The Inevitable Conflict

"Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Matthew 4:1

The story of the temptation of Jesus came from his own lips. He was the only one that could possibly have known about it. He tells it in pictured language such as anybody can understand. We are not to conclude from this that some visible agency of evil came and spoke to Him. On the contrary. His temptation came to him, just as ours come to us. It is this fact that makes his story of personal worth to you and me.

- I -

The first fact that impresses us in this story of Jesus is that temptation was universal. This conflict in which Jesus engaged was inevitable for him. It is inevitable for you and me. In the Middle Ages there were those who sought to hide from temptation by shutting themselves in monasteries or going to live in lonely caves. But wherever they went, the first face they saw was that of temptation. There are some places where temptations are less strong than others. But there are no places where temptation can be entirely avoided— not even in prayer, not even at the Communion table.

The fact that Jesus was tempted proves that no moral attained can exempt from temptation. Years ago I met a certain group whose members claimed that they had become so good that they were no longer tempted. But all such have run past Jesus and are looking back at Him. Real goodness may lessen the range of our temptations, it may lessen its power, but this inevitable conflict comes to all of us regardless where we go or how high we climb.
Next, this story teaches us that temptation is not sin. There is nothing wrong in being tempted; it is the yielding that is wrong. In fact, temptation in the purpose of God is not an evil, but a good. It is a part of God's plan for us. It is born of our power of choice. The fact that I have a capacity to climb must be paid for by a capacity to refuse to climb and even to sin. If I have the power in the forks of the road to take the right turn, I must also have the power to take the wrong turn. A capacity to be tempted is the price I must pay for the privilege of being a man. Without it character is impossible.

There are two voices that always speak to us in every temptation. In the first pages of Genesis we read, "God said," "the Serpent said." With every downward call there is an upward call. With every invitation to take the upward and unselfish way, there is also an invitation to take the lower and selfish way. This lower choice was possible for Jesus. Had not such been the case, His temptation was a mere sham battle. Naturally, he could approach it with courage. For me such a battle is a matter of life and death. I may fail.

It is said that honest old Israel Putman was once challenged to a duel. Being a challenge, it was his right to choose the weapons. He suggested two kegs of gun powder, each with a fuse of ten feet long. The fuses were to be lighted at the same time. The man whose fuse was slower in burning up would sin. His antagonist writhed in agony. At last he sprang to his feet and ran for his life, while Putman sat unmoved. But his complacency was due to the fact that he had seen that both kegs were filled with onions. But Christ's battle was no more sham than yours and mine. This conflict with temptation is, therefore, a matter of
deep seriousness. That is the reason Jesus taught us to pray this prayer, "Lead us not into temptation." In teaching us partition, he is not teaching us to ask nor expect exemption. He is telling us the spirit in which to approach temptation. We are asking God that we meet these temptations in the consciousness of our own weakness and also in the consciousness of His strength.

The fact that James says, "Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations", does not mean that we are to go temptation hunting. The man who does that is doomed. Years ago a candidate for the Harvard ministry said he was going to test himself by spending a few weeks in the slums of New York. So far as I know he never came out. Temptation, then, is a part of the universal life. It is a price we pay for being men and women. It may be in result, our ruin or a fuller life. Therefore, we are to meet temptation within the will of God and trusting in Him for victory.

II

Notice next the three temptations that came to Jesus. They are not unique. They are of a kind with which you and I have to deal almost everyday.

1. The first temptation of Jesus was the temptation to unbelief that would result to disobedience to the will of God. "If thou be the son of God command that these stones be made bread." This temptation was not a suggestion that Jesus doubt his unique diety. This suggestion might might read this way: "Inasmuch as you are the son of God command that these stones be made bread." What would be wrong? Hunger is perfectly natural. Yet he is invited to attain a right end in a wrong way. Since you are the son of God, there is no reason that you should suffer hunger. You can avoid at by employing your supernatural powers. But for Jesus to
have done that would have been to destroy the whole meaning of incarnation. Jesus is here not to live as the Son of God, but as a man.

This same voice spoke to Jesus again after Simon Peter had made his confession. Jesus thought he was far enough along to disclose the cross. "This shall never be unto thee." In other words, what is the use of having power if you do not use it for yourself? Jesus answered, "Get thee behind me Satan." It was the same satanic voice that had spoken to Him in the wilderness. "You have certain powers, use them for yourself." That is a question of yours and mine. It is the very heart of stewardship. Who is going to decide what you do with your life? Yourself or God?

In suggesting that Jesus make bread, the tempter is implying that if he refuses, he is going to die. He is suggesting further that if he carries out his mission, he must live. But Jesus answers, "My first duty is not to live, my first duty and only duty is the will of God." This simplifies life for all of us. We are not here to win a certain degree of success. We are not here to win or fail. We are here to do the will of God regardless of consequences.

This fact is made plain in one of the great stories of the Old Testament. Nebuchadnezzar has built a great statue of himself. At a given signal everyone was to stop and bow to the statue. But when the signal was given, two men refused to bow. Their rebellion filled the king with rage. He ordered them to obey or suffer the penalty of death.

Listen to their answer. "The God whom we serve is able to deliver us out of thou hand and he will deliver us." There we see momentary terror flash across the face of the speaker. He
remembers that some men have had to die for their faith. But instantly he recovers and continues his magnificent answer. "The God whom we serve is able to deliver us......but if not be it known unto thee, O king, we will not bow down." In other words, we can afford to die, but we cannot afford to disobey." The world owes its moral uplift not to those who have said:"I must live.", but, "I must trust in God and obey." This then, is the first temptation. So to doubt God is to believe that you can manage your own life better than He can. That comes to all of us.

2. The second temptation is to the sin of presumption. That was a wise Psalmist who said, "Keep back thou servant also from presumptuous sins." Notice the subtly of this temptation. When Jesus's faith held firm, when he said he was going to trust God whatever the cost, the temptor comes over to his side and goes him one better. "You are right", he said, "God will keep you if you walk the path of obedience; He will keep you whether you are obedient or not. He is so good you can do a wicked thing and stay with Him. Therefore, cast yourself down from the pinnacle of the temple. It will be a wonderful display and the law of gravity will not work in your case." To prove his point, the devil himself quoted Scripture: "The angels will keep thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." But he left out one little phrase, "in all thy ways." The Lord has promised to keep us when we walk in the path of obedience, but He does not promise to keep us when we take matters in our own hands. To count on God's keeping us when we do a wicked thing is not to trust Him, but to presume on Him.

It is a matter of plain common sense that if God keeps us physically, we must be obedient to His law. If I pray to be kept in health while
I refuse to eat, or while I eat too much, my prayers will do no good. In our eastern Tennessee mountains we have certain very religious folks who presume to handle poisonous snakes. They get bitten and die. Even if Jesus had flung himself from the pinnacle, He would have dashed himself to death. Just as God cannot keep us when we presume upon His laws of physical health, neither can He keep us when we presume upon His laws of spiritual health. After having become a follower, if you turn aside to those things that poison a spiritual life, you will die, or if you leave off what our fathers used to call "the means of grace" you will meet with the same disaster. For the maintaining of spiritual health, you have a certain technique. To maintain spiritual health, you must make a habit of prayer, a habit of reading God's Word, a habit of worship, and a habit of work. "Every branch in me", said Jesus, "that beareth fruit is taken away." To conclude that you can be a Christian, to conclude that your church can be at its best while you neglect its services, is not to trust God, it is to presume upon Him.

There are those who claim that to be trusting in the goodness of God is to be goody, goody. God will save those who repent and accept His salvation and none others. He will keep those who continue to obey Him and none others. We too need to pray with the Psalmist, "Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sin."

3. The third temptation of Jesus was the devil's attempt to show Him the kingdoms of the world and say, "This I will give thee if thou will fall down and worship me." Of course, this did not come in this bold way. It is for the winnings of these kingdoms that he has come. How is he to accomplish his purpose? One is by frontal attack, the driving out of evil. The other is by compromise. Win the
world not by walking in light, not by being entirely black, but rather dress in a sober gray.

Now there is no surer way to defeat than by compromise. If, as a Christian, you have made up your mind to be as near like the man of the world as possible, then you are headed for failure. Whenever a church begins to compromise, it just to that extend loses its power.

I am told that in England a considerable bit of the brewry stock is owned by the clergy. What can such men say against the evil of liquor? Woe betide the minister that finds himself pastor of a church whose membership make it impossible for him to speak against any evil that ought to be denounced. I have prayed the Lord to save me from getting to be pastor of any church that I was afraid to lose. No man can be a profit of the Lord when he has to compromise.

It is my conviction that the more unworldly a church becomes, the greater its strength. Much of the power of the early church was that its membership did not conform, but was transformed. Soon after I came to Charlotte a minister said to me, If I were pastor of First Church, I would put on dances down there and get my young people. All questions of the right and wrong of dancing aside, such a course does not even make good sense. It is a slander against young people that the only way to hold them to the church is in somebody's arms. Those that are held for that reason would do just as well to join the country club.

"If you want to win a quick and easy way," said the temptor, "compromise and come over to my side."

"I will not seek to win," Jesus said, "In that fashion." Therefore, He said, "Get thee hence." The only sane, safe and
successful way to be a Christian is to be a wholehearted Christian. Here yet we must affirm, "I will not seek to win by compromise, but by conquest."

- III -

What was the outcome of His temptations?

1. Jesus won. He did not have to win, he might have lost, just as we might lose. All the weapons he had are also at our disposal.

At Mt. Vernon, I noticed the sword that Washington carried during the revolution, the sword that won. Here is the sword that Jesus used, the word of God. He met every temptation relying on God's word.

2. Having won the victory, angels came and ministered unto Him. That is, God did meet his needs and brought to him a greater strength.

Every temptation to which we yield leaves us that much weaker. Every temptation that we meet and overcome gives us strength.

An Old Testament story sums up the truth. Samson met a lion one day and after a hard fought battle slew him. Later when he came that way the birds and the beasts had eaten the flesh of the lion and the bees had builded their nest in his carca. "Out of the strong came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."

No wonder, therefore, that James said, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."
"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."

— Matthew 4:1.

I.

The first fact that we notice in this story is that Jesus was a man subject to temptation. He was sinless, but that fact did not exempt Him. He was tempted during this long wilderness experience, He was tempted at every turn of His road. He was tempted to the end of His life. The New Testament writers emphasize that fact. He was tempted at all points like as we are. His temptations were stern and bitter. The writer to the Hebrews tells this, that "He suffered, being tempted."

Since this is the case, we may be sure that His temptations were very real. They might have ended in disaster, just as yours and mine. If this is not true, conflict means nothing to us, but is only a sham. It is said that Israel Putnam was once challenged to a duel. Since he was challenged, he had the privilege to select the weapons with which the duel was to be fought. His choice was that each combatant was to sit on a keg of gunpowder with a fuse of equal length inserted. These fuses were to be lighted at the same time. And of course the one whose fuse burned the quicker would lose the fight. When the day of battle came, Israel's opponent watched the fuses burn with pallid face, clammy with cold sweat. But Israel sat as undisturbed and unafraid as a babe in its mother's arms. But the secret was not in his great courage. It was rather in the fact that he had seen to it that the kegs were filled with onions instead of gunpowder. Hence, there was no death possible for him in such a fight. But such was not the case with Jesus, as it is not with you and me.
It is interesting, also, to know the time of this temptation: "Then was Jesus led of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted." This, then, goes back to one of the great spiritual experiences in the life of our Lord. It was just after His baptism. It was just after He had seen the Heavens open and the spirit of God descend upon Him. It was just after He had heard the voice of God saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." It was on the heels of this tremendously spiritual experience that Jesus had to face possibly the most stern and dangerous conflict of His life.

