and descend into the very depths of hell. He can choose the right way and climb to the very heights of heaven. Through countless millions of wrong choices on the part of his ancestors he has become prone to make those same wrong choices. He is, therefore, in need of redemption. But the fact that he can climb so high and descend so low is a mark of his greatness. No such capacity belongs to any other creature. "Thou hast made him a little lower than God."

3. The third affirmation that this poet makes regarding man is that he was made for a great destiny. That grows naturally out of his grandeur. Certainly we should not expect a God-like creature such as man to be made for a mean and paltry purpose. Of course, he sometimes uses his immense powers for unworthy ends. Bunyan pictures a chap with a muckrake, busy raking up dirt and sticks and straw. When a mighty angel is poised above him waiting to crown him if he will only look up. Made for something magnificent he gives over his good to what is low and un-
worthy.

God then has a great purpose for man. He has a purpose not only for the race, but for every individual. God plans every life. It is easier to believe this when we realize that he plans everything else in his universe. Sir Jean Jeans, one of the greatest scientists said, "It would seem that this universe was made by an infinite mathematician." Everywhere there are marks of plan: "The heavens declare the glory of God and the earth showeth his handiwork." A modern poet was saying the same thing when he sang:

"That though in solemn silence
Move around that blind celestial ball,
In reasons where they all rejoice,
And utter forth a generous voice,
Forever singing as they stand,
The hand that made it is divine."

If God has a purpose in things, certainly he has a purpose in your life and mine who are to live when all things have passed away. This is a plain declaration of our Lord, "As the father hath sent me into the world, even so I send you into the world."

As to the specific purpose of God in every human life this Psalmist does not undertake to say. But he does speak for the race, and in speaking for the race he is uttering what is fundamentally true for everyone of us. "Thou madest him to have dominion over his hands." This grand creature man is not to be a plaything of his environment. He is not to be a slave either of himself or of his brother. He is made for mastery. He is to share somewhat in the kingly life of God. He is to enter into that experience that the Seer of Patmos claimed for himself and his fellow saints centuries later. "He hath loosed us from our sins and made us to be kings and priests." We are made to conquer. It is God's purpose for everyone of us that we should live victoriously.
This view of man's greatness and of his importance in the scheme of things is one that is needed at all times. It is especially needed in our day when there are so many influences and false views that tend to rob man of his essential greatness. We are familiar with some of these.

1. Modern man is being dwarfed by being robbed of his high origin. There have not been wanting those who have denied that man is God-made. They have claimed instead that he is mud made. In the language of Bertrand Russell, "He is the product of blind forces that had no provision of what they were creating. Man is not a child of God, he is a child of blind force."

This son of mud therefore is not a grand creature but one of no significance whatsoever. He is not even a personality. He is a machine. He has no freedom. His virtues are no more worthy of commendation than his vices are worthy of condemnation. A devoted Paul is no better than a treacherous Judas. In fact, nothing signifies in such a world. Jesus Christ has no more meaning than an angleworm. This mud-made machine was made for no purpose and has no destiny except to end in mud where it began.

2. Then modern man is often dwarfed by his environment. He is so small and his universe is so big. This Psalmist faced that same problem. Of course, his universe was a snug little affair in comparison with ours. But even small as it was, it made man look like a petty creature. "When I consider thy heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?" Today the walls of our universe have been pushed back to the infinite. Our own world has become so small that one scientist tells us that if it were to drop out of existence it would be like the falling of a single leaf in a vast primeval forest.

Then in recent years we have had the wits and the smart boys poking fun at
this miserable little creature called man. One has pictured him as a monkey on
the epidermis of a midge planet, filthily digging for ground nuts while he chatters
of his kinship with the arc.angels. Of course, that last phrase is a give away.
Any creature that can chatter of the kinship of arc.angels would cease to be a
monkey. The best of monkeys chatter only of things that are of the earth earthy.
If one of them could once dream of kinship with the arc.angels he would rise into
newness of life.

Mark dumb... it tells of a certain man who died and went to heaven from California.
"Where are you from?" asked Peter when he reached the gate. "California," was the
proud answer. "Where is California?" "In the United States." "Where is the United States?" "In North America." "But where is North America." "On the planet earth." But nobody had ever heard of it. At last
wise men searched through the archives of heaven and found that an insignificant
fragment had been flung from the heavens and had been christened The Earth. That
was our world. That a petty pigmy is man! But these smart boys ride on the as-
sumption that bigness and greatness mean the same thing. They are the victims of
what one has called "jumboism." Measured by the physical only, man is a very
small speck in his universe. But small as he is, he can do what all the millions
of suns cannot do. He can know, and love, and choose. It is for this reason
that God visits him. It is for this reason that the most insignificant creature
in all the world means infinitely more to the fatherly heart of God than all the
stars, and the dust of stars, that litter up the milky way of the eternities. We
need, therefore, this bracing word of the Psalmist to save us from self-conta...

When we turn from the smart-aleck to the supreme genius of English literature we
find a different world. It runs like this:.

"That a piece of work is man,

How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty,

In form and bearing how express and admirable,
III.

Naturally it is of vital importance of which of these conflicting views of man we are going to take. Personally, I unhesitatingly take my stand with the Psalmist. I do this for at least three reasons.

1. His bracing faith appeals to my heart. I have what William James called the will to believe. I simply had rather believe that I am God-made, that I am sent into the world for a high and holy purpose than to believe that I am mud-made and have no significance at all. This higher faith enlists my desire. There are those that are wooed by the lower faith. Recently I read a letter from a chap who was telling how much better he felt since he got rid of all faith in God. It is the same sort of peace that the fool attained by saying in his heart, "There is no God."

When I was a student at Harvard University a friend of mine told me this story: He seemed to be telling it in good faith. However, I do not vouch for its truth. "One day," he said, "I was on the train going to New York from Cambridge. At New Haven a friend of mine, a student of Yale, boarded the train. I noticed his ticket just looking out from his coat pocket. I secretly took that ticket and put it in my own pocket. A little later he missed it and began searching for it frantically. Then he said, 'I have lost my ticket. Worse still, I spent every dime I had for that ticket. I wonder if you would not stake me for a loan to keep me from being put off the train?' I told him I too had spent every dime I had for my ticket and therefore could not help him financially. But I told him if he would get under the seat I would cover him up with my coat and the conductor might not see him. He did this reluctantly. A little later the conductor came in and I
handed him two tickets. 'Where is the other passenger?' Under the seat I replied. He prefers to ride that way." So may you. But I prefer the better seat offered by this Psalmist.

2. Then I side with the Psalmist because it appeals to my intelligence. Faith in God who made man for a high destiny is not without its difficulties. But to my mind it does not involve one millionth part of the difficulties involved in trying to account for man in terms of mud. To assert that a first class machine is a product of blind forces that had no previsions of what they were creating would be hard to believe. If I were to tell you that this watch that has so many marks of plan and purpose, came about as a fortuitous concourse of atoms, you would count me less than sane. But when I affirm that an Isaiah, or a Saint John, or a Jesus Christ, with their high courage and love could be made by mud, that taxes my credulity to the breaking point.

3. Then I accept this faith because it is being sanctioned in some fashion by what man is and what he is accomplishing. I am not shutting my eyes to his many faults and sins. But in spite of all this, man has shown himself through the centuries a grand creature. He has achieved a mastery at least in the realm of the physical that is perfectly amazing. One of the weakest of creatures he is increasingly becoming the master of his environment. He can outrun the antelope, he can outswim the fish, he can outfly the eagle. Deadly diseases that used to lay waste whole populations he is conquering. He has not shown equal mastery in the realm of the spiritual. But great souls here and there have risen to the heights as to remind us of God. Even in the realm of the spiritual we have made and are making progress.

IV.

Now since we are made for mastery, how is that mastery to be attained?

1. How has man attained in the realm of the physical? Take one particular
field, for instance, that of electricity. A few years ago electricity was just a force in the hand of a capricious God. It engendered nothing but fear. Today it is one of man's most useful servants. How has this frail creature achieved mastery over electricity? He has done so by discovering the laws of electricity and become obedient to them.

How does man find inner freedom? There are two schools of thought here. One school says that the way to be free is to be self-assertive. For me to be free is for me to live my own life. But the whole experience of the race has given the lie to that. Here is a ship at sea. It is guided by a little compass no larger than my fist. Suppose I were to say to that ship, "You are a great vessel. You are a million times larger than this little compass. Why let it boss you?" The ship listens, and throws the compass overboard. But it doesn't find any freedom. It does not find any safe harbor. It ends in Jim Jones' locker.

All about us today there are men who are slaves. Some are slaves to fear. Some are slaves to appetite. Some are slaves to money. Some are slaves to themselves. How can these be free? They cannot find freedom through disobedience, but only through obedience. "He that committeth sin," said Jesus, "is a slave." He came to set men free. We find the freedom that he gives, not by rebellion. We find it by obedience. We find it through surrender. These early saints went out with a passion for telling men their story. They knew the secret of mastery of self. They were eager to share it with others.

"Oft when the spell is on me to deliver
Hearts the illusion, and the truth lies bare;
Desert or throng, the city or river
Fades into illusive paradise of air,
Only like souls I see, the folks and under
Slaves who should conquer, bound who should be Rings
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder
"Made for Mastery"

Sadly content with the show of things
Then with a burst the intolerable craving
Shivers through me like a trumpet call
Oh to save them, to perish for their saving
Die for their life, but offered for them all."

This same law holds in our relationships one with another. Then the Psalmist said, "Thou madest him to have dominion," he includes in that dominion this visible world, "all sheep and oxen, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea." But you will notice that man was not to have dominion over his fellow man. At least he was not to seek this dominion by the most familiar weapon that we have known through the centuries, that of force. The supreme tragedies of human history have grown out of man's effort by force to have dominion over his fellows. But such efforts always have and always will end in failure.

Dominion won by force is inadequate for two reasons. First, it never reaches the heart. Every despot could say what Macbeth said, "Love, honor, troops of friends I must not look to have. But curses not loud, but deep. Mouth honor for the poor wretch would fain deny and dare not." But dominion won by force is that which will not last. Less than a quarter of a century ago Germany was hopelessly defeated. Today she has her foot upon the neck of some of the nations that were her conquerors at that time. This miserable seesaw has been kept up through the centuries. The oppressed of one generation become the oppressors of the next. The victims become the victors. The nobleman triumphed completely over the peasantry in France for years. Then as Dickens puts it, "Humanity long pressed down grew into that distorted monstrosity known as the guillotine."

There is but one mastery that we can assert over each other that is of worth and that will abide. And that is the mastery of the heart. We must win the love
of those we would conquer. And how do we do that? It is the same story. We win not by self-assertiveness, but by self-giving. The magnetism of Christ comes through his self-dedication, not through his self-assertiveness. So it will be for us. When David Livingston died in the heart of Africa if his power over his followers had been that of fear his little company would have melted like a rope of sand. But he had won a place in their hearts through love. Therefore, these black men took his body upon their shoulders and in spite of their jungle savagery walked five hundred miles to get his body to his friends in England.

"Thou madest him to have dominion." That a pity to be slave when we could be conquerors. Who is the supreme conqueror of human history? You know, it is Jesus. When he stood with his foot upon the threshold of death he uttered this majestic sentence, "I have overcome the world." That is the way Christ expects us to live. You remember the story of that eaglet that was hatched by an old hen in the barnyard. For days the queer little creature ran about with the chicks, growing more uncouth, more unhappy, more ugly all the time. Then one day when he was almost grown there came a speck in the sky. That speck came closer and uttered a wild call. And this queer unhappy chick looked up and its lack-lustre eyes began to sparkle and something said to it. "You ought to be like that. You are not made for the barnyard. You are made for the sky-land." And it spread its burnish brown wings and surrendered itself to the air. And as you look at Christ this morning living as a conqueror, something tells you that you too may win. You may win as he did, not by self-assertiveness, but by self-giving. May God help us to try it.
"Thou madest him to have dominion."
—Psalm 8:6

Here is a song coming out of a long gone past that still has upon it some of the freshness of the morning. The poet who wrote it evidently had his mind and heart saturated by that great and majestic first chapter of Genesis. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas."

I

In this song the psalmist makes three assertions about man that are still fresh and to the point. Naturally, they are commonplaces of our Christian faith. Yet we need to be reminded again and again of them. We tend to lose sight of the richness and depth of their meaning.

1.

The first assertion of the psalmist is that man is God-made. "Thou hast made him." In thus speaking, he is in harmony with all the writers of the Bible and with the best faith of the centuries. Here he is repeating in a measure the words of Genesis. God made man, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul. When a few years ago a great scientist advanced the theory of evolution, many religious folks were horrified. They thought that science and religion had come into conflict. But the Bible is never anywhere
concerned with the processes of creation. It is now how man was created that concerns
the prophets but who created him. They all agree in the declaration that man is
God-made.

2. The second assertion of this poet is that man is a grand creature. "Thou
hast made him," he declares, not "a little lower than the angels" as the timid
translators of the King James version put it, but "Thou hast made him a little
lower than God." Man is God's child. Man is made in God's likeness. In fact
He and His Maker are the only two beings in the universe endowed with personality.

Of course, personality, as we use it has nothing to do with the physical. It
means power to know, power to choose, power to love. This God-like creature is
of such worth that he is more priceless than the whole world.

In thus asserting man's greatness, the author is not claiming for him per-
fection. If he is the son of God, he is also a son of Adam. Therefore, he is an
amazing mixture of the heights and of the depths, of angel and devil, of star-dust
and mud. If there is nothing too good to say about this amazing creature, neither
is there anything too bad. He is like his God in that he can choose. From where
you sit two roadways lead. If you take the wrong turn, you may dip downward and
ever downward until that road loses itself in the quagmires of desolation and
death. If you take the right turn, you may climb upward and ever upward even to
where the light lingers when the sun is set. Son of Adam and son of God with an
all-but infinite power to become--man is a grand creature.

3. Since God has made man, akin to himself, he has made him for a noble
destiny. There is purpose in his creation. "Thou madest him," said the poet,
"to have dominion." He is not made to be the plaything of his own passions and
lusts. He is not made to be the slave of things. He is not made to be the bond
servant of his fellows. He is made for mastery. John expressed somewhat the same
thought in the opening chapter of Revelation: "To him that loved us and loosed
us from our sins and made us to be kings." "The king," Carlyle tells us, is a canny
man." He is made for dominion.
This is God's plan, not simply for the race, but for the individual. God does not simply have a plan for mankind but for man as an individual. When the prophet went down to the potter's house, he saw a man working on a wheel. The potter was working on a piece of plastic clay. It was imperfect and unsightly. But there was a place where this bit of ugly clay was a poem. That was in the mind of the potter. He had a purpose and was working toward that purpose.

Just so the infinite potter has a plan for your life and mine. As we turn the pages of the Old and New Testament, we come upon man who rise to spiritual beauty and usefulness or sink to ugliness and shame just in proportion as they enter into God's purposes for their lives. The Master lived His whole life, not according to His own plan, but according to the plan of God for him. As he stood at the end of the journey, he prayed, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." He himself declares that God no more planned his life than he plans yours and mine. "As the father hath sent me into the world, even so send I unto you." We then are God-made. We are grand creatures and made for a great destiny. So sings this psalmist. So affirm the great spiritual seers of the Bible.

II

This truth of the greatness of the individual man, of his supreme worth, is one that our day has had a great tendency to forget. Much has happened in recent years to obscure man's essential worth, to blind us to his importance in the scheme of things. A number of voices have been lifted that have argued for man's littleness and cheapness instead of for his greatness.

1. There is the voice of atheism. The vast majority of men today believe in some kind of God. That this belief is by no means universal. Bertram Russell affirmed some years ago that man was the product of blind forces that had no prevision of what they were creating. In other words, man is not a child of God. He is a son of the mud. With such an origin there is not much for him to live up to. A young fellow writing to his radio preacher informed him what a
relief it had been to him since he had ceased to believe in God. Naturally, he
wanted to live in an atmosphere that is not quite so refined as that created by
faith in God.

2. Then man has been further dwarfed by the political faith of today. Ours
has been the era of the totalitarian state. In every nation the very bigness of
the state has tended to dwarf the individual. In such states as Germany, and
Japan the individual has ceased to count for anything more than a cog in the
machine. When the state is supreme, man ceases to have individual significance.

3. Then modern man has been dwarfed by his environment. The universe of
the psalmist was an exceedingly snug little affair in comparison with ours. Yet
as he looked out on the distant stars, he was amazed that a God who made the
stars could take knowledge of a creature so small as man. "When I consider thy
heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained,
what is man that thou art mindful of him and the son of man that thou visitest him."
But the snug little universe of that day has been pushed back to the bounds of
the infinite. So vast is our universe that one scientist tells us that if our
world were to drop out of existence it would be no more than the falling of a single
leaf in a primeval forest.

Then a few years ago there arose a crop of smart boys who thought it great
wisdom to poke fun at this shabby creature called man. One wit declared that
man was but a monkey on the epidermis of a midge planet filthily digging for
ground nuts, while he chattered of his kinship with the archangels. Of course,
this latter clause is a dead give away. Any creature that can chatter of his
kinship with the archangels is not a monkey. Should a monkey ever begin to do
such chattering, he would separate himself from his fellow monkeys by a space
infinitely wider than the spaces between the stars. Even so wise a man as Mark
Twain must have his joke at the expense of this feeble creature called man. "A
certain gentleman," he declared, "died in the state of California and went to
heaven. Arrived at his new abode, he was asked whence he came. "From California!" he declared proudly. "Where is California?" was the next question. "In the United States" came the indignant answer. "But where is the United States?" "In North America." Where is North America?" "On the planet earth." But nobody had ever heard of such a planet. Then the scholars investigated the ancient archives and found that a little speck had been flung off from a planet. The name of that little speck was "The Wart". That was our world.

But, of course, the fallacy of all this is that bigness makes greatness, while smallness must be the same as littleness. Of course, that is the furthest possible from the truth. Man in his physical proportions may and does look almost infinitely insignificant in a universe like ours. Yet he can do what all the suns and stars and the dust of stars cannot do. He can think God's thoughts after Him. He can choose between right and wrong. He can love and hate. Naturally, therefore, God intended this great creature for a great destiny. He told him to have dominion.

III

Now it is easy for me to accept this view of man because he has achieved the dream that God prepared for him to a degree of which our fathers never dreamed. Coming into a rude and unfinished world, he has achieved in the realm of the physical until today he is far on the road to being an acknowledged master. In spite of his weakness, he can outswim the fish and outfly the eagle. Many deadly diseases he has utterly destroyed. His achievements in the realm of the material have been nothing short of marvelous.

But while he has carried out God's purpose in the material, he has failed most tragically in the realm of the spiritual. He has allowed his head to run far leagues ahead of his heart. For this reason his mastery in the realm of the material has been more of a curse, I fear, than a blessing. Mankind would be far better off in barbaric ignorance than with superlative education if that education has to do only with the head. It is seeking this one sided dominion that is tearing
the world to bits today.

Where have we gone wrong? We have gone wrong in thinking that education in itself is enough. Ninety percent of the great universities of America were founded by the church. But having been founded by the church, many of them forgot their heritage, many of them lost their faith until today in our public schools and in our schools of higher education God is largely ignored. This is about the worst blow to our faith that could happen. To teach positively against God is bad; to ignore him is worse still.

This brings us to a matter of which we are thinking especially today. How are we going to educate so as to realize the fullness of dominion that was God's purpose for us. Our education must be Christianized. We must begin in the home. That is simple and fundamental. We need the assistance of the Sunday School. We need also the assistance of the church college and university. The college that is definitely Christian is absolutely essential to the needs of today and of tomorrow. If such a school ceases to exert a definitely Christian influence it has betrayed its trust. If it helps to Christianize those who attend it it has fulfilled its destiny.

IV

Now such education is optional. But the results of refusing thus to educate are not optional. Unless we train the heart of mankind civilization simply cannot live. How then shall we find the dominion that is God's purpose for us? How shall we find it as individuals? There are two schools of thought on this question. One says that the way to freedom is the way of self-assertion. If you want to be free, do as you please. The other affirms that the way of freedom is the way of self-surrender.

As to which one really works has been proved times without number. Here is a ship at sea. It is being guided by a compass little larger than my fist. I say to that great vessel, "You are a tremendous big creature, yet you allow this
silly little compass to boss you." "I hadn't thought of that," the ship replies. "I will toss it overboard." But when it has tossed the compass overboard and can now do as it pleases, it does not find a larger freedom. It does not come the quicker to port; it becomes a derelict. It is only in obedience to law that we find our freedom. "Whosoever committeth sin is a slave," said Jesus. "But if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. Not only is it by surrender but self-giving that we achieve dominion over ourselves, but it is by obedience and self-giving that we achieve dominion everywhere. It is thus and only thus that we can achieve any abiding dominion over our fellows. When God told man to have dominion, he mentioned all the lower orders of life. But through the centuries man in his selfishness has sought dominion over his brother. Generally speaking, he has sought that dominion by force. In so seeking, he has won many a temporary success, never a permanent one. "Do you know what astonishes me most?" asked Napoleon the Great. Then he answers in this fashion, "It is the powerlessness of force to organize anything permanently."

There is but one way that men can learn to live together. There is but one way that they can learn to master not only their environment and themselves, but to live with each other. Paul stated it in a single sentence, "Be in subjection one to another, out of reverence to Christ." If we train for mutual subjection, we can thus build a home-life, a church life, a national and international life that will stand.

Some months ago I was driving along a road in Virginia. A friend pointed to a tomb on a hill overlooking the road. "I am told," he said, "that old Mr. Blank is buried there. He was a hard man with a large number of slaves whom he worked unmercifully. When at last he died, he ordered himself to be buried standing with his face turned to his fields. I am told that he had the word passed to his superstitious Negro slaves that he would be watching them. But his plan did not work. They cursed him to his dead face.

There was another man who dealt also with Negroes. One night he died amidst
THE WILDS OF Africa. But the little handful of blacks could not leave his body where it fell. They laid that dear dust upon their shoulders and in spite of the jungle, in spite of wild beasts and wilder men, they trudged five hundred miles to the coast in order to give that body to his friends from England. Both of these men sought subjection. One sought it by terror. The other sought it by being in subjection himself. There is really one hope for freedom of the individual and for freedom for the world. That is according to God's plan. "Have dominion," He commands. How? "Be in subjection one to another, out of reverence to Christ."
"Thou madest him to have dominion."

—Psalm 8:6

Here is a song coming out of a long gone past that still has upon it some of the freshness of the morning. The poet who wrote it evidently had his mind and heart saturated by that great and majestic first chapter of Genesis. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?... Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas."

