THE WAY THAT SEEMETH RIGHT TO EVERY MAN

The writer of Proverbs says: "There is a way that seemeth right to every man but the end thereof leadeth to destruction."

On February 2, 1966, Walter Cronkite was giving his seven o'clock news report over CBS. At one place in the news broadcast there was projected on the television screen the picture of a college choir singing a litany which was climaxed in these words: "God is dead." Walter Cronkite paused for a moment, then he said, "I want all of you to know that there is no connection between this last news item and the one I am about to give." Then he went on to tell of a young man who had been arrested in connection with the death of a nineteen year old girl whose body had been found in the trunk of his rented automobile. The coroner reported that the cause of death was an overdose of narcotics. Mr. Cronkite went on to say, "This young man is from one of the countries most prominent families. He is a graduate of Dartmouth and has a private income of $27,000 a year."

I wondered why Mr. Cronkite stopped in the middle of his broadcast and injected the remark, "There is no connection between this news item and the one which I am about to give you." Perhaps he was thinking that a Godless society is a dying society. He might have thought of Dostoevski's words in Brothers Karamazov: "If God is dead then all is permitted." With these words in mind, let us consider again the quotation from Proverbs: "There is a way which seemeth right to every man but the end thereof is the way of destruction."

In America today there is a way of life that is being advocated, a way which no longer needs God. There has grown up within our
society a group of people who are saying that God is dead and that our Christian way of life is not useful, workable, or pragmatic.

Our Christian way of life has been challenged. Exactly when and where it started we do not know. Perhaps it had its beginning in the Renaissance. Or perhaps it started with the free thinkers of Leipzig back in 1850 when a group of young men and women met together and announced, "We no longer need the God hypothesis."

Norman Vincent Peale, in his book "Sin, Sex and Self-Control," gives us an insight as to how and why our Faith is challenged. He tells of a young man named Peter Howard, who, before his untimely death, headed up the moral rearmament program in Great Britain. Mr. Howard, speaking at Williams College stated, "My generation at Oxford had a funny outlook... We used our brains to tell our conscience and heart that what we wanted was right. We succeeded. We got important jobs and used our Oxford-trained intelligence to kill the conscience of the nation to make the nation more comfortable for us to live in." 1

Aldous Huxley, the hero of Howard's generation, wrote in "E nds and Means," "I had motives for not wanting the world to have meaning, consequently assumed it had none... The liberation we desired was a liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom." 2 This man, this great mind, was telling the world that he was wrong in some of his earlier basic assumptions about the moral structure of the universe.

1 Norman Vincent Peale, Sin, Sex and Self Control, pp. 66-67
2 Ibid, p. 67
Recently, there appeared an article in the "This Week" section in a Sunday newspaper entitled "Do We Have A New Morality?" It told of an eighteen year old girl who was telling her mother and father the kind of life she had been living. They were alarmed and shocked, and when they asked her for her reasons for such behavior, she simply looked at them and said, "Do you not know that we have a new morality?" I wish that I could impress this thought upon our young people: the new morality is not a morality of license. It is not a morality that stresses irresponsibility. The new morality is one that advocates responsibility and that will make life meaningful. It certainly must not be given to the tearing down of the moral structures of our day.

I believe that life is moral; I believe that God is a moral God; I believe this is a moral universe and that God has created us to live as morally responsible human beings. An Anglican priest said to Norman Vincent Peale, "We must teach a new kind of morality to our people because only 2 percent of them are adhering to the present moral standards. So what good is a moral code when no one lives up to it?" I read an article in the "Wall Street Journal" which made more sense than did this Anglican priest. The article said, "There is a vast difference between recognizing human frailty and lending it the seeming sanction of authority. The wisdom of the Decalogue is not renewed because some people commit adultery." We are indeed living in a day when a way of life without God is being advocated.

I think the writer of Proverbs might have added these words: "there is a way that seemeth right to every man and this way without God is definitely a way that leads to destruction."
What happens when we follow our own way of life? What happens when we put God off the throne and put ourselves on it? I believe that every man becomes a law within himself. The lawlessness that we see in America today is little more than man choosing his own laws. Civil disobedience is merely the reaction of a person who believes that he has the highest and best judgment for the way he lives his own life, that his individual judgment is better than the law of the land, even better than God's law in the Ten Commandments.

When man forgets God he entrones himself. He becomes a law within himself and the inevitable result is anarchy, a state of complete lawlessness. Look at our college campuses today. What is happening there? What has created a climate where college students can take over the administration buildings and demand that the administrators do as they say? James H. Billington, Professor of History at Princeton says, "We are having lawlessness on our universities and college campuses because our young people are starved to death spiritually." Think about that for a moment. A young girl told of going to a Great Issues Conference. When she came away and no one had even mentioned the name of God at this conference, she said, "Is God not a great issue in our lives today?" "The spiritual poverty on our campuses," says Professor Billington, "is as explosive as the material poverty in the ghettos."

A loss of respect for the law and the courts has contributed to the lawlessness on our land. Look at the law of censorship, as an example. In 1957, the Supreme Court established its own code of censorship to determine whether or not something was obscene, immoral etc. This is what they said, "The Constitution does guarantee freedom of ideas having even the slightest redeeming social
importance such as unorthodox ideas, controversial issues, even ideas hateful to the prevailing climate of opinion." The court defined obscenity as "material utterly without redeeming social importance." Now when such a law as this, which is highly debatable, is established, what would be utterly without redeeming social value to one person may not be to another.

Look at the issue of prescribed prayer and Bible reading in the public schools. I thank God that every service I have had the privilege to attend at any school, whether it be a P.T.A., a chapel program or a Baccalaureate service, has included prayer. I can understand that a person who is not a Christian is not interested in having prayer at such services; however, I cannot see why a court has the right to decide in favor of one against the other. After all, if we are "One nation under God," how could the courts possibly make a decision against the basic fundamentals upon which our country was established? The courts need to be guided by fundamental principles of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, not the likes or dislikes of the individual.

Somehow men must get hold of the fundamental principles of right and wrong. We cannot continue on this collision course of anarchy. Sooner or later we must decide upon something by which we stand or fall. We cannot go on living in this "twilight zone" of morality.

Paul writing to the Ephesians said,"Therefore you must wear the whole armor of God that you may be able to resist evil in its day of power, and that even when you have fought to a standstill you may still stand your ground."

Our generation has not been able to stand its ground. Our values have been tested and have failed the test. Because we have
not "stood by our guns," we have lost the battle. We have been over-run by another generation seeking permanent and lasting values. Our youth have challenged our moral standards and we have given in. We have allowed our young people to take hold of the "bottle," to swallow the "pill" and to run "wild" beyond restraint.

Our young people want to be disciplined. They want rules and guidelines as directives in life; nevertheless, not being sure of our own values we have let our youths run into a way of anarchism where "all is permitted" and "everything is accented." How tragic!

A prominent psychologists puts it this way, "Our young people want something to bump up against." When a teen-ager asks an adult, "What do you think about this," or "What should I do about this?" they really want an answer. They want to find someone who believes in something strong enough to stand up for their belief.

This new generation will not find strong convictions unless we adults have strong convictions. Recently a teen-age girl asked her father for advice. "When the advise came clear-cut, the daughter said, "Ah! Dad, that's old fashioned." However, a few days later the dad happened to overhear a conversation of a teen-age group. To his surprise, his daughter was confidently ex解放思想er her father's "old fashioned" ideas to a "new Fashioned" group.

Recently, I spoke to a group of young people at Guntersville Lake. On Saturday morning the group discussed the topic, "Playing The Game of Life." The subject presented us with the question, "By what rules will we play the game of life?" After much discussion the came to this conclusion, "The game of life should be played by God's rules — The Ten Commandments."

Do we have values that last? Do our lives possess convictions
by which we are willing to stand? It is not enough to say, "I alone
so." There must come a moment in each life when, like Martin Luther,
we say, "Here I stand. God being my helper, I can do no other."

The way to strong convictions is not easy. Often it is a pain­
ful way of "blood, sweat and tears." Renoir, the great French
painter suffered dreadfully with arthritis. His hands were twisted
and deformed: the joints of his fingers were swollen and enormous.
He had great difficulty holding the brush. His condition became so
bad that he had to be carried to his easel.

One day Matisse came to call and found Renoir painting. At one
point he winced with pain, and the brush fell from his hand. Tear­
with pity, Matisse cried, "Why torture yourself like this, master?
You have done so much. You may well be satisfied!"

Renoir looked at him and smiled. "The pain passes, Matisse,
but the beauty remains."

If we are going to stem this immoral, lawless tide which is
sweeping across our country, because every man wants his own way,
we are going to have to stand by the Principles of God. It may be
painful, but the pain will pass and the beauty will last forever.

This sermon was preached at The First United Methodist Church
in Hartselle by Rev. Ralph K. Bates
A GOOD MEDICINE

"A cheerful heart is a good medicine."

Proverbs 17:22

I.

Here is a word that is of vital interest to every one of us.

1. This is the case because we are all interested in our own aches and pains. If you find a conversation lagging, just mention the particular ailment from which your friend is suffering and see how quickly the ice is broken. O. Henry has a charming story of a certain thug who was burglarizing a house. He flashed his light upon a man in bed and said, "Put up your mits!" The victim lifted his right hand. "Put up the other," came the command. "You might be amphibious and able to shoot with both hands." "Can't," was the laconic reply. "Why can't you?" "I have rheumatism in my left shoulder." The thug looked at him thoughtfully, then relaxed. "It's a good thing," he said, "that me and rheumatism is old pals." He then proceeded to discuss with his intended victim the various symptoms of their mutual affliction. They went into detail as to the effect of a change in weather. They discussed the merits of various remedies such as Rattle Snake Oil, Essence of Evergreen, Potts Pain Pulverizer. Their natural antipathy was forgotten in the thrill of their discussion of their disease and its remedies.
2. This is of interest because all of us have our aches and pains. That is, there is something wrong with every one of us. There is not one of us that is one hundred percent fit. By this, I do not mean that all of us are sick physically. Ours is a day that glories in the possession of healthful bodies. That is good. When I was a boy it was bad form to be entirely well, even for a man. For a woman, it was little short of disgrace. The best that any of us dared say for ourselves if we desired to remain in good society was that we were "tolerable". Today we are glad to be well, but in spite of this many of us are physically under par.

But while some may be physically fit, all of us are below par spiritually. When we read Paul's word, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," we are not greatly startled. Our generation is not keenly conscious of sin. We do not think that our decent and respectable sins amount to much. But, suppose, instead of saying, that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, we affirm that all have broken the laws of spiritual health, and are therefore, not so fit and strong as they might be; to that, every one of us would say "amen". Whatever may be the state of our physical health, we know that we are not living as abundantly as we might live. Therefore, we are interested in this text. We miss the mark, you are not filling both eye

3. Finally, this text is of interest because we all desire to be rid of our aches and pains. This word not only suggests that we are ill, but it suggests a remedy. "A cheerful heart is a good medicine", is the more correct rendering of the American Revised. "A cheerful heart helps and heals" is Moffatt's translation. In all these renderings this wise man is displaying his remedy. "If you want a good medicine," he says, "try a cheerful heart."

II.

What are some of the merits of this medicine?
1. It is a remedy that is easy to take and pleasant in its after-effects. I was brought up in a malarial country where quinine and calomel were the standard remedies. In those days quinine was not given in capsules, but in coffee. The bitterness of it was unspeakable. The after effects were, if possible, even more horrible. I shall never forget that annoying ringing in my ears. One gentleman said he took so much quinine that folks used to stop as he passed down the street just to listen to the chimes. But a cheerful heart, that is a pleasant remedy and leaves no ill effects.