And this experience of our Lord is not unique. Often our times of greatest conflict press hard on the heels of our greatest religious experiences. It was after Elijah had overcome the priest of Baal. It was after he had prayed down fire from Heaven. It was after he had seen what seemed to be the greatest triumph of his life. But he hurried off to fling himself under the Juniper tree in utter fear and defeat. And you who have recently asserted your allegiance to Christ and united with His Church must not be surprised when you discover that your conflicts are not over. The tempter will not let you go without a protest. Your biggest battles are yet to be fought.

II.

Notice next the nature of the temptation that came to Jesus. The story is told in vigorous and pictorial language. But we can readily see that the battle that He fought and won is the same that you and I have to fight, and fight every day. When He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterwards in hunger. So stern was His conflict during these forty days that all thought of food was crowded out of His mind. He was too absorbed in the great spiritual struggle through which He was passing. But toward
the end His healthy body began to cry aloud for bread, and the
loaf-shaped stones that lay about Him that looked so much like
the bread that His mother used to bake suggested readily the
possibility of turning them into bread. Hence, the tempter said:
"If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

Now, what is the temptation involved in this? It is not
as it is sometimes supposed the temptation of Jesus to doubt His
own deity. The tempter is not suggesting that He may not be the
Son of God, and that He prove the fact to Himself by performing a
miracle. He rather assumes that Jesus is the Son of God, and the
temptation might be more aptly stated in this form, "Inasmuch as
Thou art the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."
And why not? Hunger is natural and legitimate, is it not? And
what more reasonable than that Jesus should use His miraculous
powers to supply His own needs?

1. The temptation here presented to Jesus is to put secondary
things first. Why is Jesus here, or to go here in the wilderness?
Why is He in our world at all? Why did the Word become flesh and
dwell among us? It was the will of God that His Son should become
man, and that being man He should live His life within the same
limitations in which we live ours. He is to be as truly man as we
are. But if He uses His miraculous power to supply His own needs
He ceases to live His life in human conditions. By so doing, He
ceases to live within the will of God. If it is right for Him to
work a miracle to avoid the pangs of hunger, it will also be right
a little later for Him to work a miracle to avoid the pangs of the
cross. But if He saves Himself, others He cannot save.

Notice next the subtlety of this temptation. The tempter
virtually says to Jesus, "You must have bread. If you do not have bread you are going to die. But you cannot afford to do that. And the only way to prevent it is to look out for number one." He is trying to induce Jesus to say what millions of others have said, "I must live. I am aware that this thing that I am about to do in order to live is not exactly right. It is not according to the will of God, but I must live. Therefore, I am going to do it anyhow." But the big business of Jesus and of every one of us is not merely to live. We do not have to live, but we must do the will of God if we are to find life that is life indeed. The one question before Jesus is this: should He trust His own will and wisdom, or leave Himself entirely within the will of God?

That is the one question for you and me. We have to meet it every day. Every day we are having to face the issue as to whether we will follow the way of the crowd or the way of the cross, whether we will listen to the voice of self, or the voice of love, whether we will follow the path of duty, or the path of inclination, whether we will obey the demands of conscience or the demands of expediency. Jesus believed that the best thing for Him was a home secure within the will of God. He believed that if He sought first the Kingdom of God, that all His needs would be met; that with or without bread, God would see Him through. And that is to be your faith and mine.

This does not mean, of course, that if we put God first we shall escape conflict. It does not mean always that we shall escape suffering. In the past it did not always mean escape from death. It did not mean that for Jesus. But He was sure that the will of God was best, whatever price to be paid. The same was true of the three brothers in that Old Testament story, who were about
to be cast into a fiery furnace for their loyalty to their convictions. "Be it known unto thee, O King," they tell their persecutor proudly, "that the God whom we serve is able to deliver us, and He will deliver us." Then the dark thought flashed into their minds that He might not. He might see fit to let them die. But they believed that even death in the cause of the right was better than life in subjection to wrong. Therefore, they finished proudly, and it is one of the most magnificent sentences in the Bible, "But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." We can afford to die, but we cannot afford to be untrue. So, said Jesus, as He faced the tempter and refused to save His life by putting secondary things first.

2. The next temptation is to the sin of presumption. Well did the Psalmist pray, "Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins." You read that in this temptation Jesus was set on the pinnacle of the temple and told to cast Himself down. And the tempter seeing the loyalty of Jesus to the Scriptures quoted from Himself, "For it is written, He shall give His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee. And in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone." But he was cunning enough to leave out one important phrase, and that was "In all thy ways," for the correct reading is "He shall give His angels charge over Thee to keep Thee in all Thy ways." But what the tempter says is that he will keep you not only if you are in the path of duty, but when you are outside it, walking your own willful way.

You readily recognize the keenness of this temptation. Jesus triumphed over it first, because in His firm faith in God, He was so sure that as long as He was within the will of God, nothing could really hurt Him. Now, the tempter recognizing this faith, goes Him one better. He tells Him that God will keep Him under
any and all circumstances, whether he is loyal or disloyal to His will; that he can do a foolish and prideful thing, and still count on the keeping power of His Father. But Jesus knew that for Him to take such a position would be an act, not of faith, but of presumption. Therefore, He said, "It is written, Thou shall not put the Lord Thy God to the test."

We readily recognize the truth of this in the realm of the material. Suppose I should tell you that my faith was so great that I could take Bichrolide of Mercury and suffer no ill effects, I should not be talking the language of faith, but of direst presumption. And if I took that poison, God would let me die. If I were to step off the roof of this church, depending on God to save me, I would not be trusting God, I would be presuming on Him. Should you as a farmer tell God to sow wheat for you and to plant corn, or as a merchant tell Him to look after your business while you were relieved of any work at all, every man would say that you were not a man of faith, but of presumption. If I should tell you that it was no longer necessary for me to eat, that God would keep me alive without bread, I should starve to death. The good sense of this, we all recognize.

But we are far more blind in the realm of the spiritual. There are those of us who do yield our lives to Christ and enter the Church in all good faith. But we begin to trifle with certain evils that we know to be deadly poison to our spiritual lives. We engage in practices that leave us sick in soul, or what is far more common, we begin to utterly neglect those things by which God has intended that we should grow in our spiritual lives. We give little time to prayer, little time to the Bible. We are
Careless and indifferent about our attendance at church, and we wonder that we are spiritually anaemic. Nobody achieves a worthwhile task by indifference. Nobody learns to be proficient even at playing the piano by taking ten lessons by correspondence as our magazines would sometimes indicate. But the greatest of all achievements is that of Christ-like character, and how presumptuous to expect to win without any effort! If you will be aggressive in your Christian life, you will win. But if you presume that because God is good, He is good and goody goody, and do nothing, your life will be a miserable defeat.

3. The third temptation is to compromise. The tempter said as he showed Jesus the Kingdoms of the world and the glory of them,"All these will I give Thee, if Thou will fall down and worship me." Now, Jesus is here to win the Kingdoms of the world. And what a world that is going to be when that task is accomplished? But how is it to be accomplished? The first temptation that met Jesus was to accomplish it by a method that would mean a compromise with evil. He might have won it by force. He might have won it by some other means than by that of unselfish love. But, Jesus told Satan that He would win, not by treating with him, but by driving him out. And His last word was,"Get thee hence Satan!"

Now, compromise is a subtle and compelling temptation to this hour. How many have tried to reach a worthy goal by a crooked road? How many have tried to build up the Kingdom of God by compromising with the enemy? A few years ago I had a man in my church who was almost fanatically wet, but he was very liberal. He paid $300.00 a month to the church. On one occasion a man representing the Anti-Saloon was to speak in my church, and late Saturday afternoon I had a letter of hot protest from
this gentleman, thundering against dragging the Church into politics, and demanding that the proposed address be cancelled. What was I to do? I at once had a vision of $3,600 that was sorely needed for missionary enterprises and our superannuated preachers slipping through my fingers. Had I a right to throw this money away? Certainly I had no right to do anything else under the circumstances. But in the long run we had the address and got the money too.

This was a mistake of King Saul. He thought he could disobey God and atone for it by offering Him an abundance of fat cattle and fat sheep. But the answer came sharp and stern, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice." And there is no lesson that our lax day needs more desperately than it needs this—that there is no excuse for sin, there must be no compromise with evil. However great the demands that may seem to come to us as individuals and as a Church by lowering our standards and staking our flag to the God of lies, these gains are only shams. They are mascots. They are worse than that. In the end, they become millstones about our neck, and ball and chains about our feet.

III.

What was the outcome of this temptation? Jesus won the fight. So may we. It is impossible to avoid temptation, but it is always possible to avoid yielding to it. "In that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to suffer us who are tempted." His courage is always sufficient. The promise is sure that there shall no temptation take us but such that is common to man, and with the temptation, our Lord will make a way of escape that we shall be able to bear it.

Not only did Jesus conquer, but He did not come from this ordeal like a man fleeing from a burning building where all his
possessions are lost. He came from it enriched. He was the stronger for the fight that He had. In truth we do not gain strength except in the realm of conflict. It was as Samson slew the lion that he had his hands full of honey. A genuinely Christian life is not easy today. It never has been. But it is possible. And the greater our conflicts as we fit ourselves to the task, the greater will be our strength and our spiritual beauty. Therefore, instead of whining over the fact that we are tempted, we should rather shout with James, "Count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations." For "blessed is he who endureth temptation for when he is tried he shall receive a crown of life."

Then, you will notice that Jesus' method of victory was not negative, but positive. He met the onslaughts of the enemy face to face, using the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. No man is strong enough to be a negative Christian. If you keep your decision to follow Christ a secret in your office, you are headed toward defeat. If your ideal Christian is one who does no harm, you are heading for failure. The only strategy that wins is that recommended by Paul, "This I say, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." The only real weapon against evil is good. To fight evil with evil means failure. "Therefore, be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." This is the roadway to an increasing victory.
This morning I am to speak to you on your own personal conflict. And I am going to use for my text the story of the temptation of Jesus as recorded in the fourth chapter of Matthew, - "Then was Jesus led of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil".

Did you notice who it was that was tempted - who this man was that had a personal combat with evil? He was not some men with the stain of an evil ancestry in his veins and already corrupted by the degrading influences of a harsh environment. The tempted man here is Jesus, the Christ of God, - the One in whom dwelt all the fullness of the God-head bodily.

Jesus was tempted. Then you and I may not hope to escape. It means this: that temptation - universal temptation is inevitable. To live at all is to be tempted. There is not a man or woman listening to me at this moment but who time and again has felt the tugging of the powers of evil. It is an inevitable conflict. There is no possible escape. Temptation will share with us the mean surroundings of poverty. It also enters amidst the palatial splendor of wealth. It is a denizen of the crowded street. It is also an unfailing companion in solitude. Else where we may, - hide ourselves where we may, it follows us quicker than the flash of sunlight and there is no escape. We encounter it in our thoughtless moments and also in our hours of seriousness. It makes its appearance in the halls of revelry and pleasure. It also is a faithful attendant at church and intrudes itself between our face and the face of God while we seek to pray.

Yes, temptation is universal. I know that there are those that you meet now and then who claim that they have got beyond temptation. I know that there are those who claim that they have climbed so far up the mountain that they are above these awful storm clouds. But those who make such claims are not to be believed for a moment. If what they say is true, they have out-climbed Jesus and are looking down upon Him. Jesus did not escape - you will not. So do not be surprised and do not be discouraged when you have to fight this battle. Remember it is a battle that must be fought by every human soul.