I

In this song the psalmist makes three assertions about man that are still fresh and to the point. Naturally, they are commonplace of our Christian faith. Yet we need to be reminded again and again of them. We tend to lose sight of the richness and depth of their meaning.

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II

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relief it had been to him since he had ceased to believe in God. Naturally, he wanted to live in an atmosphere that is not quite so refined as that created by faith in God.

2. Then man has been further dwarfed by the political faith of today. Ours has been the era of the totalitarian state. In every nation the very bigness of the state has tended to dwarf the individual. In such states as Germany and Japan the individual has ceased to count for anything more than a cog in the machine. When the state is supreme, man ceases to have individual significance.

3. Then modern man has been dwarfed by his environment. The universe of the psalmist was an exceedingly snug little affair in comparison with ours. Yet as he looked out on the distant stars, he was amazed that a God who made the stars could take knowledge of a creature so small as man. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him and the son of man that thou visitest him?"

But the snug little universe of that day has been pushed back to the bounds of the infinite. So vast is our universe that one scientist tells us that if our world were to drop out of existence it would be no more than the falling of a single leaf in a primeval forest.

Then a few years ago there arose a crop of smart boys who thought it great wisdom to poke fun at this shabby creature called man. One wit declared that man was but a monkey on the epidermis of a midge planet filthily digging for ground nuts, while he chattered of his kinship with the archangels. Of course, this latter clause is a dead giveaway. Any creature that can chatter of his kinship with the archangels is not a monkey. Should a monkey ever begin to do such chattering, he would separate himself from his fellow monkeys by a space infinitely wider than the spaces between the stars. Even so wise a man as Mark Twain must have his joke at the expense of this feeble creature called man. "A certain gentleman," he declared, "died in the state of California and went to
heaven. Arrived at his new abode, he was asked whence he came. 'From California!' he declared proudly. 'Where is California?' was the next question. 'In the United States' came the indignant answer. 'But where is the United States?' 'In North America.' Where is North America? 'On the planet earth.' But nobody had ever heard of such a planet. Then the scholars investigated the ancient archives and found that a little speck had been flung off from a planet. The name of that little speck was "The Wart." That was our world.

But, of course, the fallacy of all this is that bigness makes greatness, while smallness must be the same as littleness. Of course, that is the furthest possible from the truth. Man in his physical proportions may and does look almost infinitely insignificant in a universe like ours. Yet he can do what all the stars and the dust of stars cannot do. He can think God's thoughts after Him. He can choose between right and wrong. He can love and hate. Naturally, therefore, God intended this great creature for a great destiny. He told him to have dominion.

III

Now it is easy for me to accept this view of man because he has achieved the dream that God prepared for him to a degree of which our fathers never dreamed. Coming into a rude and unfinished world, he has achieved in the realm of the physical until today he is far on the road to being an acknowledged master. In spite of his weakness, he can outswim the fish and outfly the eagle. Many deadly diseases he has utterly destroyed. His achievements in the realm of the material have been nothing short of marvelous.

But while he has carried out God's purpose in the material, he has failed most tragically in the realm of the spiritual. He has allowed his head to run far leagues ahead of his heart. For this reason his mastery in the realm of the material has been more of a curse, I fear, than a blessing. Mankind would be far better off in barbaric ignorance than with superlative education if that education has to do only with the head. It is seeking this one sided dominion that is tearing
the world to bits today.

Where have we gone wrong? We have gone wrong in thinking that education in itself is enough. Ninety percent of the great universities of America were founded by the church. But having been founded by the church, many of them forgot their heritage, many of them lost their faith until today in our public schools and in our schools of higher education God is largely ignored. This is about the worst blow to our faith that could happen. To teach positively against God is bad; to ignore him is worse still.

This brings us to a matter of which we are thinking especially today. How are we going to educate so as to realize the fullness of dominion that was God's purpose for us. Our education must be Christianized. We must begin in the home. That is simple and fundamental. We need the assistance of the Sunday School. We need also the assistance of the church college and university. The college that is definitely Christian is absolutely essential to the needs of today and of tomorrow. If such a school ceases to assert a definitely Christian influence it has betrayed its trust. If it helps to Christianize those who attend it it has fulfilled its destiny.

IV

Now such education is optional. But the results of refusing thus to educate are not optional. Unless we train the hearts of mankind civilization simply cannot live. How then shall we find the dominion that is God's purpose for us? How shall we find it as individuals? There are two schools of thought on this question. One says that the way to freedom is the way of self-surrender. The other affirms that the way of freedom is the way of self-surrender.

As to which one really works has been proved times without number. Here is a ship at sea. It is being guided by a compass little larger than my fist. I say to that great vessel, "You are a tremendous big creature, yet you allow this
silly little compass to boss you." "I hadn't thought of that," the ship replies. "I will toss it overboard." But when it has tossed the compass overboard and can now do as it pleases, it does not find a larger freedom. It does not come the quicker to port; it becomes a derelict. It is only in obedience to law that we find our freedom. "Whosoever committeth sin is a slave," said Jesus. "But if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. Not only is it by surrender but self-giving that we achieve dominion over ourselves, but it is by obedience and self-giving that we achieve dominion everywhere. It is thus and only thus that we can achieve any abiding dominion over our fellows. When God told man to have dominion, he mentioned all the lower orders of life. But through the centuries man in his selfishness has sought dominion over his brother. Generally speaking, he has sought that dominion by force. In so seeking, he has won many a temporary success, never a permanent one. "Do you know what astonishes me most?" asked Napoleon the Great. Then he answers in this fashion, "It is the powerlessness of force to organize anything permanently."

There is but one way that men can learn to live together. There is but one way that they can learn to master not only their environment and themselves, but to live with each other. Paul stated it in a single sentence, "Be in subjection one to another, out of reverence to Christ." If we train for mental subjection, we can thus build a home-life, a church life, a national and international life that will stand.

Some months ago I was driving along a road in Virginia. A friend pointed to a tomb on a hill overlooking the road. "I am told," he said, "that old Mr. Blank is buried there. He was a hard man with a large number of slaves whom he worked unmercifully. When at last he died, he ordered himself to be buried standing with his face turned to his fields. I am told that he had the word passed to his superstitious Negro slaves that he would be watching them. But his plan did not work. They cursed him to his dead face.

There was another man who dealt also with Negroes. One night he died amidst
THE WILDS OF Africa. But the little handful of blacks could not leave his body where it fell. They laid that dear dust upon their shoulders and in spite of the jungle, in spite of wild beasts and wilder men, they trudged five hundred miles to the coast in order to give that body to his friends from England. Both of these men sought subjection. One sought it by terror. The other sought it by being in subjection himself. There is really one hope for freedom of the individual and for freedom for the world. That is according to God’s plan. “Have dominion,” He commands. How? “Be in subjection come to another, out of reverence to Christ.”
This is the last Sunday of the old year. Tomorrow we are to venture upon what we call a new year. Of course, for all of us it will not be new, for some it will only be another year drab and gray as the one just passed. Some of us will make of it a mile stone upon our journey to a fuller life. Others will make of it a mill stone to add to the weight of our burdens, and to make our lagging steps a little more slow. Some of us will enter upon it with a sob, others will enter it with a song. By God's grace I am proposing to be a part of this latter class. I am commending this same high privilege to you. In spite of all the evils that threaten; in spite of all the black clouds that hang in our sky, we may all of us, if we will, face tomorrow with a song.

The song that I commend to you is in this Holy book. The Bible thrills with songs. Though it tells of the grimdest tragedy ever enacted in this world it is still the gladdest of all glad books. It thrills and rings with joyous songs. But the song that I have selected for my text is the most beautiful and the most gladsome in all the Book. Because it is so bracing and helpful, more of you know it by heart than any other song in the Bible.

Not only is this old song the best known and the best loved in the Bible, but it is the best known and the best loved in the literature of the world. That is saying a great deal. The art of writing has been known for many centuries. All nations have had their songs. Some of them have come down to
us from a distant past. But of all the songs born in the hot hearts of men
of genius, none has won the place that this song has won. Some of you learned
it at mother's knee; some of you came to it under the stress of great need.
You had bruised your knuckles and barked your shins and broken your heart, and
you had to have something upon which to lean and you came to this old song.

I have thought sometimes that if this song could write its own biography
it would be the most gripping ever written. What an amazing story it would
have been to tell! There is no sea that it has not crossed, no forest that it
has not penetrated, no tragedy that it has not shared. It has been thumbed
by kings and beggars; holy women have loved it; and sin-sick harlots have
clung to it as their one hope. Dying soldiers have sung it as they have
breathed out their souls on the field of battle. Little children have whispered
it as they fell asleep. It has been sung in the shelter of the Church and the
fireside. It has also been sung by robbed and persecuted men and women who
were facing lonely exile. There are songs for youth and songs for old age,
but this is everybody's song.

Naturally, I do not expect your interest this morning because of the
novelty of my text. I am aware that familiarity tends to breed contempt. I
undertook to show a friend a beautiful church some years ago, but he passed
it without a glance saying, "I have seen it before." There are those who dwell
upon the sea who never thrill at the sight of its heaving billows, and at the
hearing of its manifold voices. It is possible to dwell under the shadow of
majestic mountains and yet never lift your eyes to those heights that hood
themselves in eternal whiteness. There are those that even get used to friends
and loved ones, so much so that they take them for granted. There are even
those that take God for granted. Familiarity, with constant love, leaves
them cold.

But there is a familiarity, thank God, that has the opposite effect.
Instead of leading to contempt it leads to a larger love. Suppose you and I were to visit next summer the farm where I grew to manhood. The day is hot and wistful. We are thirsty. By and by we come to the path that leads down to the basin Spring. "Here," I say, "is the way to my favorite spring. Let's go down and get a drink." "No," you answer, "let us not go there. That old spring is so familiar. You have drunk from it so many times before. Let us hunt a new spring so that you can enjoy it." "But I will enjoy this," I answer, "all the more because I have drunk from it before. When you kiss it upon the lips you will drink nothing but water, but I will drink not only water, but a thousand youthful memories as well." So many of you will thrill the more to this Psalm because you have drunk from its sparkling waters so many times before.

Who wrote this matchless song? We do not know. All through the centuries tradition has credited it to David, the shepherd king. I am going to assume that tradition is right. But if David wrote this song, I am sure he did not write it while he was a shepherd lad. In spite of the fact that it has an immortal youthfulness about it, it is not a song of youth. I am equally sure that it was not written by a man in the stern stress of the middle passage.

It has about it mellow cheerfulness, sweetness of age. The man who wrote this song had lived much, thought much, loved and suffered much. This author, I am sure had greatly sinned, and had been greatly forgiven.

He is in his palace, where memory leads him across the years. The ceiling of the place over arches into the Arabian sky. His cortesans are a flock of sheep. He knows them all by name. Here is one that has a genius for getting lost. More than one night has he spent in the wilds in search of that foolish sheep. Here is another that wears a scar. At the risk of his own life he had rescued him from the snare of a wild beast. Then a gracious realization breaks upon his heart with the splendors of the sunrise. "I, too, have a
shepherd," he whispers, "there has been one who has constantly cared for me, and who has followed me in all my wanderings. There is one whose gentleness has made me great." Then he breaks into song—"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

II.

Notice first the rich and full discovery that this Psalm has made. I cannot but marvel at how much he discovered about God before Jesus came to reveal him more perfectly. Listen to what he says:

"The Lord is my Shepherd," that is a declaration against which we may lean our shoulders in a time of storm. Notice how personal it is. Luther was right when he declared "that experientially religion is in the personal pronoun." David does not say "The Lord is 'a Shepherd."' that would have been worth saying, but one might make such a declaration without a shout. But what the Psalmist says is "The Lord is my Shepherd." And any man to be able to say that is to have in his heart something of the joy that will one day make heaven pulsate with hallelujahs.

This is the case because everything takes on a different meaning when we can speak of it as our very own. As you drive through the city you pass hundreds of houses without any great interest. If there is one cottage on a back street about which you can say "that is my home" then that has meaning. Here is a company of women grouped about a cradle. In that cradle is a little laddy that is kicking and cooing and trying to swallow now his foot and now his fist. All look at him with keen interest, but there is one woman in that group who looks with different eyes from all the others. The tenderness of her face proclaims to the beholder what she is saying in her heart. "That is my baby." So the psalmist claims God as his very own. He may also be your very own as if you were his only child. You may have a sunrise of a springtime
for your soul's self as if there were not another sharing with you.

"The world grows green on a thousand hills,
By a thousand rivers the bees are humming;
And a million birds on a million rills
Sing of the golden seasons coming."

"But gazing out on the sun-kissed lea,
And hearing the thrush and the blue bird singing
I feel that the summer is all for me;
And all for me the joy it is bringing."

So I may have God for my very own.

Entering upon the realization of this experience the next declaration of the Psalmist follows as naturally as night follows day. Suppose it is true that the Lord is my Shepherd; suppose I am really in the care and keeping of almighty God, then I ought to face the future with quiet confidence. I ought to be able to meet tomorrow with a song. I ought to share the glad-hearted hope of this poet. "I shall not want." With God as my backer there ought to look out from my eyes a quiet peace that all the hail storms and fiery showers of this world cannot destroy.

III.

What are some of the wants that the Good Shepherd proposes to supply? Belonging to Him, what wants can we count upon his meeting for us?

1. With the Lord as my Shepherd, I shall not want for refreshment and rest.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." How have your pastures been for the year that has passed? Some of us have not been among lush clover. We have rather been trudging through a desert. How many can say with the prodigal, "I wandereth with hunger." One of the most pathetic and one of the most hopeful signs of our times is the eager hunger for God. The face of humanity today
"Facing tomorrow"

when seen aright is little more than one gentle wistfullness. With God as my Shepherd I shall not want for the Bread of Life and the Water of Life.

Finding refreshment I shall also find rest. A sheep, you know, never lies down as long as it is hungry. It is only when its hunger has been satisfied that it can rest. Not only is plenty necessary, but security as well. A frightened sheep will not lie down. A sheep must find both refreshment and security. So must we. And it is all this that is offered to us by the Good Shepherd. He is here this morning closer than our hungers and our fears saying, "Come unto me all ye that are hungry and heavy laden and I will give you rest."

2. With the Lord my Shepherd, I shall not want for guidance. "He leadeth me beside the still waters." This word "leadeth" has two possible meanings. The first is, he goes before me. Tomorrow is a new adventure; we have not passed that way before. "We are the first that ever burst into that silent sea." We do not know what lies ahead of us. There will be some spots bright with the sunshine, some dark with shadows. There will be some victories and some bitter defeats. But while tomorrow is unknown to us it is well known to our Good Shepherd. He always goes before.

Centuries ago before Columbus discovered America, the old geographers drew maps of the known world. Then out beyond they left wide stretches that represented the unknown. "Here be dragons," they wrote. "Here be monsters that devour men." But the author of the hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm read his map in a different fashion. "Here even," he said, "in the unknown is God."

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from they presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." Whatever else is in tomorrow you may be sure that God is there.
Not only does God go before us, but if we are willing he will give us guidance. A bewildered man, years ago, stood at the forks of the road not knowing which way to turn. Standing there he sang a song, that is akin to the Shepherd's Psalm, has won a place in the hearts of men. It runs like this: "Lead kindly light." There is a kindly light that leads, sometimes we refuse to follow. Sometimes we are scarcely conscious of His leadership. But as we look back over our yesteryears, most of us I am sure are conscious that God has not failed us. We can at least say with Shakespeare "There is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we may."

3. I shall not want for restoration. "He restoreth my soul." This word also has two possible meanings. First, it means the restoration of health to the one who is sick. The Bible represents sin as sickness. The sinner is one who is in bad health spiritually. We have a great Physician, therefore, the prophet was amazed that so many were spiritual invalids when they might be enjoying health.

"Is there no balm in Gilboa?"
"Is there no physician there?"
"Why then is the health of the daughter of my people not recovered?"

Then, the Good Shepherd not only restores our health, but if we get out of relationship with Him, if we go astray like lost sheep, He seeks us till he finds us. I am sure here that David was thinking of the most tragic chapter in his eventful life. In the heat of passion David had sinned deeply. He had broken up a home. The home that he wrecked was that of a true and faithful friend. Not only had he been guilty of adultery, but of murder as well. This murder had been committed in cold blood. But even then, the Good Shepherd had not given him up. He had gone into the wilderness and had sought his lost sheep till he found him. No wonder David sang with joyful tears "He
restoreth my soul."

4. I shall not want for companionship in sorrow. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." God leads through green pastures and beside still waters, but all of life is not a beautiful pasture scene. The landscape has a way of changing. The road sometimes dips with cheerful surroundings into deep, dark canyons, and climbs barren moors. Then death draws so near that his grim shadow falls across our path. But this is our consolation that we do not have to meet life's trying experiences alone. There is always the unseen Companion.

Not only does the Good Shepherd walk with us into the valley of the shadow, but he brings us through it. How that ought to set our sad hearts to singing. A few years ago I was passing through some of the loveliest mountain scenery to be found in the world. It was summer and all the rugged landscape was clothed in holiday attire, and brightened by the noon day sun in a golden glory. But suddenly something happened that blotted out the scene completely. I found myself in the blackest of black night. But somehow I was not terrified. I realized that the train had just passed into a tunnel. I was sure that there was light at the other end. This may be our assurance as we enter the valley of the shadow in the fellowship of the Good Shepherd. He not only enables us to walk into the valley of the shadow, but to walk through, and to do so without fear. This is the case, not because our dangers are not real; not because death is not real, but because of the undergirding of the Everlasting Arm.

5. Finally, I shall not want for a home at the close of the day. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." If the Lord really is my shepherd; if he leads me through the changing years; if he holds my hand amidst the trying experiences of life, will he lead me then at the end when I need him most?

When do you cling closest to the hand of your child? When that child is most
frightened, and when he needs most a mother's tenderness and a father's strength. God is like that. It is impossible for me to think of Him as being my Shepherd through the days of sunshine and shadow, then when the evening comes, going home in the gloaming alone, leaving me in my weakness to shift for myself. No, I am sure I shall not want for a home when the day is done.

While I was pastor in Fort Worth years ago, I went to see an old grandmother, who was slowly passing in the land of unfading spring. "I am glad you came," said the daughter, "but mother will not know you. She has not recognized any of us today. But I would be glad if you would go in and sit with her a while, even though she will not know you are there." Therefore, I went in, took my place by the bedside, and saw that she was very near to where the gracious Physician was waiting with eternal healing in his fingers.

Knowing how she had lived, I decided to try an experiment. I put my lips close to her ear and said "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." Then that happened that her own daughter could hardly believe. The thin lips smiled and the feeble white head nodded, and I saw she understood. When she was so nearly across the river that she no longer knew the voices of her own children she could still recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd that had come in the gloaming to gather his own child to his bosom. Because this is true, you and I ought to face all that life can do to us, and all that death can do without fear. God grant that we can gird ourselves with this Psalm as we go along life's journey.
FACING TOMORROW

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

Psalms 23:1

I.

Today is the last Sunday of the old year. Going into a new year, provided we have not grown old in heart is always an adventure. Of course, for some next year will only be another year. But for all of us it may be new. In these times of uncertainty we need all the help that is available in order that we may face whatever the future may bring with high hearted courage. This is the case not because we are selfishly looking out for our own interest. It is the case because we shall be able to give only in proportion only as we receive. To be a source of courage and inspiration to others we must have that courage and inspiration in our own hearts.

In casting about for such help for myself my eyes and heart turn naturally to this old psalm. Of course, I do not expect you to be interested in it or to be thrilled by it because it is new in the sense that our recent song hits are new. This is a very old song. It has been making music for our discordant world for almost three thousand years. It is a familiar song. In fact it is the most familiar in the literature of the world. More people know it by heart than any other song. Some of you learned it at your mother's knee years ago. Some of you came to it in the stern stress of the middle passage when your heart was broken and when you were in sore need. Some of you may have come to it as you neared the
sunset and evening star. But whether in the morning or evening, in May time or December, more people have learned their way to it than to any other song ever sung.

Naturally, I repeat, I do not expect your interest because you have never heard it before. I am not forgetting also that familiarity is said to breed contempt. There is some truth in this. It is possible to get a bit used to the splendors and joys of daily life. I undertook to show a friend a beautiful building. But he passed it without a glance, saying, "I have seen it before." So we sometimes treat the sunsets and the sunrise. So we treat the glories of the noon day and the serene beauty of the stars. Some who live upon the sea shore get so used to it that they are never thrilled by its majesty and its mystery. Some dwell under the shadow of mighty mountains without ever lifting their eyes to the peaks that climb toward the stars.

But familiarity does not always breed contempt, thank God. Sometimes it breeds a deeper love. The friends for whom you care the most are perhaps old friends. The commonplace husband or the faded wife with whom you have lived till you have celebrated your golden wedding, these are both the dearer because of long years of association. So it is with the scenes with which you are most familiar. If you and I were to be back on the old farm this summer, and I were to say to you, "Here is the winding path that leads to the spring. Let's go get a drink." "I know you have drunk there so many times, let's hunt a new spring that you have not drunk from." "By no means," I would answer. "I know I have been there many times before. I have visited it with some that lie asleep on the sunny slope of yonder hill. I have heard its songful prattle mingled with my youthful dreams. But let us go again. You will drink some of the freshest water in the world, but I will drink more than water. I will drink in memories too."

If this song could write its own biography what a story it would have to tell. I imagine it would be one of the most thrilling books ever written. How could it
help it! There is no sea that this song has not crossed, no forest that it has not penetrated, almost no helpful experience that it has not had. It has been thumbed by paupers and by kings. Little children have loved it and white haired old pilgrims. Pure and tender mothers have rejoiced in it, and sinsick harlots have clung to it as their one hope. It has been sung midst the peace of God's house and about the glow of the family fireside. The choicest of the saints have found it a soft pillow on which to rest a dying head. Martyrs have sung it as they have gone to meet God in winding sheets of flame.

Who wrote this amazing song it is impossible to say for certain. For many centuries the Nile made Egypt fertile though no man knew its source. The fact that we cannot say with assurance who wrote this hymn does not detract in the least from its music. Tradition for many years has attributed it to David, the shepherd king. If he wrote it, as I am assuming that he did, I am quite sure that he did not write it while he was a shepherd. Though the song has a breath of unfailing youth about it, it is not a song of the springtime. No more I am sure was it written while David was struggling upward from the lowly rank of shepherd to be king of his people. It was written, I feel confident, by one who had lived much and loved much, and who had been greatly forgiven. David must have written it when he was getting close to the end of the journey.