2. Then a cheerful heart involves no risk. There are some remedies that may cure, but they may also kill. This was especially true of the X-ray when it was in its infancy. I remember a good woman in my town who was suffering from cancer. She took X-ray treatment. But the physician, not knowing how to handle such new equipment, burned the patient so badly that the remedy became worse than the disease. There are times when an operation is necessary. But this is always dangerous. Of course, if the patient survives he will have something interesting to talk about for the remainder of his days, but sometimes he fails to survive. But a cheerful heart, I never knew anybody to be hurt by that remedy. It never involves the slightest risk.

3. Finally, a cheerful heart is a good medicine because it works. There are times when the best of physicians are baffled. Then there are so many fake remedies. There is no other field that affords such an opportunity for quack-ery as the field of medicine. This is no reflection upon that large group of earnest and competent and honest physicians who are rendering a high service. But while these do their best, it is impossible to weed out all the quacks. Sometime ago the editor of a leading medical journal accused a certain notorious physician, whose name is much on the air, of being a fake. The accused brought suit for libel, which suit he lost. This was the case because it was shown that the accused had received as high as a million dollars in a single
year for pretending to give their lost youth back to a bunch of silly old men. There are many remedies that will not work. But here is one that never fails to help.

This is true regardless of the disease from which we may be suffering. Even if our malady is physical, a cheerful heart will help us. This is the case because there is not a fibre in our body that is not affected by the mind. This is a fact that is recognized not only by the Bible, but by modern science as well. Every physician, every psychiatrist knows that a cheerful heart is a good medicine in the treatment of physical disease. By this, I do not mean that cheerfulness is a cure-all. I do not mean that if one is only cheerful he need never die. I am only affirming what this wise man of the long ago affirmed,—that a cheerful heart will do good.

There are thousands of sufferers whose sickness would vanish at the coming of a cheerful heart as darkness vanishes at the coming of the sun. There are thousands who die every year, not because their physical ills are incurable, but because they lack this healing medicine. These have lost heart and hope. They feel that it is futile to go on living when there is nothing left for which to live. We have all known such. I am thinking now of a charming young girl, once full of gaiety. But one day starked tragedy stalked into her life. Her physical ills were slight. But, in spite of all that the best of physicians could do, she faded like a frost-bitten flower. There was only one medicine that would have worked, that was a cheerful heart. But that remedy was never tried.

If this remedy is helpful in the treatment of our physical ills, of course, it is even more so in the treatment of the ills of the heart. Here is a remedy that can "minister to a mind diseased, pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow, raze out the written troubles of the brain, and with some sweet oblivious antidote cleanse the stuffed bosom from that perilous stuff that weighs upon
the heart." When we realize this we share the amazement of the prophet who saw so many sick, where there was a remedy right at hand. "Is there no balm in Gilliad? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" by this he did not mean that a cheerful heart is in itself a cure for sin. But it follows so hard upon the cure that it seems as if there can be no cure without it.

4. Finally, this is a remedy that not only helps the patient but it helps others as well. When I take a dose of medicine it effects me alone. But if I take the bracing medicine of a cheerful heart the good effects are not confined to myself. It gives me something to share. This something is often what people need most. Many of us are having a hard time. We have all the discouragement we need. We rub elbows with enough kill-joys to make life a bit difficult. There are those whose fingers are as nimble in stealing away our sunshine and laughter as those of a skilled pickpocket. Gloom is contagious. We can steal the blue from our neighbor's sky without any effort. But if gloom is contagious, thank God, so is joy.

One day two brave and earnest men went into a city to conduct a preaching mission. They were the finest of gentlemen, yet they aroused resentment on the part of certain religious leaders. Therefore, though their one purpose was to help, they had the humiliation of having their clothing torn from their bodies. Not only so, but they were publicly and painfully whipped. Then they were turned over to a cruel jailor who thrust them into a prison cell and made their feet fast in the stocks. It was a terrible experience. But instead of growing bitter and sour over it, out of sheer joy, they sang. And the story says that the prisoners listened to them. Nobody ever sings entirely alone. These prisoners had a stake in that song. They, too, were suffering. Naturally they were interested in how their fellow-prisoners were seeing their ordeal through.

All of us get into some kind of prison sooner or later. The man who sings
through such experiences, renders a high service both to himself and to others.

Since a cheerful heart is such a good medicine we do not wonder that the Bible lays much emphasis upon it. This amazing Book records the supreme tragedy of human history. But in spite of that fact it is by far the most hopeful book in the literature of the world. Turn almost where you will, in the Old or New Testament, especially in the Psalms, and you will meet the thrill of laughing and singing hearts. "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice ye righteous and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." "Be of good cheer," is a word that is upon the lips of Jesus again and again. Then, at the close of the day, when He is kneeling in prayer with his friends, He makes for them this request:—"Grant that the joy that is mine may be theirs." Thus Jesus knowing the worth of a cheerful heart, prayed that this blessing might be the portion of all His friends.

III.

Now, assuming that you have gone with me thus far, assuming that you agree that a cheerful heart is a good medicine, how are we to avail ourselves of this remedy?

1. We need, first, a firm conviction that this remedy is within our reach. We are not being offered a pot of gold at the end of some rainbow, a fountain of youth that we can never find. I am aware that to some this will seem utterly incredible. I can realize how easy it will be for some desperate souls to hear such a word with resentment rather than with hope. "You would not talk to me about a cheerful heart," these might say, half-angrily, "if you knew the grim tragedy that is stalking my steps. It is easy enough for one in your position to talk with glib assurance about cheerfulness, but you would not be so certain if life had done to you what it has done to me."

There is solid sense in what you say. As I speak, I am doing so with the
realization that some of you are in tragic situations of which I have had little or no experience. Yet, I still maintain a cheerful heart is within reach of all of us. This I say because such cheerfulness is not a mere matter of temperament. Temperament may help, but it is not enough. No more is it a product of circumstances. I am aware there are certain circumstances that make attaining of a cheerful heart far easier. But no set of circumstances can guarantee its attainment. If a cheerful heart were born solely of our circumstances we could easily divide the cheerful from the cheerless. All we should have to do would be to draw a line through our city putting the successful, the prosperous, the healthful, the socially prominent on one side; and the failures, the sick, the misfits, the poverty stricken on the other. But this would not work. Were we to do this we should find some of the most wretched people among the highly successful, and some of the gladdest among the failures.

Some years ago, for instance, the pastor of a prominent church went to call on a certain actress who had won world-wide fame. She was beautiful, young, and seemingly possessed all that heart could wish. But when the minister congratulated her upon her success, she turned to him, with genuine sadness looking out from her tired eyes and said, "Don't talk to me about that. In spite of it all, I am wretched. What I want is rest and peace, peace and rest."

From there this minister went to call on an old maid who was slowly dying of tuberculosis. She was the oldest of a large family of orphan children. When her father and mother had gone, she had taken it upon herself to give her brothers and sisters a chance. She had made a success of her task, but it had cost her her life. When the minister expressed his sympathy, she answered joyfully, "Don't pity me. I have had a wonderful life. I wouldn't have missed it for the world." In spite of poverty and sickness she had found what her seemingly fortunate sister had missed. A cheerful heart is within reach of all because it is independent of things.
2. A second realization we need if we are to possess a cheerful heart, is that this high attainment is the result of a cause. The law of sowing and reaping operates here as it does everywhere else. For this reason we cannot attain this goal by merely shutting our eyes to the grim and ugly facts of life. Some may achieve a certain kind of cheerfulness by denying what they know to be true, but this is only to build for themselves a fool's paradise. In fact, the most bored, tired, fed-up folks in all the world are those that spend their days and nights in an effort to have a good time. Nor do we attain this fine boon by merely seeking it. It is not enough to say to ourselves "Go to now, I am going to have a cheerful heart." That would be just as futile as it would to expect to reap a harvest of wheat where we had sown nothing but tares. It would be just as silly as to expect to gather beautiful roses where we had planted nothing but nettles.

Since the attainment of a cheerful heart is a law abiding procedure we need not expect victory through sheer force of will. That mother at the circus who threatened her small boy with punishment if he refused to have a good time, does not appeal to our intelligence. No more can we hope to win by merely putting on the outer trappings of cheerfulness. By this, I do not mean to disparage those brave souls, who for the sake of others, lock their own griefs in their hearts and smile on the world. There is a fine courage in this, but it is a poor cure for heart-ache.

Generally speaking, the smiles we wear when our souls are frowning lack spontaneity. They are mere artificial flowers. What is wrong with that flower upon milady's hat? It lacks reality. It has never mined in the rich loam of the garden for the gold of true beauty. Its cheek has never been touched by the sun's magic brush. It has never been washed with the rain. It has never been christened by the gentle baptism of the dew. The smile that is put on may be as little impressive as that of a wax figure in a show window.
If then a cheerful heart is the result of an inward cause; if it is a harvest we reap from a certain kind of sowing, what is that sowing? Answer: If we are to have real cheer we must have inward peace. We must get rid of whatever civil war may be raging in our souls. We must give up our grudges and our hates. I have seen sick folks, and poor folks, who were cheerful of heart. But I have yet to find a happy hater. If we are to be cheerful of heart, we must find purpose and meaning in life. Finally, we must work. No deliberate idler can ever know real joy. We must work, not simply for ourselves, but we must work for others.

Now, if these are causes that result in cheerfulness of heart, where does it all bring us? Answer. It brings us to God. It brings us to the fundamentals of our holy faith. It brings us to the foot of the cross. If it is peace we need, we find it through the forgiving grace of Christ. If we are to get rid of the bondage of self, He must set us free. If we are to go forth and be spent for others, there is no inspiration equal to that that Paul experienced when he said, "He loved me and gave himself up for me."

The supreme secret of joy is whole-hearted dedication to God. In fact, we may say with perfect conviction that every dedicated life is a joyful life. All others miss the road.

"Joy is a fruit that will not grow
On nature's barren soil,
All we can boast till Christ we know,
is vanity and toil."

Since the roadway to joy is that of a dedicated life, we cannot hope to find this prize by merely seeking for it. We must rather forget our own joy in an effort to bring joy to our fellows. Begin here and now to follow Christ and you will come to know Him and to share His joy. That is what the Master meant when he said "If any man is willing to do his will he shall know." Dare
to make a beginning. Do the duty that lies nearest you. There is a story of a man who went in quest of the flower called heart-ease. But upon every road he took he found an obstacle against which he barked his shins and bruised his soul. That obstacle was his brother's burden. At last in desperation he decided to lift that unwelcome burden, for he could continue his quest no other way. So very sadly he lifted the load to his own shoulders. Then, to his utter amazement he found the lovely flower of his dreams blooming where the dreaded burden had rested. Even so, as you and I go out to lift our brother's burden, we shall find blooming in our very path, the lovely flower of a cheerful heart.
A GOOD MEDICINE

"A cheerful heart is a good medicine."
---Proverbs 17:22

I

This is a topic of universal interest. This is the case in the first place because everybody is interested in his own aches and pains. If you find the conversation lagging, just begin to name over the symptoms from which your friend is suffering and the most listless conversationalist will at once glow with enthusiasm. Few things are more interesting than one's own symptoms. O. Henry tells a very human story of a certain porch-climber who was burglarizing a home. He flashed his light in the face of the head of the house as he lay in bed. "Put up your mitts!" came the stern command. His host lifted his right hand. "Put up the other!" came the command. "You might be amphibious and able to shoot with both hands," "Can't!" was the laconic reply. "Why can't you?" "Got rheumatism in my left shoulder," came the answer. Then the thug gazed at him intently for a moment, slowly relaxed, and then sat down by the bed. "It is a good thing," he said, "that me and rheumatism is old pals." Then they began to discuss the influence of the weather and the relative merits of such remedies as rattlesnake oil, essence of evergreen, and Pluto's Pain Pulverizer. Though separated by such wide chasms they were drawn together in a common interest in the discussion of their aches and pains.