Not only do we read that Jesus was tempted, but that He was led of the spirit to be tempted, - that is, His temptation was God-planned. Temptation was a part of God's purpose in His life. It is a part of God's purpose in every life. God has no other way of educating men into true moral wealth. Milton was right when he said, "I can not praise the fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies forth to meet its adversary, where garlands are to be run for, not without heat and dust". If character is to be grown there must be two roads open before the feet of the traveler. It must be possible to do right or to do wrong - to go up or to go down - to grovel or to soar - to be pure or to be impure.

While it is true, as James says, "that God can not be tempted of evil, neither tempteth He any man", it is equally true that God allows us to be tempted; that He leads us to the place of temptation and to the way of testing. He brings us to where the roads fork, but once there, He never asks us to take the wrong road. With every invitation from the devil to go wrong there is an invitation from God to go right, and every downward call is accompanied by an upward call. It is also true that every upward call is accompanied by a downward
That Battle of Yours.

call. Thus man is a creature of temptation. He is a continuous fighter. He fights for his life and he does it according to the plan of God.

And we read that Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted, — that is, He met temptation alone. That is the way you have to meet it and that is the way I have to meet it. There are battles that we fight in multitudes. There are battles in which we know the comfort and companionship of comrades, - but the hardest battles, those where souls are either lost or won, are the battles that we fight alone. Will you do this bit of work for God or refuse to do it? Will you consent to do this evil or will you say "No"? Will you take the road that leads upward or the road that leads to the depths? These are questions that none can decide but yourself. Your dearest loved ones can not decide them for you. God Himself can not decide them for you. Every man fights himself at the supreme crisis of his life in the wilderness. The fight that decides his heaven or his hell must be fought alone.

I know that there are influences that are often brought to bear upon us for better or for worse, but it is for us to decide what is to be the weight and power of these influences. Should I decide wrong - should I take the wrong course, others may be to blame but the real responsibility is my own. "I have placed before you an open door and no man can shut it". As one has well said, "There is only one door knob on the door of a man's heart and that is on the inside". Nobody can wreck your life but yourself. What you will do with your life is a lone battle that you must fight as Jesus did in the wilderness.

It is interesting, too, to notice the time of this temptation. "Then was Jesus led of the spirit into the wilderness." Then - that is looking back to a great experience in the life of Jesus. He had just been baptized with the Holy Ghost. The spirit of God had just come upon Him in bodily form like a dove. The voice of God had just spoken to Him out of the silence. Then, - after this great experience; then, - after this open dedication of His life to God; then, - it was that He went into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

And so often that is the case - our greatest failures, I think, come as a rule on the heels of our greatest successes. Our most humiliating defeats follow hard in the wake of our supremest victories. Then, - after you had stood before God's altar and declared that you would follow Him and be loyal to Him; then, the very next day the devil came to tell you that it was all a mistake and all a blunder, and that you did not get anywhere after all. And some of you believed him and when an invitation is given to accept Christ now you say, "I tried it once and failed. I will not try again". Then; - after you had decided that you would become a tither - after you had decided that you would act as a good steward of Jesus Christ, - then the devil came telling you that you were too religious to look after your own interests; that you were playing the fanatic; that you were already carrying more than you were able; and you backed out and broke your vow. Then, - when you had resolved to be a better christian than you had been, to be more faithful to the cause of God and the church, to establish a family altar, maybe; then, after you had made some new spiritual departure - after you had seen some heavenly vision - after you had registered some new vow of consecration - then the devil came to tell you that it was all a farce.

That is the history of many a soul. When Elijah had faced the
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four hundred and fifty prophets on Carmel, - when he had put them to shame and death - when he had so prayed that God had answered by fire, - then it was that he hurried away to his hour of greatest weakness and greatest failure and defeat. Then, after this wonderful victory, - we find him a few hours later under the juniper tree whining at the hardness of his luck and beseeching God that he might die. Then, - when the church had defied all persecution - when it had out-lived the tortures of Nero and had scorned all impossibilities, - then, when it had displaced the Roman eagle with the insignia of the Cross, - - then, when the church had climbed onto the throne of the Caesars, - - - then it was that the sunset came and the night was on and the world was plunged into the gloom of the dark ages and the church's greatest downfall came on the heels of its great victory.

And the story tells us here who it was that tempted Jesus. Remember, these disciples got this story from the lips of Jesus. They could have heard it from none other. And Jesus tells us that His tempter was the devil. I wonder how many of you in this enlightened day believe that He was mistaken. I wonder how many of you think that He was a victim of credulity and superstition. For if there is anything true in the wide world, it is true that Jesus Christ believed in a personal agency of evil that He called satan or the devil. I will not undertake to prove that Jesus believed so. It is a fact that lies so open and above board on almost every page of the Bible that it is useless to prove it to folks who read the Bible at all. And I am not saying that the apostles believed in the personality of the devil, but I do say that Jesus certainly did. I know it is true that many do not today.

"Men do not believe in a devil now
As their fathers used to do;
They have forced the door of the broadest creed
To let his majesty through.

There is not a print of his cloven foot
Or a fiery dart from his bow
To be found in earth or air today,
For the world has voted it so.

But what is mixing this fatal draught,
That palsies heart and brain
And loads the earth with each passing year
With ten hundred thousands slain?

Who blights the bloom on the land today
With the fiery breath of hell -
If the devil is not, and never was,-
Won't somebody rise and tell?

Who dogs the steps of the toiling saint,
And digs the pit for his feet?
Who sows the tares in the field of time,
Wherever God sows His wheat?

The devil is voted not to be -
And of course the thing is true.
But I wonder who is doing the kind of work
The devil alone should do."
Jesus encountered an enemy. He called that enemy the devil. Personally, I believe He was right. I cannot account for the facts of personal experience in any other way. I cannot account for the experience of others in any other way. He projects the harsh and cruel thought often in our prayer. He suddenly flings the foul picture upon the canvas of the imagination. He makes every upward step an effort and every downward step easy. Yonder is Macbeth. He sees a dagger; who points the way he should go to murder Duncan? He calls it the dagger of the mind. Who makes the dagger of the mind? I believe it is an evil personality. I believe it is the devil. I think that our danger is in fancying that he doesn't exist and that our safety lies in recognizing his presence as a grim, ugly fact and keeping close to Him who has power to destroy the works of the devil.

Now look briefly at the temptations that he presented to Jesus. "If thou be the son of God," he said, "command that these stones be made bread." What is the temptation? Why not make the stones bread? In the first place, to yield is to refuse to accept the reality of His incarnation. If Jesus is not going to meet His conflicts as a man, then His incarnation is a farce. To make bread is to refuse the pain and suffering that comes to Him as a part of the divine plan. It is to take Himself out of the plan of God altogether. Second, to make bread is to use His God-given power for Himself rather than for the world. Of course, lying at the back of this is the real basis of the temptation is an effort to shake the faith of Christ in His Father's wisdom and His Father's plan. But the effect of that unbelief is to be in the two directions just mentioned; to make Christ refuse the will of His Father and do His own will.

And that temptation is one that comes to everyone of us. Your question today is this: power, - what shall I do with it? life, - how shall I use it? personality, - where shall I invest it? The devil says, "Look out for Number One. Use it for yourself." It is a temptation that every man must overcome who would know the fellowship of Jesus Christ.

This was the victory that Moses won when he forsaw Egypt. It was here that the rich young ruler failed when he stood at the forks of the road of destiny and allowed his great possessions to be forged into a chain about the neck of his soul. It was here that John R. Mott won when he refused to be turned aside from his life work for $100,000 a year. It was here that the young fellow to whom I preached recently lost. He stood beside the wall in a packed house and wept through the sermon. At its close a gentleman spoke to me about him and said that years ago he had felt called to the ministry, but refused to pay the price and had lost. Jesus believed in God enough to be willing to accept His plan for His life. So must you, if you win.

The second temptation is the very opposite of the first. In the first the devil attacks the faith of Jesus. When he finds it firm, he comes over to the side of Jesus and even passes Him in his profession of faith. He says, "Yes, you are right, God will keep you even in the wilderness if you are there in accordance with His will. He will keep you anywhere whether it is in accordance with His will or not. If thou be the son of God," he said, as he put him on the pinnacle of the temple, "cast yourself down." Then the devil quotes scripture, but he is oon-
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ning enough to leave out the little phrase "in all thy ways". He wants Christ to think that He can do a presumptuous thing, a foolish thing, and expect God to uphold Him in it.

And we need to pray continually to be kept from presumptuous sin. We talk much of the love of God and the goodness of God, but some of us get to the place where we think God is so good that we can presume upon His goodness.

Now, God can be depended upon to keep us in the path of duty, but to expect to be kept outside that path is deliberately to tempt God. Some of you think you can leave off prayer, the study of the Word, your responsibility to the church, - and not suffer loss. You think you can spend a year or two years away here in the city, leave your church membership at home and live like any old worldling, and that it will make no difference. Or you fancy that you can run after the things of the world, and put your head in the mouth of the lion and that the Lord will not allow it to be bitten. You are tempting God and deceiving yourself. Believe me, God is good, but He is not goody-goody, - and throughout all this Book there is not one soft or doughy sentiment. There is not one word to indicate that those who presume upon God's goodness insofar that they will live careless and indifferent lives, will find themselves other where than without the gates.

The last temptation was a temptation to compromise. We are not to understand that it was presented in the ball-bearing way that is is here. What the devil is offering is the world. Christ wants the world. It is the purpose of His coming. God has promised it to Him, but it is to come at the price of the Cross. Here is an easy way to get it; to compromise. What a temptation it is! the hardest of all, I think.

Here is a woman with a Godless husband. She wants to reach him. She wants him to go to church with her. She decides to compromise, - she will attend his dances and card parties to get him to go with her. She compromises and loses.

The great danger in all temptation is that the object makes us blind to the price; that the lure of the thing desired blinds our eyes to the cost mark. Sin looks so much more inviting before it is committed than afterward. When I stand on this side of sin it is very attractive, but when I look at it from the other side, the side of the past, it is uglier than any death's head.

Jesus would not compromise. He said, "I will win the world, but I will win it not in partnership with the devil - I will win it not by compromise with the devil, I will win it by hostility to him. I will win it by driving the devil out of me." And He said, "Get thee hence, satan", - and the devil got.

An old weapon is an interesting thing - - the sword of Washington, the sword of Napoleon. I want to show you this morning the weapon that Jesus Christ used in this battle. It is a tremendously interesting piece of salvage. Here it is. It is the Word of God. Jesus Christ had His mind and heart saturated with it, and so must you and so must I, if we expect to win. Wielding this glorious weapon, Christ won and the angels came and ministered unto Him.
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And we read that He returned from the wilderness in the power of the spirit. Conquest always means power. You remember when Samson had slain the lion he returned days later to find the carcass full of honey, and he came away with hands full of honey, + honey for himself and honey for those that he loved. And you who are fighting today a lonely, hard, discouraging fight, remember that God can and will give you victory if you trust Him, and you will come away with hands full of honey - - and come to understand something of the deep and joyous meaning of that word from James, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."
"What is special about that?" --Matthew 5:47

This is an arresting and searching question. It is evident that Jesus expects his followers to be vastly different from those about them. He came at a cost to Himself beyond our powers to understand, to do something for us that we cannot do for ourselves. It was for the joy that was set before Him—a joy measured in terms of transformed lives that there is anything distinctive in the life of those about us.

What is there about us as professing Christians that is special? If there is nothing, then our Christianity is a futile something, a disappointment to ourselves and a far keener disappointment to Him whom we claim as our Lord and Master.