One day we can imagine he was in his palace on the highest hill in Jerusalem. Memory takes him by the hand and leads him back across the sunlit years. His palace roof overarches into the deep blue of the Syrian sky. His scepter - in his withered hand becomes a shepherd's crook in the vigorous hand of youth. His courtiers would change into a flock of sheep. He knows everyone of these sheep by name. He is familiar with their traits of character. Here is one that has a scar. At the risk of his own life he had rescued this sheep from the mouth of a lion. Here is another that has had a genius for getting lost. More than one night has he spent among the hills for that sheep. But always he sought it till he found
it. There was no danger that he would not dare in order to protect them and to lead them into green pastures. Then a beautiful realization stole into his heart that kissed it into a flowering springtime. "I, too, have a Shepherd," he said to himself, softly, as his eyes grew misty with unshed tears. "There is One who has always sought me, who has never let me down, whose gentleness has made me great. 'The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.'"

II.

Here the poet makes two tremendous assertions that we can all make with him.

1. "The Lord is my Shepherd." He dares to claim God as his very own. "Experiential religion," said Luther, "is in the personal pronoun." That is true. Everything takes on a new meaning when we can claim it as our very own. There are ten thousand houses scattered about the streets and the countryside, but there is one that has a peculiar meaning for you because you can say, "It is my house, my home." Here is a group of women gathered about a cradle. In that cradle is a miracle of beauty, a baby. Every woman is interested. But there is one whose eyes have a peculiar sparkle and in whose face is a peculiar warmth. She said, "That is my baby."

"The Lord is my Shepherd." He can be as really yours as if you were his only child. You may have a sunrise all to yourself, though we all enjoy it better if we share it. The spring may be mine just as if God were working that transforming miracle solely for me.

"The world grows green on a thousand hills,
By a thousand rivers the bees are humming
And a million birds on a million rills
Sing of the golden seasons coming.
But gazing out on the sun-kissed lea
And hearing the thrush and the blue bird singing
"Facing Tomorrow"

I feel that the summer is all for me
And all for me the joy it is bringing."

So may be that most joyous of summer times. "The Lord is my Shepherd."

2. The next affirmation of this poet is the most natural in the world. It follows the first as night follows the day, as morning follows the coming of the sun. "The Lord is my Shepherd," then what? "I shall not want." That is what we should expect, is it not? Possessing Him we do really possess all things. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you." "For my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

III.

What are some of the wants that our Lord promises to supply?
III.

What are some of the needs that the Good Shepherd promises to provide for us as we face the needs for the coming year?

1. With the Lord our Shepherd we shall not want for refreshment and rest. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." This writer knew that a sheep never lies down when it is hungry. Nor does it ever lie down when it is afraid.

Men and women are hungry today. Millions are hungry for physical bread, far more millions are hungry for the Bread of Life. We are not deeply worried over our sins I fear, but we are hungry of heart. For those who have eyes to see, certainly the gaunt face of our humanity is one lean face of wistfulness. But the Good Shepherd offers green pastures. He is able to satisfy the hungry heart.

Not only does he satisfy our hungers and thirsts, but he delivers us from fear. What a boon that is in a time of uncertainty and upheaval. Here is one who discovered the secret: "The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge. Therefore will we not fear." God can deliver us from the gnawing agony of anxiety. So the saints have found. Here is one writing from a prison cell, but with what calmness and poise he writes. "In nothing be anxious, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. With God as our shepherd we shall not want for leadership and guidance. "He leadeth me beside the still waters." The word has two possible meanings. First, he goes before me. Jesus used the same language, "When he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them." We do not know what is in tomorrow. For some of us there will be laughter and sunshine, for some of us tears and tragedy, but for all of us God is there. When the old geographers used to map the world they would draw the country that was known, then out beyond there would be far spaces. "There be demons, there be dragons that devour men." But the Psalmist wrote, "Here
is God. "Whether shall I go from thy presence, or whether shall I flee from thy spirit? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there, if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

Then God not only goes before us, but he guides us. I am a bit suspicious of those who blame every turn of their lives upon God. Personally, I always feel a bit afraid to claim divine sanction for every act of my life. I do too many foolish things. Yet, I do believe that there is a kindly light that leads. I have a fancy that most of you as you look back on your yesterdays do not have many wrong decisions to regret. I think we can at least go as far as Shakespeare. "There is a destiny that shapes all ends, rough hue them how we may." To me it is reasonable that the God who guides the bird of passage in his quest for the light of summer will be equally kind to his child.

"He who from zone to zone guides through the tearless heavens thy solemn flight, In the long way that I must go alone will guide my steps aright."

3. I shall not want for restoration. This word has two possible meanings. First, I shall not want for healing when I am sick. Sin is the worst of all sickness. It lies back of most of our physical illness. The Good Shepherd offers himself as the cure for our moral sickness. He is saying to everyone of us what he said to the paralytic in the long ago, "Wilt thou be made whole?"

But this means more than healing. It means to restore to right relationship. When a sheep got lost it got out of touch with the flock. The shepherd sought it till he found it and restored it to the flock again. Sin breaks our relationships with each other. It is the grand divider. David I am sure is thinking of the blackest period of his life—that time when in the heat of passion he had become an adulterer. Then with cool cunning had become a murderer. Even then, God did not cast him off. He restored him. That restoration is for us.
4. I shall not want for companionship and comfort in the dark days that may be ahead. "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil." This does not mean, as some think, the actual experience of dying. For most folks death brings its own anesthetic. It is generally not hard to die. This means those periods when death gets so close that it casts its black shadow over your path. Even in those times, when the sun drops out of your sky and the stars turn black, and you seem to walk alone, you will not be alone. There will be One with you in the valley who will not only stay close by but will bring you through.

On a summer day not long ago I was traveling by train through a wild bit of mountain scenery. All about was a heaving sea of greenness that was bathed by the golden glory of a summer sun. Suddenly it was all blotted out. I found myself in darkness. And through the car window I could not see a single thing. But I was not greatly disturbed. My faith was that this was only a tunnel in which we had entered; that is was not a terminus but a thoroughfare; that I would not have to tarry in it, but I would pass through it. So it will be of the sorrows that we pass through. "Weeping may last for a night, and joy cometh in the morning."

5. Finally, I shall not want for a home at the close of the day. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." In the morning the shepherd leads his flock out to pasture, through the sunny hours he watches them, by and by the sun sets and the day fades into golden, then into gray, then into the deep blue of the night sky. What does the shepherd do then? Does he hurry home alone and leave the defenseless sheep to shift for themselves? By no means. He will not desert them when they need him most. Nor will the Good Shepherd who gives his life for the sheep. He will come, I am sure, to everyone of his own in the gloaming to take us home.

In Bunyan's immortal story he pictures his Pilgrim as being shown through the armory chamber in the Palace Beautiful. Here he has the privilege of equipping
himself for the trying journey that is ahead. This is the armory chamber through which I try to lead you. If you equip yourself you shall not only be able to meet tomorrow with high-hearted gallantry, but you will have something of infinite worth to give to others. This is not a selfish song. We all know the first step is helping more and in being more. If you want to do the most possible in the coming year for your home, your friends, your church, your community, then go out to meet the tomorrow in the fellowship of the Good Shepherd.
"O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together."

Here is a sunny faced singer who is on his way to a Thanksgiving service. He is all a- thrill with the joy of it. So great is his gladness that he is eager to share it with others. But even in his eagerness, he does not promise; he does not scold; he rather invites. He has this winsome word upon his lips "I am going eagerly to give thanks" he declares. "Come with me and my joy will be doubled by your presence. O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together."

It is so much easier to lead folks than it is to drive them. This is a lesson for all of us, especially parents. It is so much easier to lead your children to church and to church school than it is to drive them. This is a word for parents; "O magnify the Lord with me." It is a word for every man who would win his friends. It is wonderful how this psalmist reaches his hand across the far spaces of the years to knock invitingly on your door and mine. "Come" he invites, "and magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together."

Now there is nothing more sane than that we should take this psalmist's invitation seriously. We ought to give thanks for many reasons.

1. First, we ought to give thanks because gratitude is a source of joy. Cultivation of the habit of thanksgiving is the same as cultivation of the habit of happiness. Do you ever sit down alone to go over God's mercies to you and yours? You would find that such a practice would make a great difference. Such a habit would bring out the sun on the gloomiest of days; it would make the daintiest of blossoms to bloom during the bleakest of winters. A grateful heart is a singing heart. If you have no gratitude, you are exceedingly short on joy.
2. Then, we ought to be grateful because gratitude is a way of growing. It is a mark of spiritual maturity. No baby has any appreciation. They are lovely in many respects but if you are counting on the slightest bit of gratitude because of your patience with them, with their colics and teething and what not, then you are going to be let down. I never knew a six months old baby to express the slightest gratitude for any service. But this is not disappointing simply because they are babies.

Now, one beauty of the baby is that it has growing power. However, beautiful it may be today, if it did not grow physically it would become a heart ache. If it refused to grow morally and spiritually, it would become an even greater heart ache. Even if it grew intelligently and failed to grow morally, it would cast nothing but a shadow over your life. If your child never learned to say "I appreciate, I thank you", then in those qualities that make a man, he is still a dwarf, a moral imbecile who never did grow up.

King Lear is regarded as the high water mark of English tragedy. Some consider this the greatest of Shakespearian plays. What is the tragic element in the book? It is ingratitude. King Lear, the kindly and devoted father, lives to see the children of his develop in many ways but in gratitude. Therefore, he is driven to madness by being forced to learn how "sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child." We ought to be grateful because gratitude is a mark of spiritual growth.

3. Then, we ought to be grateful because gratitude is an open door to usefulness. By our gratitude we can help others. This is true in the first place because to be grateful is to be joyous.

Joyous people are more helpful than those who are sad. It is a terrible cross to have to live with somebody who is always moping. It is terrible to be greeted each morning by a face that looks like a chronic pain. There are some folks who feel that there is a kind of virtue in being miserable and in helping to make others so. This is certainly not the case. Joy is more than a privilege - it is a duty. The last prayer that Jesus uttered on behalf of his
disciples and on our behalf was that "the joy that was his might be ours."

What different ways people have in facing sorrow. There are those whom sorrow sweetens. It makes them more winsome and more unselfish with the passing of the day. There is an Old Testament story of a certain king who was passing along the city wall on a day of great tragedy. His people were starving to death. They perhaps looked after him with envious eyes until they made a discovery. Through a rent in his royal robe, they saw that he wore sackcloth within upon his flesh. He had a secret sorrow but he did not increase their agony by displaying it. He hid it away while he smiled on the world. That is beautiful and heroic.

But there are others that take the opposite course. They receive a sore wound and spend the rest of the time pitying themselves. There is nothing more selfish than a selfish sorrow. It can make its possessor a burden. To face sorrow in this manner is worse than weakness, it is wickedness. I knew a mother years ago who lost her lovely daughter. Having lost this one child, she seemed utterly to forget her husband, to forget her other children, to forget her duties to her friends. She locked herself in and let that sorrow wreck her life. But worst of all, she made herself a burden to the husband and children that she might have helped. Joy is a privilege but it is a duty also. You have no right to be a kill-joy in your home. Gratitude will prevent this. Then gratitude helps others by giving them encouragement. There are many people walking today with lagging steps and heavy hearts who would go songfully on their way if they had a word of appreciation. I can readily see why some lose heart. I doubt if I could have remained in the ministry without the appreciation of those whom I have tried to serve. Of all the fine lubricants to oil the friction threaded machinery of life, there is nothing finer than gratitude. One said of Job "Your words have kept men on their feet". The words that do this most frequently are words of gratitude and appreciation.

Then we ought to be grateful because God delights in our gratitude.
The redeemed of the Lord say so, is the word of one of the prophets. Then he tells us how those that fear the Lord stand-off one from another, and a book of remembrance wax kept. We have certain keep sakes, a faded flower pressed away in a book, a letter yellow with age. This prophet indicates that God also has keep sakes. He keeps those words that express our gratitude for his loving mercy. How many 8 years has the faded away?

4. We ought to be grateful because we can be. The fact that gratitude is urged and commanded so many times means that if we are not grateful, it is our own-fault. Gratitude is more than a matter of temperament; it is more than a matter of circumstances; it does not depend upon outside conditions but upon inside. If you are not grateful, it is not the fault of your friends; it is not the fault of your enemies; it is not the fault of your family; it is not the fault of God; it is your own fault. Gratitude is within reach of every human soul.

To be convinced of this it is only necessary to look at those about you this morning. Who are the thankful and who are the thankless? If gratitude were a matter of circumstances, you could draw a line and put all the healthful and successful and sons of good fortune on one side and put all the sick and the sorrowful and the unfortunate on the other side and say "Come forth, the grateful would then come." But that would not work at all. You would find as many grateful peoples among those that seemingly have nothing for which to be thankful as you would among those into whose laps good fortune seems to have dropped everything. Whether you are thankful, then, is up to you.

II

Suppose then we really desire to be grateful. Suppose we desire it so much that we determine to be grateful. How shall we go about it? There are certain simple and definite considerations that will make gratitude possible, even inevitable, for every one of us.

1. The first consideration I offer is just this. Face the fact that every
possession that is really worthwhile this morning has come to you as a gift.

"What hath thou given, Paul, that thou hast not received?" The real answer is nothing. Your native land is a gift; the flower you enjoy is a gift; the books you read have not been written by you - they come to you as a gift; the church with its open door is a gift; the gospel with its hopes is a gift; friends are a gift, health, intellect, physical beauty - all of these are gifts. Now, in our conceit, we often forget them. The rich fool had nobody to thank but for himself for his prosperity, therefore he was not thankful at all.

"Little Jack Horner, stood in a corner, eating his Christmas pie; He stuck in a thumb and pulled out a plum and said..." What did he say. He did not say what a wonderful mother I have to bake such a lovely pie. What a fine old dad to make the baking possible. What a debt I owe to the many hands that have sown the wheat and made the flour and cultivated the plums. What a great God I have. No, in his sublime conceit, he was the only great one in the world because he could stuff himself with that which he had absolutely no part in producing. If we are to be grateful, we are to be humble hearted.

2. If we are to be grateful, we must not take these blessings that come to us from the hands of others, and primarily from the hands of God, for granted. It is so easy to do that. We live in an ordered world. Day always follows night and spring always trips hard upon the heels of winter. Therefore we take our world for granted. Often we take our loved ones for granted; we take our friends for granted; we take God for granted. Life's daily mercies that are new every morning are in many respects like the ticking of a clock, we do not notice it until it stops. Then we wring our hands, and think how grateful we should have been.

If you are going to be grateful, you must not take things for granted.

3. To be grateful, you must be thankful. The words to think and to think come from the same Anglo Saxon root. The reason some of us thank so little is because we think so little. We are so forgetful. Some of us find it easy to remember slights but hard to remember favors. The author of the 1Q3rd
Psalm has this fine word "Bless the Lord O my soul and forget not all his benefits."

It was because this psalmist was thinking that he was so spontaneously thankful. Of what did he think that so made his heart to sing? Naturally, he does not enumerate all God's mercies that had come to him, he only mentioned three.

1. He was grateful for what God had done to him personally. Written testimony asserts that something did happen as a result of his seeking. "I sought the Lord and He heard me and delivered me from all my fears." Of what he was afraid we are not told but, there were certain menacing fears that were yapping at his heels. He felt as desolate and frightened as a lost child. Then he sought the Lord and found himself undergirded by the Everlasting Arms. That is what has happened to some of us. I do not know what this psalmist was afraid of, he may have been afraid of the sins of his youth; afraid of yesterday; afraid of tomorrow, afraid for himself or afraid for his loved ones; but whatever his fears, in the realization of God's word, they vanished as mist before the sunrise and he went forward singing "The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge."

2. Then this man was grateful for what God had done for his friend. I imagine that this friend had been induced to give God a trial by the psalmist himself. Here is what he said about that friend. This poor man cried unto the Lord. The Lord heard him and saved him out of trouble. One trouble after another had swept down upon him until he seemed trodden into the very mud of despair to rise no more. He was too broken and benumbed even to put his trouble into words. Therefore, he merely cried to God and God saved him and the psalmist was grateful and in his gratitude sung with joy.

3. Finally, he was grateful for what God had done to his group of friends.
to whom he may have been called upon to minister. This group had lost their radiance, they had gone into a settled gloom. Their countenances would "cream of and matthe like a stagnant pond, but something happened to change all this.

What was it? "They looked unto him that is God and were enlightened, their faces were not ashamed." There is a rugged hill back of my home. I have seen it hooded in gloom in the early morning, then I watched its face become radiant as the sun rise played upon it. So it happened to these gloomy souls of whom the psalmist sings. He was grateful therefore, for what God had done. Not only for himself but for others.

4. Finally, he was grateful for what fellow had taught him about God. That was the supreme source of his gratitude. This is the case because God is always grateful; because to God the giver is always greater than any of his gifts.

IV

What then have I learned about God through my own experience? There are those who would throw away the Old Testament. Of course, it is not equal to the New, but I know of nothing, I know of few miracles more wonderful than how much these saints of the Old Testament learned about God before Jesus came. How much the author of the 23rd Psalm learned. Jesus was able to take this Psalm as a description of himself. See what this man learned.

1. He learned that God is good. Of course, you answer, anybody ought to know that. But it is not of course at all. When he sang this Psalm, there were numberless gods, almost all of them were vindictive and cruel and lustful beyond the worst of men. It is not even easy for some to believe in a good today. It is a triumph of faith when Whittier was able to sing this "So mads the maddening maze of things and tossed by storm and flood, to this same faith my spirit clings, I know that God is good." It was a simple discovery that this man made that in spite of so much that was evil and contradictory, the God of the universe was infinitely in command.
2. He discovered that this God was accessible. He was not a God a far off, he was near to all of us. He was sufficiently near to those who need him most. "The Lord is near unto them that are of a broken heart." So Jesus taught, but how marvelous that this man discovered centuries before the coming of Jesus that the God of his experience was closer than breath and nearer than hands and feet, that he was even then being afflicted in our afflictions and bearing our burdens.

3. He discovered God's amazing adequacy for all of our needs. "The young lions lack and suffer hunger but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." Tradition tells us that David wrote this psalm while he was hiding from Saul in the fastness of the mountains. One night he heard the hungry lions snarling in their search of prey. Strong as they were, they were yet hungry. But this psalmist, in spite of his weakness, had all of his needs supplied. Thus he wove the very snarl of the lions into music as he said "the young lions do lack and suffer hunger but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

4. Finally, he is thankful that everyone of us may learn this truth for himself. He declares that we can test it out by experience. Therefore he invites "taste and see that the Lord is good." How can we know that promise? We can only by testing it out. We know the thrill of loving only by loving. How can we know for ourselves that God is good, accessible and adequate to our needs? Only by putting him to the test. If you will give him a chance, your uncertainty will be changed into certainty. With the coming of certainty, you too will be ready to sing with the psalmist out of sheer gratitude. "O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together."

Mr. [Signature]
A WINSOME INVITATION

"O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together."

Psalms 34:3

Here is a man with a thrill in his voice and sunshine looking out from his eyes. He is inviting us to share his pew at a Thanksgiving service that he has made up his mind to attend. He is so eager and joyous about it that we catch the contagion of his enthusiasm across the far spaces of the years. He is not prodding us. He is not scowling at us and telling us how ashamed of ourselves we ought to be for not attending church. He is rather saying, "I am out on a superb adventure this morning. I am going to give thanks. Really, I would not miss it for a fortune. But my joy will not be complete unless you go along." "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." That last word is a big word, "together". It speaks of fellowship, and fellowship is a universal longing of the human heart.

Now personally I am inclined to accept this invitation. Always I should object to being prodded out to church quite as much as you. But when one comes with such a wooing word upon his lips he wins my eager attention. I feel that I ought to join with him in celebrating Thanksgiving day. Not only so, but I am inclined to believe that most of you are of the same mind. We ought all to accept this invitation. This is the case for at least the following reasons.

1. We ought to give thanks because such a habit makes for our own personal
joy. Real gladness is a privilege. But it is more than a privilege, it is a duty. This is not the easiest possible world in which to live, but nobody has a right to mope in it. Nobody has a right to act as if his Father in heaven were dead. Glum and sighing souls are a burden to themselves, but they are also a burden to others. To be constantly gloomy and pessimistic is to be a kill-joy. To be grateful is to be songful. If life has grown drab and gray learn to give thanks and you will be surprised how much lighter your burden will be and how quickly your night will change into day.

Not only do we need to be grateful because gratitude is a mark of moral growth and leads to greater growth. There is no surer sign of spiritual infancy than ingratitude. A baby is a sweet and precious creature. Almost everybody admires and loves a baby. The little fellow is so winsome in his innocence. But innocence is all he has. He has no character. He is short on all the making virtues. Gratitude, for instance, is a beautiful flower that has not learned to blossom in the garden of his heart. Wake with him at all hours of the night, share his colic and his teething, but he will show no more appreciation than a first class pig. But this does not grieve us because he is only a baby. If, however, with the passing of the years he grows in body and grows in mind but fails to grow in thankfulness then he becomes a source of heartache. For to be thankless forever is forever to be a spiritual dwarf. But to express our thanks is to grow in gratitude. Hence we need to attend this service because it is the way to be joyful. It is both a mark of and a pathway to spiritual development.

2. We not only need to give thanks for the sake of ourselves, but for the sake of our fellows. Gratitude is a joy to others. Ingratitude is a source of endless pain. King Lear is the greatest tragedy in English literature. It is a tragedy of ingratitude. Here a tender and beautiful father learns, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child." Countless thousands have
learned that same horrible lesson. I was in a home sometime ago where there were four children all grown and working. They worked at odd hours. The mother told me haltingly and reluctantly how she was up till midnight and sometimes had to rise as early as four in the morning. But she was glad to do it for her children. Then she hesitated and choked and said, "But it would be far easier if they ever showed the slightest appreciation. But they never find what I have done they always find what I haven't done." When I realize how much more smoothly the machinery of this world would run if it were oiled more frequently with the fine lubricant of gratitude, I wonder that I am so grudging with it myself. A friend of mine used to tell how the various virtues met in heaven. There were Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Meekness, Self-control. There were also Benevolence and Gratitude. All these virtues greeted each other warmly because they were old friends. They had associated for long years down in the world. "There were only two of them," said my friend a bit cynically, "who had never met. They were Benevolence and Gratitude. When Benevolence saw Gratitude his eyes sparkled." He said, "I have long wanted to meet you. Many a time I would have carried on far better than I did if you had only been there." "Your words," said one of Job's friends, "have kept men on their feet." Even so, many a man whose steps had all but slipped has been kept on his feet by a word of appreciation. I ought to know for more than once I have been that man. If you want to help where help is most needed join with this sunny singer in learning to give thanks.