Second, everybody is interested in a good medicine because we all have our aches and pains. That does not mean that most of us are not fairly physically fit. But everyone has known an ache or pain at sometime—this in spite of the fact that we are, generally speaking, far more healthful than we used to be. When I was a boy, good health might have been desirable, but it was certainly no social asset. When I was a boy, the best that anybody dared to be, unless he wanted to
lose prestige was "tolerable". If he were better than that, he was an egotistical braggart. That was true even of men. Of course, for a woman to be entirely healthful was worse. Woman at that time, unlike Gaul, was divided into two parts—above and below! She was cut in two in the middle.

Third, we are all interested in a good medicine because we are eager to be rid of our aches and pains. We are so eager that we give ourselves endless trouble and endless expense. We allow ourselves to be imposed on by the most brazen kind of quackery. There is no sphere of human activity that lends itself more readily to duplicity and quackery than medicine unless it be the field of religion. No religious charlatan can voice any theory too ridiculous to be accepted by some with utmost fervor. No quack doctor can propose cures too miraculous to empty the pockets of the gullible.

For instance a gentleman died a year or so ago whose name was almost a household word. He had perhaps the strongest broadcasting station on the American continent. The editor of the American Medical Journal accused this gentleman of being a quack. The accused sued Doctor Fishbein, the editor, for the sum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars. He was not able to collect a penny. This was the case because Doctor Fishbein showed that in one single year this so-called doctor had collected one million dollars from a bunch of silly old men to whom he had promised to restore their lost youth.

But here is a remedy that will really work. This has a record of bringing about universal improvement and oftentimes it works a positive cure. Hence this wise man said, "A cheerful heart is a good medicine." "A cheerful heart helps and heals," is Moffatt's translation. "A cheerful heart is a healing medicine," is the translation of Doctor Goodspeed. Therefore, since all of us are interested in our aches and pains, since all of us have them, and since all of us desire to be rid of them, we need to lend an ear to this wise physician.
II

Why is a cheerful heart a good medicine? What is there good about it? Assuming that I am a medicine salesman, as I am, what can I say to you about my remedy?

1. It is pleasant to take. There are some medicines that are helpful but their taste is horrible. Those of you who read your magazines have seen most heart rending pictures of some mother trying to give her child a certain type of medicine. The usual unfortunate is in wild rebellion, but all of this gives way to eagerness when their particular remedy, as tasty as the best chocolate bonbons, is applied. But no remedy is more pleasant than this. It even beats Castoria, for which children cry so pathetically.

2. Then I recommend this remedy because it involves no risk. There are certain remedies that the physician has to offer when he can guarantee no cure. That was especially true of the x-ray in its early stages of development. A neighbor of ours years ago had cancer. The doctor treated her with x-ray. But he did not know how to use this new and tremendous power; therefore, he burned the patient so terribly that the remedy became far worse than the disease. Even an operation is not a cure-all. When I had to pass through this ordeal far from home, the doctor left the choice of to operate or not to operate up to me. I answered, "Doctor, I want to get well. Take the chance that is best." He was a frank and honest man. He said, "I will not conceal from you the fact that the operation is dangerous. But I think not to operate will be more so." Hence, the operation! But here is a remedy that has no bad after-effects—it involves no risk at all.

3. Not only is this remedy pleasant to take, not only does it involve no risk, but it does help and heal as this wise man said. This is true even in the realm of the physical. Doctors have learned that a patient who is cheerful has a far better chance of recovery than one who has no cheer. There are some people that a wise physician would not allow in a sick room. They tend to depress and
to rob the patient of hope.

Since I have referred to my operation, I can tell you this further story. A good friend came to see me with the remark, "I am sorry you are going to have to undergo that particular operation. You know I had five relatives who had that same operation and every one of them died on the operating table." A very helpful suggestion! Dr. H. C. Morrison tells us that when he was very ill some of his saintly friends came to see him and asked the privilege of singing to cheer him up. When he consented, they chose this very fitting selection:

"My latest sun is sinking fast,
My race is nearly run."

Sometime ago one of the leading physicians of the faculty of Vanderbilt University declared that half of the beds occupied in our hospitals are occupied by those whose sickness was primarily mental. That is, so far as they were physically sick at all, their sickness was born of a sick mind. Given a mind sufficiently sick, even a slight disease might take us off. Years ago I knew a charming and vivacious girl. One night she was doing some work by an old-fashioned kerosene lamp. As she gave the work she was doing a sudden tug, the lamp was dragged into her lap and her beautiful face was horribly burned. She went to bed and turned that scarred face to the wall and died. What killed her was not the burn—it was a broken and cheerless heart.

But if a cheerful heart exercises help and healing power in the treatment of the physical disease, it is a sure cure when that disease is mental or of the heart. Here is a remedy that can banish your night and turn it into day. Here is a remedy that can really minister to a diseased mind.

"Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?"

A cheerful heart is to be recommended because it is a good medicine. It is healing power for body and soul.
4. Finally, a cheerful heart is to be recommended because it not only helps
the patient, but it helps others as well. If I take a dose of ordinary medicine,
it affects me only. But if I take a dose of good cheer it not only helps me but
it helps those who have to live with me. Ingersoll once said in bitterness,
"Why didn't God make health and courage contagious just as He did sickness and
disease?" For the simple reason that that is exactly what he did. Gloom is
contagious. There are some folks that can pick your pockets of courage and good
cheer with a skill equal to that of the Artful Dodger. To encounter such is like
running into a London fog or a Kansas dust-storm.

But if gloom is contagious so is cheerfulness. It gives us something to
share. One day two able ministers went into an ancient city for a preaching
mission. The authorities objected to their preaching. They were therefore humi-
liated and pained by having their clothing torn from them in the marketplace.
They were led to the whipping post and beaten until the blood ran down their heels.
After that they were thrown into prison and their feet made fast in the stocks.
Then what? Paul and Silas sang and the prisoners heard them. Nobody ever sings
entirely alone. Not only were prison doors opened by their cheerful songs, but
human hearts were opened as well. In applying this remedy to themselves, they
brought healing to others. If, therefore, you are eager to be sound and well,
if you are eager to give help and cheer to others, take this remedy. "A cheerful
heart is a good medicine."

III

But you say gloomily, "How am I to get hold of it? How can I have a cheerful
heart? What is the use of saying a word like that to me when I can never be
cheerful again?" In answer to that I say two words.

1. Everybody can have a cheerful heart. If that is not the case, the
writers of this amazing book we call the Bible have misunderstood both God and
the human heart. It fairly shouts with appeals to good cheer. "Rejoice in the
Lord, ye righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart," is the call of one of the psalmists. In fact, almost all the psalmists are fairly lyrical with an irrepressible gladness. "Rejoice in the Lord always," says Paul, "and again I say rejoice." What he said he did. We find him without his freedom. We find him shivering sometimes without his coat, but we never find him without his song. And Jesus in the last prayer that He prayed with His friends when certainl y he prayed only for those needs that are fundamental made this request that "the joy that is mine may be theirs." Of course we cannot assert that a cheerful heart is everybody's privilege if such a possession is a mere matter of temperament. But it is not. There are people who are more joyous by temperament than others but that does not answer the question. Joyfulness is not a matter of shutting one's eyes, it is not a mere matter of looking on the bright side, it is not a matter of denying what you know to be true! Even if happiness came by such a method it would be only to live in a fool's paradise. While I was in Houston a certain gentleman was taken up by an unusually cheerful faith. By and by rather disillusioned he came back to the fold. When a friend asked him the reason for his leaving he said, "They were too blank cheerful for me!" That is their cheer would not check up with the facts.

Everybody can have a cheerful heart because such a possession is not a child of circumstances. Now do not misunderstand me. Right circumstances may help greatly toward cheerfulness. There are some of you in trying situations where a cheerful heart is more difficult perhaps than the situation that I occupy. And yet this cheer is not born of circumstances. If such were the case, we could easily divide the cheerless from the cheerful. All we would have to do is to put all the sick, the failures, the misfits, the bereaved on one side and the rest on the other. But you know that would not work.

There died in Hollywood two or three years ago a beautiful actress. In her short twenty-eight years she had managed to accumulate vast fame, a million or so in money, tremendous popularity—everything almost but a cheerful heart. She
did not have that. She was as conspicuous for her wretchedness as she was for her beauty. There was another girl—no, not exactly a girl any more! She was what we have called an old maid. She had been left the oldest of a large family of children. She took the burden of these children upon herself, literally sold her life into providing for them, and now she is dying of tuberculosis. But when the minister came to see her, she did not pity herself. He found her the happiest of beings. She said, "I would not change it for the world. What I have is rest and peace." She had a cheerful heart.

2. If we are to have a cheerful heart, we are to remember that such comes as a result of cause and effect. It operates in the same fixed fashion as sowing and reaping. Therefore, don't expect to find a cheerful heart by simply saying, "Go to, now! I am going to be cheerful!" A smile on the face when there is a frown on the soul is not very impressive. Such a smile is a mere artificial flower. What is the matter with the flower on the lady's hat? It looks well enough. Yet it is not vastly impressive. It lacks reality. It has never mined in the loam of the garden for the fine gold of real beauty. It has never been christened by the gentle baptism of the rain and the dew. It has never held its cheek up to be painted by the sun's magic brush. Smiles are not manufactured on the outside. They are born from within. But by this I am not meaning to say that we cannot help ourselves to acquire a cheerful heart. We can, but only by meeting the conditions. I believe cheerfulness is a high Christian duty. Robert Louis Stevenson looked on gloom as a bit of a sin, an ugly sin that hurt the possessor and his friend. Therefore, in spite of a heavy handicap he made it his business to be happy. He prays,

"If I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness;

Lord, Thy most pointed pleasure take
And stab my spirit broad awake."

Most of us have, I repeat, no right to be as cheerless as we are.
But how are we to attain? Not simply by looking on the bright side, not by spitting on our hands and going in quest of happiness! If you go out in the city to find the saddest, most weary, the most fed up and blasé souls in our city, you will find them among those who have determined at any cost to find good cheer. But the more they pursue it, the more weary they become. (You can no more shake your sluggish soul into cheerfulness than could the mother drive her boy into having a good time.) I am told that when a circus came to town, a mother took her young son. He did not seem to be enjoying the performance as she thought he ought. So she shook him rudely and said, "Have a good time now! I brought you here to have a good time—you've got to have it!"

What then are some of the conditions of a cheerful heart? To have a cheerful heart we must have a heart of peace. We can't be cheerful so long as we are worried to death. We can't be cheerful of heart so long as fear nags at us and fills our days with restlessness and our nights of sleep.

But to have inward peace we must be at peace with our fellows. I have seen some rich haters and some poor haters, but I have yet to see a happy hater. A cheerful heart is very apt to be a loving heart. If we keep a cheerful heart, we must work. There can be no happy idlers. Not only must we work, but we must work not simply for ourselves but for others.

Where then does this bring us? Answer—it brings us to God. Who else is adequate to still the civil war in your heart? Who can set your soul at peace with yourself that you can be at peace with your faltering, failing brothers? Who can put purpose and meaning and glory into life so that the meanest task becomes transfigured? The answer to that question is God. He makes it possible for you to look up from the bit of work that you do in His name and say with humble gladness and cheerfulness of heart, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world." God gives a cheerful heart, and it can come in no other way.
"Joy is a fruit that will not grow on Nature's barren soil.
All we can boast of Christ we know is vanity and toil."

Do you really want this good medicine? Have you a pain, a loss, a want somewhere that needs a remedy? I give you this challenge. Go out from here to live as you believe God would have you live and you will come sooner or later to possess a cheerful heart because you will come to possess God. But you will never discover the secret by going your own selfish and careless way.