Naturally this difference between the man who is a Christian and the one who is not is not so sharp in our own land today as it was when Christianity was young. This difference is not so pronounced among us as it is in pagan lands where the Gospel has been only recently proclaimed. Our society has been so leavened by Christian teaching and preaching that there are multitudes who are Christian in certain of their attitudes though they acknowledge no loyalty to Jesus Christ. Yet there is something really distinctive about those who know Jesus Christ. We are told that a little girl in India when questioned about the Christians in her village, described them as the folks who were different. That description holds good in every land and in every age.
1. These early Christians specialized in love one for another. They had been so taught by their Master. How, according to Jesus, are we to distinguish one who is a Christian from one who is not? "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciple if..." If what? Not if you belong to a certain denomination, not if you have been baptized in a certain fashion. This is the one mark of genuineness, "if ye have love one to another."

It was by one Christian thus loving his fellow Christian that these early saints made perhaps their most profound impression upon the world of their day. "How these Christians love each other!" men exclaimed in awed wonder. And because these pagans longed to love and be loved, they were drawn into these Christian groups that Paul called "Colonies of heaven." To this day there is nothing so winsome as an atmosphere made warm and vital by the presence of those who really love each other. Such an atmosphere belongs to every truly Christian group. This is the case because every Christian loves his fellow Christian.

2. Not only did these followers of Jesus love one another, not only did they love the brotherhood, but they loved those outside the brotherhood. If you read OUT OF THE NIGHT, a book of a few years ago, you must have been impressed by the author's emphasis on the devotion of one Communist to another. I could not help being amazed at the price that one fellow traveller seemed willing to pay to serve and protect another. But as impressive as was their loyalty to each other, was their hatred of all outside their organization.
There was no sacrifice too great for them to make in seeking to destroy all who happened not to be of their faith.

But not only did these Christians love each other, they also loved strangers, foreigners, and outsiders. If our world is divided today by deep and wide chasms, that ancient world was divided by chasms that were deeper and wider still. Yet there was no chasm that separated people in that day that Christianity did not bridge. It bridged the chasm between man and man and between race and race. It bridged the chasm between people who were respectable and those who were outcast. It gave to social nobodies and slaves healing for their wounded self-respect by bringing them into the Brotherhood. These early Christians were possessed of an eager interest in every human soul. They not only loved one another, but they loved strangers and outsiders.

3. Finally these disciples of Jesus not only loved one another, not only did they love strangers and foreigners, but they loved their enemies. That is something that the man of the world not only does not do, but does not even desire to do. In "Quo Vadis" Petronius is writing a letter to his nephew who has been converted to Christianity. This nephew has been impressing upon his uncle the fact that if he becomes a Christian, he must love everybody, even his enemies. "Must I love Nero?" writes the uncle in reply. Then he answers his own question, "I swear by the white knees of the Graces that I couldn't love him if I wanted to." What is implied is that such love is not only impossible, but undesirable.

But these Christians did love their enemies. Real
Christians do so still. If they do not, they are simply not Christians. Of course Christian love does not mean fondness for or delight in one's enemies. They are not the ones that we would choose as our guests. We love our enemies when we exercise toward them an active and sacrificial good will. Such love Jesus taught, such love Jesus practiced. "Bless them that curse you and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you." is His exacting word. So He himself did. He did it even as He hung on the Cross. Here he threw about the shoulders of his murderers the sheltering folds of this protecting prayer:—"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

Here is another scene. A brilliant and gifted young man, Stephen by name, has become a follower of the Christ. He proclaims his faith with irresistible power. His foes being unable to answer him with words resort to stones. They drag him outside the city and mob him. There is no effort at justice or fairplay. He is done to death without even a mock trial. How does he meet this terrible ordeal? He meets it in the spirit of his Master. When we hear him pray this prayer, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," we know that we are in the presence of a Christian. These early Christians specialized in brotherliness in that they loved one another, they loved outsiders, they loved even their enemies. Such love is characteristic of Christ's real followers today.

- -II- -

Then these early Christians specialized in a fine gallantry that made them dare to live life the hard way. They went out, not simply to follow Christ, but to reproduce
him. Thus they sought to make him king over all that pagan world. Their adventure was costly. Their Master had made this fact plain to them from the beginning. They had become followers of Jesus knowing that such would be the case. They knew that they would have to pay much, even their very all.

Jesus also makes this plain to us. He declares that there is a wide gate and an easy way, but that this leads to death. If we are bent on life, he makes it plain that we must enter by the narrow gate and travel the hard way. It was so hard for Jesus himself that it involved the Cross. He never promised that it would be easier for us; He said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." At the very door of entrance to life there stands a cross upon which we must die to self. This dying to self is often as painful as physical death. But there is no beginning of the Christian life without this denial or dying to self. There is no continuing it without this daily dying to our selves. There simply is no cheap and easy way to be a Christian.

As I was turning again the pages of my Bible preparing this sermon, I was impressed afresh by how little God seems to care for the ease and comfort of his saints. Take those men of the Old Testament who were most loyal to Him and who became his closest friends. These heroic souls were willing to dare any danger and brave any death rather than prove disloyal. What response did God make to them? Did He see to it that no rude wind blew upon them? Did He shelter and
coddle them? Here is the answer. "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented. They wandered in deserts and in mountains; and in dens, and caves of the earth."

In the New Testament there is the same seeming indifference. For instance, when Jesus kneels in prayer for the last time with his little handful of friends, he makes no plea that they be sheltered and protected. He knows the harsh and cruel world in which he is leaving them. They are destined, almost to a man, to die for their loyalty to him. Yet this is his prayer, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." He is concerned not for their comfort, but for their character.

What is perhaps stranger still, this indifference on the part of God to the comfort and ease of his saints was shared by these saints themselves. Notice in the New Testament how the followers of Jesus prayed when they found themselves with their backs to the wall. Their prayers were never for escape. Those who prayed only to escape were not followers of Christ. Here, for instance, are the two revolutionaries who died at the side of Jesus. One of them is a truly great soul. After he has taken the part of Jesus against those who are doing him to death, he prays this prayer for himself: "Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." He wants deliverance, not from where he is, even though he is suffering the pangs of hell. He rather seeks deliverance from what he is. But the lesser revolutionary does not mind
being what he is, he only hates being where he is. Therefore, he prays this prayer, "If Thou be the Christ, save thyself and us."

Simon Magus has sought to buy the Holy Spirit on a cash basis. With righteous indignation Peter turns on him with this word, "Thy money perish with thee... Repent therefore of this thy wickedness and pray God the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, 'Pray ye to the Lord for me.'" But what are Peter and John to ask for him? Not that he be forgiven, but "that none of these things which ye have spoken may come upon me." He had no desire for any kind of heaven; he only wanted to escape hell.

But listen to the saints as they pray: "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings." Who are doing the threatening? The very same men who had crucified their Master? They know, therefore, that these are not vain threats. Their danger is real. For what then do they pray? They do not ask for escape. This is their prayer: "Grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word." They do not ask for an easy way. They ask rather that they may see their hard way through with honor.

Here is Paul writing a letter from a prison in Rome. By and by he comes to the matter of prayer. "Pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watch thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." he urges. Then he remembers his own needs. There
fore, he requests prayer for himself. But for what are his friends to ask on his behalf? That he might be free? That his health might no longer be endangered by his hard prison life? By no means. "And for me", he writes, "that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds." Thus in a fashion characteristic of the saints, he does not ask for an easy way, he rather seeks for strength and courage to walk the hard way. These early Christians dared to walk the difficult road. The same must be true of us.

- III -

But here is a lovely paradox. If these early Christians did have the hardest time of anybody, they also had the best time of anybody. When we get our first glimpse of them as a group, they are so absurdly joyous that the worldlings as they look on can find no explanation of their joy but that they have had a few too many drinks. "These men", they declare, "are full of new wine." But from that intoxication they never recovered. It did not leave them with an ill head and an aching heart. It rather sent them laughing and singing over all that hard Roman world.

Real Christians are joyful. We cannot be like our Master in any other way. I know that we have a tendency to gasp with amazement when we hear Jesus say, "My yoke is easy." What was His yoke? It was the yoke of a perfectly dedicated life. It was a yoke that made his life one long toil up Calvary. Yet He tells us that the yoke that cost
him so much was kindly. This was certainly true. In spite of the cross, yes, and because of the cross, Jesus lived more richly, more joyously, I take it, than any other man who ever set foot upon this planet.

The abundant life that Jesus lived, he shares with his followers. Take another look at Paul for example. What a hard life he lived! He went to the whipping post so many times that his body must have been little more than one huge scar. He tells us frankly that he had suffered the loss of all things. Yet how richly he lived! Absolutely nothing could rob him of his radiance. But this radiance belongs not simply to the Christian in the first century, but of every century. This is the case because specializing in loving and in self-giving, he specializes also in fellowship with his Lord. What, then, have I as a Christian that the non-Christian does not have? In a word, I have Christ. Possessing Christ I possess all that makes life supremely worth while both in time and in eternity.
"The Forgotten Virtue."

Matthew, 6: 9.

You will find the text of the morning in Matthew, 6: 9: "Hallowed be thy name." You will see at once that I do not expect to make my appeal to you this morning on the basis of the novelty of my text. Were I to search all the Bible I could not find one that is more familiar. It is a part of that immortal prayer that Jesus taught His disciples. We have been familiar with it since our earliest childhood. Its familiar words have been upon our lips literally hundreds of times. But in spite of the fact that this is the first petition of this marvelous prayer, I feel quite confident that it is the last in our thought and aspiration.

"Hallowed be thy name" - Jesus taught us to pray this prayer before we asked for the forgiveness of sins. We were to pray this before we made request for our daily bread, for the doing of the divine will and for the incoming of the kingdom of God. It is a petition that Jesus put first because it was first in importance. He knew it to be fundamental. He looked upon it not only as the supreme virtue, but as that virtue without which the praying of the other petitions of this prayer is next to impossible.

"Hallowed be thy name" - for what are we making request when we present this petition before the Throne? We are asking that God's name, that is, God Himself, shall be hallowed, shown to be holy, revered and. This, then, is a prayer for that fine virtue that is so lacking in modern life, even oftentimes in modern church life, the virtue of reverence. And mark you, it is the mother of virtues, as another has pointed out. If you do not have reverence and chastity the chances are that you will be impure. If you have no reverence for holiness, you will be unclean. If you have no reverence for truth, you will be dishonest.

What is reverence? It is not mere solemnity. It is not sanctimoniousness, nor sternness. You may be very solemn and very flippant at the same time. There are times, I fancy, when we put on an appearance of solemnity as a mask to hide the light and frivolous soul that is behind the mask. Reverence may be solemn. It may have a face full of sunshine and eyes full of laughter, for fundamentally it is not a thing of externals. Reverence is a thing of the soul. It is the attitude of the heart towards what is noble, worthful and sublime. It is that feeling of high admiration and worship and awe, not unmixed with fear, that we feel in the presence of the highest and the best that we know.

Now, however optimistic you may be, and I certainly class myself among the optimists, but however optimistic you may be or I may be, I do not think that we can claim that reverence is one of the outstanding characteristics of the age in which we live. It is in large measure a forgotten virtue. The art of being reverent is to a great extent a lost art. If we do not realize this it is because we have not really opened our eyes to one of the most palpable facts of today. One of the leading writers and thinkers of our country said recently that nothing in our modern life wears a halo. And that is unfortunately too largely true.
If you want to be impressed with this fact contrast the modern attitude toward God with the attitude of the early Puritan fathers, for instance. I am not asking you, understand, to admire all the characteristics of the Puritan, but there were characteristics that they possessed that are altogether admirable, one of which was the fine grace of reverence. They were men who had an awe inspiring sense of God. They groveled in the dust before their maker, even if they did set their foot upon the neck of their king.