3. Then we ought to attend this service not only for the sake of ourselves and our needy fellows, but for the sake of our Lord. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so," is a word from the lips of one of the prophets. He tells us that those that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord heard them. I daresay they were words of gratitude. One time Jesus healed ten men. Nine of them for some reason said never a word of thanksgiving. No doubt they had their
reasons. "He knows I am grateful," they said one to another. But one man didn't take Jesus' knowledge for granted. He hurried back and said so himself. And his coming was like the coming of the morning to the heart of Jesus. Our Lord is enough like us to appreciate our thanksgiving. He appreciates it because it means that we are growing. He appreciates it because he is a lover and a father.

4. Finally, we ought to attend this service because we can do it. It is a fine possibility that is within our reach. The door stands wide open. Everyone of us may enter as we will. No set of circumstances can shut the door in our faces. We cannot be shut out by poverty, by sickness, by loneliness, by tragedy in any form. The door stands wide open for every man and every woman who really desires to give thanks. If you do not desire, nothing can make you.

I know that there are those who will argue with this. What some will say gloomily is, "what have I to be thankful for?" Others will say, "while I am not going to be thankful today, some day I will." When I get a better position, when I get over this nagging pain, when I run past this grim domestic tragedy, then I am going to be thankful. But nobody can be thankful in a situation like that that confronts me." But of course, to speak in this fashion is to be entirely mistaken. If you were going to divide the thankful from the thankless, how would you go about it? You certainly would not put all the successful, the strong, the sorrowless in one camp, and all the failures and the sick and the sorrowing in another. Were you to do that you would find quite as many thankless ones in good circumstances as you would in those in circumstances that are trying. Gratitude is not a flower that grows only in a hothouse. It may grow in the most rigid of climates. It may grow in spite of the most nipping frosts of heartache and adversity. Therefore, anybody may attend this service who will.

II.

"O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." And you
look at the eager face of this singer and say, "I would like to, who wouldn't? But how? You know my circumstances. You know how life has gone to pieces for me. You know how tragedy has dogged my steps. How may I be grateful?" There are certain essentials that all of us may possess. There are certain tickets of admission that may be had without money and without price. These will certainly make us welcome at this service of thanksgiving. What are some of these?

1. Humility. If you and I are to get into this service this morning we must have this ticket. This is the case because pride and conceit will certainly shut the door in our faces. The trouble with conceited folks is that they have nobody to thank but themselves. The Rich Fool had a fine farm. He had faithful employees. God had sent the sunshine and the rain in just the right proportions. But he was chucked full to the ears with his own self-importance. Therefore, when he thought within himself it was only to remind himself of what a great man he was. Therefore, there was not the slightest gratitude in his heart either for God or man. If you are to be grateful you must be humble.

That ought not to be difficult as we face the plain facts of life. There is nothing of worth that any of us possess that has not come to us as a gift. We ought to be grateful for our wonderful nation with its opportunities that belong to no other nation on the earth. But how have these blessings become ours? They have come as the gift of God, and through the sacrificial toil of our pioneer fathers whose dust has enriched our soil. If you have health, strength, beauty, if you have a good intellect, these are gifts. There is not a single treasure that you possess that has not come to you in a large measure as a gift. "What hast thou," exclaims Paul, "that thou didst not receive?" The only answer is nothing. All that is really yours is your sin. You ought to be humble enough to be grateful.

2. Then if you enter this service you must not take your blessings for granted. That is a course that certainly shuts the door of gratitude in our
faces. The mercies that make life worth living are those common-place blessings that come to us day by day and hour by hour. But how often we kill our gratitude by simply accepting them as matters of course. This is an ordered world. Morning always follows night, and spring always follows winter. Naturally, so why be grateful? We take our liberty for granted, forgetting the price that others have paid or may yet have to pay. We take our Church for granted. Often we pass up its opportunities as if they were paltry nothings. We sometimes take our friends for granted. Worse still, we often take our loved ones for granted. Never letting them see the gratitude that is really in our hearts. Never offering a word of appreciation. Then one day we are jarred into wakefulness and spill the words that would have helped in the ears that no longer hear. We even take God for granted. He knocks at our door every hour. That has become such a common-place that some of us have forgot to be grateful for his love, persistence, and patience.

3. Finally, if you are to be grateful you must get down to cases. When some of us start in to give thanks we shoot with a blunderbuss. We ought to be specific. Call over before God some of the mercies for which you are thankful this morning. Be specific. That was the case with this Psalmist. He got down to cases. He mentions certain dealings of God with himself and with others that made the flower of gratitude blossom as naturally as flowers bloom at the coming of spring.

First, there was God's dealings with himself. Here is his testimony, "I sought the Lord, and he heard me and delivered me from all my fears." "Yesterday," says this radiant man, "I had a pack of tormenting and blood thirsty fears yelping on my track. They made life a hideous nightmare. I turned this way and that, but saw no road to safety. Then when I could feel their hot breath against my throat, in desperation I turned to God and He heard me." That personal testimony that an ounce of experience is worth a ton of speculation is true. "He heard me and delivered me from all my fears. Since then I have come to be possessed of a new courage. Since then I have realized that the eternal God is my dwelling place and underneath
are the everlasting arms."

Second, not only was the Psalmist thankful for what God had done to him personally, but for his amazing mercies to some of his friends. There was one man, for instance, who had passed through deep waters. Here is the story.

"This poor man cried and the Lord heard him and saved him out of his troubles." Here again we do not know what troubled this tempest tossed soul. But one calamity after another fell over him till he felt he must sink to rise no more. He was so troubled he could not pray. He could not put his anguish into words. All he could do was to cry out like a frightened child. But God heard him and saved him out of his trouble. And now there looked out of his eyes a peace that passeth understanding.

Then there were other friends who for some reason had lost all the laughter and song out of life. They walked a drab road and their faces wore a settled gloom. Here is their experience, "They looked unto him, and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed." One morning I looked at a grim old hill that climbs to the heights to look down on the Buffalo River. By and by the sunrise came and bathed its rugged head in the golden glory and that hill was transfigured. And this grateful singer is grateful today because he had induced his friends to turn their gloomy faces toward God. As they had done this, low, the gloom passed away. And there was a radiance looking out in their once gloomy eyes that was never seen on land or sea.

4. Finally, this Psalmist was grateful because of what all these experiences had taught him of God.

III.

What did he learn of God through his own experience and through that of his fellows? Remember this great and helpful singer did not have your chance and mine. He lived many centuries before Jesus was born. He lived long before our Lord ever
came to gather little children in his arms, to bend over outcasts, to bear our burdens, and to tell us God is like me. "He that has seen me has seen the Father."

As I read this amazing Hymn Book of the Jews I am thrilled and astonished again of how much these ancient saints learned about God in the long ago.

1. He learned that God is good. How trite that sounds. "Of course God is good," you say. But there is no "of course" to it. Certainly this was the case in his day when almost everybody believed in a multitude of gods of whom were cruel, vindictive, lustful, even beyond the average man. It is not always easy to believe in the goodness of God today. In the face of wide spread tragedy it does at times seem that some lesser God had made the world and had not power to make it good. But this man was sure of God's goodness and was grateful. So may we be.

"So midst the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To this firm faith my spirit clings
I know that God is good."

2. This good God is ever near. He is near to all his children. He is especially near to those who need him most. Listen to his gracious word, "He is near unto them that are of a broken heart." All of us need the undergirding of a present God. however smooth may be our road, and however full of sunshine our skies, But we who walk alone, we whose road has turned thorny, and whose skies have grown gray, we must have Him. When two disciples on an Easter Sunday long ago were walking home from the crucifixion of Jesus, when they were walking from a grave that they were sure was closed forever, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them. The Lord is near to you as you walk your lonely road.

My father was a rugged man. Had you seen him in some attitudes you would have thought him stern. But if he was all granite on the outside he was molten lava within. If he could be austre at times he could also be as tender as a
mother. He did not pet and spoil his boys. But when we needed him he was there. One day he and I were caught in the field during a terrible rain storm. When we started home little rivulets had risen almost to rivers. I walked behind, putting my tracks in his tracks. By and by the water got deeper and I was afraid, and I cried for help. He did not rebuke me. He took me in his strong arms and I was at peace.

3. He discovered the amazing adequacy of God. Before Paul's day he realized that God could supply every need of ourselves according to his riches in glory. Here is his word, "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." Tradition says that this Psalm was written by David when he was a hunted outlaw. One night he heard the lions as they snarled and fought in their hunger. The lion is the king of beasts, yet he knows want. "But here am I," he said, "in my weakness and God supplies every need of mine." And he set the snarls and growls of these lions to music as he taught of the amazing adequacy of God. He was grateful because he was sure that whatever need he had God was able fully to meet it.

4. Finally, he had discovered that the truth that he had claimed for God might be tested in the laboratory of experience. "This," he said, "I have found in God. He is like this—Always good, always near, always adequate." If you do not believe it, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Therefore in this gracious and bracing relationship of God he sang spontaneously. But he is not satisfied to sing alone. So he reached a hand across the centuries to share with you and me. "O magnify the Lord with me," he invites, "and let us exalt his name together." As for me, I count it a privilege to enter into this service of Thanksgiving in his fellowship and in the fellowship of God's saints around the world, and above all, in the fellowship of our common Lord.
A WINSOME INVITATION

"O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together."
Psalm 34:3

Here is a sunny faced man who is hurrying on nimble and willing feet to a Thanksgiving service. He is all eagerness, but, eager as he is, he is not willing to enjoy the thrill of this service alone. He is eager for our companionship, therefore, he gives us this winsome invitation. "O magnify the Lord with me." He does not prod, he persuade. He does not undertake to compel, he woos. Since he gives his invitation so charmingly, I feel constrained to join him.

I feel that I am included in this invitation, because he is not asking for certain fortunate souls, but for just anybody who is willing to come. He recognizes the fact that gratitude is something that everyone may possess if only willing. Of course, this is not the way that many of us think about it. Though we are lacking in gratitude, we are perfectly sure that under certain circumstances we would be exceedingly grateful. But, generally speaking, while circumstances may help, gratitude is not a charm of circumstances at all. If such were the case, you could take all the successful folks, all those who are well and strong, all to whom life has come right side up, and put them on one side, then put the suffering, and the misfits, and the failures on the other side, draw a line between them and say, "All the of good fortune are grateful and all the of ill fortune are ungrateful," but that would not work at all. Generally speaking, you would find more gratitude among the suffering than among those who had spent their lives on the sunny side of the street. It is up to
Thus the Prophet indicated that the Lord has kept us to decide whether we will be grateful or not.

I

Why is this man so eager that we join him in a Thanksgiving service? His appeal is not unique. It runs thru the whole Bible. God calls to us again and again to the high task and privilege of thanksgiving. "O give thanks unto the Lord," is repeated over and over again. "In everything give thanks," urges Paul. Why is this inspired word so full of invitations to thanksgiving? In other words, why is God so eager for us to possess and express our appreciation.

Let me say in the beginning that this eagerness is not born primarily of God's love of praise. In other words, we are not to be grateful simply for God's benefit. So many have an idea that this is the case. Naturally, since God is our Father, he appreciates our appreciation. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so," is the word from one of the prophets: "They that feared the Lord," he tells us, "they spake one with another and the Lord hearkened, and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written." Thus the prophet indicated that the Lord has keep-sakes just as we, like an old rose pressed away in a book, or a worn letter to remind us to be grateful. But our Lord is supremely eager for our gratitude because of what the habit of giving thanks does for its possessors.

1. To be grateful is to be joyous. A thankful heart is a singing heart. If you have nothing in your hands, or in your heart, that makes you eager to give thanks, then the chances are that you are living under leaden skies. You are living in a drab winter instead of the radiant spring in which it is your privilege to live. Our Lord is eager for us to be joyous. The last prayer he prayed for us was that the joy that was his might be ours. Joy is more than a privilege. It is a duty. To be grateful is to be joyous.

2. Our Lord is eager for us to be grateful because gratitude is a mark
of spiritual gratitude. There are some warped souls who never learn to say, "Thank you," either to God or man - that is indeed a tragedy. Of course, we do not expect gratitude of little babies. To wake with them all hours of the night, to deal with their colic and their teething, is taken as a matter of course. But we tolerate them because they are babies. If they never come out of it, if they never learn to say, "I appreciate it," we have to write them down as moral and spiritual dwarfs in the supreme things that go to make a man or woman. They never grow up.

3. God is eager for us to give thanks, because it makes us helpful to others. It makes us helpful because it makes us joyous, and because it enables us to play the part of grown ups rather than of babies. Then it helps us because directly it gladdens and strengthens others. Appreciation is twice blessed. It blesses him that gives and him that takes. This is an obvious fact. It is so obvious that I wonder why we do not use it more. Life is hard for most folks, the battle is lonely, but many who are today walking with lagging steps would go on nimble feet to that task if they were only girded by some genuine gratitude.

Now since gratitude not only costs us nothing but rather enriches us, it is amazing how grudgingly we give it. Years ago a man preached a sermon on the common sin in the world. What do you suppose that sin was? It was not lying, it was not stealing. It was not unkindness. It was ungratitude. This is not the sin of the vicious so much as of the thoughtless. The word think and thank come from the same Anglo-Saxon root. We thank little because we think little of the kindness that has been shown us.

For instance, one day Jesus was passing through a certain village. In that village there was a queer fraternity. These men were not bound together by a common bond of culture or race. There only bond was a common tragedy.
They were all lepers. They were suffering from a deadly disease, but when they heard that Jesus was coming, they held a meeting and voted unanimously to make an appeal to him for help. Later in the day when the Master came in sight they put their decision to action. Standing afar off, they lifted up their cracked faces, and prayed, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." "Go show yourselves to the priest," was the reply of Jesus. Now that was what a leper was to do after he was cured. These had not been cured, but in the faith that the Master was too wise to send them on a fool's errand, they obeyed, with the results that they were all cured.

Then, what? Nine of them hurried on their self-chosen way, only one came back to give thanks. Surely God has discovered countless millions of times the tragedy of King Lear, "How sharper is a serpent's tooth it is, than to have a thankless child."

II

Why, I wonder is this ancient singer so grateful? I have an idea that had you known him you might have said, "I don't see how he can be so songful." Of course, things are a little better with him now, but he has had a terrible time." What then would seem the source of his gratitude? Why did he praise both consciously and spontaneously?

1. He was grateful for the experience of God, in his own life. Listen to his testimony. "I sought the Lord." So, what, we answer incredulously. Many a man has sought the Lord after a fashion, and, so far as we could see, got nowhere. But that has never been the case of those who sought right. "I sought the Lord." These and these alone have a right to speak. "What came of your seeking," I ask with half a sneer?

He heard me and gave the answer. "It seemed at first that I was simply crying into emptiness. It seemed at first as there were no ears to hear, but he heard me and delivered me from all my fears." That is a testimony that is
worth listening to. I am sure there are many here present who would like
to sit down and talk quietly with this ancient saint. He has found what so
many long to find. He was desperately afraid, but he found comfort. His fears
vanished as those of a little child. He has found shelter in his Father's arms.

Of what was he afraid? He does not tell us. There are so many things
to frighten us. Every to-morrow is a kind of thicket on the right-of-way of
life from which care and tragedy may spring upon us, or may
spring upon one we love better than we love ourselves. This man may have been
afraid of the loss of his wealth that would leave him to a penniless old age.
He may have been afraid of the loss of his health. Pain may have been walking
with fire-shot feet along every nerve in his body. He may have been afraid,
even as you have some dear boy who is away in a place of danger. But, whatever
his fear, he found deliverance. He learned to sing with another psalmist. "I
will fear no evil -- - - The Lord of host is with us, the God of Jacob is our
refuge, therefore, we will not fear."

2. Then this saint was not only grateful for what God had done for him
personally, but for what he had done for his friend. Maybe the psalmist had
lead this friend into his experience. Anyway, as he thought on God's goodness,
his mind and heart went to a certain chap who had had a desperately hard time.
Listen to what he says about him. "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him
and saved him out of all his troubles." This was not theory but experience.

Look at this friend. He was in sore trouble. One tragedy after another
had walked over his heart with cruel feet until he seemed utterly trodden down
and destroyed. So desperate was his plight that he could no longer pray. He
could not even put his anguish into words, but in this bleak hour he flung a
that is always
cry into the encircling gloom, and attention, heard that
cry and that hand tender and strong, that is always feeling for your hand and mine, gripped the hand of this troubled man, lifted him up, and he knew the meaning of salvation.

To save him out of all his trouble, that does not mean, necessarily, that he lead this man to a residence on easy street. It does not mean that from thence-forth the sea of life was smooth and every moment jubilant with a joy. It does not mean that he had no more to do with fiery furnaces. His troubles may have been even just as grim as before, but he did not have to meet them alone. He walked through his fiery furnaces leaning on the everlasting arm. That is to be saved, in the grandest fashion.

3. Then this man was thankful for what God had done to a group of his neighbors. For some reason, it seemed these neighbors had lost all brightness out of their lives. Their faces had come to wear a mantle of settled gloom. Here again he does not tell us the source of this gloom. It may not have been fear and trouble as in his own case, or in that of his friend. It may have been the gloom of broken friendship, of love that had changed to hate. It may have been the gloom of a lost sense of God. It may have been that sin had walked with cloaked feet over their faces until the light had gone out, but, be the causes what they may, these faces had come to live in the shadows.

That though they once lived in the shadows, it is his joy that they are not there any more. Maybe the wonderful change that has been wrought has come about thru his own effort. Anyway, the night is past and day dawned. Anyway, the bleak winter has given place to spring. Here is how he tells it. "They looked unto him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed."

Finally, and above all else, he was grateful because of what this experience had taught him about God. He realized that better than any of God's gifts was God himself.
III

What had this man learned of God? I am quite aware that the Old Testament is not up with the age. There are parts of it that make good reading. But, aside from the miracle of Jesus himself, it seems to me there is no greater wonder than how much these ancient psalmists and prophets learned of God before Jesus came. One of them was the song of the Good Shepherd, that Jesus fitted himself into the picture and declares that he is the one of whom the psalmist is singing. "I am the Good Shepherd." But, then I repeat, this man came to know God.

1. He came to know God is good. Of course, we are ready today. Put yourself in his place. He lived in a day when imagination had its own gods. These gods were not good, they were cruel, and lustful, and ugly beyond the human. He lived in a harsh, hard world. Jesus has come since then to bend over outcasts, and to gather little children in his arms and bless them. He has come to tell us that God is like me, but, in spite of this, it is not always easy to believe in the goodness of God. But to that height this man had won, in spite of all his foes. It is a height that we may win.

"So midst the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by stream and flood,
To this firm faith my spirit clings,
I know that God is good."

This is a faith to lean our backs against in time of trouble.

2. Not only had this psalmist learned that God is good, but that he is always ever near. Listen to him. "The Lord is near unto them that are of a broken heart." Of course, he is near to all of us. He is always closer than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet. But this psalmist felt that he is especially near to those for whom life had gone to pieces. That he is sure. That he is within reach of all of us, but he is most accessible to those who need him most.
He is near unto them of a broken heart. This is true of those whose hearts are broken because of loneliness, because of tragedy, or because there has been the setting of some great hope that was like the setting of the sun. He is the God of the smoking flax, and the bruised reed he will nor break. To all such, he is saying even now, "Fear not, I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee by the right hand of my righteousness."

3. Finally, he has discovered not only God's goodness and nearness, but because of this he is ever near. Is equal to every situation, however desperate. Here is the way he puts it. "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger, but they that they seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." The lion is the king of beasts, but even the lion in the strength of his youth has to know want.

Tradition tells us that David wrote this psalm when he was hiding among the wiles of the mountains from the envy of Saul. As he thought of the goodness of God, he could hear the lions growling and snarling in search of their prey, so he set these snarls to music. The lack of the lions reminded him of his plenty. He entered into the experience that Paul entered into centuries later, when his Lord said, "My grace is sufficient -- -- "My God shall supply every need of yours, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Thus he come to know God as a good, and near, and all sufficient, friend that was to make gratitude as spontaneous as a gushing spring.

IV

How shall the psalmist experience these hours? He shared that rich experience with needy souls in his day. He is ready to share it with us. He
gives us one simple direction. With eager urgency he appeals, "Taste and see
that the Lord is good. You can know the truth of all I have been saying," he
declares, if you will only give God a chance."

A few days ago I stopped to exchange a few words with two very capable
young men, neither of whom was a member of my church. The conversation turned
to matters of faith, and one of them said wistfully, "If man would only trust
God as they trust that bank on the corner, what a difference it would make."
"They would do so even more," I answered, if they would give God the same chance
they are giving the bank." God can only give to us only as we do possible for
him to give.

How does spinach taste? Very much like nothing. But the only way to
know is to taste it. How does it feel to be in love? There is no use to try
to describe it. The only way is to love. How shall I come to know God as good,
and near, and sufficient? Only by trusting him. That is what this psalmist did.
That is what countless millions have done since then and they have come to share
his joy and his gratitude.

Dr. J. H. Jowett was one of the greatest preachers of the last generation.
He had a lingering disease. When he was upon his bed of affliction, he wrote to
an old friend, also a minister. His letter read somewhat, as follows: "My dear
Friend: We have preached a great gospel, you and I. Now that we have come to
days of pain, I want you to remember what I am finding, and, that is, that Christ
is bigger than anything we have ever said about him. So may we find, and, in finding,
we shall join in the song of this man of long ago. "O magnify the Lord with us, and let us exalt his name together."
THAT TONGUE OF YOURS

"I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue." Psalm 39:1

Here is a man who has made a fine and difficult resolution. He has resolved to control his tongue. That, as everyone knows, who has ever undertaken the task, is not easy. Practical James tells us that it is so difficult as to be among the impossibilities except for the grace of God. He declares flatly that though man has been able to tame all the birds of the wilderness and the savage beasts, he has not been able to control his wild and savage tongue. Therefore, he declares that it is an abiding evil, full of deadly poison. Yet here is a man who has made up his mind to master his tongue instead of having his tongue master him.

Just how he came by this resolution we are not told. Thinking of some of my own experiences, I can offer a reasonable guess. I can imagine that one day he was in a group of friends and the discussion turned, as it so often does, not upon issues of the day or matters of religion, but upon personalities. They began to discuss their absent friends. This psalmist had some witty and cutting remarks to make about these friends. His sallies of cruel wit were greeted with gales of laughter. At last, when he told his friends goodnight and went on, he felt quite pleased with himself. He had been the center of attraction.

But when he was at home and in bed just as he was about to fall asleep, he thought of one of those cutting and witty remarks of his and suddenly the ugliness of it broke upon him. As suddenly his sense of pride and elation in his sparkling wit gave place to shame. He realized that he had been needlessly cruel and disloyal. He knew that what he had said could do nobody good, that it could do nothing but harm. Therefore, his pillow became a thing of nettles and his bed was strewed with stones and as he tossed in his shame,
and in his condemnation, he bowed before God. "I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue."