Did you ever hear the man that set out in search of that lovely blossom called heart's ease? He longed for the beautiful flower because he felt that he needed it so. He went down the road that led east. But soon he barked his shins on his brother's burden. That road seemed blocked. He turned north but again he found the road blocked by his brothers burden. There was the same as he turned south then west. At last in sheer desperation he decided that he would lift his brother's burden or give up his quest. So all unwillingly at first he gave his strength to that task and lo! as he lifted his brother's burden he found blooming right where the burden had been the lovely flower of heart's ease. "A cheerful heart is a good medicine." I need it and you need it. It may be ours only at the price of self-giving.
LEARN TO LAUGH

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine"
Proverbs 17:22

In the light of all the Bible has to say about cheerfulness and laughter, it is amazing how many people have the conviction that laughter is a bit questionable, if not positively wicked. Of course, it is all right to laugh at the theater or in the dance hall or at the card party. In fact it is all right to laugh almost anywhere but in church. Here we must not simply be serious but solemn. In fact, solemnity is the big thing. So long as we hide a flippant heart behind a solemn face it is all right.

Of course flippancy is bad anyway. But the right kind of laughter is not born of flippancy. One may genuinely be cheerful and tremendously serious all at the same time. If laughter is right anywhere, it is right in church. In fact to take laughter out of worship is not human. It is to have a type of religion that is at home only in the church. It is perfectly safe to say that no injury can be done to religion greater than trying to confine it to the church.

The Bible recognizes over and over that type of religion that is born of a cheerful heart. Such laughter will have at least two important characteristics.

First, the laughter born of a cheerful heart will be kindly laughter. In an old Dryburgh Abbey in Scotland where Sir Walter Scott lies buried, there is a verse that reads like
this: "Sweeten bitter things with gentle laughter." What a fine word that is. Oftentimes bitter things can be sweetened in just that fashion. Many folks would sob less if they laughed a little more.

There is a type of laughter that has a sting in it. It is cruel. There are times when we laugh with folks. There are times when we laugh at them. Such laughter is not wholesome. It does not come so much from a cheerful heart as from a cruel heart. Thackeray in his English humor says some harsh things about Dean Smith: "His laugh jars upon us after seven score years." His laughter is not kingly.

Second, not only is the laughter of a cheerful heart kindly laughter, but is it also clean. Personally I have not ever been able to see much fun in filth. Now and then a speaker will take an unfair advantage of his audience to tell an unquestionable story. I abominate such a practice. It has always been my conviction that those who delight in dirty stories are dirty on the inside. The laughter of a cheerful heart is clean.

Third, the next fact about this laughter is that it is not only kindly and clean but it has healing in it. "A cheerful heart doeth good like a medicine." is the Revised Version. "A cheerful heart helps and heals." is Moffatt's translation.

- - II -

Now when we talk of something that helps and heals, when we speak of a good medicine, we are speaking of something that is universal for two reasons.

1. We are all interested in our own aches and pains. If you find the conversation with a person hard, find out from what he suffers or has suffered and let him tell you his symptoms, then
interest will pick up. O. Henry tells of a porch climber who found his victim in bed and ordered him to stick up his mits. "The other two, he ordered, "I can't" came the reply. "Why can't you?" "Rheumatism." Then the burglar relaxed. "It's a good thing me and rheumatism is pals." Then he forgot his mission while he discussed essence of evergreen, rattle snake oil as remedies.

2. We are interested because everybody has or has had aches and pains. We are more interested in health now. When I was a boy, it was not good style to be well. A woman had better social standing if she were on the puny side.

Today physical health is better. But even those who do not have physical pains suffer mentally or spiritually. When Paul said, "We have all sinned and have come short to the Glory of God," he meant that none of us have the spiritual health that we ought to have. None of us are 100% fit. We are, therefore, all interested in a remedy.

3. Then we are interested because everybody wants to get rid of his aches and pains. For this reason, we are ready to take almost any kind of medicine if take almost any kind of teaching that will promise help. No other human knowledge lends itself quite so well to quackery as religion and medicine.

A few years ago a man whose name was much on the air, was chased out of Kansas down to Texas. Here he put up the largest broadcasting station on the continent. Dr. Fishbein accused him of being a quack. The gentleman in question sued Dr. Fishbein for two thousand dollars. He was not, however, able to collect a penny because it was proved that he had received as much as a million dollars in a single year from silly old men whose youth he promised to restore.
Now since we have our aches and pains and since we wish to be rid of them, we ought to be interested in this remedy. It is good for four reasons:

1. It is easy to take. We have seen children cry for Castoria. This beats Castoria any day. It is pleasant to take and leaves no bad after affects. One gentleman who lives in the malarial country says that he took so much quinine that folks used to stand on the street and listen to the chimes. But laughter is pleasant and has no evil after affects.

2. Here is a remedy that involves no risks. An operation may cure but also it may kill. But a cheerful heart certainly not do any harm. It is slightly habit forming, but the tighter this habit grips you, the better off you will be.

3. This is a remedy that will certainly work. By this I am not saying that if you are cheerful you will never be sick or you will never die. But what I do say is that cheerfulness will help any form of physical sickness, and it will absolutely cure most mental sickness.

More than one-half of those that occupy hospital beds are suffering from mental illness rather than physical. Thousands die every year just for lack of a cheerful heart. They have lost their incentive to live. I am thinking now of a lovely girl who had an accident that burned her face. That face was her treasure. She could have recovered, but her cheerful heart was gone so she turned her scarred face to the wall and died.

A cheerful heart helps and heals. Whatever may be your sickness a cheerful heart will do you vast good. In fact there is almost no other remedy that has such power to help.
4. Finally this remedy not only helps one who takes it, but it helps others as well. Here is a medicine that you can take not for yourself alone, but for the whole family. In fact all your friends can share in it. This is the case not only because a cheerful heart helps you, but it helps everyone who comes in contact with you. One day Bob Ingersoll asked this question, "If God is good why did He not make health, courage, and cheerfulness contagious like He made disease and cowardice?"

The answer is that is exactly what He did.

Take gloom for instance, sourness and grumpiness. They are contagious. One man in an audience who refuses to laugh can often keep his neighbors from doing so. A few years ago a man was to lecture in Macon, Georgia. A friend of mine, who later became a bishop, gathered about him three or four associates, induced them to buy front seat tickets. Then they pledged themselves not to laugh. The result was they wrecked the man. He quit before he finished his lecture.

Bishop Candler came down from Gatesville, Texas, to lecture. He was quite humorous, but there was one man down in front who was an immovable bunch of whiskers. All that was visible other than the whiskers were two little beady eyes. Mr. Whiskers was as unmoved by the Bishop's humor as the dead. At last he told a joke that cracked Mr. Whiskers and the lecture went well. But failure was staring him in the face.

But now just as gloom and grumpiness are contagious, so is laughter and good cheer. Ralph Connor tells of a ship wounded by torpedo. A panic was threatening, but the chaplain, a great husky fellow, saw something funny and roared with laughter. More joined in with him and the situation was saved. On one occasion
the gene:iar assembly of the Presbyterian Church was largely
saved from an unholy row by a man who knew how to laugh.

- IV -

Laughter is a privilege. Everybody ought to laugh. It
is a positive duty to look around in this world and find something
to laugh about.

But laughter is more than a privilege, it is a duty. You
have no right to take any blue out of my sky. You have no right
to rob me of my sunshine. You have no right to add to my load
of gloom. You owe me all the cheer that you can give. I owe
you that same debt. Robert Lewis Stephenson, whose life was one
long battle with pain, looked on cheerfulness as a positive
duty. "If I have faultered more or less
In my quest of happiness,
Lord, my most point pleasure take
And stab my spirit broad awake."

Now since it is a privilege to be cheerful and since it is
our duty to be cheerful, cheerfulness is in reach of everyone
of us. This is the case because whether you are cheerful or
not does not depend on circumstances, it depends on what you are
on the inside. To have a cheerful heart, you must have a
peaceful heart.

Where does this bring us? It brings us right to the foot
of the cross. It brings us into the presence of God. If you
are right with God and right with your fellows, then cheerfulness
and laughter become second nature. All deeply religious people
are possessed of cheerful hearts. Of course you could help your-
self in some fashion by looking at what you like instead of
what you dislike. But the surest of all roads to the cheerful
heart is the heart that has given hospitality to the Christ, who
stands at the door and knocks.
THE FAR-SEEING FOOL

"The fools eyes are in the ends of the earth."

Proverbs 17:24

Here is a far seeing man. That sounds encouraging. We are complimented by having such a title given to us. "He is a far-seeing man," we say of one who has made a success in business. He came upon a struggling little village and saw that one day it would become a city. He saw in a blundering horseless carriage the coming automobile. He saw in the first airship a machine that would one day revolutionize travel. It is a tribute to his wisdom to say of a man that he is far-seeing. Yet, this blunt author calls his far-seeing man a fool.

I.

Why is this the case? Wherein is he foolish? Of course, we realize at once that if he is really wise, the fact that some one called him a fool would not detract one whit from his wisdom. No more would it add to his wisdom to call him wise, if it so happens that he is a fool. We keenly resent being called names. Many a battle has been fought over such matters. Yet, we cannot fail to see that this is a bit silly. Suppose one calls me a liar. If I am a liar he has only told me the truth, his frankness should awaken my appreciation. If I am not a liar, his saying so will not make me one. It only means that he himself is a liar. That is his misfortune and not mine. Wherein then, I repeat, is this man foolish?
His foolishness does not consist of the fact that he looks ahead. To look ahead is the part of wisdom. To refuse to look ahead, to see only what is near, would be the height of folly. When we take a survey of the wise men we find that all of them have this characteristic—-that they are far-seeing. Take the two outstanding heroes of the Old Testament, for instance, Abraham and Moses.

When you read the New Testament you will notice that when these writers want to tell us what religion is at its best, they are constantly going back to this man Abraham. The characteristic upon which they set their admiring eyes is this:—That he took the far view. Listen to the writer to the Hebrews. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." That is, one day this man turned his back on Ur of the Chaldeans to journey into the unknown. "Where are you going?" his practical friends asked. "I do not know," came the answer. "But I have had the vision of a new and better day and I am going at the call of God." It was thus that he became God's friend. It was thus that he became the father of a new nation.

If Abraham became the father of a new nation, Moses was the liberator and the law giver to that nation. He had been adopted into the royal family of Egypt. He had his feet on the steps of the throne. But he turned his back upon that throne to cast his lot with a hoard of slaves. "By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." This latter phrase "he had respect unto the recompence of the reward," might be better translated, "he looked away from everything else to the coming of the Lord."
That is, he became what he became and rendered the service that he rendered because he took the far view. This man is not foolish then because he took the far view.

Not only is far-sightedness a part of wisdom, but to do the opposite is the part of folly. It is very foolish so to fix our eyes on the near that we ignore all else. Even a very small treasure may be held so close to our eyes as to blind us to those that are far vaster and of far greater worth. It is possible to hold a penny so close to the eye as to shut out all else beside. How many more play the fool simply because they see only what is near. They fix their gaze so intensely upon what is at hand that they forget all that the yonder and that tomorrow hold.

That, for instance, was the folly of Esau. One day this vigorous hunter was coming home from the chase. As he passed the tent of his brother, Jacob, he caught the fragrant aroma of some cooking beans. That fragrance went to his brain like wine. "Let me gulp down some of that red stuff," he said. "All right," answered Jacob, provided you let me have your birthright." Esau glared a moment in resentment and said, "Take it, I am about to die." How stupid! He held a bowl of beans so close under his nose that he forgot all the high privileges and responsibilities of the spiritual leadership of his clan.