Contrast the hymns of today with the grand hymns of the church that were written in a more reverent age. Take this, for instance,-

"O how I fear thee, living God,
With deepest, tenderest fears,
And worship thee with trembling hope,
And penitential tears."

Then put along with that this other song, though I admit it is rather pretty:

"I come to the garden alone,
While the dew is yet on the roses,
And the voice I hear sounding in my ear,
The Son of God discloses.

"And He walks with me,
And He talks with me, etc."

How much more familiar is the one than the other. How much more reverent is the one than the other. Or take another -

"Thee we adore, thy eternal name,
And humbly own to Thee
How feeble is our mortal frame!
What dying worms we be!"

And then hear this:

"I am longing for the coming
Of the snow-white angel band,
That shall bear my weary spirit
To the sinless summer land."

The trouble with this latter, in the first place, is that it is not true. The man who wrote it was not longing for the coming of the snow-white angel band. It would have frightened the life out of him, just as it would out of you and me. The fact that I am trying to bring to you is that our modern songs, while some of them are good, have grown more slushy and more familiar and far less reverent in their attitude toward God.

What is the secret of this modern irreverence? One cause of our irreverence, I am sure, is our progress, our great advancement, our fancied knowledge. Our semi savage forefathers looked in the sky and sea and forest and felt a solemn awe. The earth trembled about them in the roar of the thunder. Gods and spirits glared at them from behind every rock and tree. They walked amidst mysteries. It made them a bit reverent.
But modern science has turned a searchlight on forest and sea and sky and we know much that they did not know. Therefore, we do not have their awe and wonder, and yet we have not driven a single mystery out of the world. We have just forced the lines back a little. The flower in the crannied wall is no more fully and perfectly understood by us than by them. And yet in our fancied advancement we feel that there is nothing any more in the universe to fill us with awe and wonder and reverential fear.

Success, as another has pointed out, often brings irreverence to the individual. Take Napoleon, for instance. With him God was on the side of the strongest battalions, that is, there was no God. He had no reverence. He had a very high opinion of himself, a certain species of reverence, though it was not that refining and uplifting reverence that dares regard himself with a holy self esteem because he is made in the image of God and purchased by the blood of the cross. Thus many of us are robbed of our reverence because of our too flattering opinions of ourselves.

I am sure that another secret of our irreverence is the unclean paths along which our modern life has led so many of us. We have been schooled by the movies with great familiarity with what is worst in human nature. So many of our shows have danced on the very edge of the crater of obscenity if they have not positively fallen in. We have not seen there such revelations of human worth as to make us reverent.

The same is true of much of our literature today. Much of what is being written makes a joke of the great integrities of life. Take that book which is possibly the best seller of the year. The heroine is a little flip of a temperamental girl, half educated, but who fancies herself a regular goddess of culture. She marries a manly, substantial physician, but though a wife, she has no reverence for the marriage ties. Though a mother, she has no reverence for motherhood. Though a member of the society of her community, she has no reverence for the pillars upon which society rests. She is nauseated and disgusted with the crude men on whose shoulders rest the burdens of the world. The only really worth while character in the town is an old renegade Swede whose chief charm seems to be that he talks atheism one half the year and tramps and swaps horses the other half.

Yet the book is well written. It slaps in the face the truths by which men live and sends those away who are influenced by it to laugh cynically and irreverently at those fundamental integrities without which civilization rots down. I think that it is hard for people who have looked long and much on what is worst and most sordid and most ugly in human nature to keep their sensitiveness for what is finest and best. You can not respond with admiration to the low and at the same time bow head and heart in reverence to the noble and sublime.

But the big final cause of our irreverence is a lost sense of God. We are needing here in America and all round the world as we are needing nothing else, a re-discovery of God. We need a new sense of Him "whose going forth is of old even from everlasting." We need to dwell anew in the secret place of the most high and to abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

But while that is our fundamental lack, there are other lacks
that lie on the surface that we would do well to notice. One reason we have grown less reverent is because we are so hurried. We haven't time to think. We run ourselves to death trying to make a living and then we as strenuously pursue a good time trying to rest ourselves. So that the art of meditation is with most of us a lost art. And thoughtlessness always leads to irreverence. That is the reason that youth is never other than irreverent.

Take a child, for instance. He would as soon pluck a king by the beard as to pull the hair of his black mammy. I remember a distinguished judge who started to speak to our first baby when he was a little fellow. And the young savage did his best to knock his face off. I respected the judge. He was a man of ability and learning and character, but that child had absolutely no respect for him.

I have a little nephew who formed the habit of saying that he was glad whatever might happen to one of his playmates. And one day I was standing talking to a fine old gentleman who had lost a limb. For three score years he had been a faithful servant of God and his country. And that little youngster stood and said, "I'm glad you ain't got but one foot." I felt a little like breaking one of his, but he meant no special harm. He was thoughtless, and therefore irreverent.

Now, that spirit does not depart from us always by the time we get into knickerbockers. The average young fellow in his teens knows far more than his father. He can not look up to the old folks because he is so much wiser than they. A few years ago I heard a very scholarly gentleman from Japan speaking on American life. There are some things that he admired about us very much, but he was amazed at the irreverence of our youth, and he gave us an example. He said he was visiting in Washington and attended a reception at the White House. Roosevelt was President. He said that when he went to shake hands with the president there was a lad of twelve in front of him. This lad, instead of saying, "How do you do, Mr. President", simply shouted, "Hello Teddy!" That is the spirit of youthful thoughtlessness, and unfortunately, that thoughtlessness oftentimes stays with us till the very end of life. We are hurried, harassed, business-ridden, pleasure chasing people. We haven't time to think, and therefore we haven't time to be reverent.

Now, what is the good of reverence? Admitting that this is an irreverent age, what is the loss? I answer that the loss is one of the most tragic imaginable. For reverence, let me repeat, is the very mother of the virtues. When reverence runs low all other virtues run low. Reverence, in the first place, as has been pointed out, is a test of character. I read the other day of a man who, sitting in Lincoln Park, said a fine looking gentleman approached the statue of Lincoln and stood and looked into the magnificent face, looked at its lines of strength and pain and compassion and power. And as he looked, reached up and removed his hat and stood reverently in the presence of one that the whole civilized world concedes to be one of the world's heroes. Meanwhile he said there was another man writing an obscene verse on the pedestal of the statue and staining it by spitting tobacco juice upon it. Now, the difference between these men, the reverent and the irreverent, is heaven-wide. Two men looked at the
same flower, and one man's face grows soft and tender and his soul is filled with high and holy thoughts. And when he looks up from the little flower he tells you to him "the meanest flower that blows can give thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears." The other merely tramps upon it and walks on, for -

"A prim rose blooming by the brim
A yellow prim rose was to him,
And it was nothing more."

(The girl who sought to pawn her doll.)

Reverence is essential, in the second place, because it is the pathway to knowledge. If you are going to get into the secrets of nature you must be reverent. One great scientist declared that nature did not disclose her secrets to the man who simply shouted, "Stand and deliver." Huxley said that in order to learn you must sit down reverently before the facts. As soon as the scholar loses his reverence he ceases to advance. Irreverence shuts the door that leads into a higher culture.

And if reverence is essential to him who would learn the things of nature, it is doubly essential to the man who would know God. No man walks into the secret place of the most high upon flippan and careless feet. When Moses sees the burning bush he must take the sandals from off his feet, for the ground upon which he stands is holy ground. When Elijah hears the voice small and still, reverently he wraps his face in his mantle and stands in the mouth of the cave. When Isaiah catches the vision of Jehovah high and lifted up he puts his lips in the dust. When John saw his risen Lord on Patmos he said, "I fell at his feet as one dead." Name over the history of all those who have been deeply schooled in the knowledge of God, and they have been reverent men.

Now, what are some of the things for which we need to regain our reverence today? The most reverent soul that ever lived in this world was Jesus Christ. What were some of the objects of His reverence? First, Jesus was profoundly reverent toward God. He taught us to pray, "Hallowed be thy name." And the aspiration and the longing that He had for us was a realization in His own life. No one can study the character of Jesus even superficially without realizing His deep and abiding reverence for His heavenly Father. And all the other great reverences of His life flowed out of this supreme reverence like streams from a fountain.

Because Jesus reverenced God, in the first place, He reverenced the word of God. And it would be altogether wholesome for us today to bring back into our own hearts something of our lost reverence for the word of God. I am not asking you to treat this Book as a fetish, but I am asking you to give to it a reverence that is its due. It is God's message to the human soul. It did not come by the will of man. But it is the message of those men of old who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. It is a costly Book. It is a Book that has remade every society into which it has come. It is a Book whose truth will outlast the centuries. Come to it reverently. It will kindle a light in your life that all hell can not extinguish and all the world's philosophers never dreamed of.

Jesus had profound reverence for the house of God. He lived in a day when religion was almost bankrupt. But He had profound reverence
for the Temple, not because of the men who ministered there, but because He had reverence for God, and it was His Father's house.

And I am profoundly convinced that it would help us to cultivate something of His reverence. Men never forgot how He blazed when He saw His Father's house being desecrated. When the rattle of money was drowning the prayers of the saints, when the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the cattle was being mingled with the anthems of the Levites, - these things set His soul on fire with indignation. And the moneychangers scarcely knew what was happening till their money was rolling upon the floor and they themselves were standing all atremble in the open street. The reason Jesus cleansed the Temple was because He could not bear to see His Father's house treated irreverently.

And is not reverence in the house of God a beautiful grace still? A preacher was showing a man over the church sometime ago, and they stepped into the auditorium. And the gentleman said, "You don't object to me keeping on my hat in the church, do you?" The preacher answered, "It is not my house."

Now, you must admit that we have much to learn in the way of reverence toward the house of God. I have heard choirs sing with almost angelic sweetness, and then I have seen them spoil it all by chattering like chimpanzees while the preacher was trying to preach. I have heard them grip the heart toward the very Throne by the beauty of their singing and then counteract and contradict the whole effect by their irreverence during prayer. How few congregations there are where all the people will even bow the head in that holy moment when the preacher, with those present with him, is trying to pray. How shallow hearted and irreverent is that individual who will remain bolt upright and gaze around over the house while some soul, however, feeble, is trying to mount on the wings of prayer up to God. Oh let us rededicate ourselves to the fine task of bring an atmosphere of reverence back into God's house. This does not mean stiffness. It does not mean an absence of life. I do not think the Lord cares for a reverence that is unnatural. But we do need that fine and holy and joyous awe that comes to those who say, "Surely God is in this place."

Jesus had a profound reverence for humanity. He looked upon every soul as something of infinite worth. And it will be a new day for us when we come to look upon all our brothers with that holy reverence that sees in every man a brother for whom Christ died.

Jesus had a profound reverence for the truth. He had to disappoint His disciples again and again because He felt that it was absolutely necessary to tell them the truth. And even when he was at the end of the way and He saw them clinging passionately to the hope of a life to come, He informed them that He would dash their hope to the ground ruthlessly if it had not been a true hope. "If it were not so I would have told you." We need that reverence for the truth today. You know there is a broadening sentiment that lying is even commendable if it is done to protect anybody's feelings. I did a rather unusual thing for me the other day. I went to see "The Old Nest", by Rupert Hughes. Hughes is a clean writer as a rule, and this play is altogether wholesome in the main moral it seeks to teach.