I

How do we sin with our tongues? In many ways. Let me mention just a few.

1. I will only mention in passing the man who schools his tongue in blasphemy, the man who accustoms himself to take God's name in vain until he does so automatically and without thinking. I was called to see a dying man some months ago. I explained to him the way of life and I believe he was still intelligent enough to accept. Then he lapsed into unconsciousness and went out like a blown out candle. But as his loved ones watched at his side, the last word they heard from his lips was a vile oath. He was not thinking, it was a matter of habit.

2. Some sin with their tongues by the telling of dirty stories, by engaging in the obscene jest. Personally I am not a prude but I have never been able to see the fun of filth. I do not appreciate obscene and questionable stories. Furthermore, it has become a growing conviction of mine across the years that those who delight in hearing and telling such stories are unclean on the inside, however outwardly respectable they might be.

3. A third way of sinning with our tongues that is very popular is in engaging in hurtful and malicious gossip. There is a wise old law in the Bible that says "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale bearer among thy people." To pass on to others that which puts a black mark against the good name of your neighbor is an ugly and cruel sin. It is doubly so when so often the report is ninety percent false. It takes such a slim foundation of truth to support a colossal lie;
For instance, years ago I followed a popular pastor who was elected Bishop. He said half-humorously in a sermon that if the congregation should hear me say what sounded like him not to be startled, thus laughingly indicating that either I had read his sermon or he had read mine. Since he had no printed sermons everybody knew what he meant. He was simply facetiously stating that he had read some of my books and might be using some of my material.

But that harmless word has grown and grown. I have met it at every point of the compass. It is now said that I preach so many of the same sermons that the Board waited on me and said, "We have heard of this before." That I then went and got all the books that I had written and opened them up before the Board and proved that the sermons preached were really mine. Here was a flimsy half ounce of truth that served as the foundation for literally tons of lies. "Thou shall not go up and down as a tale bearer among thy people."

4. We sin with our tongues by finding fault, by harsh and unfair criticism. "Judge not", said Jesus. What did he mean? He was not forbidding us to reach some conclusion as to the moral worth of those about us. That is both inevitable and necessary. What is forbidden is finding fault, to look for the worst instead of for the best. The fault-finder always sins with his tongue.

It is easy to see why this is the case. To look for the worst is to find it. No man ever lived so perfectly that his neighbor could not find fault with him if they set out to do so. Jesus himself is no exception. The people of his day criticized him unmercifully. Some of them declared that he was not a religious man at all, that he was a mere glutton and
drunkard. No man can get a clean bill of health at the hands of a fault finder. How often we have sinned with our tongues when we looked for the worst in our brother and, having found it, passed it on to others.

5. Finally, we sin with our tongues by failing to use them at the right time or in the right cause. The tongue is a power. It may be a power for good. When a just cause is at stake no man has a right to be silent. When another is slandered in your presence and you know him to be slandered, you are honor bound to call that slander, however little you may like the one who is slandered. There is a speech that is deadly. There is a silence that is equally deadly and damning. 

Along with this cowardly silence and part of it is defending our absent friends so weakly and half-heartedly that we do not in reality defend him at all. It is altogether possible to "damn with faint praise, assever with evil leer, and without sneering, teach the rest to sneer." A half-hearted defense may be just as cowardly and devilish as whole hearted silence.

II

Now, what is there so wrong about these sins of the tongue?

1. The man who thus sins with his tongue in malicious gossip and fault finding hurts the one with whom he finds fault. There are those who are made to suffer by lies that are told about them. Some are embittered by such baseless criticism. In a book of a generation ago called the "Voice of the People" is a fine and honest young man named Nick Burr. He came up from the ranks and became governor of his state. He was engaged to be married to a charming girl who knew herself to be socially above him.

Then somebody raised a malicious lie that seemed destined to tear his reputation to shreds. Even the woman with whom he was to marry believed it.
With intense indignation he confronted her with the fact. "He has lied on me," he said, referring to the slanderer. "He has lied on me and you believe it and I will never forgive you. And as for him, may God in his just mercy damn him." It is awful to become possessed of hate like that. It is even more horrible, perhaps, deliberately to create a hurt like that.

Then the slanderer hurts his victim because often he thus steals his reputation. Now, your good name is important. It is a part of the capital on which you are doing business. The measure of your usefulness is in part the measure of your reputation. Some feel that the best legacy they have to leave to their children is the legacy of a good name.

Years ago a circuit rider in Texas had to give up the ministry on account of a throat trouble. He became a tenant on the land of a wealthy ranchman. Soon this ranchman came to trust the one time minister. Often he sent large sums of money to the bank by him. Often he sent him to bring home the money for the payroll. One day as he was journeying home with $5,000 in cash, a man stepped from the bushes at the side of the road, put a gun in his face, and said, "I know you have $5,000 for the payroll. I want it.

The minister looked him quietly in the face and said, "All I have to leave my family is this wagon and team and my good name. If I gave you this money I could never prove that I did not do it willingly. Therefore, I had rather die than to leave any question in the minds of my loved ones. If you want the money enough to kill me, go ahead. If not, I will go on my way." And the man disappeared.

In Vanderbilt University some years ago students were losing their watches. Checks would be sent from home that never arrived. By and by they suspected one of the most brilliant young men in the University.
They searched his room and found some sixty watches. A few of the checks were there but most of them he had simply torn up. The loot was of no value to him. He was from a wealthy family. He simply stold for love of stealing. That is true of a reputation thief. "Who steals my purse steals trash, 'Twas mine, 'twas his and has been, and has been slave to all. But he that filches from me my hope, my courage, my expectations, taketh that which not enricheth him but makes me poor indeed."

2. If the reputation thief hurts his victim, he also hurts the man who receives his stolen goods. There are always two parties concerned in malicious gossip, the one who peddles it out and the one who receives it. In the underworld the receiver of stolen goods is called a fence. He is counted equally guilty with the thief who stole the goods.

This human nature of ours has a strange perversity about it. The gossip can be very interesting. It is hard to explain just why a story of the other fellow's collapse, of his failure, is so interesting. Part of it I suppose is due to the fact that we feel that his ugliness increases our beauty, that his uselessness makes us appear the more useful, that in seeing him torn down we feel that we ourselves are built up. The thief and the receiver are equally guilty.

3. But the worst harm of the man who thus sins with his tongue is against the sinner himself. In seeking to see and say the worst we hurt our victims, we hurt our hearers, but we inflict the deadliest wrongs upon ourselves. The man who thins/robs himself in the realm of friendship. Nobody has too many friends. I know sometimes we say irritably "I don't care a cent what he thinks of me." Yet you do, at least, you ought to care. To fail to do so is to cheat yourself of all possible friends.
Do you want to know how you can win friends and influence people? I confess I do not know all the answers but I know one that does the opposite. Look for the worst in your friend and having found it be sure and point it out to him. Always tell him what you think is wrong with him, what you dislike about him, but never what you do like. Thus you will cheat both him and you. If, on the other hand, you find what you do like and tell him about that you may change an enemy into a friend.

Not only do you cheat yourself in the realm of friendship but in the realm of personal character. To look for the worst in another is to find it. And finding it you will so fix your attention upon it that you will fail to see the best. Seeing only what is wrong in your neighbor will do deadly harm to you. One result is practically sure to follow. The more clear eyed you become to the vices of others, the more blind you become to your own faults.

Then what? Being clear eyed as to what is wrong with your neighbor and blind as to what is wrong with you, you will come to boast of a goodness to which you are an utter stranger. You will take pride in that of which you should be profoundly ashamed. That was the case with Iago, the greatest devil in literature. "I am nothing," he said, "if not critical." He could tear a reputation to shreds and send his victims to murder and suicide and pat himself on the back in congratulation. Such an attitude, of course, makes repentance impossible. The Pharisee went to church and prayed, but what was the good of his prayer? No good at all. He had such a keen eye for the sins of others, he saw so clearly that they were extortioners, unjust, adulterers, that he couldn't find a fleck of wrong upon himself. The same was the tragedy of the Elder Son. When his younger brother came home with his confession of sin upon his lips, he tried to drive him back into the hog pen by accusing him of sins of which he knew
nothing. "He has wasted thy money with harlots, but I have been perfect. All these years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandments." With a keen eye for the sins of his brother and no sense of the sin in himself, the door to the feast of the fullness of life was shut in his face.

So it ever is. Practical James tells us that vital Christianity for the loose talker, for the man who sins with his tongue, is simply impossible. 'Till we reach the place where we cease to unsheath our tongues as swords and stab our fellows then we can never be Christian. Here is his plain word: "If any man among you seem to be religious and bridletb not his tongue, this man's religion is vain." — Exordium.

III

How shall we master these tongues of ours? Of course, it is altogether wise and Christian for us to make the high resolve of this ancient Psalmist. "I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue." But even with such a right resolve we are going to need help to put that resolution into practice. In the self control of our tongues, then, I believe these considerations might be of service.

1. Let us remember how unfit we are to pass judgment upon our fellow. In order to give a just judgment, I must know all the facts in the case. I must know what the accused has done and not simply what somebody said he has done. But that is not enough. I must know the motives that prompted him in the doing of it. Not only so, but I must know something of his background. Anybody can see the fall he has made but not everybody can see the sources of weakness that brought about his fall. In truth, I must know the facts about the accused that only God can know.
That is the reason why over and over we are forbidden from judging. How often when we do judge and find we are wrong we say, "I would not have said that had I known the facts." Nobody knows all the facts except God. Who are we to push God off his throne and exercise his power? "Who art thou that judgest another man's survival? To his own Master he stands or falls."

We ought to be slow to pass judgment on our fellows by harsh criticisms because we cannot possibly know all the facts.

2. Then it might help us to control our critical tongues if we ask ourselves what is our real motive. Is the adverse criticism we are about to offer for the good of the one and for the as a whole? Are we really seeking to help? There are times when the truth must be told in the interest of others. There are times when the giving of adverse criticism cannot help anybody, even if it is true.

Here, for instance, is a man who has sown his wild oats. He has soiled pages in his life story of which he is now deeply ashamed. In serious honesty he is undertaking to start anew. What could be more cruel and more wicked than to hinder and hamper him by unearthing his soiled past?

"If you see a tall fellow in the heart of the crowd
A leader of men looking fearless and proud.
And you know of an incident whose mere speaking aloud
Would cause his proud heat to in anguish be bowed.
It is a pretty good thing to forget it."

I am going to expose this dirty chapter in the life of my friend. You are? Why? Is it for his good? Is it for the good of others? Is love back of it all? Or is it the case that you dislike the man? Or is it that you are prompted by the ugly devil of envy? Is it possible that you are playing with another's happiness and good name with the conviction that in tearing him down you build yourself up? Before we sin with our tongues against
our neighbors, ask yourself why.

3. Finally, I offer this wise word from the Psalmist. It is a prayer he prayed for himself in the long ago. We ought to pray it for ourselves today. It runs like this: "Lord, set a watch before my mouth, keep thou the door of my lips." If a God of infinite love controls our speech it will be said of us as it was said of that ideal woman in the last chapter of the Book of Proverbs: "In her tongue was the law of kindness".

If our Lord thus keeps the door of our lips we shall not only refuse to speak the ruinous and hurtful word, we shall not only refuse in so far as possible to hurt our neighbor and others by our malicious gossip, but we shall crowd out our fault finding with our virtue finding. We shall over come evil with good. Then it shall be said of us as the holy man of yesterday, "Your words have kept me upon my feet."

"Slave of a woman and that"
A NEW SONG

"He hath put a new song in my mouth."
---Psalm 40:3

Here is a word that is very up-to-date. It has to do with a new song. So many are ready to thrill over the latest song hit! But this God-given song is infinitely more fascinating and far more new. Its newness, however, is not born of the fact that this singer is saying something that has never been said before. It is not merely a bizarre song—it is a new song. I am glad that this is the case. There is no real virtue in mere novelty. Neither new songs nor new gospels are needed if by new we mean only the unusual and novel. This song is new not because it is merely queer, but because it is born of experiences that are new and vital to the singer.

Yesterday a hearse passed you on the street. You only gave it a brief glance. A hearse is such a common sight! Yet to some who followed that journey to the cemetery was as new and poignant as if they were the first who had ever been called upon to bury their dead out of their sight. The other day I heard a young mother talking to her baby. She was saying the same sweet, ungrammatical nothings that generations of mothers have said. Yet they were fascinatingly new and lovely. Here are a man and a maid in love. In their own ears how amazingly new and fresh are the things they say to each other! Yet they have been said over and over again millions of times. Recently a mother found an old love-letter that was so sentimental that she told her daughter frankly she was ashamed of her for writing such a letter. But when the daughter looked it over, she found to her delight that it was not her letter at all but her mother's. Love talks the same language through the centuries, but it is always fascinatingly new.

Jesus said, "Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is
A NEW SONG - page 2

like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." That is what this psalmist is doing. That is what we can do if we have a fresh and vital experience of God. Our song will be as new and fresh as the first rose of June, yet as old as the ordered coming of the seasons. It will be as new as the first smile that dimples the cheek of the mother's first baby, yet it will be as old as motherhood, as new as the sunrise and yet as old as the sun. Just so long as we are making new discoveries in God so long will our song be enchantingly new.

Now what is the good of this new song?

1. It is an unspeakable benediction to He who possesses it. Song means joy, laughter, gladness. Our present-day religion is a bit short on joy; therefore, it is short on power. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." It is a source of strength in our hour of need. It is a strong anchor when the tempest is upon us and sorrow sits sobbing like a troubled ghost in every chamber of the heart.

2. Then this new song is not only a benediction to the singer, but to our fellows as well. "Many shall see it," says the poet, "in fear and shall trust in the Lord. Many shall see it." Doesn't the poet use the wrong word? Should he not have said, "Many shall hear it." Who sees a song? Yet so it stands written. You doubtless recall the wise conclusion that John Milton reached when he dreamed of writing a poem that the world would not let die. He declared that he who would write a great poem must himself be a poem. Our singer has attained in some measure the high standard set by Milton. With this new song upon his lips that is but an echo of the song within his heart, he has himself become a song.

There is a winsomeness and charm about his life that may be seen as well as heard. He is so in tune with the Infinite that those whose lives he touches cannot resist his spell. They yearn to know his secret and, knowing it, they too come to trust in the Lord.

We who profess to be Christians are often dreadfully short on winsomeness. We read of some of the early saints that great grace was upon them. That is, they
were gracious, fascinating, appealing. To associate with them was to become keen and eager to find what they had found. But when the Pharisee had finished thanking God that he was not as other men, I wonder who followed him home to ask him about the deep things of the soul. I wonder what man came with eager step and with an impatient appeal that would take no denial to learn how he might rise to the sublime height of fasting twice a week and giving tithes of all he possessed.

You know—no one came. This was the case not because this Pharisee was not religious. It was rather the case because he was horribly religious. He was not in tune with God, and there was no wooing harmony in his life.

It is not thus that this singer seeks to take captive the hearts of men. He knows that we are not going to win the world by our wails. We are not going to conquer by our complaints. We are not going to captivate by consistently prating not about what is wrong with the church. We are going to win by proclaiming what a distressingly hard time we are having as we try to serve the Lord. We are not going to win by living discordant lives that clash like instruments played out of tune. But we can win through the appealing winsomeness of lives in tune with Christ. If there is a harmony about our lives that the world cannot give and cannot take away, somebody is going to ask the secret. Generally speaking, we are quite short on inner music. We are lacking in freshness and newness. If we show the way to the new song by the beauty of our own lives, many shall see it and fear and shall trust in the Lord.
A NEW SONG

"He hath put a new song in my mouth." Psalms 40-3

Here is a word out of the long gone past that speaks with special urgency to our day. This man has made a discovery that every one of us is longing to make. He has found something to make life thrilling. God has given to all of us an instinctive hatred of monotony. We dislike dull, drab sameness. We do not like to travel life on a road that is dead level. We are eager for our road to dip down into the cool recesses of the canyon now and then. We long for it to climb to the sun-kissed heights. We love the thrill of freshness and or newness.

Yet while this is the longing of all of us, I fear that it is the experience of only a few. For how many life seems nothing more than a monotonous round of petty duties. How boring for the housewife who has every day to make the same old beds, sweep the same floors, dust the same furniture. How little thrill in planning what she is going to have for breakfast, lunch and dinner today and tomorrow and tomorrow. For others life is made up of going down to the store or down to the office and back to the house until we wear a rut that seems to us as to be so grim and so narrow that it threatens to crush the life out of us. When such read the words of that ancient saint, "There is no new thing under the sun", they say a yawning "Amen". But here is a man who has found something that has made all life thrillingly fresh and new. "He has put a new song in my mouth," he declares with radiant gladness.

I

What is the source of this new song?

It is not merely a song of youth. We can be sure of that because this man is not young. There are few subjects about which more silly slush easy.
talked and written than about the joys of youth. Even many of our poets talk as if every youth lived thrillingly while every other is finding life about as monotonous as a thud through a desert. Of course, such a contention is utterly false.

It is false in that all the young do not find life new or thrilling. Some of the most tired and bored and fed up folk that I have met in all my ministry have been youths who were on the sunny side of thirty. Here is the verdict of one of them. "'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek alone, the blush that fades so fast, But the tender bloom of heart is gone e'er youth itself is past."

Plenty of young folks are older at eighteen than their fathers at eighty. The fact that this man found life a new song is not born of his youthfulness. Neither is he singing because he has been born with a golden spoon in his mouth. He is not singing because he is living on the sunny side of the street where everything has come to him right side up. I think that if he has memories that bless, he also has memories that burn. The radiance and joy that he is experiencing, therefore, are not born of circumstances. He is not singing because he has just been to a favorite night spot or is planning to go to one that night. He is not singing because he has won a bet or because he has been on a drunk.

No more is he singing because he is in good health or because everything he touches turns to gold. There are strong and successful men who find life refreshingl new and thrilling, but most of them do not. It is equally true that there are those who have earned little of this world's goods. There are those who have barked their shins and broken their health who have yet found their way into newness of abiding morning. If you were to go out into our city today to seek for those who were finding life still thrilling, some of them would be among the highly successful, but others would be among those who in the eyes of men have made an utter failure. This man's song is not born of his
circumstances.

If he is not singing simply because he is young or because he is successful, no more is he singing because he has made up his mind to sing. Now, I agree with Stevenson in believing that joy is more than a privilege, it is a duty. Nobody has a right to bump through life on four flat tires. Nobody has a right to be a kill-joy by constantly whining and by constantly looking like a chronic pain. We are commanded over and over again to rejoice. Stevenson was so convinced of this duty that he wrote this word: "If I have faltered more or less, in my quest of happiness. Lord, my most pointed pleasure take, and snap my spirit broad awake."

But while joy is a duty, we do not perform that duty by merely grimly determining to do so. Joy is the effect of a cause. Having taken the right attitude towards God and man, joy comes of itself. But we do not win it by saying "Go to, I am going to be joyful."

During the first world war we used to listen to "Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile", Well, putting on a joyful face is worth something. The one who smiles from grim determination will at least not be a kill joy for others. But smiles that are real come from beyond the lips; they must be born of the heart. The Rich Fool tried to shake a sluggish soul into having a good time. He reminded his soul that his barns were filled to overflowing. But his soul remained joyless just the same. This new song is not born of grim determination.

How, then, did he come by it? It was a gift of God. "He has put a new song in my mouth." Then this lovely spring flows from a source that is inexhaustible. There are some fleeting joys we may know that leave us with ill heads and aching hearts, but the man whose song comes from God need never fear the loss of that music so long as he keeps in fellowship with his Lord. Pointing his joyless fellows to the fact of God, the Psalmist declares, "He has put a new song in my
What is the content of this song? What is he singing about?

1. He was singing a song of deliverance. "He brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay." This is the language of poetry. Just what grim tragedy had overtaken this sinner we do not know, but we do know this; something had happened that had robbed him of the right of the sun. He was in bleak and darkened pit where the grim monster of the mud was swallowing him by the inch. He was sinking in the dark and there was no human hand stretched out to help.

Victor Hugh tells the story of a man caught in quicksand. One moment he was walking along the beach in perfect safety. Then a foot sank to the ankle. In an effort to free his foot, he put down the other, which sank in above the ankle. At first he was not frightened, but the more frantically he struggled, the deeper he sank. Now he is up to his knees. Now the monster has swallowed him up to his waist. He is terrified. He looks about for human help but there is not a soul in sight. He looks at the distant trees, the blue skies, the clouds, the sea gulls. He shrieks. He curses. By then the sand fills his mouth and the monster has his prey. "I was like that", says the Psalmist, "being swallowed up, but I stretched out a hand and another hand, as mighty as it was tender, seized mine and I was delivered."

The Bible fairly bristles with stories of deliverances like that. This deliverance is also the theme of many of our best loved hymns. Here is one our fathers used to sing. "Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see." That hymn was born out of an experience of deliverance. Its author had run away to sea when he was just a boy. He fell so low that he came first to be a trader in slaves, then he himself became a slave. He was the property of a Negro woman. She used to make him pick up crumbs under the table, but this man experienced a mighty deliverance. So he declared with the Psalmist, "He has put a new
song in my mouth." In his study he kept this passage hanging before his eyes: "Remember that thou wast a bondsman in Egypt and that the Lord thy God delivered thee."

3. This was the Psalms security. The man who was once the bond slave of forces stronger than himself can now walk with assured step. "Thou hast set my feet upon a rock and established my goings." He had found security in a dazed and insecure world.

It is that which all the world is seeking today. A sense of insecurity of one kind or another is dogging the steps of countless millions at this moment. Of course, it would be a great help if we could find the basis of a lasting peace, but we as individuals do not have to wait for that. We can find security where this man found it and we can find it nowhere else. If you desire steady something that will stir you, something against which to lean your weak shoulders with the assurance that it will never let you down, you will find that in religion and you do not find it anywhere else.

As the Bible is a book of deliverances, so it is a book of security. "The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge", therefore will we not fail. "The Lord is thy keeper, the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand." "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." "All that dwell in the secret places of the most high abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Here is a man who is singing because he has found the security of his Father's arms.

4. Finally, this is a song of gratitude. "Thou hast put a new song in my mouth," even praise unto our God. For the man who has found deliverance, for the man who because of his faith in God can walk life's way with fearless tread, gratitude is as natural and spontaneous as the perfume of a flower.
Having been thus richly blessed, having had all life thus made new, having come out of black winter into amorous spring, this man naturally breaks forth into a song of thanksgiving.

Finally, he tells that this is a new song. New in what sense? It is not in the sense that nobody ever had a similar experience before or since. Such experiences have come to countless millions. It is rather new in that it is his own experience. Recently I buried a baby. Nothing new about that, you say. People have been burying babies for countless centuries. Yet to the parents of this child that experience was as new as if nothing like it had ever happened in all human history. It was new in that they said, "The baby who slipped away was my baby."