That was the trouble with the Rich Fool of whom Jesus spoke. We sometimes criticize him because he looked ahead. But the trouble with him was that he did not look far enough ahead. He had his gaze so fixed upon abundant crops, upon well filled barns, that he forgot all other values. It is as blundering, common as feedish as it is tragic. The Rich Young Ru德尔 made the same mistake. He felt the spell of Jesus. He longed to be his disciple. But his wealth held him back. He so fixed his gaze on the treasures that he must give up that he forgot all the finer spiritual treasures.
that he might work. This man was surely not a fool because he refused to fix his gaze solely upon the near. Why then, I repeat, was he a fool? He was a fool, not because he looked ahead, he was rather a fool because he got his eyes so fixed on the distant that he ignored the near altogether. In the building of his life he so fixed his gaze upon the spire that he was to build that he ignored the foundation. He so fixed his gaze upon the future that he utterly forgot and ignored the present. It is wise to look ahead, but so to look ahead as to ignore the here and now ends in tragic folly.

II.

What did this man miss by taking the far view? What did he ignore.

1. He ignored what was present in space. He forgot his present gifts, his own talents. His mind was so fixed on the gift of the man that had two talents or five, that he forgot what he had in his own hand. He was so interested in the other man's garden that he forgot his own.

Failing to see his own gifts and abilities he failed to realize his own opportunities. There were so many fine things that others could do, but nothing he could do. There were so many services they could render, but his field was so narrow and small that he could do nothing about it. Sometime ago a man came forward at the close of the service and said, "I am anxious to do some work for the Lord. I am his friend and want to help to build his kingdom." "What is your business?" I asked. "I am a traveling man," he answered. "Do you know many of your fellow travelers who are not Christians?" I asked. "Plenty," he replied. "Did you ever speak to them about the privilege of discipleship to your Lord?" "No" he answered rather reluctantly. "I do not want to do it that way. I want to prepare a lecture on the "Prince of Peace" and deliver it in your church." There was with opportunities abundant, but he thought only of taking advant-
age of the other man's opportunities.

2. Then this far-seeing fool fixed his gaze only on what was distant in time. There were two big days in his calendar, two red letter days. The first of these was yesterday. Yesterday it was a privilege to live. Yesterday the great books were written, the great inventions were perfected, the great discoveries were made. Yesterday men were men, and preachers were something as preachers ought to be. Yesterday new continents were to be discovered and subdued. But all that is past now.

And the other red letter was tomorrow. Tomorrow the work that today he had neglected he would perform with ease and skill. Tomorrow the preparation that he had failed to make he would make. Tomorrow, the service that he had forgotten would be rendered. The coward would become a hero tomorrow. The sinner would be a saint tomorrow. The slave would be free tomorrow.

You remember the story of the plague of frogs that was sent upon Egypt? The story said that there came to the Egyptians a plague of loathsome frogs. There were frogs in the fields and frogs in the town; frogs under the house and frogs in the house; frogs in the bed and under the bed; frogs on the table and under the table; frogs in the dishes and in the food. Everywhere there were frogs. Pharaoh, with his people, was horrified and disgusted. He hurried to Moses with a request to remove the frogs. "When do you want us to get the things away?" asked Moses. "Tomorrow," came the answer. How we flatter ourselves that all our failures will become success tomorrow.

Now in taking this far view the fool ignores two items of supreme importance.

First, he ignores the here. Here, of course is a prosaic place. It is not half so romantic as yonder. But, it is a place that if you ignore it there will not be any worthwhile yonder. What you do yonder will be largely determined by what you do here. If you are a weakling here, you will likely
be a weakling yonder. If you are faithful here, you will likely be even more faithful yonder. The only way to get ready for yonder, whether that world is here or now, is to deal bravely with the here. Then this fool ignored today. That is a very commonplace time, but it is the only time there is. To lose today is to lose tomorrow. It is to lose all eternity.

III.

It is easy to see how the ignoring of the here and now ends in tragedy. The only place you have to play your part is the place you are. You remember the man in Asia who owned a little garden. One night he had a guest. That guest sat with him far into the night telling him about diamonds. At last they went to bed. There was no sleep for the owner of this little garden. The lust for diamonds had taken hold of his heart. The little patch that he possessed seemed altogether contemptible. He sold it for a trifle and went diamond hunting. He missed his quest and at last in despair threw himself into the sea. But the man who bought his garden thought so well of it that he worked it. And by so doing he discovered a diamond, and his garden became the Golconda Diamond Mines.

In the vision of Sir Launfal there was a knight you remember, who set out in search of the Holy Grail. In all countries he pursued his quest, but in vain. At last, broken and old, he came back to his castle to have the door of that castle shut in his face. As he turned away a beggar asked him for alms. He shared his crust with him and drank with him out of a wooden bowl. And as he drank, thus he found the Holy Grail. He found it, not by searching in some distant land, he found it at his own door. To throw away here is to throw away the only place you have.

To throw away now is to throw away the only time you have. Tomorrow
may be beautiful today, but the tragedy of it is that it never comes. When Felix was deeply stirred by the appeal of Paul; when he looked wistfully toward the heights and longed to climb into a finer manhood, he missed it all. How? In the surest way possible. He said "Go thy way for this time." Put off for a single moment the doing of any deed and you will put off that deed through all eternity. The only place you have is here. The only time you have is now. To throw it away is to throw away all your hopes for time and for eternity.

It is said that the devil being a bit disappointed in the progress of the kingdom of evil called his imps together to inquire how a successful work of condemnation could be accomplished. Many suggestions were offered. One shrewd imp said. "Let me go to the world and tell them that there is no God. Let me tell them that all thought of the loving heavenly father is only wishful thinking. Let me tell them that the universe with its earth, its seas, its stars, its sun are the product of blind force that had no prevision of what they were creating. Let me tell them that man is without significance. That personality is of no more worth than a mote that peoples the sunbeam. That men die and perish just as the beasts.

The devil listened attentively, "But when the imp had finished he shook his head and said. "No," he said, "that will not do. Men are foolish, but not that foolish. Besides man is incredibly religious. Some might be taken in by such idiocy, but these are comparatively few. Besides that is old stuff. We can't win that way."

Then a yet shrewder imp offered another suggestion. "Let me go and tell men that there is a God. That he is a loving heavenly father. Let me tell them that God is so loving that there is nothing in him of which to be afraid. Let me tell men that the law of sowing and reaping is a farce. That men can "gather grapes of thorns and figs of thistles." Let me convince
them that while a few foolish and silly might reap as they sow, those who are wise will know how to reverse the laws of nature and from a sowing of tares reap a rich harvest of wheat." But again the devil shook his head and said, "You can't get away with that. Too many men know of their own experiences that what they sow they reap."

Then a little imp stood up, who had the name of being the shrewdest of all. "I have a plan," he said. "Let me go and tell men that there is a loving heavenly father. Let me tell them that Whatever a man saeth that shall he also reap. But let me tell them further that there is no use in taking this matter seriously. There will be plenty of time tomorrow. All I will urge them to do is to throw away today." The devil smiled, and all the imps applauded. And that was the plan adopted. It is one that is being worked now. I daresay it has wrecked more lives than any other one thing.

"Procrastination is the thief of time,
Year after year it steals till all are fled;
And to the mercies of a moment leaves
The vast concerns of an eternal scene."

Some years ago I was visiting in a home where there was quite an intelligent mother who was not a Christian. She did not seem vastly interested. In the course of the conversation, however, I asked her a question. "Did you know," I said, "that God has set a special day for your salvation?" She looked a bit surprised and said, "No, I didn't know that."

"He has. Not only so, but he has set a special hour, a special moment. Do you know when that date is?" "No," she replies. "If I tell you the exact day and hour and moment of his appointment, will you keep the engagement?"

She looked serious, then she said "I will." Then I told her the date. "Now is the accepted time, and today is the day of salvation." That is your date and mine. If we meet it life ends in victory. If we throw it away, we throw
"The Far-seeing Fool"

away tomorrow and all eternity.
THE FOOLISH LOOKING FOOL
Proverbs 17:24

"The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth."

I have not called this man a foolish looking fool because he has the appearance of a fool. There is nothing about his personal appearance to indicate his idiocy. He has neither the blank face nor the lack-luster eye of the mentally unbalanced. His foolishness consists in the way in which he uses his eyes, the manner of his looking. He is utterly blind to the near. He has an eye for the distant and for the distant only. "The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth."

Now it is well enough to have an eye for the distant. The man who sees only the near would be to be pitied. He would miss many of the finest inspirations of life. He would also miss some of the finest hopes, but to miss the near altogether, to refuse to see anything but the distant must end in tragedy. Such looking brands the looker as a fool.

"A fools eyes are in the ends of the earth." This type of individual is a very common type. Of all the fools about whom I am to speak to you I suppose this type is the most numerous. In a congregation of this size there are doubtless scores if not hundreds of them. The type of foolishness here represented is exceedingly human. It belongs in a measure to everyone of us. It is that something that makes us feel that almost any time is better than the present, and almost any place is better than here.

When this fool sees only the distant it means that he despises the things that are present.

1. He despises the things present in time. There are good days in his calendar, but none of them is today. For instance, yesterday was a fine day. What a pity that he could not have lived in that distant day that has dropped into the sunset! For it was yesterday that all the great inventions were made. Yesterday some fortunate fellow invented the steam engine and the steam boat. He invented the telephone and the telegraph and the wireless and the radio. He invented the airship and the jazz music and the new dance steps. He invented everything in fact that is worth inventing.

Yes, it was yesterday that all the great explorers lived. It was then that all the great discoveries were made. There are no new sea routes to be discovered to India. There is no new North America to be given to the world. Even the heavens have been explored and mapped. The dark continent has been penetrated and boats have ascended the Amazon and the Nile. Hence all the glamor and the romance have gone. There is nothing more to be discovered in this prosaic time that we call today.

Then too it was yesterday when all the great books were written. Yesterday Shakespeare gave us his magic page. Yesterday Dickens and Thackeray and Hawthorne dreamed their dreams. Yesterday Tennyson spilled out his
lyrics. Yesterday Carlyle hurled his thunderbolts. Yesterday Browning built his massive temple. They said everything that was to be said. Had the fool lived before then he might have beaten them to it; but it is too late now.

Then yesterday there was opportunity for high and chivalrous service. Yesterday mail clad knights rode forth to the defense of the weak. But today all high and poetic service is out of the question. There is nothing better to do than to either fight windmills with Don Quixote or to sit in idleness and dream of the great days that have gone.

Everything was better on yesterday. Men and women were somewhat as they ought to be. Women were queenly and men were chivalrous. Women had long hair and men wore wigs. Churches were perfect in their spirituality and preachers could preach. My how fervently a fool looks back to the good old times of fifty years ago.

Then there is a second red letter day in the fool's calendar and that is tomorrow. Everything worth while that he has ignored and neglected in today he is going to accomplish in tomorrow. All the achievements that he has postponed because they are unpleasant and difficult he is going to put thru in perfect order tomorrow, for the things that are hard today will of course be easy tomorrow. The things that cannot be done but by rugged toil today will be accomplished without any effort tomorrow. The prize that can only be reached with intense struggle today will be slipped into his hands tomorrow. From useless he will become useful tomorrow. From a liability he will become an asset. From a sinner he will become a saint. From a burden he will become wings. From a heartache to those who love him he will become a creature of joy and pride tomorrow.

But what is the difficulty of his theory in ignoring the present moment? He ignores all the time he has. If he will not act in the present then he will not act at all. I heard of a young fellow the other day who was engaged to be married to a charming girl. The father's consent had to be obtained. He asked the old gentleman to go walking with him. He saw a big rock by the side of the road and vowed he would ask him when they had reached that rock. But his courage failed. He said "I will wait until I get to that big oak", and here again his courage failed him, and he put it off again and again till he returned home and the girl was never asked for and the marriage never took place. How much wiser was that man who overcame his shrinking and in the present moment asked the girl with whom he was riding how she would like to be buried in his family grave yard?