But I was amazed at what a liar the sordid old mother of the
story is. The lying of the play is not a thing of necessity or even usefulness. It is brought in again and again as the mother’s badge of loyalty and love and fidelity to her children. Now, I believe my mother was quite as loyal, and far more than this mother, but I believe she would have died rather than stain her lips with a known lie. The memory of a mother whose love led her to persistently lie for you might be touching, but the memory of one whose profound reverence for the truth forbade her lying, even in the interest of love, is far more precious.

May the Lord deliver us from a cheap and irreverent idea of the truth. Truth telling is fundamental. Build a lie into a ship and it will wreck. Build a lie into a stone wall and it will fall down. Build a lie into a locomotive and it will fly the track. Build a lie into a home and it will disintegrate. Lying is ruinous, damming, whether there is any God of eternity or not. Lying means anarchy. Here and now we need a new reverence for the truth.

Then we need, last of all, something of Christ’s reverence for the marriage relationship. He said, “What God hath joined together let not man put asunder.” In His mind marriage was not simply an experiment, not simply a legal agreement entered into, it was a holy sacrament. It was something from which there was to be no divorcement save that written in the green grass upon the grave of one of the contracting parties. But what is becoming our attitude today? A young lady the other day, speaking of getting married, said she was not sure that she and Tom could get along. Sometimes she thought they could and sometimes she thought they could not. The only thing she knew to do was to try it out. If they could not make it go they could quit and get a divorce.

Such is the attitude of a growing number today. Such an attitude when it becomes universal will wreck any civilization on the face of the earth. Rome went for five hundred years without a divorce. Then divorce became as easy and prevalent as it is in America. And Rome went on the rocks. Upon the sanctity of the marriage vow rests the home. Upon the home rests all the pillars of civilization. We must, if we are to save the world, instil within our children a new and profound reverence for the marriage relationship.

“Hallowed be thy name” - I come back at last to our one hope. We need reverence for the church of God, reverence for God’s Book, reverence for humanity, reverence for truth, reverence for the marriage vow, but all these lean finally and fundamentally on reverence for God. So I bring you face to face with this supreme need. I repeat to you the text of two weeks ago, “Acquaint now thyself with Him.” Get into the intimacy of His presence and a new reverence for these other things will come. They will grow naturally out of your profound reverence for God.
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Matthew, 6th chapt. 9th verse.

Two weeks ago we began a study of the Lord's Prayer. We tried to show that as the disciples saw Jesus pray they were led to ask that they themselves be taught this mightiest of all arts. We said that as they say Jesus pray they became conscious of the ineffectiveness of their own prayers, of their need of more effective praying, of their ignorance of its secret, that they also became conscious of its glorious possibilities.

In our second address we showed how Jesus, in response to this prayer, taught them what is known as the Lord's Prayer. And He said, "When you pray say 'Our Father',' - that is, Jesus taught them that prayer was to a person and that that person was not a far-off disinterested person, but was their own father, and that the kind of a father he was was a heavenly father, that is, a father perfect in love and understanding and in power; and that as they prayed to God as their father they were to pray to Him as brothers and that the praying of this prayer put upon them the obligation to play a brother's part to all mankind.

Tonight we come to the first petition. It is a bit astonishing, I think, to the natural man as to what this first petition is. It is the petition that we always say first when we pray this prayer, but how few of us really pray it first. It is a petition that has to do primarily, it seems, not with ourselves but with God. Having come into the divine presence, having obtained an audience with God, our father, of what are we to think first and for what are we to make our first request? It is not for our daily bread; it is not even for the forgiveness of our sins and the enrichment of our own spiritual lives; our first petition is to be that God's name may be hallowed. That is, our first thought is to be of God's honor and of God's glory rather than of the needs of our own selves or even of those dearest to use. Because this is true, many have come to misunderstand God and to think that, somewhat as we do, He is seeking first his own interest and His own honor and glory. They come to think of Him as a rather grasping sort of a king who would allow no rival near the throne, but this is to misunderstand Him altogether.

When God asks that our first thought be of Him and our last thought of ourselves, He is not seeking His own glory primarily, but our own. None of God's commands are for Himself. They are not for His good, as another has pointed out, but for our good. When God says "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy", it is not because He needs the sabbath; it is because we need it. The sabbath was made for man. It fits into the deepest needs of his life, physical and spiritual, and so the command to keep it holy is a command to seek our own best and highest interests. When God says "Thou shalt not kill", it is not for His protection, but for our protection. And so it is with all the commandments and so it is with this petition. It is only as we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness that it becomes possible for all the needed blessings of our lives, material and spiritual, to be added unto us.

Now, Christ does not only expect us to say this petition first, but He expects us to pray it first. That is, He is not seeking that we make this a mere utterance of the lips, but that it shall be the profoundest desire of the heart. He is demanding of us those holy heights where we shall think of God's honor before we think of our own. And I am frank to say that what He is requiring of us is: except we have the divine assistance, all is impossible. But when we come to think of the matter, that is what He is always requiring of us, - the impossible. When Jesus
came into the temple, He saw a man with a withered hand and He said to him, "Stretch forth thy hand", and He was not speaking of the hand that was sound and unwithered, but He was speaking of the one that hung limp and useless at his side. That is, He asked him to do the very thing that He could not do. When Jesus sat with the man that was paralyzed, the sick man enfeebled in soul as well as in body, and he told Him that he had been in that case for thirty-eight years, and yet Jesus broke in on his wayward story to say "Rise up and walk", that is, He demanded of the man the one thing that he could not do. It was the same way when He fed the multitude, He said "Give ye them to eat" when He knew that they had only five loaves and two small fishes. God is ever calling on us for the impossible. He says "Be born again", and I do not wonder that Nicodemus answered Him in bewilderment "How can a man be born again when he is old?" He says "Love your enemies"; He says "Pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you". He says "Love thy neighbor as thyself". And to the natural man these are utter and eternal impossibilities.

Now, this petition is an impossible petition. We can not pray it as an art unless from the heart we have uttered the invocation with which the prayer begins. It is not till we have said from our inner souls "Our Father" that we are able to say "Hallowed be thy name", but if we have claimed our privilege of sonship, then, through the Holy Ghost, we will be able to say as the first and deepest longing of our hearts "Hallowed be thy name". But the petition is forever impossible for us unless in genuine reality we have accepted God as our father and have become a sharer in the divine nature.

Now, what is this petition that we are asking? "Hallowed be thy name". What does it mean? First of all, what do we mean by the name of God being hallowed? Name does not mean simply a word. It rather represents God's character, our conception of God. It is equivalent to saying "May God Himself revealed to us as a father be hallowed". You know, names mean very little now, but when they were first given they were descriptive. Samson was named Samson because he was sunny; they would never have given that name to a man who was morose and melancholy. Abraham was so named because he was to be the father of a multitude. You remember the story of Jacob's wrestle by the brook. And it says "When the angel say that he prevailed not against him he touched him in the hollow of his thigh and the hollow of his thigh was out of joint as he wrestled". And he said "Let me go for the day breaketh" and he said "I will not let thee go except thou bless me". And then the wrestling angel said unto him "What is thy name?" Why that strange question? Did not the angel know? He did, but what he was seeking from this struggling man was a confession that would make it possible for him to bring the desired blessing into his life. And the man answered "My name is Jacob", that is, "I am a supplanter, a cheat, a trickster, a fraud". His name was a description of himself, a character sketch, in brief a short biography of one whose life had been far from a right life. So the name was a brief character sketch. There are names ever yet that have certain significance: "Little Willie" does not call up the most masculine picture, and "Flossie" is not such a name as you would connect with a girl of force and driving power. When I was a boy I used to read that passage where it says "His name shall be in their foreheads", and I wondered how a man would look with the name of Jesus written in big letters across his face. And of course I came to see that the
meaning of the passage was not that at all, but that there should, through the grace of God, come a day in a man's life when there should shine out in the very lines of his face something of the beauty of the character of Christ. We read that when Peter and John stood before their accusers that "They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus", that is, John and Peter had the name of Jesus written upon their faces. They had come to share in His nature. They had come to be partakers of His holiness. They were a bit like Him. So when the Psalmist says "They that know Thy name shall trust in Thee", he meant they that really know God, - know the kind of being He is, they that know the infinite love of His heart, they that know the reality of His fatherhood, they that know the might of His power - - "they shall trust in Thee".

Now, the purpose of God from the very beginning has been to reveal His name. He has revealed His name in nature. He has revealed His name in revelation. When man fell, we find God coming with this word upon His lips "Where art thou?" We see the guilty pair driven from the garden. It is one of our first views of God's face. And we see at the beginning his hatred of sin and his love for man. And all through the Book in a thousand different ways he is trying to tell man that He is holy, that He is against them that do evil and that no sin can prosper. And yet that He loves them with an everlasting love and if the "wicked man will forsake his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts and will turn unto the Lord, He will have mercy upon him and will abundantly pardon." And finally, God has revealed His name in all its glorious fullness in His Son. If we want to know all that is meant by the name of God, we have only to look into the face of Jesus Christ, for in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the God-head bodily. So when we pray "Hallowed by thy name", we are praying that God whose fatherhood is revealed in Jesus Christ, may be known and reverenced and worshipped for what He is.

As we pray this prayer we are to seek to honor God and to hallow His name in our personal lives. We shall not take the name of the Lord flippantly upon our lips. A man can not pray the Lord's Prayer and be a swearing man. He can not pray the Lord's Prayer and use many of the exclamations that many church members use. We are to hallow God's name by having right conceptions of Him, by thinking of Him as He has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. I have known people in the stress of great sorrow or keen disappointments to blame God and cherish hard and harsh thoughts of Him. We are to hallow His name by having right and holy thoughts of Him in our own individual hearts. Then we are to hallow His name by our living so as to show the beauty of His character. God said to the Jews "My name is blasphemed among the heathen because of you!" That is, professing to know and serve a holy God, they led unholy lives. We need to remember the prayer more and more "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us". We shall only show forth God as holy and lovable by being holy and lovable ourselves. And it is as we thus hallow his name by our own personal consecration to it that His name shall finally become hallowed throughout the whole world.

You remember when Sky Pilot lay dead in the little cabin at the head of the canyon how the hard old duke said to the Honorable Fred, "I would give the world to die like that", and it was that beauty of the Lord that he saw in the life of this preacher of the foot hills that led to the remaking of their own lives.

"Hallowed by thy name". As we seek through the power of the spirit to answer this prayer in our own lives we shall also be seeking and be
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succeeding in the bringing about of its realization in the wide world. And whenever that good day comes when God's name is hallowed in all nations and by all men, then the Kingdom will have come, and the Glory of the Lord indeed will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

CGC:BR
"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." These words are a part of the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples. They are at once a prayer and a program. They state what is the business of the Church and what is the business of the individual Christian from century to century.

PART I.

What is our task? According to Jesus Christ our Lord we are here to engage in the biggest enterprise imaginable. It is our business to help to establish the Kingdom of heaven. As to what the Kingdom of heaven is, I think Paul gives possibly the most concise and definite definition. "The kingdom of heaven is not eating and drinking but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Notice the order. It must be kept. The kingdom of heaven is righteousness. That must come first. There must be righteousness in the heart of the individual. There must be righteousness in the home. Righteousness between man and man. There must be righteousness in social life. Righteousness in business life. Righteousness in political life. It is our business to bring about the reign of righteousness.

Now when righteousness prevails joy will follow as naturally as night follows day. The one trouble with this world fundamentally is sin. Every heartache every broken hope, every blighted life may be accounted for finally by the big fact of sin. Sin is the supreme joy killer. But when sin goes joy comes. Many are seeking for joy
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today that will never find it. If they seek righteousness first then joy will come without their seeking.