Last night a young couple sat together in a car or in a park or in a parlor and talked sentimental nothings to each other just as lovers have done for hundreds of years. How old it was and yet how new to those who experienced it. This man's experience of God was as new as the first flower of spring and yet almost as old as the ordered coming of the seasons. Others may have sung similar songs, but in his heart and on his lips it was eternally new.

III

What is the good of such a song?

1. Such music gives a tang to the feast of life. To have this new song is to live gladly and abundantly, however harshly life might treat us.

2. Such a song is a great safeguard against temptation. If we look about us today we cannot fail to see that we are in the midst of a moral slump. Vast numbers are flinging away from the old moralities. Of course, there is nothing new in this, but what is new about it is the fact that many of those who are breaking with the fundamental integrities are doing so seemingly without any compunction of conscience. A Dean of Women said recently, "Ten years ago a young girl detected in a moral delinquency was embarrassed. Today she is indignant. Gambling
threatens to become a national curse, and the number of people drinking intoxicating drinks is increasing daily. How are we to resist this terrific onslaught? How are we to refuse to hear these siren voices? We must have within our hearts a music of our own. When Ulysses had to pass along the death-haunted shores of Greece and Italy where the sirens lured men to their death, he made the voyage in safety because he had Orpheus, the supreme singer of his day, on board. The voice of the Lord is your strength in resisting temptation.

3. Then the love of the Lord is your strength for helping others. If your life is a cross between a wail and a sob, if you are constantly reminding all you know what a dull, drab time you are having by being a Christian, these who know you are likely to take any road but yours. But if they find you experiencing a joy that this world cannot give and cannot take away, they are going to want to know your secret, because almost all of us are short on joy.

IV

How may we have this new song for ourselves?

There are those who believe that such an experience is impossible. They agree with the cynic that "there is no new thing under the sun". But over against this grim declaration, there is a shout of triumph from the lips of our Risen Lord. "Behold, I make all things new." Paul declares that he was experiencing this newness. "Old things are passed away," he writes. "Behold, they are become new." In other words, given a new kind of eyesight, that man becomes new.

This is the case because what we are determines what we see. Peter Bell, so far as we know, had quite as good eyes as the poet Wordsworth. But Wordsworth had not only physical eyesight but he had faith and the insight of a poet. When Peter Bell saw a primrose, he saw nothing more. "A primrose by the river bank, A yellow primrose was to him, And it was nothing more." But to the poet it was far more. Therefore, he sang, "To me the meanest flower that blows
can give thoughts that too often lie too deep for tears."

The man who has become a new creation in Christ Jesus faces a new world. To such a man the privileges of the church are new. To such a one the Bible is a new book. To such a one mankind is new. He can see in every man his brother for whom Christ died.

Here, then, we are confronted by two possible ways of getting a bit of a thrill, of bringing something of newness into life. One is by the road of dissipation. So many of the foolish and hurtful things we do are done not because we are wicked, but because we are trying to get a thrill. Many a man gets drunk just to experience a momentary escape from himself. He wants his landscape to light up for an instant, even though it becomes all the blacker when the momentary flash is past.

But here is a road to a joy that thrills today, and will thrill tomorrow. "Be not drunk with wine," says Paul, "but be filled with the Spirit." If we enter into this experience we shall have a new song. We shall also understand what the great saint meant when he said, "Old things are passed away, Behold, they are become new."

Earth around is wetter green, Skies above are softer blue Something lives in every hue Christless eyes have never seen.

Birds with gladsome songs overflow Flowers with a richer glowy shine Since I know, as now I know, I am his and he is mine."
"Therefore will we not fear." — Psalms 46:2.

Here is a man who has made and signed the declaration of independence. He is claiming his freedom from one of the most cruel and tormenting masters that our world has ever known. He has made up his mind that whatever happens, come life or death, he is not going to be afraid. The earth may be removed, and the mountains may be tossed into the sea, but in the face of it all, he is going to be undisturbed and unafraid.

I.

Just what does the Psalmist mean by this declaration of independence?

He does not mean that he has done with fear altogether. Fear is in one respect like money. It is a useful servant even if it is a bad master. Fear is useful in that it guards us against a needless physical risk. No man has a right to take a needless physical risk. To expose one's self to needless danger is not a mark of courage, but of recklessness and foolhardiness.

No one has a right to take a needless moral risk, whatever sin turns Nemesis upon his track. The Book of Genesis is perfectly modern and up-to-date when it pictures Adam and Eve as tormented by fear as soon as they became conscious of wrongdoing. Wrong-doing always begets fear. Think of the terror of the embezzler in the bank! Think of the night of terror that he must spend when he knows that the bank examiner is coming tomorrow! Think of the wretchedness of the bravest of crooks who is being constantly dogged by the officers of the law! The man who exposes himself to needless moral danger is playing the fool.
But while fear is useful as a servant, it is a horrible master.

II.

What are some of the fears that dog our steps? They are almost as numberless as the sands. We are afraid of our physical needs. We are afraid of our spiritual needs. We are terrified about our bodies and our souls. We fear for ourselves, and we fear for others. We are afraid of what happened yesterday. We fear for today. We look with frightened eyes toward tomorrow. There are multitudes of us whose lives are one continuous battle with fear.

III.

What are the evils of fear?

1. Fear tends to bring about the very thing that it dreads. The man who is possessed of a deadly fear of failure is likely to fail. The man who is constantly in fear for his health is very likely to be sick. A student that goes with shaking knees to his examination is mighty apt to flunk. Fear tends to bring about the very thing of which it is afraid.

2. Fear is paralyzing. Years ago I undertook to quote the "Witch's Caldron." I forgot it, and for months after, when I would begin to quote a poem the blood would rush to my face lest I should forget. And if I had forgotten a few times more I should have been put to silence. Sixteen years ago, I blundered while reciting the Creed. Since then I have been reading it. While at Harvard I used to meet a dog. One day he wheeled on me with a roar, and I did exactly the right thing. I stood perfectly still and looked at him, not because I knew that was the right thing, but because I was frightened stiff. There was a man of one talent. He was so afraid of doing
the wrong thing that he did nothing at all.

How many fine things you have thought of doing, but have never done, simply because you were afraid! When your convictions were slandered you wanted to speak out, but you did not dare. When Jesus invited the Rich Young Ruler to follow Him, his heart yearned to respond, but his fear conquered. When He opened the door of His Kingdom to Pilate and invited him to enter, Pilate was strangely moved. He wanted to do his duty, but he was afraid. Fear unmans us. It paralizes us.

3. Fear drives us to do the thing that hurts. Oftentimes it brutalizes us. I was rereading recently the tragedy of the Titanic. Many of the lifeboats were not filled. One lifeboat that had plenty of room was seized by a poor drowning sailor. It was a woman that pounded his clinging fingers till he was forced to turn loose. Perhaps she was not naturally cruel. She was just crazed with fear.

When the Iriquois Theatre was burned in Chicago, little children were ruthlessly trampled under brutal feet. Why? Not because those who did this had a grudge against children and a desire to destroy them. They were simply made cruel and brutal by fear.

What a cruel thing that was that Peter did when he denied his Lord! How it worried Jesus and broke His heart!

But Peter did not hate Jesus. He loved Him. He was driven to do the thing he hated because he was afraid.

How many cigarette-smokers there are among women today! Take a seat in the average hotel lobby, and you will see more women smoking than men. Why did women take up this needless habit? Not because they had a natural desire for tobacco. They had no more craving for it than they had for rat poison. They did it simply because they dared not do otherwise. They were driven
to it by their fear of the crowd.

Why did that young chap drink with his companions? He was not brought up that way. All his training was against him. What was the matter? He was afraid of the crowd. His fear unmanned him, and made him do what he did not wish to do.

4. Then, fear makes us wretched. Whatever may be your circumstances - you may live in a palace, you may have all that heart could wish, but if your steps are dogged by fear, then you are wretched.

I read some time ago of a hobo who slipped into an empty banana car to beat his way to a neighboring city. He found that car creepy with tarantulas. Not one of them harmed him in the least, but he was almost driven into insanity by his fear.

IV.

How are we to get rid of fear?

1. We are not going to do so by a mere resolution, though we can help toward that end. I remember a rather silly story in one of McGuffey's Readers about a boy who got frightened at a guidepost. At last he discovered how powerless his foe was to harm him, and the story closed in this fashion:

"Ah well, thought he,
One thing I've learned,
Nor shall I soon forget
Whatever frightens me again
I'll walk straight up to it."

That was a stupid resolution. If that something happened to be a rattlesnake or even a gangster it might not be the wisest procedure at all.

2. We are not going to find deliverance by shutting our eyes to our dangers. There are those who find some measure of escape through the denial. Take sin, sickness, and doubt, for instance.
These are realities, whether we face them or not. And it seems to me that no wise man would desire the escape of a physical reality.

3. The only antidote of fear is faith; faith in God. Faith in God quiets our fear for two reasons:
(1) It delivers us from the bondage of sin.
(2) It brings us a sense of Divine Presence. The one man on shipboard when the storm was on, who was calm and unafraid, was Paul. The captain had lost his nerve. The Roman soldiers had become terrified. Paul stood forth in the midst of them and said: "Sirs, be of good cheer, for this night there stood by me the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, fear not Paul. Therefore, sirs, be of good cheer; for I believe God, that it shall be even as told me.

Here, then, is a way of conquest of one of our supremest foes. You may begin it now. Will you do it?
PSALM 55:6  "Oh that I had wings like a dove how soon would I fly away and be at rest."

In all the literature of the world I doubt if there is a more genuinely human cry, a more intense heart cry, than is this of the psalmist. We have all uttered it at some time of our lives, either consciously or unconsciously, either articulately or inarticulately. Often times it begins in our very childhood and grows more intense with us as we get deeper into the years and life becomes more serious with its baptisms of tears - tears over loses and tears over graves. The dove is one of the most familiar birds of the Orient, golden in color and gray under its wings. It is spoken of as the silver wing of the birdish dove. It has been connected from of old in the minds of people with the spiritual and with the unseen. It was sacred, as you know, to the Goddess of love, Venus. Certain Indian Tribes believe to this day if you catch a dove and whisper a message in its ear and turn it loose at sunset, it'll fly away into the miracle country and tell you a message to the one you've loved long sense and lost a while.

While the Jews did not regard it in this fashion, it was held in peculiar favor, often lighting upon the shoulders and eating from the hands of the people. When chaos was over the face of the deep, the Holy Spirit brooded dove-like. And when the waters of the flood covered the earth and Noah wanted to ask if the waters had withdrawn, he sent a dove to ask him. And when Jesus was baptized, it was in bodily form, as a dove, that the Holy Spirit came upon them. So it was a bird regarded with peculiar favor.

Who said these words first, we do not know. Tradition has credited them to the shepherd king. Of course, I couldn't prove that he uttered them any more than you could prove that he did not. But they seem to me to befit his sensitive lips perhaps better than that of any other psalmist of whom we can think.

Certainly these words are the words of somebody who is in trouble - somebody whose come to a door to which they find no key and a vail through which they cannot see. It
is easy to imagine the circumstances under which David uttered these words, if he uttered them. I can imagine that one day he is pacing back and forth on his palace roof on the highest hill in Jerusalem. It is a terrible day for him. These is a war on—that damming scourge of mankind which we hate and, yet, which we are never able quite to give up. Not only was this a war, but it was the worst type of war. It was a civil war. Then to bring the tragedy to its climax, the war was being led by David's handsome and gifted son, Absalom, who was far too handsome for his own good. And so as the old king paces back and forth, he can hear the clash of arms from the street. It's the rattles of the armor as his soldiers are going out to meet the soldiers of his son. There's no way that he can win. Anybody could see that. If he wins the fight, he loses because he lost his son. If he loses the fight, he's lost his own head. So there's no way out of it. Then his restless pacing is arrested for a moment as a dove flies and lights upon the parapet of the roof and begins to coo. The sunset and the distant hills and with a fellow feeling for the bird, he tries to approach her, but she's a little shy of him and she spreads her wings and whirls away into the farflung vault of gold. And he shades his eyes and looks after her until she becomes a speck and then fades into utter nothingness. And then I see him wipe his eyes that have grown moist partly from looking on the brightness without, but more from looking on the darkness within and he mutters something to himself through lips that are white and drawn with pain. What is the tired old man saying? Just this—"I wish I had wings like a dove. I'd get away from all this—the heartache, the loneliness, the disappointment, the despair, the hopelessness. I'd get away into some land beyond the hills where I could have a little peace."

I say, we've all felt like that at times. If we have a toothache on one side of our mouth, we feel it wouldn't be quite so bad on the other. If we are sick and feverish in one room, we feel we would be less restless in another.

There was a preacher once who wanted to move. Of course, his tribe died long ago, but this preacher wasn't getting on well, though he was a great preacher and
a great lover and as he would try to lead his people, he only antagonized them.

For he, himself, confessed that "When I speak I shriek and then he made up his mind that he wouldn't preach any more - that he'd just give it up, but, he said,

"I couldn't quit because His word was a fire shut up in my bones and I couldn't keep my mouth shut to save my life though I knew it wasn't getting me anywhere and it wasn't getting my people anywhere." And in his desperation, he said "I wish I had in the wilderness a lodging place for wayfaring men that I might leave my people and go from them."

Many a preacher has felt like that. He wanted to get away. You will remember that in Loxly Hall, Tennyson puts these words in the mouths of his heartborken lover. This man had given his heart to a beautiful girl and the girl had tgyed with him for awhile and then flung him aside for one of far less a character as the betrayed lover thought - "of one who would hold her when his passion should have spent its novel force a little dearer than its dog, a littler better than its horse. And when he found himself thus heartborkenly forsaken he longed for some retreat deep in yon the shinging Orient where my life began to beat. Then me thinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind, in the steamship, in the reel bay, in the thoughts that shake mankind." And we find the same longing expressed by our own American poet as he stood on the bridge and sang "How often, Oh how often, in the days that have gone by, have I stood on the bridge at midnight and gazed on the waving sky. How often, oh how often, have I wished that the ebb and tide would bear me away on its bosom o'er the ocean wild and wide for my heart was hot and restless and my life was full
of care and the burden that lay upon me seemed greater than I could bear." And he wanted to throw it all down and get away.

I went from the classroom as a teacher (I wasn't trained for the ministry) into the pulpit. And just after I was licensed to preach, I was sent out to what was then Indian Territory. That was in 1906. Indian Territory became a state the next year, thanks to my presence. I went out to take a tumble-down circuit. The man whose place I was taking had been guilty of some disgraceful conduct that had compelled him to retire from the ministry and membership of the church. There was also a local preacher who had been on a drunk and in the thrill of his drunkenness he went home and whipped his wife. I remember that the first item of business, after my arrival, was a church trial. And one member of the trial committee was a fine old comanche Indian Chief. A fine Christian, he was. And he listened to the evidence with typical Indian stoicism. And then when the vote was about to be taken, he stopped the proceedings and said, "Before I feel competent to vote on this subject I must ask a question or two. You say the preacher got drunk and went home and whipped his wife. 'Yes', 'Well', 'he said, 'I want to know what he whipped her for. She might have needed it.'" Now with those two honest co-workers I began my ministry. Suffice it to say, when I reached the little town there was no brass band to meet me. It was the hottest part of summer and I went up and got a room at a wooden hotel - a room that I shared with a great many lesser guests and I waited with eager expectation for the coming of Sunday because I had three sermons that I had preached and I made up my mind I was going to preach the best of these three sermons. My ministry had been mainly to the homefolks who had known me since I was a child and when I had finished one of these masterpieces, they would come forward and say, "Great preaching, Clovis, you'll be Bishop one of these days. You can already preach as well as the Presiding Elder," as we called the District Superintendent then. And I thought that was a compliment and so I was greatly helped. And when Sunday came I went out to the church. My congregation looked a
bit like a volunteer crop of molasses cane. There was just a stalk here and there. And I preached that best sermon, but if anybody thought I was going to be Bishop, he kept it a profound secret. Indeed, the Eldership was not mentioned and this poor ole renegade who had been pastor came up and invited me home to dinner with him. And I considered it because there was no where else to go, but I never did quite get with him. He stayed about four or five feet ahead all the way. And when we got to the parsonage, he disappeared. He had a wife and a large family of girls, but there was nobody in sight. And I sat down on the porch alone and then the oldest daughter of the family came and announced dinner. And then I said "Now I'll meet the family." But when I went out to dinner I ate absolutely alone. There was a place set just like a restaurant. And when I had finished my dinner I wasn't very hungry - I again looked about for the family, but I didn't find anybody, but I did find my hat. And I took out through the woods and struck the railroad, and started west - not to grow up with the country, but to get away. And I can smile at this as I look back at it across the space of more than fifty years, but I passed through Gethsemane that afternoon and the point of the enemey's attack was not the difficulty of the situation. I had faced some difficulty before. It was this. I wasn't called to preach. I told myself "you are like one of Jeremiah's foolish prophets. I sent them not. They ran. I spake not unto them, yet they prophesy. You are here not because you're a hero. You are here because you are a fool. God never called you to preach." And I'd find myself unconsciously breaking into a run. By and by I stopped way up the railroad and watched the sun as it slipped in behind the great ole summer clouds. And as I watched it, I said "I wish I could turn that old cloud on its hindges and get away from all of this. What was I saying? I was saying just what the psalmist was saying, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove. How soon would I fly away and be at rest?" And you won't be surprised to know that when a call long distance telephone came a few days later. Coming clear around by St. Louis, it was so hard to get me in this little back-woods town where I was, telling me that I had been elected to one of the desirable positions in my field in my native state,
that I went back and took it. And as I went back, the very car wheels sang under
me "Never Again". And if there was ever a decision I thought was fixed, was this,
to preach
"I'll never walk into the pulpit again." And what volumes it speaks to the patience
and long-suffering of our Lord, here I am with more than half a century of ministry
behind me in spite of my failure.

Now what was the matter with David? It wasn't the fact that he was a weakling.
He was a strong man. It wasn't the fact that he was a failure. He was a highly
successful man. He had won his way from a shepherd's tent to the palace of the King.
It wasn't the fact that he was a dullard. He was a vastly intelligent man. He had
an intelligence as clear and sparkling as the play of sunlight on clear water. And
he had a flock of skylarks in his heart. He was a great poet. That he let
out one by one. And those larks will sing as long as men have a sky above their heads. And
then he had a wonderful way of winning the hearts of people. How people loved him.

Why one day when he was hiding in the facets of the hills with a price on his life,
I think the day was hot and wishful and he said more to himself than to anybody else,
"I wish I had a drink out of the old home well at the gate of Bethlehem". And you
know three of those rough neeks overheard him and though they were shut in by
enemies, they dodged here and there among enemies' lines and hours later they came
back each with a skin of water for their leader. And when David received it, it was
so saturated with the sweat of blood of devotion that he was too big a man to drink
it. It was too sacred, he felt, to be drunk. And he poured it out as a libation
to his Lord. And in token of their love and loyalty, a man who had greatly succeeded
and who was greatly loved. And yet he wants to throw it all down and get away. What's
the matter with him? Well one thing, he's not as young as he used to be. The years
give us much if we will receive it. But it also takes something away from us. There's
no use in us pretending that it does not. We're not as strong when we're old as we
were when we were young. And often times, it steals our courage. In the finest
description of old age that I know in the Bible of it, is said of the old, "he shall
be afraid of that which is high." He's not as daring as he used to be. Forty years
if you'd said to me of a certain church, "don't go there, nobody can do anything with it," I'd said "just let me try it; BUT what would I say now? I'd say, "let one of these young fellows have it, I don't want to be bothered with it." I'm not as strong as I used to be. He used to go glibly down the street with a sack of salt on his shoulder, but now when a grasshopper lights on his shoulder, his knees tend to buckle. He's not as brave and daring as he used to be. There was a time when he would have felt perfectly adequate to this desperate situation, but he wasn't adequate any more. And he wanted to get away because he had a burden that was too heavy to carry and a task that he felt that he couldn't put through. And then, he wanted to get away from an atmosphere that was tinged and chilled and poisoned by a lack of appreciation, by ingratitude. His best friend, , had gone back on him. He spoke of him, "We had sweet counsel together and walked to the house of God in company. His words were smoother than butter, but war was in his words of his heart. The mouth were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords? He'd gone back on him and let him down. And David felt that he didn't have a friend in the world who appreciated him. And there wasn't anybody to whom it mattered whether he should sink or swim - live or die.

Now everybody needs appreciation at times. Almost everybody has to have it. I know we find those that said "I don't care what anybody thinks about me". But when I hear that, I know you've just been hurt. You do care. You care desperately. Sometimes it is a matter of life and death. During the last World War over in Richmond there was a fine Christian who had a neighbor who was a grouchy man - hard to get on with, hard to soften his outer shell. And one day this fine Christian, in reading the paper, noticed - among the missing - the son of his neighbor. He hesitated whether he should go to see him or not. The son had been a model boy - the finest athlete in the City. And by and by he said anybody who has laid such a costly gift on the altar of his country, I ought to tell him of my appreciation. And he went over and rang the doorbell and nobody came. And he rang again and again, and at last he heard some heavy steps slowly descending the stairs and the man opened
the door. And he said, "Mr. Johnson, I've come to you to express to you my deep appreciation. I saw the paper this morning — my deep appreciation of the gift you've made and the loss you've suffered. And the man glared at him for an instance and he just threw his arms about him and fairly dragged him into the room — and sobbed out his grief upon his shoulder. And when he had gained control, he said, "Come upstairs. I want to show you something."

And he led him upstairs into the boy's room, where his athletic trophies were — his tennis racket, his baseball bat, his football. And there on the table was an angry Colt Revolver. He said, "I had that cocked and was just ready to use it, when your ring came at the door. You have helped me. You've saved my life." Everybody needs appreciation. There were thousands that appreciated David, but nobody told him about it. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so. Then he wanted to get away from an old torturing memory — the memory of the sin of his yesterday. There was the sin with the wife of Uriah that God had forgiven, but David hadn't fully forgiven himself. God had saved him, but he hadn't saved him from the consequences.