The only time, I repeat, that you and I have is this time. If we will not act in the now we will not act at all. But what a strange tendency we have for waiting. You remember that time when Egypt had its plague of frogs and there were frogs everywhere, Moses asked Pharaoh when he should remove the frogs, and Pharaoh said "tomorrow".

It is gazing upon that distant day that has wrecked more souls possibly than any other one thing. It is then that the young fellow who is wasting his time in school is going to get busy. It is then that the trifler is going to be serious. It is then that the awakened man is going to be converted. What said Felix to Paul in that sterling sermon that the great apostle had preached to him. Felix was stirred to the depths of
The Foolish Looking Fool -3.

his soul. But when pressed for an immediate decision the best he could do was to say "Go thy way for this time." And thus he threw away his chance. Thus he missed his opportunity forever.

There is but one time in which God ever promises to save a single soul. You can search every page in this Book and there is no promise given for tomorrow. I was talking to an unsaved woman some time ago and I said to her, "Did you know that God set a definite time when you are to be saved?" And she answered "No." I said, "If I show you that he has would you keep your engagement with the Lord, God Almighty?" She declared that she would. I then gave her His word: "Now is the accepted time", and "Today is the day of salvation."

Believe me, every promise of God is a present promise. Every call of God is a present call. "Let the wicked man forsake his ways and the righteous man his thoughts, and then let him turn unto the Lord and He will have mercy. When is he to turn? Not in some far off tomorrow that never comes. He is to turn today, for to refuse to turn in the present is to refuse forever.

2. Then the fool despises the things that are near in space. He not only despises the now he despises also the here. For instance, he has no respect for his own talents simply because they are his own. He is so busy looking at and envying the man of five talents that he allows his own to slip thru his fingers and go to waste. He is so busy telling you what he would do if he only had the other man's ability that he squanders his own ability.

This man is also going to tell you about the other man's duties and obligations. He knows what I ought to do. He knows what you ought to do. He knows how I ought to preach. He knows how you ought to conduct your family affairs. He knows the kind of Christian you ought to be. I went to a town some years ago to hold a meeting and one of the first gentlemen I struck was a man of this type. He knew what everybody else ought to do. And when I asked him about his own obligations, he closed up and was as dumb as an oyster. The fool sees the other fellow's obligations but is blind to his own.

3. This man was blind to his own opportunities. If he is holding a position, he is blind to the importance of that position. It is too small for him. Therefore he is too small for it. He is always complaining about his hard luck. He is always wanting to get into a big position when he is failing in the one that he has. He is rattling around in a mustard seed and all the while whining that somebody doesn't put him in a hogshead. He wonders why he is not made the head of the firm while he is studying the clock more than he studies his employer's interest.

There is but one sure way to get into a better position and that is to over-fill the one you have. I think there was never a time when the world was so eagerly hunting for folks who can put over a job as now. If you will fill the place that you have, then you will get a better place. If you despise that place, then you will lose it and the better place as well.
Did you ever hear the story of the man who owned a beautiful little cottage and garden away across the seas? A stranger spent the night with him one night and told about diamonds. This man made up his mind that he must discover a diamond mine. So he sold his little place for almost nothing and set out diamond hunting. At last, poverty stricken, he threw himself into the sea. The man who bought his place went to work in his own little garden. One day he unearthed a jewel, and thus was discovered the Golconda Diamond Mine, one of the richest mines ever discovered.

The fool despises his present opportunities to serve. He wants to be helpful. Everybody does. But the service upon which he sets his heart is a distant and romantic service. He would like to preach to congregations of ten to twelve thousand, or he would like to go as a missionary to some distant part of the earth. He would like to fill a place akin to that filled by St. Paul. Meanwhile, he is utterly ignoring the opportunities that lie right at his door. I have known mothers who were so busy reforming a city that they left their own children to the nurture of the street. I have known folks so interested in the foreign field that they ignored the heathen right at our door.

Do not understand me to say a word against the foreign missionary. I would say every word possible in its favor. I wish far more of us would volunteer for this noble service. But remember this: The test of the genuineness of your call is what you are willing to do here. You are to begin at Jerusalem. You are to begin in your own home. It is little short of positive shame to be willing to give money to christianize Africa when you deal in an unchristian spirit with the colored people that live in your own city, and maybe work in your own home.

Thus we need to realize that however narrow your sphere seems to be, there is room in it for the rendering of a great and abiding service. Do not despise your opportunities just because they are near. It is worth while to make father and mother a little happier even if they are plain prosaic folks that you are very intimately acquainted with. It is worth while to be faithful to your children, even tho they are your own. It is worth while to make the burden as easy for your wife and make life as joyful for her even if she was stupid enough to enter into a very near and sacred relation with you. It is worth while to keep up something of a sweet romance with your husband even tho he has no glamour that belongs to the distant knight at the end of the rainbow.

One of the tragedies of life is that we so often fail to appreciate each other till we lose each other. So often we give our flowers for hands that cannot hold them and spill our love words into ears that cannot hear them and shower our kisses upon lips that are powerless to respond. When they are gone we miss them. But we are sorry that we were not kinder. Like the girl who refused to bring her mother a glass of water, there comes a time when we would give the dearest treasure of life for the opportunity to make good our neglect of the simple kindnesses to the inmates of the home.
Finally, we despise our opportunity to know Jesus Christ just because that opportunity is near. If we had to go all the way to Jerusalem in order to be saved, there is not a man or woman listening to me that would not be saving money to go. But because salvation is offered to you in the here and now you despise it. Because Jesus Christ is so near you ignore him. It is an old story. Elisha had power to cure leprosy, but none of his own people asked for the cure. The only man who was ever cured came from distant Damascus.

There was a woman in search of health who wandered over a large part of the world. She visited one watering place after another, and consulted one physician after another. At last a physician in a distant land told her that the only chance to recover would be for her to drink at a certain well in Scotland. And she came to discover that the well that he recommended was on her own estate. She had despised its healing waters not because they were worthless, but because they were near. What enchantment distance lends to the view. I went to a place to hold prayer meeting some months ago. They could not hold the service in the regular prayer meeting room. They had to go to the auditorium and it overflowed. And that was a thing that never happened when I was pastor. It only happened when I was gone. We find ourselves caught constantly under the spell of the distant.

Do you remember the vision of Sir Launfel? He went out in search of the Holy Grail, but he found it not in the distant places of the earth. He found it by his own door as he did a commonplace, homely duty that came to his hand and did it in the spirit of brotherhood. It was then that he discovered in the old beggar to whom he ministered Jesus Christ Himself. And, mark you, all your discoveries and all mine are to be made not by day dreaming nor star gazing, nor fixing our eyes upon the distant, they are to be made by our loyal faithfulness to present duties and present opportunities.

In gazing upon the distant he loses the here and now. That is the first calamity. And remember the here and now is all that he has. It is useless for you to tell what you are going to do tomorrow if you are doing nothing today. It is useless for you to tell what you used to do down at your home church if you have a letter locked up in your trunk today. The man who says only the far misses his only wealth and that is the present moment and the present place.

Not only does he miss these treasures, but he misses also the distant things upon which he gazes. The only possible way of getting ready for tomorrow is by a wise use of today. The only possible way of attaining distant good is in the faithful use of our present opportunities. The best of teachers cannot give a good grade to the student that has wasted his time. God Himself cannot give a passing mark to you when you have un­fitted yourself by your wasted present. Whether you pass the examination or flunk does not depend on the teacher, it depends on you. Whether you find an abundant inheritance into the joys of your Lord does not depend on Jesus, it depends on you. God Himself cannot give you heaven when you have Hell in your own heart.
For these reasons, the only big question before you tonight is, what are you going to do with this opportunity. God promises you salvation tonight and He does not promise it any other time. A sure way of salvation is to accept that promise. A sure way of damnation is to wait until tomorrow. (Louis Benois)
"Far-Sighted"

Proverbs 17:24

"The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth."

The text presents us with a far seeing man but it calls this far seeing man a fool. Wherein is he foolish? Certainly it is not because he sees beyond the things that are in reach of his hand. The purpose of the wise man in giving us this text is not to teach the importance of near-sightedness. The Bible never commands the forward look. It urges upon us the importance of taking account of the future. Before building our tower, we are to be far sighted enough to count the cost.

The far view has been an unfalling characteristic of all the great saints of the past. How did Abraham come to be the friend of God? How was it that he entered so beautifully into the place that God had made for him. How was God able at once to bless him and to make him a blessing? It was because Abraham had the far view. He left Ur of the Chaldees and journeyed into the unknown. because he had caught a vision, because he had caught the far view. He had glimpsed the tower of that city whose builder and maker is God.

The same is characteristic of Moses. By faith Moses, when he was grown to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Estimating the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he looked not on everything else to the coming reward. That is, Moses had the far view. He refused to let the wealth and pomp and splendor and power of Egypt blind him to the unfading glories that were yet locked in the bosom of the centuries.

Now just as far-sightedness is a characteristic of all the saints, near-sightedness lies back of all spiritual failure. What was the matter with Balaam? He was near-sighted. He allowed a donkey to shut out all the glories that might have been his as the spiritual leader of his people. The same was the blight of the rich farmer whom God called a fool. His gaze was so fixed on barns that he failed utterly to see those eternal treasures, houses where moth nor dust doth not corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal.

What is the matter with that young man who is beginning to turn aside in the paths of dissipation? He refuses to look ahead. He refuses to look into the face of the man that he will be tomorrow. If he could only get a glimpse of himself as the robbed and defrauded thing that he will be by and by, he would not spend his day as he is spending it. If that young girl who is today flirting with the unclean thing, would only take the far view of herself, if she would only see that tarnished thing that she will be tomorrow, before whose soiled face every door is shut, she might hate the thing that is robbing her. But she is being blinded by her near-sightedness.
If then the far view has characterized all the saints and if near sightedness has characterized all the great moral failures, why is the hero of our text dubbed the fool. Answer, his foolishness consists not in the things that he sees but in the things that he fails to see. To have the distant view is commendable and even necessary, but to be so absorbed in the distant that you utterly ignore the near, that is a calamity. To be so intent upon the spire with which you intend to adorn the temple of life that you utterly ignore the foundation is to mark yourself a fool.

II

"The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth", therefore, he sees the distant and the distant only. All that is near he overlooks. First, he overlooks the present time. There are two great days in his calendar and only two.

(1). First there is yesterday. What a day was that. It was then that all great inventions were perfected. It was then that all great discoveries were made. It was then that all worth while books were written. It was then that all moral revolutions were wrought. It was then that all high and chivalrous adventures were performed. If the fool could have lived in yesterday, he would have been one of the wisest of the wise.

(2). Then the second great day in the fool's calendar, is tomorrow. How utterly different he is going to be from the dull, drab, commonplace of today. It is tomorrow that he is to come into possession of a kind of Aladdin's Lamp. The difficulties of today will be things of no consequence tomorrow. The ignorance of today will give place to clear-eyed knowledge tomorrow. The folly of today will be soundest wisdom tomorrow. The sin of today will be strangely transformed into holiness tomorrow.

What a day of all days is that one day that never comes, tomorrow. If all the moral reformation, if all the kind deeds, if all the helpful service that had been planned for that day had actually been performed, the world would have been made a paradise long ago. For it is always the day upon which it is easier to do everything that we do except sin. Even when the plague of frogs was upon Egypt and there were frogs in the house and under the house, upon the table and under the table, and frogs were everywhere, and Moses asked the king when he wanted the plague removed, he gave the answer that has been given by a billion sin-plagued souls, "Tomorrow".

2. The far sighted fool overlooks the things present in space.

(1). He overlooks his present obligations. There is a sense in which he feels himself a debtor, but he wants to pay in some distant and romantic fashion. I used to live next door to a woman who
A few years ago a young colored man took up his residence at Tuskegee Institute. This school was built on some sand hills that cost only .50¢ an acre. But this young man had the wisdom to take advantage of his present opportunity and by so doing he has perfected two hundred articles of value out of that sand. Only two crops could be grown on this sandy land. One of them is potatoes and the other peanuts. Out of these potatoes this man has perfected one hundred different articles of usefulness and out of the peanuts, one hundred and ten.