Not only does the reign of righteousness mean joy it also means peace. What lies back of the restlessness and wretchedness of human hearts. The source of the tragedy is the quarrel of the soul with God. When the sin is removed that prevents our peace with God we shall have peace indeed, for peace between God and man means continual peace within the individual, peace between man and man and peace throughout the world.

PART II.

Why are we to pray for the coming in of the kingdom? Why are we to make this at once our program and our prayer?

1. Because it is a worthy enterprise. No other in all the world is so supremely worthwhile.

2. We are to do this because the kingdom of God is not yet fully come. I know there is a sense in which God is absolutely King over the whole universe. But He is not King in all human hearts. There are ten thousand things in our individual and social lives that are contrary to the will of God. Jesus is not yet fully enthroned.

3. We are to make this our program and our prayer because it is not only worthwhile, but because no man can fail who thus invests himself. This prayer is not only a program but a prophesy. Jesus did not set us to praying for what never could be accomplished. However completely wrong seems to triumph in many places today, its triumph is not going to continue. The final victory is not with sin but with righteousness. "Jesus shall reign where ere the sun doeth its successive journey run."
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PART III.

Where are we to seek to establish this kingdom? The answer is made very plain in the text. We are not to seek to establish the kingdom of God in heaven, it is already established there. We are to seek to establish it in the earth. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Jesus has not come simply to save a few folks out of the world, He has come to save the world. When He prayed for His disciples, this was His prayer. "I pray not that Thou shalt take them out of the world but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil."

There was a time in the middle ages when it was thought proper for one who had become a Christian to hide himself away from the world. There he remained getting himself ready for heaven. Meanwhile, the world was plunged deeper into the dark. No greater calamity could possibly happen than for the church to become solely concerned with its own affairs and turn the running of the world over to the devil. Such a church would die for lack of a mission. Such a church would leave the world without the only saving salt that it has.

PART IV.

How are we to help? In the realization of this great task.

1. We are to help bring about the kingdom of God by giving ourself heart and soul to that kingdom. There is one place at least where you can see to it that the will of God is done, and that is in your own personal life. That is your first and fundamental duty. You will do little to establish the kingdom of God in the world until you have allowed Him to establish His kingdom in your own heart. And let us not be afraid of the will of God. Life becomes rich and meaningful just in proportion as we are surrendered to that will. There is nothing greater
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than the proof of our own experiences where the good and acceptable and perfect will of God is.

2. Having entered the kingdom, we are to seek to make Christ's kingdom throughout the world. It is for this cause that we are saved. Every man who has really accepted Jesus Christ as the Lord of his life is seeking to make Him Lord over all men and in all human affairs.

We are to seek to make Christ's kingdom by going with Him after the lost. He is come to seek and to save that which is lost. If we are His we are going to share in His purpose and his passion. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the one cure for our sin-scared humanity.

But our work is more than a cure. It is to be a preventative. We are not to be so concerned with the hospital at the foot of the cliff that we forget the fence at the top. As the light of the world, we are to guide lost men back to God. As the salt of the earth we are in-so-far as in us lies to prevent evil. We are to bring to bear the saving salt of a Christ-like personality upon our homes, upon our churches, upon our city, upon our nation and upon our world. This is why we are here. This, I take it, is the business of the Church.
Matthew 6:9-16—"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

If the church were put to popular vote today it would probably be elected but the majority would not be great. There are those that are openly antagonistic. They rejoice in all her failures. They take pleasure in all her defeats. If a preacher goes wrong; if he throws away his hidden credentials and becomes a minister of the gospel without the grace of God, they tell the story far and wide as if it were good news. If a member proves unfaithful they seem to think it a matter for personal congratulation.

But while the number of openly antagonistic is small, the number of the indifferent is very large. And indifference is far worse than antagonism. For a church to be found fault with may be a blessing rather than a calamity. It may prove an asset rather than a liability. But for a church to be ignored is a calamity always and everywhere. For folks to hate us may count as much for our advantage as for our disadvantage. But for them to be indifferent to us, to pass us by and treat us as not worth either of hate or love—that spells disaster.

Now why are there so many today who are either antagonistic or indifferent? I think this arises from two causes.

1. The church has failed to fully measure up to its opportunities. In some measure we have disappointed both ourselves and our Lord. We have not lived within the circle of His will. He intends that we shall be "A glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." It is his purpose that as a church we shall be "fair as the moon and bright as the sun and terrible as an army of banners." This failure has given rise to some
The church—its purpose.

antagonism and to much indifference.

2. This antagonism and indifference have also been born of ignorance. There are a vast multitude who have no right understanding of that for which the church stands. There are scores that pass our doors every day that are totally ignorant of the program of the church as if they had been born in darkest heathenism. I am persuaded that there are numberless people who from a position of indifference would be turned to one of active support if they could only be induced to see that for which the church stands and for which it is doing battle.

I.

What is the purpose of the church? Since God has established it; since Christ gave himself to its upbuilding both in time and eternity, it must have some purpose that is pre-eminently worth while. Surely it is not an institution of such insignificance as to merit the disregard and indifference in which it is held by so many people. The very fact of Christ's relation to it indicates that it is an institution of supreme importance. What then is it here to do?

1. It is here to help us to be saved from our sins and to flee from the wrath to come. It is to serve in some measure as a fold for the sheep of the Good Shepherd. But while this is true, it is by no means all the truth. If this were the whole truth then the church might be the selfish institution that some claim it to be. But its primary purpose is not to save folks
The church—its purpose.

out of the world. It is to keep folks in the world and to keep Christ in them.

2. The church is interested in the life to come. It teaches that faithful loyalty to the Gospel given to his trust will get men into heaven. But this is not her primary mission. The Gospel will get men into heaven. It is absolutely guaranteed to do so. But the Church is not concerned chiefly with the life to come. It is concerned with the life that now is. Its primary purpose is not to give us a program for some future world but for the world in which we find ourselves today.

3. The program of the church in a sentence is this: to bring in the kingdom of God. Jesus stated her program in its fulness when he taught us to pray "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." He organized the little hand full of disciples that he gathered about him and sent them out not to a trivial and cheap task. He sent them out to the most stupendous undertaking that was ever dreamed of. He sent them to no less a task than the bringing in of the kingdom of God throughout the world. The church, therefore, has for its purpose not only to get men into heaven but it has yet a more immediate purpose of getting heaven into men in the here and now.

II.

Now when Christ taught us to pray for the coming of His kingdom; when he set us to the task of bringing in his kingdom, the fact that he gave us such a program implies at least two
The kingdom of God has not yet fully come. I know that there is a sense in which God is king today. I know the shout "Hear the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth", is one that belongs to all the centuries. Throughout the vast universe God is king. He created it all. He holds it in the hollow of his hand. For this reason everywhere you look in the physical world you find evidence of order and of plan. You feel with Tennyson "That nothing walks with aimless feet." You sing with the psalmists "The heavens declare the glory of God." You feel with Addison, "In reason's ear they all rejoice and utter forth a glorious voice, forever singing as they shine--The hand that made us is divine."

But there is one place that God is not fully enthroned as yet. That is in the hearts of men. His kingship there is not complete. "Why does not God stop war?" was a question asked by many a few years ago. The only answer to such a question is this: "Because he could not." My will is as free as God's will. Just so long as I choose evil, I am at liberty to pursue my course. God cannot prevent my wrong choice. Of course he could do so, in a sense, by destroying me. He could have stopped the war by dropping the warring nations into the sea. But this is not the victory that God is seeking. The kingship for which the Church is to work and pray is something far better and higher than this. The appeal of God is ever this: "Son give me thine heart." He is
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not seeking the obedience that is born of slavish fear but that that is born of love. He wants us to obey him because we have taken the relation of a loving child to a loving father.

Now in this sense the kingdom of God has not yet fully come. There are countless thousands that have not yet accepted the kingship of Jesus. His will is not yet fully done among the nations. It is not yet fully done within the Church. It is not yet fully done within your heart and mine. There are countless things taking place every day in our world that would never take place if the will of God were being done as it is done in heaven.

Yesterday a minister of Christ proved disloyal to his high calling. Yesterday a husband and wife dragged their marriage relationship through the mud. Yesterday a son poisoned the pure blood of his mother. We no longer say "For as much as it has pleased God to take out of this world the soul of our diseased brother." There are so many times when it is not true. That little child who died from insufficient food did not go out of life according to the will of God. That young man that died poisoned with boot-leg liquor did not die within the will of God. That young girl who went out under a criminal operation did not do so because it pleased God. Oh, you cannot live with open eyes in this world without realizing that the kingdom has not yet come.

2. But when Christ set his church to the task of praying and working for the kingdom of God, he expected us to work at it hopefully and expectantly. This prayer upon the lips of Jesus is more than simply a prayer and a program. It is also a prophesy.
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He would not set us to pray for that which is never to be granted. He would not set us to work for that which could never be attained. Therefore, while we work and pray in the realization that the kingdom of God has not yet come, we are also to work with the conviction that some day it will come.

One day Jesus shall reign

Wherever the sun doth its successive journeys run.

His kingdom spread from shore to shore,

Till moon shall wax and wane no more.

III.

We are accustomed to sing: "The kingdom is coming; Oh, tell me the story." What is this kingdom of God that the church is to establish? What is this for which we are to work and for which we are to pray? What is this consummation to which we are to look?

There are many definitions in the Bible. Possibly the best is that from St. Paul. "The kingdom of heaven is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

1. The kingdom is righteousness. When the kingdom of God is fully come every man will live a right life. We shall be right in our inner life. We shall be right in our relationships with each other. We shall be right in our business affairs. We shall be right in our amusements. We shall be right in our weights and measures. We shall be right in our book-keeping. Life will no longer be divided in the sacred and secular. We shall be as religious in all our transactions as we are in the taking of the communion on Sunday morning.
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2. The kingdom is peace. You see righteousness comes before peace. There can be no peace unless there is righteousness first. "There is no peace sayeth my God to the wicked." There are many harassed and worried people who are eager for peace and eager for joy. But they will never find these until they meet the conditions. Self and sin must first be dethroned. Christ must be enthroned.

When I was a boy I went barefooted. Therefore I was frequently afflicted with stone bruises. When a bit of corruption had formed way down under the skin, the pain would be very annoying but there was only one way to get ease. That was to lance the offending bruise and allow the corruption to escape. But when that was done you did not need to apply a poltice. It got easy of itself.

The kingdom of heaven is peace. That means peace between you and God. The one great cause of unrest today is a tragic quarrel between the soul and God. It means peace also within your heart. It means that the civil war has ceased within your soul. It means peace between man and man. In the kingdom of God no man has a quarrel against his brother.

3. The kingdom of heaven is joy. That is the most natural thing in the world. Let sin be done away, let the Spirit of God hold sway in your hearts, joy and peace will be the result. When this righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit becomes the possession of everyone of us, then the kingdom of God will have come. Then this old world will become a heavenly place in which to live. Then the task for which our Lord set his church will be
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accomplished.

IV.

How is this dream to become a reality?

1. If the kingdom of God is to come there must be a new consecration on the part of the church. Through the centuries there have been great revivals. These revivals have usually come when things were at their wicked worst. It was so in the coming of the Reformation. It was so with the coming of the great spiritual awakening under Wesley. But these revivals have always begun not by the ingathering of the many but of the consecration of the few. The first duty of the church is a closer walk with God.

2. If the church is to help bring in the kingdom it must be a conquering force. It must go forth with its Master to seek and to save that which is lost. Here is a type of work that any man can do who is willing to pay the price. "The next great revival" Moody said, "will come when men are willing to take a walk with their friends for Christ's sake." Here is a task at which you can help. In which you must help or give an account of your neglect before the judgment seat of Christ.