God will always forgive us from our sins, but he wants always to save us from the consequences of our sins. And this old sin reached out of the black of the coat-sleeve of the past and laid hold on the shoulders of King David and shook him ruthlessly and said, "After all you did it. You did it. You set your boy a bad example. And then you were too busy being a king to be a father. And you passed the buck." Just as he did in this particular instance as his own officers went out to the battle, he said, "See that the young man, Absalom, is safe." And when the news came that he was killed, he went up and uttered about the bitterest cry we found on the pages of the Old Testament: "Oh my son, Absalom, I'm sorry now that I didn't die for you! But it was too late and he wanted to get away from a torturing sorrow that had broken his heart for which there was no second opportunity and no second chance. But this man, this saintly man now, if he had been a great sinner, he had also been a great saint, discovered before he finished his song that the away remedy he sought was a fake remedy. That he couldn't get away from his heartache and his shame and from his disillusionment by merely running. If running would answer our questions, we'd be the happiest generation the world has ever known because we have broken the sound barrier. And I flew out to California the other day.
If a man had a shot at me after I got started on that plane with a fine Winchester Rifle, I'd just waved at the bullet as I left it behind. We can go fast enough. But that doesn't bring us peace. Milton's devil discovered that. "Infinite woe and infinite despair, which way I fly is hell. Myself I'm hell." And you don't get away from hell by passing over the street. And you don't get away from it by crossing over the Continent. And you don't get away from it by crossing over the ocean. And you don't even get away from it by crossing over the river/death. If you have hell with you, it'll stay with you. Running is not the remedy. If running was the remedy, we could make it, but that's not enough. What did David need? He found out for himself. What he needed was not a new physical climate. He needed a new spiritual climate. So he said, "Cast my burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain thee."

In his letter to the Ephesians, some five or six times, Paul uses this word, STAND therefore. Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand in the day fought of battle. And having the battle through to the finish, remain victors on the field. You don't need a new power to run. You need a new power to stand in our places and be true.

There is a missionary hymn they used to sing when I was a boy, "I'll Go Where You Want Me To Go Dear Lord, I'll Be What You Want Me To Be". It takes a great deal of dedication to sing that. And yet it does have in it the lure of distant horizons, the romance of new faces and new adventures. There is another song, not so popular. And that is often far harder to sing. It went like this, "I'll Stay Where You Put Me, I will Dear Lord, Though I wanted So Badly to Go. I was Eager to March at the Battle Front. I Wanted to Lead Them, You Know. I planned to keep Step to the Music Loud, To Cheer When the Banner Unflurred, To Stand in the Midst of the Fight Straight and Proud when the enemy Starts to Hurl, But I'll Stay Where You Put Me. I'll Stay where You Put Me. I'll Work Dear Lord. I'll Bear the Days' Burden and Heat, Always Trusting Thee fully when evening has come. I'll lay Heavy Sheaves at Thy Feet. And When My Life Work Is Ended and Done, In the Light of Eternity's Glow, Life's Record all Closed, I Surely Shall Find, 'Twas Better To Stay
It's not dove's wings we need. We need the undergirding of the Everlasting Arms. That'll make us strong to stand in our places and Be true in the here and now. And May God Bless you Everyone.
WINGS

Oh that I had wings like a dove, how soon would I fly away and be at rest.

Psalms 55:6

In all literature there is not a more human, a more genuine heartache than is this of the Psalmist. We begin to utter it articulately or inarticulately in our very childhood. It becomes more intense with us as we get deeper into the years, and life becomes more serious with its baptism of tears; tears over griefs and tears over graves. There is not one of us but has at times longed to throw down the task and get up and away. We have all felt at times that any time was better than our time, and that almost any place was better than our place. We have sobbed with the Psalmist "I wish I had wings like a dove."

The dove is one of the most familiar birds in the Orient. It is golden in color and silvery under its wings. From of old it has been associated in the minds of people with the spiritual and the unseen. Among the Romans, it was sacred to the goddess of love, Venus. Certain Indian tribes believed that if you catch a dove and whisper a message into its ears it will fly straight into the sunset land and tell it to one you have loved and lost a while. While the Jews did not regard it in this sacred fashion, they looked upon it with particular veneration. It often would light upon their shoulders and eat from their hands.

I.

It is easy to imagine something of the circumstances over which these words
were uttered. One day the king is pacing back and forth on his palace roof on the highest hill in Jerusalem. He is in trouble. His handsome son, who has all his father's attractiveness, without his religion, has rebelled against him. His rebellion has broken his father's heart. From below the king can hear the tumult of marching soldiers. There is the rush and hustle of armies preparing for the march.

Suddenly a dove lights upon the parapet of the roof and begins to coo to the sunset and the distant sea. The tired old man, with fellow feeling for the bird, tries to approach her. But she is a bird shy of him. As he approaches her she spreads her wings and flies away into the far-flung vault of gold. The king looks after her till she becomes a mere speck in the sun and it fades into utter nothingness. Then he wipes his eyes grown moist, partly from looking upon the light without, but more from the dust within. Then he mutters something through lips that are white and drawn with pain. What is the tired old man saying? Just this: "I wish I had wings like a dove, I too would fly away and be at rest."

"This, I repeat, is a universal cry. It has been uttered by the old and the young. By those who were merely vexed, and those whose lives were torn by tragedy. There was a preacher once who had a congregation that were cold and unresponsive that his heart was broken. He resolved that he would quit trying to do anything with them. But he loved them so deeply, and was so sure of his message that he could not quit. The word that he had to utter was as of a fire shut up in his bones. Then he wanted to leave. "I wish" he said desperately, "that I had in the wilderness a lodging place for wayfaring men that I might leave my people and go from them." His cry is the cry of the Psalmist."

We hear the same cry upon the lips of some of the poets. Carlyle was quoting Jeremiah when he said "I wish I had a lodging place in some vast wilderness, where rumor of failure and defeat might never reach me." Tennyson
puts the same words upon the lips of a lover whose heart has been broken.

"I wish for some retreat,

Deep in yonder's firing orient

Where my life began to beat,

And me thinks, there would be enjoyment,

More than in this march of mind

In the steamship, in the railroad,

In the thoughts that shake mankind."

Our own poet Longfellow was voicing the same longing as he stood on "the bridge at midnight."

"How often, oh, how often,

In the days that had gone by,

I had stood on that bridge at midnight

And gazed on that wave and sky."

"For my heart was hot and restless,

And my life was full of care,

And the burden laid upon me

Seemed greater than I could bear."

Therefore, he longs to throw it all down and get away.

Years ago I went to serve a circuit as a supply. I had not yet become a member of the Conference. I found the church that I was to serve torn into shreds. There had been three ministers in the village. One of them. One of them had fallen on evil days. The second, a local preacher, had recently been run out of town. The third, had stolen some liquor, got gorgeously drunk, and the thrill of it had gone home and whipped his wife. The first thing in order was a church trial. On the committee was a splendid Indian chief who was a Christian. He listened to the evidence with typical Indian stoicism. Before the vote was taken
h a question, "Before I feel competent to vote," he said "I would like to know what the brother whipped his wife for... she might have needed it.

With these three predecessors, I began my ministry. Naturally, I was not vastly popular. But while cast down, I was not destroyed. I said to myself ("Just wait till Sunday comes, I have three sermons, I am going to preach the best of the three.") The great day came, but my sermon did not seem vastly impressive. A thoroughly depressed old brother invited me to his home. When dinner was announced he disappeared. Dishes were set about my plate hotel fashion and I was left alone. Really, I was not hungry. I got up, seized my hat, made my way through the woods, struck a railroad, and started West. Then and there, I made up my mind that I had not been called to preach. In sheer agony, I would find myself breaking into a run. At last, I drew up and watched the sun pass behind a big fluffy cloud. "I wish," I said to myself "that I could turn that great cloud on its hinges and slip in behind it and get away from all of this." What was the matter? I was simply saying what the Psalmist was saying.

II.

What was the matter with David that he wanted to fly?

It was not that he was a weakling, David was a strong man. He was a many-sided man. He was a great warrior, a great statesman. If tradition is true, he was a great poet. He had a flock of skylarks in his heart that will sing as long as man have a sky above their heads. At his worst, he was a great sinner, at his best he was a great saint. Then, he had a tremendous capacity for winning the hearts of people. Folks loved him with mad devotion.

One day, you remember, he was hiding among the fastnesses of the hills. The enemy had shut him in on every side. A battle was in progress. David became thirsty. I imagine he said, "I wish I had a drink out of the old well of the gate of Bethlehem. Three roughshers overheard him. At the risk of their lives
they made their way through the hills. By and by, each was back with a drink of water for their leader. When David received these gifts, the water was so tinged with the sweat and blood of sacrifice that it was too sacred to drink. He poured it out upon the ground as a libation to their love. The devotion of his followers had lifted him from a lowly place to the position of king. But now he wants to throw it all down and get away.

What, I repeat, is the matter? He is in a hard, a desperate situation. But he has been there before. Why does this one seem too much for him? Why does he promise himself, as we so often do, that we are going to give it all up and quit.

1. Well, for one thing, David is not as young as he once was. In his youth almost nothing daunted him. Difficulties fired him and kindled light in his eyes. Every obstacle was a challenge to conflict. But the years have put out some of his fire. He is not as sure of himself as he once was. He does not rush with that head-long joy into conflicts like he did in his younger days. He is getting old.

I knew my father as an old man. I have seen him toward the end of his life come in from half a days work and sit in brooding silence by my mother. Then he would say, rather pathetically, "You know Molly, I can't do the days work like I used to do it. You know that I used to could outrun any boy that I have ... I could do more work than any boy I have, but I can't do it anymore." Time was pushing him on the sideline. And strong man that he was, he found it a bit hard to bear. David felt less able to face up to his difficulties because he was getting old.

2. Then, he wanted to get away from a great sorrow. Rebellion in his kingdom would have been bad enough had it been led by a stranger, but rebellion led by his own son, that was sorrows crown of sorrow. How our children can comfort. How they can bring something from the warmth of heaven into the life that now is, and how they can shatter us and break our hearts. This poor, bewildered father was learning through his own experience "how sharper than a
serpent's tooth is a thankless child."

Then this sorrow touched him even more sharply because he felt that the fault was so largely his own. He had given his son everything but himself. Busy with a thousand duties, he had left the rearing of his boy to strangers. A little later when his army went to meet that of his son, he did what he had been always doing, shifted the responsibility of his son to others shoulders.

"Deal gently with the young man for my sake." That old sin of his is now reaching out of the black coat sleeve of the past to shake him rudely and hiss at him, "It is all your fault." God has forgiven David, but David cannot forgive himself.

3. Then David has been betrayed by his friend, the man whom he trusted most completely has let him down. In fact, he feels in his utter loneliness and desperation that he does not have a friend in the world. There are thousands who love him and appreciate him, but not one of them comes forward just at this time to say so. Thus, he feels depressed, defeated and alone.

There comes, I think, in the lives of the strongest of us when we have serious misgivings about ourselves, feel that we are no count, and never will be any better. What David needed was a word of encouragement. Everybody needs that now and then however strong they may be. But so often we fail to give it when it is really needed. A boy, who had caused his mother such grief, came home the other day to see her dying. Thinking she was already unconscious, he kissed her and sobbed, "Oh mother, you are the best mother a boy ever had." And she whispered back with her last breath "Why didn't you tell me sooner?" Well, we are behind time a lot.

Years ago while I was pastor in Fort Worth, I visited a faded old grandmother, who was more than four score years of age. In the course of the conversation she said "Next month on a certain day is my birthday." I knew that not many people would remember that day. Most of her friends had gone into the
sunset. So I told my wife when I reached home what she said, and ask her to remind me when the birthday came around. When it came, I got a lovely bouquet and went to her home. She, herself came to the door. I said, "Grandmother, I remembered that this was your birthday and I brought you these flowers." Her old wrinkled face brightened as if she had been sixteen, and I had been her lover. She took those flowers in her trembling hands, buried her face among the dewy blossoms, and when she lifted it there was other dew upon that face. Then she smiled through her tears and said, "Brother Chappell, I am so glad you didn't wait till I was dead to bring them."

Well, we often do. We appreciate our old friends, but we never say so. Then one day we see a bit of crepe upon the door and we spill our appreciation into ears that do not hear. One fine thing about the gift of Mary of Bethlehem was that in the language of Jesus "she came afore time." She saw death coming to the Master that she loved, and she said I will beat death to him, and she did. She anointed his brow while he lived so that when death touched him, it made even the frozen shadow of death smell of perfume.

"If I should die tonight,
My friends would look upon my quiet face
Before they laid it in its resting place,
And deem that death had left it almost fair,
And, laying snow-white flowers against my hair,
Would smooth it down with tearful tenderness,
And fold my hands with lingering caress
Poor hands, so empty and so cold tonight."

"Oh friends, I pray tonight,
Keep not your flowers for my dead cold brow,
The way is lonely; let me feel them now."
Think gently of me, I am travel-worn
My faltering feet are pierced with many a thorn.
Forgive, oh hearts estranged, forgive, I plead
When dreamless rest is mine I shall not need
The tenderness for which I long tonight."

III.

But David discovered before he finished his song, that his was a false and futile longing. This is the case for many reasons.

1. Flight is a poor remedy because it fails to help the hard situation from which you flee. Especially, when you have got yourself into the difficulty. Your business is bad, you are having a hard time keeping the wolf from the door. What is the remedy? Some stand from under, they take to their heels, they blow out their brains. But such a course is no help, it just shifts the burden to other shoulders that you ought to bear. Or, your church is not doing so well as you would like. What then? Quit it. But that is not a remedy that works. If your home or your church is not what it ought to be, the only remedy is to try to make it better. Not simply stand from under, take to your heels, and let it alone.

2. Then flight is a failure because it doesn't help the one who flees. If you have the headache, than you know what to do. You can't get rid of it by crossing over the street. You can't get rid of it by crossing over the ocean. It is quite as fleet footed. Omar said, "I, myself am heaven or hell." Milton was saying the same thing when he pictured his devil as vainly trying to escape from himself. "Which way I find is hell, myself am hell." You can't get rid of difficulties by running because the real difficulties are within, on the inside of you.
What then is the remedy?

If life has gone all to pieces for you, if you are promising yourself to junk all responsibility, throw duties out the door and quit, what you need is not so much a new physical climate, as a new spiritual climate. This sobering conviction came home to the Psalmist. Therefore, he finished his song by singing "Cast thy burdens upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee. He will never suffer the righteous to be moved."

What we need then is not a new capacity to run. We do not need a new method of shirking our duties. We can all stand from under the load fast enough. What we need is a new power to stand in our place and be true. That power God is offering to each one of us. "I have set the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." "Stand therefore, having your loins girded about with truth, put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand in the day of battle. And having fought the battle through to the finish remain faithful on the field."

There is a song we used to sing that has in it much of heroism. It begins "I will go where you want me to go, Dear Lord." But, there is another song that is even more difficult. It has in it less of romance. It misses the lure of far horizons. It runs like this:

"I will stay where you put me, I will dear Lord,

Though I wanted so badly to go,
I was eager to march in the battle front
I wanted to lead them you know.
I planned to keep step to the music loud,
To cheer when the banner unfurled,
To stand in the midst of the fight, strong and proud
When the enemies darts were hurled,
But, I will stay where you put me."
"I will stay where you put me, I will work dear Lord
I will bear the day's burdens and heat,
Always trusting thy voice when evening is come,
I will lay heavy sheaves at thy feet.
And then when my life's work is ended
And down in the light of eternal glow
Life's record all closed, I surely shall find
Was better to stay than to go."
"Oh that I had wings like a dove! how soon would I fly away and be at rest." (Psalm 55:6)

In this amazing hymnbook of the Jews we find reflected practically every mood of the human soul. If you are joyful, if springtime is a frolic upon the morning hills of your heart, you can find here somebody who can rejoice with you. If your light is gone out, if sorrow sits sobbing like a troubled guest in your heart, here also you can find somebody to weep with you. If you have lost your Lord and are as desperate and frightened as a lost child, here again you can find somebody to enter into sympathy with you. If you have found a God, if you are living in the conscious joy of his fellowship, you will find here an understanding heart, you will find here one who will sing with you "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

Here for instance is a man who wants to throw down the old troubled burden of his present and get away. He feels like life would be more gracious and gladsome anywhere in all the world than where he is. So he longs for the wings of a dove that he might fly away and be at rest. In all the literature of the world there is not a more genuine heartcry than this. We have all uttered it at one time or another. We sometimes begin in our very childhood and it grows more intense as we get deeper into the years and life becomes more serious with its baptisms of tears—tears of losses and tears over graves.

The dove is one of the most familiar birds in the Orient, golden in color and gray under its wings. It is spoken of as the silver wing of the
burnished dove. It is the ancestor of all homing pigeons. Take it anywhere and break its wings and it will flutter as best it can towards home. From of old this bird has been connected in the minds of many people with the spiritual and the unseen. It was, as you know, sacred to the goddess of love, Venus. Certain tribes believed that if you catch a dove and whisper a message in its ear and turn it loose at sunset it will fly into the unseen and tell your message to the one that you have loved and lost.

While the Jews did not look upon the dove in this fashion they did regard it with peculiar favor. When chaos was over the face of creation the Spirit of God brooded dovelike to bring order out of chaos. When Noah wanted to ask God whether the water of the flood had withdrawn from the earth he sent a dove to ask Him. When Jesus was baptized it was in bodily form as of a dove that the Holy Spirit came upon Him. Thus the bird was held in high regard. It was the gentlest of all birds often lighting upon the shoulder and eating from the hands of the people.

I

It is easy to imagine something of the circumstances under which this word was uttered. The author I take it was David, the shepherd king. Of course I could not prove that he uttered these words any more than you could prove that he did not. From the little we know of this fascinating man it would seem that these words would fit his history and his sensitive lips more than those of any other. This shepherd king is pacing back and forth upon the palace roof on the highest hill in Jerusalem. He is in trouble. There is a war on. From below comes the clash of the arms of soldiers as they are preparing to go to battle.

But these soldiers are not going to fight any foreign foe; they are going to fight their own brothers for this is a civil war. A rebellion is
on. Sadder still that rebellion is being led by Absalom, David’s handsome and gifted son. The old king is learning how sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is to have a thankless child.

By and by the king’s attention is drawn to a dove who lies upon the parapet of the roof and begins to coo to the sunset in the distant scene. With a fellow feeling for the bird he tried to approach her but she is a bit shy of him. Therefore she spreads her wings and whirs away into the far-flung vault of gold. The king shades his eyes and looks after her and she becomes first a speck and then fades into utter nothingness. Then he wipes his eyes that have become moist partly from looking at the darkness without but more from looking at the darkness within. Then he mutters something to himself through lips that are white and drawn with pain. What is the tired old man saying? Just this: "I wish I had wings like a dove. I’d get away from all this bitterness and heartache. I’d go away and rest."

Now almost all of us have felt that at some time. If we have toothache on one side of our mouth we feel that it would not be so bad if it were just on the other. If it was a bone felon on one finger it would be a little less painful on the other finger. If we are sick and feverish in one room the fever would be a little less hot in another. I passed along the highway sometime ago to see a cow bent on both knees with her head run through the fence grazing at a little sparse grass on the side of the pavement. There were acres of grass behind her but she felt life would be worth living if she could only get outside that particular pasture.

There was a preacher once by the name of Jeremiah. He had an appointment that he did not like. I doubt that his case has been entirely unique. I have never felt it in my heart to envy a bishop. He has next to an impossible job with every church feeling that it ought to have a better minister and every minister feeling that he ought to have a better church. Jeremiah felt this so keenly that he cried on day in despair: "I wish I had a lodging place in some wilderness so that I might leave my people and
go from them." He, as David, was longing for the wings of a dove.

The poet, Cowper, centuries later almost paraphrased Jeremiah as he longed for a lodge in some vast wilderness where "rumor or despair or defeat might never reach him more." Tennyson puts the same longing upon the lips of the disappointed lover in Locksley Hall. The girl to whom he had given his all had flung him down. He feels that life would be more bearable anywhere else. Thus he cried:

"Ah, for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where
my life began to beat,
. . . . . .
There methinks would be enjoyment
more than in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the
thoughts that shake mankind.

Our own American poet, Longfellow, speaks to the same purpose as he stands on the bridge:

"How often, oh how often,
In the days that had gone by,
I had stood on that bridge at midnight
And gazed on that wave and sky!

How often, oh how often,
I had wished that the ebbing tide
Would bear me away on its bosom
O'er the ocean wild and wide!

For my heart was hot and restless,
And my heart was full of care,
And the burden laid upon me
Seemed greater than I could bear."

Thus he longed to fling it all down and get away.

Years ago before I became a member of the Conference, I went out to Oklahoma to supply work. The circuit had three appointments: Stonewall, Owl, and Jesse—especially Jesse. I went as an emergency man. The minister whose place I was taking had been on a drunk and in the thrill of his fiery water had come near killing a man. He was the pastor. There were two local preachers, one of whom was run out of town just before I arrived. The other had also been on a drunk but he had stolen the liquor and in the thrill of it had gone home and whipped his wife. About the first item of
of business after my arrival was a church trial. On the trial committee was a fine old Indian chief. After he had heard the evidence he stopped the procedure with a question. "Before I feel competent to vote," he said, I must know what he whipped his wife for. She might have needed it.

With those three earnest co-workers, I began my ministry. Suffice it to say, I was not as popular as Santa Claus. There was no saint to meet me at the train. I went up to the hotel and shared a very small and hot room with various other creatures. While my reception was not flattering I was not utterly cast down. I knew Sunday was in the offing. I had three sermons. I had already made up my mind to preach the best of the three. I was sure that would get action.

Now my experience up to that time had been mainly among those who had known me from childhood. Therefore when I would finish they would come forward and say: "Great sermon. You will be bishop some day. You can already preach as well as the presiding elder." I thought that was a compliment then. So the atmosphere had been warmed with appreciation. But when I preached my first sermon at Stonewall, if anybody thought I was going to be bishop they kept it a profound secret. In fact, they did not even say I surpassed the presiding elder. It was very trying. When the benediction had been pronounced and the little handful of worshippers had gone this poor old renegade preacher came forward and invited me home with him to dinner. I tried to go with him but never was able to keep up. He kept a little bit ahead, entered the house and disappeared. I saw him no more that day. A little later I was invited in to dinner. Some dishes were placed about my plate and I sat down absolutely alone though there was a large family. I found that I was not hungry. I got up, looked about for somebody, but all had vanished. I found my hat, took out through the forest, reached the railroad track and started west.

In thus going west I wasn't going to grow up with the country as wise Horace Greely advised. I was only trying to get away. I can smile
at it now as I look at it across the far space of the years, but it was not
the laughing matter then. I was desperate. I had given up a good position
to take that circuit but now I decided that it was all a tragic blunder,
that the Lord had never called me to preach anyway. In the sheer agony
of it I would find myself breaking into a run. At last I stopped and
watched the sun as it slipped in behind a great summer cloud. "I wish I
could just turn that old cloud on its hinges," I said to myself, "and get
away from all this." What was the matter? I was just joining my voice
with that of millions of other men and women in saying, "Oh if I had wings
like a dove, how soon would I fly away and be at rest.