What is the outcome of ignoring the present and the near. There is but one possible outcome, and that is utter failure. The man that is so absorbed in the distant that he ignores what is at hand will miss everything. First, he will miss the near. You remember Esop's story of the dog and the piece of meat. A dog was one day crossing over a stream upon a foot log. This dog had a fine piece of meat in his mouth. As he looked down into the water, he saw a reflection of himself, but he thought it was another dog. The piece of meat that this dog carried looked much larger and better than his own.
Therefore, he instantly dropped what he already had and dashed into the water to capture that of his fellow.

The mistake of this dog is the blunder of the fool. The dog lost the piece of meat that he had. So does the fool who ignores today. He loses it. To refuse to act in the present is to throw away all the time that you have. To refuse to act in the present, therefore, is not to act at all.

There was once a young man engaged to be married to a charming girl. There was only one other move to be made, he had not asked her father. He took a walk with the old gentleman for this purpose. They had talked about everything except the one thing for which the walk was taken. The young man would see a large tree ahead, and say to himself, "When we get to that tree, I am going to make my request". But arriving there, his heart would fail and he would postpone his question until another object was reached. Thus the walk was finished and the question was never asked.

It is thus that we throw away our chances at Jesus Christ. Why did not Felix become a Christian. It was not because he never heard the Gospel. It was not because that when he did hear it he was not stirred by it. He was tremendously stirred. He failed because he said, "Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season, I will call for Thee". That is, he failed by refusing to accept in the present moment, a present Christ, and his failure has been the failure of millions.

There are many promises of salvation in this Book, but all of them fix your salvation at exactly the same day, at exactly the same hour, at exactly the same moment. "Did you know," I said to one that was not a Christian, "that God had set a special date for your salvation?" "No" was the answer. "If I show you that He has, will you accept Him?" "Yes" was the reply. Then I answered, "Now is the accepted time and today is the day of salvation; If you are saved, you must be saved in the now, for that is all the time there is.

Not only did this dog lose the piece of meat that he had when he made his foolish jump, but he failed to get the piece that he saw in the distance. And the same is the failure of the fool. Tomorrow and the yonder are very alluring but he misses them. Because to throw away today is to miss tomorrow, and to despise the here is also to throw away the yonder. The distant heaven, therefore, that I seek in the spring of the here and now I find transformed into a hell when I actually arrive. For the only way to get ready for a great tomorrow is to appreciate today and live it as nobly and bravely and faithfully as we can.
THE MENACE OF LAWLESSNESS
Proverbs 29:18

"Where there is no vision the people cast off restraint."

I.

"The people cast off restraint." Everybody makes up his mind to do as he pleases. Everybody decides to have his own way. Everybody determines to be a law unto himself. Everybody makes up his mind that the way to be free is to acknowledge no law. Therefore, we shake the hand of man and the hand of God from our shoulders and fling out into life bent upon doing our own will, bent upon acknowledging no restraint whether it be the outward restraint of the State or the restraint of the moral law.

Men have always had a tendency to make this tragic blunder. They are making it today at a rate that is perfectly appalling. The United States has now become the most lawless nation on the face of the earth. Poverty has always been considered a breeder of crime, but we have broken all records for lawlessness while being the most prosperous nation on the face of the earth. We have broken our own records while being prosperous than we have ever been before. Therefore, with less excuse for crime we have broken all criminal records.

What is America’s biggest business? We carry on a tremendous trade in the automobile industry. We own three-fourths of all the automobiles in the world. The budget of this great industry is five billions of dollars annually. That is more than it takes to run the Federal government. The budget of the government of the United States is four and one-half billion dollars. But the crime budget of this country, according to the North American Review of Reviews is thirteen billions of dollars. That is twice as much as the automobile industry. That is almost three times as much as it cost to run the national government. America’s crime business is the biggest in the world.
The Menace of Lawlessness

And who carries on this enormous business? It is not carried on simply by a group of foreigners that have come into our country who know no respect for our laws. It is not carried on by a few old and hardened criminals. It is carried on mainly by our young men. It is estimated that seventy-five percent of the crime of the United States is committed by young men and women under twenty-five. And crime seems to be quite as prevalent among the native born Anglo-Saxon as among our foreign-born populace. The homicide records of Memphis as made is almost ten times that of the city of New York.

This crime incubus does not exact its toll from the few but from the many. Every man who works at all has to pay his part. It costs us something more than $150.00 a year for every man, woman, and child. There are some cities where this is increased. In Chicago, for instance, it cost $45.00 a head to keep up the racket game. That is, six hundred crooks bleed three millions of people of one hundred forty-five millions of dollars annually. A bootblack has to pay fifteen dollars as an initiation fee and then two dollars per month for protection. If he refuses to pay, his place is bombed or he is killed. If he appeals to the police he finds the police in with the racketeers. So, he is utterly powerless.

II.

Now what lies back of this appalling situation? What are some of its causes? To speak negatively, this is not caused by too many laws. I think they have too many. There are eighty-nine thousand on our statute books. But, of course, most of them are as dead as King Tut. We know nothing about them and we do not bother. Nor is it caused by the Eighteenth Amendment. The violation of the Eighteenth Amendment may cause a good deal
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of it but not the Eighteenth Amendment itself.

Can we say that this crime is being carried on by folks who are naturally criminals, a group of morons, etc. I know we like to look at the criminal and say, "what a horrible face." We like to feel that while he is made of the slime and ooze of things, we are made of far finer stuff. But as a matter of fact, the average criminal is made out of exactly the same kind of stuff that we are. When he came into this world he had exactly the same possibilities that we have. And certainly, as a rule, he is quite intelligent. A noted physician recently made a test of the inmates of a certain penitentiary and also of those doing guard duty. He declared that the mentality of the inmates was seventy-five percent higher than the good men and true that were set to guard them.

When I was pastor in Texas I used to go quite often to preach to the inmates of the state reformatory. I made my first appearance with fear and trimbling. I said to myself, what on earth can I possibly say to interest a group of wild Arabs that have been gathered from the streets of our cities. But I managed to get thru that first time. And though it has been my privileged to speak before some of the most cultured audiences that have assembled in America, I have never preached to a quicker audience, one that was more keen and alert and alive than that audience of young criminals. A joke that the average crowd would scarcely see at all, they would see before it was half finished and sometimes laugh so enthusiastically over it that they could not hear the finish at all. The same was my experience preaching to the reformatory in Washington, D.C. These young delinquents, out of whom the hardened criminals are made do not become criminals because they are mentally unfit and unfurnished.

1. The first contribution to crime that I want to mention is the
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glorification of crime that we often see in our newspapers and sometimes in moving pictures. It is not so dangerous to portray sin if it is made to look what it is, an ugly and ghastly thing. All the great artists who have written truly have shown us something of sin. We see it in Shakespeare. Take Macbeth, for instance. Crime is there but it does not look fascinating. It is loathsome and repellent. Hawthorne writes of sin in his SCARLET LETTER but he spreads no phosphorus light on its ugliness. But a gunman was buried in Chicago recently and the floral offerings were paraded before the eyes of the world. It was splendid enough for a president. It took seventeen cars to carry the flowers.

2. Another cause of crime is the miscarriage of justice. Sometimes this comes about thru a police force that is not free. Too often in our American cities the police force becomes a political football. They receive their pay from the city, but they owe their allegiance to a "political boss."

Then often justice grossly miscarries criminal escape that ought to be punished. It is estimated that a criminal has forty-one chances for escape today for one of conviction or punishment. Then what is equally bad, those we do punish often times are those that deserve it the less. Sometimes the offender is very young, he has not had a fair chance. He is sent up for a long term with hardened criminals. He comes out of the prison at last with soul warped and twisted, a second Jean Valjean.

3. The third cause of crime is the failure of the home. One thousand youthful offenders were examined in Boston. It was found that sixty percent of these came from broken homes. The casting off of restraint of the marriage relation, the casting off of the restraint of the respon-
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sibility of motherhood and fatherhood, this is one of the most fruitful causes of lawlessness in America today.

Then when the home holds together there is often times a tragic lack of home training. There is no family altar, there is no right example, there is no wholesome discipline. Outlawry is not born in the slums, it is born in our homes. A child that does not learn to keep the laws of the home is likely to give trouble at school. He is likely to give trouble both to himself and to others in the outer world. Nothing is more needed today than right example and right training and discipline in the home.

4. The final cause I mention and the one that lies back of and includes all others is this, a lost sense of God. "Where there is no vision the people cast off restraint." That is, when we lose our sense of God, when we lose respect for His will and word, then we lose the supreme safeguard. Voltaire is rated by many as an atheist but he it was who said, if there were no God he would have to invent one because the world simply cannot get along without God.

This flinging away from God does not always issue in crime against the State, but it always issues in lawlessness. And I fancy that we have never quite so carried it out to the letter as today when we fling away from all restraints. Bertrand Russell in speaking of the good life said that he was not going to undertake to teach his child that fidelity to the marriage vow was of any merit, that he was not going to teach him that it was of any worth not to have escapades and sexual lapses. Another ballad writer speaks of morality as a disease, as a weakness, saying that purity in women was a handicap and a liability rather than an asset. The nation that forgets God is headed for destruction. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin will bow the head of any people."
Now what are we to do about this widespread lawlessness. And here I am speaking not only with regard to those who break the law of the state, but those who disregard God.

1. We must see and teach others to see that law is not our foe but our friend. Take the laws of God, for instance. Why are they written? Not for His benefit but for ours. The same is true of the laws of the State. They are to safeguard society, and in keeping them we find our highest freedom.

But in spite of the plain truth of this, we have been prone thru the centuries to feel that freedom lay in the way of casting off restraint. That was the first lie that the devil ever told. "Sin," he said, "and you will find the larger life." But Eve did not find a larger life; she found death. Freedom can only come in obedience to law. If the train does not keep in its narrow track, it will become a wreck. If the ship throws its compass overboard it finds no port, it ends at the bottom of the sea. The man who determines to be free becomes a slave.

Possibly some of you are bewildered in the presence of the changes that have been wrought in our modern life. The Bible has been criticized the church often times discredited, but this at least is left, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." That law is most heartening. It tells us that we may choose our own harvest. That is a great privilege. But it warns us also that wrong sowing is sure to result in the reaping of a wrong harvest. "What we sow as a nation we reap. What we sow as individuals we reap. We need above all else a return to God. He alone gives freedom." But it is a freedom that leaves us with compelling obligations. "I must" was a word often on the lips of Jesus. Every man whose life has
any worth or driving power always has things that he must do, things that he must not do. Esau was a profane man. His life was unfenced. As such it ended in failure. The heroes of the world have been men who have said, "I must do this and I cannot do that."

Finally if we are to save America we are not going to do it by saving the hardened sinners and the hardened criminals that mar our world today. Our chance is with the children. Every generation our Lord sweeps our world clean and gives us a new chance. If we save the children we will save the world. This we can only hope to do thru a vital religion that is intellectually applied. It is amazing how few ever come into our Juvenile Courts from genuinely Christian homes. It is perfectly amazing how few are ever arrested who are regular attendants at Sunday School. But we have some twenty-seven millions of children and young people who are receiving no religious training whatever.

France undertook to dig the Panama canal. She had to give over the enterprise because her people could not live there. Tropical diseases made it impossible. Later the canal was dug by the United States. Today it is the most wholesome place to live. Why? Not because a skilled physician is there to treat a patient when he is discovered with yellow fever or some other deadly disease, but because the mosquito and the housefly have been destroyed. The causes have been put away. We must use the same good sense in dealing with the sin of lawlessness. We can make a forward step by having a wholesome Christian atmosphere in our own homes.
Therefore I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. So choose life, that you may live...
"She looketh well to the ways of her household."