3. Not only is the work of the church one of consecration and conquest. It is also one of conservation. We are to do more than cure evil. We are to prevent it. We are to be the salt of the earth. We are to go after that which is lost, but more important still, we are to prevent from getting lost.

This is the work of the church through Sunday School. It is the duty of every teacher to seek to win souls to Christ and to build up souls in Christ. Your greatest contribution will be
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to train your children for Christ in their young and tender years that they will never stray from him. This is also the work of the church through the Christian home. I call you to face the fact once more that a child can be a Christian. Not only can a child be a christian but he can be a christian easier as a child then ever again. Then if he is not won as a child, the chances are that he will never be won. Surely this ought to call every teacher and every father and mother to a new consecration.

I wonder how many of you pray with your children. A friend of mine told me the other day that in an audience of five thousand, he asked all who had family altars to stand. How many do you suppose stood? Only sixteen and it was an audience of religious people. How can we hope to bring the king by such shameful neglect as that. Our children love us and idolize us. They believe that what we do is right. That fact, if anything else, ought to send us to our knees in a fuller surrender.

To feel his little hand in mine, so clinging and so warm,
To know he thinks I'm strong enough to keep him from all harm;
To see his simple faith in all I can say or do.
It sort o' shames a fellow, but it makes him better to;
And I am trying hard to be the man he fancies me to be.
Because I have this chap at home who thinks the world o' me.

I would not disappoint his trust for anything on earth,
Nor let him know how little I just naturally am worth,
But after all it's easier that brighter road to climb
With the little hands behind me to push me all the time;
And I reckon I'm a better man than what I used to be. Because I have this chap at home who thinks the world o' me.

Here then is a task that is surely worth while. It is one that Christ put first. It is one that he calls on you and me to put first. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." You can do nothing less than that and find life large and roomy and worth while. Not even Christ himself could find anything bigger and larger or better at which to toil. I am not wondering that when the missionary was offered $24,000 for his services, he replied, "Your salary is far too large, but your job is not big enough. I am trying to bring in the kingdom of God." Do you make this program yours?
WHY WORRY?

Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? Matthew 6-27

I

What warning is Jesus giving us by this arresting question? To begin negatively, He is not warning us against taking life seriously. Jesus was tremendously in earnest. No man was ever more so. One day as his disciples looked into his face, they read the interpretation of a text that they had not understood before. That was this, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." That is, Jesus fairly burns himself out because of his intense earnestness. He desires us to be in earnest. Therefore, He is not urging upon us that happy-go-lucky attitude toward life that some pretend. There are those the soil of whose souls is so shallow that they cannot even grow a decent worry.

No more is Jesus warning us against the thought-out life. Few words that Jesus ever uttered have been more grossly misunderstood than this "Take no thought for tomorrow." If ever man took thought, Jesus was that man. It was with a joy that was set before him that He endured the Cross, despising the shame. Since He thought of tomorrow, he would have us do the same. Therefore, He is not warning here against the thought-out life.

What then, is He warning against? He is warning against worry. He is eager that we face life with an attitude of faith instead of an attitude of feverish, fretful anxiety. Thus He appeals both to our faith and to our common-sense with this question, "Which of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his span of life?"

II

Why do we need a word like this?

1. We need it because so many of us are worried. Perhaps there was never a day in all history that there were so many worried people as there are at this moment. Nor can we explain this wide-spread worry merely in terms of our circumstances. Circumstances are bad enough, it is true, but worry is not a child
of circumstances. Whether you worry or not does not depend upon your situation but upon you. Whenever you are robbed by worry, it is always an inside job. But be the causes what they may, multitudes are worried today. Ignorant folks worry. Of course, they do not know any better. Educated folks worry. Certainly. They know so much to worry about. Old folks worry. Yes, indeed. They are coming close to the sunset of the evening star. Young folks worry. Naturally. They have so many years ahead of them in our topsy-turvy world. Irreligious folks worry because they have no faith. Religious folks worry because they have an inadequate faith. All sorts of people worry.

Not only do all sorts of people worry, but they worry about all sorts of things. We worry about our bodies and we worry about our souls. We worry about the pulpit and the pulpit worries about the pew. We worry about getting married and we worry because we have not married. We worry about calamities that actually take place. We worry far more about calamities that never do take place. If you are a good worrier and put in more than a forty hour week, as many of us do, you can count on it that at least seventy-five to ninety percent of the tragedies about which you have worried never have and never will take place.

Not only do all sorts of folks worry about all sorts of things, but they worry, as another has pointed out, at the worst possible times. If you would only do all your worrying while on vacation, then it might not be so bad. But instead of picking a good leisurely time, you wait until the going is hard and until the burden is heavy. You wait until you are most in need of steady nerves and a clear head. Then you unfit yourself for coping with your situation by giving way to worry.

2. Then we need this word of warning because worry is so useless. This is the very heart of what Jesus is saying. "Which of you by being anxious can add a cubic to his span of life?" By which he means to say worry is useless. It never lifted a single load. It never solved a single problem. It never
rubbed out a single wrinkle, but it has rubbed in billions of them. It has been well said that there are two classes of things, that nobody ought to worry about. First, we ought not to worry about the things that we cannot help. There are some things that, if we are wise, we simply accept. We may object to the law of gravity, but it is not wise to argue with that law. By doing so we should only break our bones. There are many things that we might like to avoid if we could, but we simply cannot. Therefore, we ought to meet them without anxiety.

Take the matter of getting old, for instance. I have known those who lived in deadly fear of the almanac. There are perhaps some of you who would not tell your ages for any price. There is no gain in this. Folks are guessing at you. By telling your age, you might save yourself a year or two. Why should we fear to get old? Does not God have as much plan for December as for June? Yet a friend said to me in this church the other day, "You ought not to get old." "The only way I know how to avoid it," I replied, "is to die and that is too heroic a remedy for me to be willing to apply at this time."

Then worry about getting old is only to speed up the process. I saw a man fall off a horse the other day. He was so deliciously and relaxedly drunk that he hit the ground like a wet towel. Therefore the fall did not hurt him in the least. If I had been falling off that horse, I would have gone down with my muscles all astrut and it might have broken my neck. This old horse called the calendar is going to toss you off one of these days, If you can take that toss relaxed, it will not hurt you, but if you are tense with anxiety, it is likely to break your body but your heart. Do not, therefore, worry about the things you cannot help. Accept them in the fear of God.

A second class of things that nobody ought to worry about are those things that you can help. Instead of worrying about them, you ought to get so busy helping that you will not have time to worry. But did you ever wake up on a winter night, being about two-thirds cold, and remember that there was a blanket not
six feet away. But instead of getting up and getting the blanket, you simply
lay there and worried the rest of the night. Of course, your worry did not
get you warm, but you had a good time worrying. We ought to avoid anxiety because it
is so useless.

3. We need this warning because worry is harmful. It is harmful to the
one who worries. It takes a great deal of work to kill if there is peace within
the heart of the worker. But it does not take worry long to make us face toward
the cemetery. It is the mother of many a disease. There is no disease known
to medicine that it does not aggravate.

Not only does worry hurt the one who worries but it makes you hard to live
with. I have known many fathers who would be cheerful all day long at their desks
then come home and spill out all their worries about the dinner table and spoil
everybody's appetite except their own. I have known a few wives who were so
worried that the best they could offer their husbands when they came home from
the day's work was a face that looked like a dead ache. Those who worry are a
disappointment burden to themselves, a burden to others, and above all else, they are a burden
to God. When Jesus was here He used to say to his friends with pained amazement,
"O men, how little ye trust me."

III

Now since worry is such an ugly foe, we ought not to tolerate it. It is
more than a misfortune; it is a positive sin. Therefore we must be rid of it.

But how?

There are two remedies that are very popular, but they are guaranteed not
to work. For instance, some of us are going to quit worrying just as soon as we
get into an ideal situation. But that remedy will not work. This is the case
in the first place, because there is no ideal situation. It is true in the
second place because, if there was an ideal situation, the chances are that you and
I would not get into it. It is a failure in the third place because, if there is
an ideal situation and you and I got into it, the first thing we would do would be
to mess it up.

If we cannot conquer worry by getting into an ideal situation, no more can we conquer it by merely clenching our fists and squaring our jaws and saying, "Go to, now, I am never going to worry again as long as I live." I used to have a great friend who would become feverish with anxiety and say over and over again, "I am not going to worry about that, would you?" And the more she resolved, the more desperately worried she became. What, then, are we to do?

1. First, I think it might help if we bear in mind that worry is an acquirement. Nobody was born worried. You doubtless caused somebody to worry soon after you got here, but nobody was ever born worried. If it so happens that you are a good violinist or a skilled golfer, it is not because you were born that way; it is rather because you have practiced and practiced and practiced. If you are good at worrying, that is the case for the same reason; you have practiced and practiced and practiced. Worry is an acquirement. Anything that you can learn can be unlearned.

2. If you are to conquer worry, we must keep peace with our conscience. We are gifted with conscience in everyone of us. If we are ever faced with H. G. Wells says of a certain character that he was not so much a personality as a civil war. Naturally, such a man could not make a winning fight against an outside enemy. He was too busy fighting himself. We are gifted with conscience, every one of us. We can have no peace so long as we ignore that inner voice.

Is there a certain course of action that always leaves you with a feeling of being defeated and morally run down at the heel? However innocent such conduct may seem, you must give it up. T.M.A. Does God's finger seem to be pointing down a certain road saying to you, "Walk that way". Then you will never find peace until you obey. When Isaiah said "There is no peace to the wicked" he was uttering a truth that is as up-to-date as your latest 'heart-beat! We can never find peace until we stop fighting with God and our own conscience.
3. If we find peace some of us will have to redirect our thinking. We are to look upon the things that we approve and not sorely upon those that we disapprove. Paul put it in these words: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

The apostle is not urging us here to blind optimism. He is not trying to make us into starry-eyed Pollyannas. He is urging upon us the sanity of seeking in our world, in our situation, in our church, in our friends, in our loved ones, the things that are lovely instead of giving of our time to searching for those things that are ugly and that fill us with disapproval and disgust.

If you are going to conquer worry, you must seek to think white instead of black.

4. Finally, the supreme antidote against worry is faith in God. The same fatherly God, Jesus reminds us, who looked after the needs of the birds can be trusted to supply our needs. We are to rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. We are to cast all our care upon Him in the realization that He cares for us. "In everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God that passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

I read somewhere of an aviator who was making a flight around the world. After he had been gone for some two hours from his last landing base in Arabia, he heard a noise in his vessel that he recognized as the gnawing of a rat. He realized that while his ship was grounded, the rat had entered it. He did not know what bit of his delicate machinery those sharp teeth might be cutting. Therefore, it made his blood run cold. At first he did not know what to do. He was two hours back to his last landing base and more than two hours to the landing base ahead.
Then he remembered that the rat was a rodent. It was not made for the heights; it was made to live on the ground and under the ground. Therefore, he began to climb. He went up one thousand, and then another thousand, and then another thousand until he was twenty thousand feet in the air. Then the noise ceased.

When he came down in safety, at his next landing base, there was a dead rat in the pit of his vessel.

Worry is a rodent. It cannot live in the heights of the living faith. It cannot live in an atmosphere sweetened by prayer. Therefore, "in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God."

"Drop the still dews of slumber,
Till all of stress shall cease,
Take from our souls the strain and stress
And let all of life confess
The beauty of thy peace."

(Found this rep in Hymnals, p. 21, begins "Dear Lord and Father"
originally, I think.)