II

What was the matter with David that he wanted to run? It was not that
he was a weakling and a coward. It was not that he was a small man. He
was a great man, a many-sided man. He was a great warrior, a great states-
man. At his worst he was a sinner. At his best he was a great saint. Then
if tradition is true, a flock of sky larks in his heart that he let out
one by one to sing as long as men have a sky above their heads. Then he
had made a great success of life. He had come from the lowly place of a
shepherd to be the king of his people. Yet he wants to throw it all down
and get away. What, I repeat, is the matter?

1. First, David is not as young as he used to be. He is now an old
man. Personally I have never looked forward to old age with fear and horror.
I believe God has as much plan and purpose for December or January as June.
There are compensations for getting old. Yet the years do take some things
from us that we would like to keep. As we come close to the sunset we are
not likely to be quite as sure of ourselves as we once were. There had
been a time in David's life when an emergency like this would have been
quickly settled. His hand would have leaped eagerly to the sword and he
would have felt himself completely competent to handle the situation. But it does not feel that way today.

I knew my father as an old man. He was a man of unusual physical strength. The physician who waited on him in his last physical illness declared that he had never known a more perfect man physically. I have seen him coming in from doing a half day’s work and sit in brooding silence beside my mother. Then he would say with a touch of pathos in his voice that he tried to conceal: "I don’t seem to be able to do the day’s work as I used to do it. You know," he would say, seeking the approval of his wife, "I used to could do more than any boy I have. I used to could out-run any boy that I have." And he could. But he felt himself being pushed on the sideline and harder still he felt that he deserved being on the sideline. David is getting old and doesn’t feel quite so fit as he once did.

2. David longs to get away from the great heartache, from a bitter disappointment. This rebellion would have been hard to bear had it been led by any subject that he had regarded as loyal. But for it to be led by his own son, the handsomest and brightest of the lot, that was the unkindest cut of all. That broke his heart. To battle against him was so hopeless, if he won the battle it was tragedy. If he lost it it was tragedy. There was no escape, the bitter heartache of it all.

Then what made this rebellion on the part of his son still harder to bear was that he could not escape a sense of guilt. He knew he was in part to blame for the bloody mess that his son had made of his life. He had neglected his son, not only so but he had misled him. That old ghastly cry reached its hand out of the black coat sleeve of the past to take this tired father by his shoulder and shake him and say: "You are to blame. Absalom is just a chip off the old block." God had forgiven him for his crime but as a father he could not forgive himself.

3. Finally he wanted to get away from an atmosphere that was chilled
by treachery and ingratitude. David's best friend had gone back on him. The man whom he had trusted most had proved a traitor. "We took sweet counsel together," he declares bitterly, "and walked to the house of God in fellowship. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords." With the failure of this friend David came to fear that nobody cared. He came to feel that there was not a creature in all the world to whom it mattered very much whether he should sink or swim, live or die. Of course, there were multitudes who loved him but nobody came forward just at that time to say so.

Now I don't know how you feel about it but it is my conviction that however strong and stalwart we may be there come times in all our lives when the very bravest and brawniest of us need a bit of mothering. We need some encouraging. We need some human hand to grip ours, to tell us that we do count after all. Speaking for myself I doubt if I could have remained in the ministry but for the praise and sympathy and encouragement of those of my own congregation that I have known along the way.

Some years ago I was talking to a tired and earnest mother. Somehow the conversation swung round to her desire for being appreciated. She fought hard with herself. At last with bitter tears she said, "You know, my children, they are good children. They love me but all of them work. Some of them work at odd hours. I have to be up until midnight every night. Often I have to rise very early in the morning. Am glad to do it for them but," she said, "I could do it so much better if they would sometimes show appreciation, if they would ever mention what I have done and fail to mention only what I fail to do.

Jane

After Carlyle had died brave old Thomas who had lived with her for long and stormy years wrung his hands and said: "If I had her back. If I had her back for only five minutes to get to tell her that through it all I loved her." But he waited until it was too late as is often the
case. One day you look across the street to see the flowers upon the door of an old friend. Then at last you tell him how much you appreciated him. The beauty of Mary's gift was that it came on time. Jesus said of her: "She came aforetime." Seeing death in the offing Mary said, "I will beat death to him." And so she did. Thus when death touches his brow it made even his freezing fingers smell of perfume. If therefore you have an encouraging word to say to some friend you better say it now. David missed this and it took the heart out of him and made him long to run.

III

But before David had finished his psalm he realized the futility of his longing.

1. Where did he long to go? Off in the wilderness. Why there? That was back where he had spent his boyhood. He wanted to get back to the old home place. He wanted to recover those dear dead days that he had enjoyed before he wore a harder crown that had not only given him the headache but the heartache. But it is futil to sing, "Backward, turn backward, oh time in your flight." We can never recover our lost yesterdays.

Then it is futil for another reason. If you were to get back into your yesterdays you would not find them half so radiant as they look today seen through the haze of memory. I have never thrilled to that sentiment that implies that all the real brightness that we find in life we find in its early morning. I think I had quite a normal and happy childhood. But I am having a still better time now. If I were to turn back far enough I would be milking about five old crumbly-horned cows and I have no desire to repeat the experience.

2. Finally David's longing was futil not only because we cannot get back but because flight is never a remedy. If you have more heartache than you know what to do with you can't cure it by walking across the street.
You can't cure it by flying across the continent or across the seas. Sorrow is quite as fleet as you are. We can't get away from heartache because we can't get away from ourselves. Milton's devil discovered that as he flew through space. "Infinite wrath and infinite despair. Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell."

What then did David need? He needed not a new physical climate but a new spiritual climate. That he found. And he passes on his rich discovery to us saying: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee. He will never suffer the righteous to be moved." What then do we need at this hour? Not a new power to get away. Not a new power to shirk our duty. We need a new power to stand in our places and be true.

There is a missionary song we used to sing when I was a boy. The chorus went like this: "I will go where you want me to go, dear Lord." It took some consecration to sing it but it did have in it the romance of far horizons, the thrill of adventure in distant lands. Here is one that to sing from the heart requires even greater consecration.

"I'll stay where you put me, I will, dear Lord,
Though I wanted so badly to go,
I was eager to march at the battlefront,
I wanted to lead them, you know.
I planned to keep step to the music loud,
To cheer when the banner unfurled,
To stand in the midst of the fight,
straight and proud,
When the enemies' darts were hurled--
But I'll stay where you put me,
I'll stay where you put me, dear Lord,
Though the field be narrow and small,
Though the ground lies fallow and the snows are thick,
And there seems to be no life at all.
The field is thine own, only give me the seed,
And I'll sow it with never a fear
Until the dry soil awake from the rain
And rejoice when the green blades appear.

... . . .

And then when my life's work is ended and done,
In the light of eternity's glow,
Life's record all closed, I surely shall find
'Twas better to find, 'twas better to stay
than to go.
So I'll stay where you put me."
PSALM 55:4 "Oh that I had wings like a dove how soon would I fly away and be
at rest."

In all the literature of the world I doubt if there is a more genuinely human cry,
a more intense heart cry, than is this of the psalmist. We have all uttered it at
some time of our lives, either consciously or unconsciously, either articulately or
inarticulately. Often times it begins in our very childhood and grows more intense
with us as we get deeper into the years and life becomes more serious with its baptism
of tears - tears over losses and tears over graves. The dove is one of the most
familiar birds of the Orient, golden in color and gray under its wings. It is spoken
of as the silver wing of the birdish dove. It has been connected from of old in the
minds of people with the spiritual and with the unseen. It was sacred, as you know,
to the Goddess of love, Venus. Certain Indian Tribes believe to this day if you catch
a dove and whisper a message in its ear and turn it loose at sunset, it'll fly away
into the miracle country and tell you a message to the one you've loved long since
and lost a while.

While the Jews did not regard it in this fashion, it was held in peculiar favor,
often lighting upon the shoulders and eating from the hands of the people. When chaos
was over the face of the deep, the Holy Spirit brooded dove-like. And when the waters
of the flood covered the earth and Noah wanted to ask if the waters had withdrawn, he sent
a dove to ask him. And when Jesus was baptised, it was in bodily form, as a dove, that
the Holy Spirit came upon them. So it was a bird regarded with peculiar favor.

Who said these words first, we do not know. Tradition has credited them to the
shepherd king. Of course, I couldn't prove that he uttered them any more than you
could prove that he did not. But they seem to me to befit his sensitive lips perhaps
better than that of any other psalmist of whom we can think.

Certainly these words are the words of somebody who is in trouble - somebody whose
come to a door to which they find no key and a wall through which they cannot see. It
is easy to imagine the circumstances under which David uttered these words, if he uttered them. I can imagine that one day he is pacing back and forth on his palace roof on the highest hill in Jerusalem. It is a terrible day for him. These is a war on—that daring courage of mankind which we hate and, yet, which we are never able quite to give up. Not only was this a war, but it was the worst type of war. It was a civil war. Then to bring the tragedy to its climax, the war was being led by David's handsome and gifted son, Absalom, who was far too handsome for his own good. And so as the old king paces back and forth, he can hear the clash of arms from the street. It's the rattle of the armor as his soldiers are going out to meet the soldiers of his son. There's no way that he can win. Anybody could see that. If he wins the fight, he loses because he lost his son. If he loses the fight, he's lost his own head. So there's no way out of it. Then his restless pacing is arrested for a moment as a dove flies and lights upon the parapet of the roof and begins to coo, the sunset and the distant hills and with a fellow feeling for the bird, he tries to approach her, but she's a little shy of him and she spreads her wings and whirls away into the starling vault of gold. And he shades his eyes and looks after her until she becomes a speck and then fades into utter nothingness. And then I see him wipe his eyes that have grown moist partly from looking up to the brightness without, but more from looking on the darkness within and he mutters something to himself through lips that are white and drawn with pain. What is the tired old man saying? Just this—"I wish I had wings like a dove. I'd get away from all this— the heartache, the loneliness, the disappointment, the despair, the hopelessness. I'd get away into some land beyond the hills where I could have a little peace."

I say, we've all felt like that at times. If we have a toothache on one side of our mouth, we feel it wouldn't be quite so bad on the other. If we are sick and feverish in one room, we feel we would be less restless in another.

There was a preacher once who wanted to move. Of course, his tribe died long ago, but this preacher wasn't getting on well, though he was a great preacher and
a great lover and as he would try to lead his people, he only antagonized them, for he, himself, confessed that "When I speak I shriek," And then he made up his mind that he wouldn't preach any more - that he'd just give it up, but, he said, "I couldn't quit because His word was a fire shut up in my bones and I couldn't keep my mouth shut to save my life though I knew it wasn't getting me anywhere and it wasn't getting my people anywhere." And in his desperation, he said, "I wish I had in the wilderness a lodging place for way-faring men that I might leave my people and go from them."

Many a preacher has felt like that. He wanted to get away. You will remember that in Lozly Hall, Tennyson puts these words in the mouths of his heartbroken lover. This man had given his heart to a beautiful girl and the girl had toyed with him for awhile and then flung him aside for one of far less a character as the betrayed lover thought - "Of one who would hold her when his passion should have spent its novel force a little dearer than its dog, a little better than its horse." And when he found himself thus heartbrokenly forsaken he longed for some retreat deep in yon the shining Orient where my life began to beat. Then me thinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind, in the steamship, in the reelbay, in the thoughts that shake mankind." And we find the same longing expressed by our own American poet as he stood on the bridge and sang, "How often, Oh how often, in the days that have gone by, have I stood on the bridge at midnight and gazed on the waving sky. How often, oh how often, have I wished that the ebb and tide would bear me away on its bosom o'er the ocean wild and wide for my heart was hot and restless and my life was full
of care and the burden that lay upon me seemed greater than I could bear." And he wanted to throw it all down and get away.

I went from the classroom as a teacher (I wasn’t trained for the ministry) into the pulpit. And just after I was licensed to preach, I was sent out to what was then Indian Territory. That was in 1906. Indian Territory became a state the next year, thanks to my presence. I went out to take a tumble-down circuit. The man whose place I was taking had been guilty of some disgraceful conduct that had compelled him to retire from the ministry and membership of the church. There was also a local preacher who had been on a drunk and in the thrill of his drunkenness he went home and whipped his wife. I remember that the first item of business, after my arrival, was a church trial. And one member of the trial committee was a fine old comanche Indian Chief. A fine Christian, he was. And he listened to the evidence with typical Indian stoicism. And then when the vote was about to be taken, he stopped the proceedings and said, "Before I feel competent to vote on this subject I must ask a question or two. You say the preacher got drunk and went home and whipped his wife. 'Yes', 'Well,' he said, 'I want to know what he whipped her for. She might have needed it.'" Now with those two honest co-workers I began my ministry. Suffice it to say, when I reached the little town there was no brass band to meet me. It was the hottest part of summer and I went up and got a room at a wooden hotel - a room that I shared with a great many lesser guests and I waited with eager expectation for the coming of Sunday because I had three sermons that I had preached and I made up my mind I was going to preach the best of these three sermons. My ministry had been mainly to the homefolks who had known me since I was a child and when I had finished one of these masterpieces, they would come forward and say, "Great preaching, Clavis, you’ll be Bishop one of these days. You can already preach as well as the Presiding Elder," as we called the District Superintendent then. And I thought that was a compliment and so I was greatly helped. And when Sunday came I wen out to the church. My congregation looked a
bit like a volunteer crop of molasses cane. There was just a stalk here and there.
And I preached that best sermon, but if anybody thought I was going to be Bishop, he
kept it a profound secret. Indeed, the Eldership was not mentioned and this poor
ole renegade who had been pastor came up and invited me home to dinner with him.
And I considered it because there was no where else to go, but I never did quite get
with him. He stayed about four or five feet ahead all the way. And when we got
to the parsonage, he disappeared. He had a wife and a large family of girls, but
there was nobody in sight. And I sat down on the porch alone and then the oldest
daughter of the family came and announced dinner. And then I said “Now I’ll meet
the family.” But when I went out to dinner I ate absolutely alone. There was a
place set just like a restaurant. And when I had finished my dinner I wasn’t very
hungry. I again looked about for the family, but I didn’t find anybody, but I did
find my hat. And I took out through the woods and struck the railroad, and started
west – not to grow up with the country, but to get away. And I can smile at this as
I look back at it across the space of more than fifty years, but I passed through
Gethsemane that afternoon and the point of the enemy’s attack was not the difficulty
of the situation. I had faced some difficulty before. It was this. I wasn’t called
to preach. I told myself “you are like one of Jeremiah’s foolish prophets. I sent
them not. They ran. I spake not unto them, yet they prophesy. You are here not
because you’re a hero. You are here because you are a fool. God never called you
to preach.” And I’d find myself unconsciously breaking into a run. By and by I
stopped way up the railroad and watched the sun as it slipped in behind the great
ole summer clouds. And as I watched it, I said “I wish I could turn that old cloud
on its hind legs and get away from all of this. What was I saying? I was saying
just what the psalmist was saying, “Oh, that I had wings like a dove. How soon
would I fly away and be at rest? And you won’t be surprised to know that when a
long distance telephone came a few days later. Coming clear around by St. Louis,
it was so hard to get me in this little back-woods town where I was, telling me that
I had been elected to one of the desirable positions in my field in my native state,
that I went back and took it. And as I went back, the very car wheels sang under
me "Never Again". And if there was ever a decision I thought was fixed, was this,
to preach
"I'll never walk into the pulpit again." And what volumes it speaks to the patience
and long-suffering of our Lord, here I am with more than half a century of ministry
behind me in spite of my failure.

Now what was the matter with David? It wasn't the fact that he was a weakling.
He was a strong man. It wasn't the fact that he was a failure. He was a highly
successful man. He had won his way from a shepherd's tent to the palace of the King.
It wasn't the fact that he was a dullard. He was a vastly intelligent man. He had
intelligence as clear and sparkling as the play of sunlight on clear water. And
he had a flock of skylarks in his heart. He was a great poet. That he let out one
by one. And those larks will sing as long as men have a sky above their heads. And
then he had a wonderful way of winning the hearts of people. How people loved him.
Why one day when he was hiding in the facies of the hills with a price on his life,
I think the day was hot and wintry and he said more to himself than to anybody else,
"I wish I had a drink out of the old home well at the gate of Bethlehem" And you
knew three of those rough neke overheard him and though they were shut in by
enemies, they dodged here and there among enemies' lines and hours later they came
back each with a skin of water for their leader. And when David received it, it was
so saturated with the sweat of blood of devotion that he was too big a man to drink
it. It was too sacred, he felt, to be drunk. And he poured it out as a libation
to his Lord. And in token of their love and loyalty, a man who had greatly succeeded
and who was greatly loved. And yet he wants to throw it all down and get away. What's
the matter with him? Well one thing, he's not as young as he used to be. The years
give us much if we will receive it. But it also takes something away from us. There's
no use in us pretending that it does not. He's not as strong when we're old as we
were when we were young. And often times, it steals our courage. In the finest
description of old age that I know in the Bible of it, it said of the old, "he shall
be afraid of that which is high." He's not as daring as he used to be. Forty years
If you'd said to me of a certain church, "don't go there, nobody can do anything with it," I'd said just let me try it! BUT what would I say now? I'd say, 'Let one of these young fellows have it, I don't want to be bothered with it." I'm not as strong as I used to be. He used to go glibly down the street with a sack of salt on his shoulder, but now when a grasshopper lights on his shoulder, his knees tend to buckle. He's not as brave and daring as he used to be. There was a time when he would have felt perfectly adequate to this desperate situation, but he wasn't adequate any more. And he wanted to get away because he had a burden that was too heavy to carry and a task that he felt that he couldn't put through. And then, he wanted to get away from an atmosphere that was tinged and chilled and poisoned by a lack of appreciation, by ingratitude. His best friend, a , had gone back on him. He spoke of him, "He had sweet counsel together and walked to the house of God in company. His words were smoother than butter, but war was in his words of his heart. The mouth were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords? He'd gone back on him and let him down. And David felt that he didn't have a friend in the world who appreciated him. And there wasn't anybody to whom it mattered whether he should sink or swim - live or die.

Now everybody needs appreciation at times. Almost everybody has to have it. I know we find those that said "I don't care what anybody thinks about me". But when I hear that, I know you've just been hurt. You do care. You care desperately. Sometimes it is a matter of life and death. During the last World War ever in Richmond there was a fine Christian who had a neighbor who was a grumpy man - hard to get on with, hard to soften his outer shell. And one day this fine Christian, in reading the paper, noticed - among the missing - the son of his neighbor. He hesitated whether he should go to see him or not. The son had been a model boy - the finest athlete in the City. And by and by he said anybody who has laid such a costly gift on the altar of his country, I ought to tell him of my appreciation. And he went over and rang the doorbell and nobody came. And he rang again and again, and at last he heard some heavy steps slowly descending the stairs and the man opened
the door. And he said, "Mr. Johnson, I've come to you to express to you my deep appreciation! I saw the paper this morning) - my deep appreciation of the gift you've made and the loss you've suffered. And the man glared at him for an instance and he just threw his arms about him and fairly dragged him into the room - and sobbed out his grief upon his shoulder. And when he had gained control, he said "come upstairs. I want to show you something." And he led him upstairs into the boy's room, where his athletic trophies were - his tennis racket, his baseball bat, his football. And there on the table was an angry Colt Revolver. He said, "I had that cooked and was just ready to use it, when your ring came at the door. You have helped me. You've saved my life." Everybody needs appreciation. There were thousands that appreciated David, but nobody told him about it. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so. Then he wanted to get away from an old torturing memory - the memory of the sin of his yesterday. There was the sin with the wife of Uriah that God had forgiven, but David hadn't fully forgiven himself. God had saved him, but he hadn't/him from the consequences. God will always forgive us from our sins, but he wants always save us from the consequences of our sins. And this old sin reached out of the black of the coat-sleeve of the past and laid hold on the shoulders of King David and shook him ruthlessly and said "after all you did it. You did it. You set your boy a bad example. And then you were too busy being a King to be a father. And you passed the buck." Just as he did in this particular instance as his own officers went out to the battle, he said, "See that the young man, Absalom, is safe." And when the news came that he was killed, he went up and uttered about the bitterest cry we found on the pages of the Old Testament: "Oh my son, Absalom, I'm sorry now that I didn't die for you! But it was too late and he wanted to get away from a torturing sorrow that had broken his heart for which there was no second opportunity and no second chance. But this man, this saintly man now, if he had been a great sinner, he had also been a great saint, discovered before he finished his song that the away remedy he sought was a fake remedy. That he couldn't get away from his heartache and his shame and from his disillusionment by merely running. If running would answer our questions, we'd be the happiest generation the world has ever known because we have broken the sound bearer. And I flew out to California the other day.
If a man had a shot at me after I got started on that plane with a fine Winchester Rifle, I'd just waved at the bullet as I left it behind. He can go fast enough. But that doesn't bring us peace. Milton's devil discovered that. "Infinite wee and infinite despair, which way I fly is hell. Myself I'm hell." And you don't get away from hell by passing over the street. And you don't get away from it by crossing over the Continent. And you don't get away from it by crossing over the ocean. And if you don't even get away from it by crossing over the river/death. If you have hell with you, it'll stay with you. Running is not the remedy. If running was the remedy, we could make it, but that's not enough. What did David need? He found out for himself. What he needed was not a new physical climate. He needed a new spiritual climate. So he said, "Cast my burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain thee." In his letter to the Ephesians, some five or six times, Paul uses this word, STAND therefore. Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand in the day fought of battle. And having the battle through to the finish, remain victor on the field. You don't need a new power to run. You need a new power to stand in our places and be true.

There is a missionary hymn they used to sing when I was a boy, "I'll Go Where You Want Me To Go Dear Lord, I'll Be What You Want Me To Be". It takes a great deal of dedication to sing that. And yet it does have in it the lure of distant horizons, the romance of new faces and new adventures. There is another song, not so popular, and that is often far harder to sing. It says like this, "I'll Stay Where You Put Me, I will Dear Lord, Though I wanted So Badly to Go. I was Eager to March at the Battle Front. I Wanted to Lead Them, You Know. I planned to keep Step to the Music Loud, To Cheer when the Banner Unfurled, To Stand in the Midst of the Fight Straight and Proud when the enemy Starts to Hurl, But I'll Stay Where You Put Me. I'll Stay where You Put Me. I'll Work Dear Lord. I'll Bear the Days' Burden and Heat, Always Trusting Thee fully when evening has come. I'll Lay Heavy Sheaves at Thine Feet. And When My Life Work Is Ended and Done, In the Light of Eternity's Glow, Life's Record all Closed, I Surely Shall Find, 'Twas Better To Stay
"Than To Go." It's not dove's wings we need. We need the undergirding of the
Everlasting Arms. That'll make us strong to stand in our places and be true in
the here and now. And May God Bless you Everyone.