-- Proverbs 31:27

I

This is a part of a famous portrait. It is drawn by the skilled hand of a great artist. Who the artist was we do not know. Nor do we know what name he gave to his famous picture. It is easy, however, to guess what he would have called it had he not left it nameless. It is his conception of the ideal woman. In this amazing picture he tells us what he conceives to be womanhood at its best. The woman here drawn is ideal for two reasons:

1. She is ideal in her character. The first characteristic of the ideal woman according to this artist is strength. Who can find a strong woman? Of course the strength that he has in mind is that highest type of strength, moral and spiritual. Physically, women is not man's equal. But often in moral and spiritual strength she surpasses him. For instance, it is rare to see a husband and father carry on religiously without the power of his wife. I recall a fine steward of mine who married a beautiful woman who was about the strength morally and spiritually of a cobweb. She did not antagonize him in his religious life. She failed to back him. They both became pagans.

But, how many women have won out under similar circumstances? How often have we known a wife and mother to stand true to her faith and take every child and child into the Kingdom with her, and into the Church, when her husband was not
only not religious, but a positive pagan. The ideal woman is strong. Second, the ideal woman is tender. Her tenderness expresses itself in service. "She stretches forth her hand to the needy. I remember still the tenderness of my mother's hand in this respect, her ministry to the sick, the delicate dishes she prepared for them. I used half way to wish to be sick myself in order to be the recipient of such tender ministries as she seemed ready to give to almost any social nobody who happened to be in need.

Not only was this ideal woman kind in the use of her hands, but also in the use of her tongue. Women are rather famous for using this particular member, though I think in all sincerity we men are equally skillful. "Her tongue opened according to law." Mine often gets lawless. How many times have I gone from conversations feeling defeated and ashamed because of the lawlessness of my tongue! But this woman had a law-abiding tongue, and the law according to which it worked was the law of kindness. She said the gentle and the helpful thing.

Then, she was a woman of cheerful courage. She was not afraid of the winter, because all of her children were clothed in scarlet. She laughed at coming dangers. That is, she faced whatever tomorrow held with courageous confidence. She did not worry herself to death. She was not a bunch of nerves, irritable and peevish, and hard to live with. She was strong and kind and courageous. She was all these because she was a woman of faith, a woman of genuine consecration to God.

2. Then, the author regards this woman as ideal because of the task at which she worked. She was a home-maker. She was a wife and mother. He says of her with a kind of joyful
pride, "She looketh well to the ways of her household. She puts her heart and soul into the task. She does it with such consecration and with such solid good sense that she makes a success of it. Her husband praises her and her children rise up and call her blessed." All this, because she has succeeded at the greatest enterprise in the world, that of building a home.

Now, if this artist were to come back to our world today he would find many changes. He would find woman enjoying a freedom that was absolutely unthinkable in his day. He would find her engaged not simply in one task, but in more than five hundred tasks. He would find her still working in the home but he would find millions working outside the home. But having looked the situation over, I have an idea that he would not change in the slightest degree his portrait of the ideal woman. He would believe still that woman comes to her best and reaches her highest heights as a home-maker. And to this, I think most of us agree. Thus we say: "Thank God for the many fine things that women are doing outside the home. But we believe that her greatest field is still there. We feel, also, that she who deliberately turns from it has abdicated her supremest throne, and stopped her ears to the dearest and sweetest throne of human aggressiveness.

Why is this the case? It is not the case, because woman is essentially inferior. The woman who goes out into the big world and wins often demonstrates her equality to man, but it is as a wife and mother that she more often demonstrates her superiority. A woman reaches her highest as a home-builder
because the home is the institution in our world of supreme importance. Almost everything that we are for good or ill can be traced directly or indirectly to the home. Every other institution succeeds or fails as it succeeds or fails.

Take the Church, for instance. It is an institution of vast importance. Jesus Christ so loved it as to give Himself for it. But it is not the Church that makes the home so much as it is the home that makes the Church. For two centuries after the death of Christ Christianity was a religion without a temple. Its services were held in the homes of the people. It was the home out of which came the Church. The same is true today. The preacher and the Sunday-school teachers can do little with your child in comparison with what the home does.

What is true of the Church is true of all our other institutions. The school is vastly important, but its usefulness is determined, in a large measure, by the home. Our National Government is important, but what we are in our national life, in our social life, in our commercial life, depends fundamentally on what we are in the home. The home is the fountain source of all else. It is from this that the streams flow that make up the great Mississippi, of our national life. If the fountain is pure, all else will be pure. If the fountain is impure, all else will be impure.

A good many years ago there was a worthless fellow in the state of Indiana named Juke. He married a woman who, if possible, was more worthless than himself. She was a bit of an outcast. Children were born to them. In the course of five generations they gave to the world approximately twelve hundred men and women. Of these twelve hundred, four hundred
of the women were prostitutes, and practically all the men were either paupers or petty criminals. They cost their state in dollars and cents nearly two millions of dollars. They cost them infinitely more in the lowered moral and spiritual temper- ature that resulted from their shoddy and filthy living.

In the state of Massachusetts there was a man named Edwards who married a young woman of fine character. Children were born to them. In the course of five generations they, too, had given to the world some twelve hundred men and women. Of these twelve hundred children, three became members of the United States Senate, thirty became judges, sixty became authors, one hundred became lawyers, and another hundred became ministers of the gospel. Out of one of these homes came influences that blasted and blinded and destroyed. Out of the other flowed a river of life on whose banks bloomed the flowers of a new and cleaner civilization. There is no estimating the value of one such clean and consecrated home, just as there is no estimating the evil of a home that strikes its flame to the God of the unclean.

III

But what effect has the new woman had on the home? The answer to that question would determine more than any other whether her freedom has made her an asset or a liability. Now, the liabilities that I am going to name may be so used in the future as to become assets, and I am optimist enough to believe that the new woman is going to be a better home-builder than the woman of yesterday. But I am persuaded that that is
a hope rather than a realization to date. The new woman is a menace to the home rather than otherwise. This, I say for three reasons:

1. The new woman is less likely to become a home-maker than was her sister of the past. This is true because she is less likely to marry. She is less likely to marry because there is less necessity for her doing so. She no longer has to marry in order to have a place to live. She is economically independent.

Not only is this the case, but oftentimes she likes her work. She finds that she has a real aptitude for a job. She likes its freedom and its contacts. She much prefers going to work at 9:00 o'clock in the morning and quitting at 5:00, to going to work at 6:00 and never quitting at all.

Then, not only does she like her work, but she likes its rewards. She has become a bit of a capitalist. She enjoys being able to buy herself a new hat or dress whenever she so desires, rather than having to wheedle the price out of some grudging and close-fisted husband. Thus, she is less likely to take the first opportunity of marriage that is offered.

Then, there is another side to the picture, it would seem that she is less likely to have an opportunity of marriage. This is true because she demands more of her prospective husband. First, she demands more financially. It costs far more to conduct a courtship and get married today than it used to. All of us are more enslaved to our material comforts. Way back in the primitive days when I got married, it was not necessary for the bridegroom to be a capitalist. It was not even necessary that he have a large salary. If such had been the case, I have an idea that my wife would have missed the
best chance she ever had. But we ventured on the munificent salary of $65.00 a month, and lived happily ever after.

But oftentimes today, the prospective bride is earning a good salary, sometimes a better one than the prospective husband. He naturally feels a delicacy, therefore, in asking her to give up her job to take his lesser salary. He is not so sure that two can live more cheaply than one. Thus the marriage is postponed, and thus oftentimes it never takes place.

One of the most appalling sights of our modern day is the growing number of young men and young women who are living together without marriage. There are some six million young men in the United States between the ages of twenty-nine and thirty who are not married. Many of them would like to marry, but they are prevented by economic reasons. I think it far better for two lovers to marry, even though they both have to work, than for them to wait so indefinitely that the springtime of life passes by, and they never marry at all.

Not only does the new woman demand more financially, but she demands more intellectually. That lessens her chances. There is this fundamental difference between men and women. A man can be happy with a woman when he knows that she is his inferior, both educationally and intellectually. But the woman cannot be so, when that is the case with her husband. A man is not happy unless he is made to believe that he is being looked up to. A woman is seldom happy unless she can look up. That puts the highly educated woman at a disadvantage in the marriage market.

"Men are not interested in women," a Christian girl said recently, "unless they are morons." Of course that is putting
the matter entirely too strong. But this much is true - if a
woman makes a man feel uncomfortable and inferior, she is not
likely to win him. If you are really interested in that young
gentleman who is calling on you, I can tell you how to get him -
listen to his inane chatter with obvious amazement. Laugh at his
jokes even though they are chestnuts that were cracked in the mouth
of the cave centuries ago. Send him away thinking he is a very
entertaining conversationalist, and he will come back. But if
you send him away feeling like a stupid donkey, then you have
seen the last of him.

Then, some few women are demanding more morally. But this
demand is as yet very slight. Of course there are some intelligent
women who realize that the stern god of science has crossed our
path, telling that, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also
reap." And for reasons of solid health, if not on moral and
religious grounds, she demands something of her husband. But
this is so rare as at present to be a negligible quantity. For
these reasons, then, the new woman is a menace to the home, because
she is less likely to establish a home.

2. She is a menace because she is quicker to wreck the home.
Since the woman left the home, divorces have increased at an enormous
rate. In one out of every seven marriages, one is sure to go upon the rocks. Who are getting these divorces? For every one man who
asks for a divorce there are four women. That is, eighty percent of
the divorces are sought by women. This does not mean necessarily
that the women are most to blame. It does not mean that she is
less long-suffering and quicker to wreck the home than she once was.

It is easy to see why this is true. Here again, she is
not held by the economic fetters that held her sister. The
woman of yesterday suffered because she did not wish to starve.
She lived with the moral leper because she felt that that was better than not living at all. The woman today, finding such relationship intolerable, quite it and makes her own living.

Then, the modern woman is no longer bound by the fear of the resulting disgrace. I can remember when to be divorced was a horrible something. I can remember when the coming of a grass widow into a community was a sensation. But that is all past. Her tribe has become enormous. She is about the most popular member of society today. And when it comes to getting married, her spinster sisters are nothing more than "Also rans". The new woman is, therefore, a menace to the home because she is quicker to wreck it than was her sister.

3. Then, the new woman is often the menace to the home even when she allows it to remain intact. This is true for at least two reasons: It is true in the first place because so many modern women have to go out to work. Being a wife and mother is a big enough job for any woman. I doubt if any industrial magnate puts forth the energy and the ability in the running of his business that Susannah Wesley put forth in the running of her home.

The new woman often menaces the home still more by going out too much to play. Now, I am not arguing for a drudge. I think it is a mistake for a women to become married to a dust pan and a mop. I think it is a mistake to get more concerned about the rug than the childish feet that walk on it. But too many modern women are standing from under their responsibilities and trying to be mothers by proxy. To take that position spells failure.

Some years ago a wealthy society woman hired a nurse for her two children. She knew little or nothing about this nurse except that she had good references. By and by her children
were afflicted by a strange malady. She took them to a physician and found that they had leprosy. She discovered, further, that her nurse was a South Sea Islander, and that they had contracted the dreadful disease from her. She and her children paid a terrible price for her standing from under her obligations.

Now, the fact that the modern woman is more independent, that she can demand more, ought to mean for tomorrow more sane and enduring marriages. It ought to mean stronger and more helpful homes. Whether it is or not depends upon what we do with this new freedom. There are many big tasks at which women may work and succeed. But the best thing that can possibly be said about this is what this wise artist said about the woman of his dream, "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and her children rise up and call her blessed."