THE DIVIDED FAMILY

Mark 1:20

"And they left their father Zebedee in the ship and followed Him."

This text is a wonderful blending of sunshine and shadow, of laughter and of tears. It fairly pulsates with hallelujahs. It also trembles with the bitter sobs of despair. There is sunshine in it brighter than the light of morning. There is darkness in it blacker than gloomiest midnight. Springtime is there, colorful with life and songful with budding hopes. Winter-time is here, dead and voiceless and full of despair. What makes this story so gladsome? Why does it thrill you like a breath from the mountains or like the sea from the infinite sea? The answer is easy. James and John have decided to become followers of Jesus Christ. Two sturdy young men with thunder and lightning in their make-up have dedicated their high powers to the Son of God. Two brawny young fishermen have made up their minds to go out under the leadership of Christ to become fishers of men. Therefore, this is a great day for them. Therefore this is a great day for the world.

"James, where are you going?" "I am going to be Christ's man", he answers. "I am going to walk with Him and work with Him about the highways and byways of Judea and of Galilee. I am going to stand with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration. I am going to watch with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. I am going to be the first Christian martyr. So dominant is my personality to become under the spell of Christ that I will be selected to head the list of those immortals who have sealed their faith with their blood. I am going to walk in the vanguard of those who have come up out of great tribulations and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

"John, where are you going?" "I am going to follow Jesus. I am going to sit with Him on the well curb when the woman of evil character comes to draw water. I am going to be an eye witness to this amazingly thrilling scene. I am going to tell all future generations that Jesus Christ cares for outcast folks. I am going to tell my fellows that though a woman may be cast out beyond the respect of both men and women, she is never cast out beyond the interest and beyond the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Where are you going, John? "I am going to become a friend of Jesus. I am going to lean upon His bosom. I am going to love Him so well that after generations will know me as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.' I am going to rest my head upon His bosom, so that all the world may know that here is room enough for all the aching heads and all the aching hearts. For all the weary sons and daughters of men that live today and
that are yet hidden in the bosom of the centuries. I am going to write a Gospel that will leave a track of light through all the centuries because more than all other Gospels it shows us that God is Love.

"And Mrs. Zebedee, where are you going?" "I am going with my lads", she answers. "Do you think a mother can be separated from her boys? Do you think that she will not share in their passion, that she will not seek to see their visions and dream their dreams? I am going with James and John into the fellowship of Jesus. I will make a foolish request of Christ one day that he cannot grant, but even back of that request there will be a loving heart that will keep me steadfast and will enable me to be among the company that is by the Cross when the supreme tragedy of this world shall be consumated!"

"And Mr. Zebedee, what about you?" He does not look up. He is so busy. But he answers hurriedly. "I am not going with my wife, I am not going with my sturdy lads. I am too busy. I have to mend these nets. Don't you see that ugly place where the net is torn? If I did not mend the nets the fishes would escape." "Yes, but if you do mend them, Christ might escape." "No," he said "I am busy."

This is the tearful part of the story. This is where the tragedy comes in. And it is a tragedy unspeakable in its bitterness. Here is where Zebedee divides his family. Here is where he separates himself from his noble wife. Here is where he separates himself from his consecrated sons. Here is where he makes it impossible for God to keep the family circle unbroken either here or hereafter.

Now, a united family is a beautiful sight. A family united in the fear or love of God is about the most beautiful something that God is ever privileged to look upon. But many families are divided. We are but fragments here this morning. Death has come in between many of us. But the separations wrought by death are very trivial and secondary matters. But the separations wrought by sin, by wrong choices, these are the things that constitute the perpetual heartache of the Son of God.

I met James out at the Church one day, and I say: "Good morning, James. Is the family at church?" "Part of them", he answers. "John is here and mother is here". "Where is Zebedee?" And a shadow flits across his face. "He did not come. He is at home with the nets." "John, where is your father?" And the sensitive face of John twitches with agony, and he answers: "Father is at home with the nets." "Mrs. Zebedee, where is your husband?" And her eyes fill with tears and she says, "I could not get him to come today. He said the nets were so broken that they had to be mended. He is at home with the nets." "Zebedee, where are the folks?" "Gone to Church." "Are you going?" "No. I had to stay at home with the nets." And the family is divided. Though they live under the same roof, they are as far apart as heaven is from hell.
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II

What is the matter with Mr. Zebedee? Why will he deliberately divide his family? Why will he allow the devil to separate him from these choice souls with whom he is so intimately and beautifully connected?

(1) It is not because Zebedee does not love his family. He is devoted to his wife. He is proud of his two fine boys. When they were little fellows he used to tell his fellow fishermen the bright things they said. He used to say: "These lads will be an improvement on their father. They do not take after me. They take after their mother. Fine boys! There are not finer boys anywhere on the borders of this lake." He was proud of them. He loved them. Therefore, when he allowed himself to become separated in heart from his boys, and separated in heart from his wife, it was not because his love for them had grown cold or had utterly died.

(2) Neither did Zebedee divide his family because he was a drunkard or held held by some vicious and evil passion. Zebedee was a very sober, an upright and honest man. So far as we know he had never been drunk in his life. So far as we know, he had been perfectly true to his marriage vows. There are many men who have allowed the devil to lasso them with some sinful and damning habit, but such was not the case with Zebedee. Zebedee was an honest, sober, hard working husband and father.

(3) Neither did Zebedee commit this tragic blunder of dividing his family because he was antagonistic to religion. He offered no opposition whatever when his two sons who were his helpers in the business of fishing decided to become followers of Christ. He did not put a restraining hand upon them. He did not scoff. He did not ridicule. He did not threaten he disinherit them. In all probability, he was exceedingly glad for them to become disciples. Neither did he stand in the way of his wife. When she got ready to go to Church he did not snarl and say that he thought she ought to stay at home with him. There are some men mean enough to do this, you know. But Zebedee, like every decent man that I have ever known, wanted his wife to be a Christian.

What, then, was wrong with Zebedee? Just this. He did not become a Christian himself. While his wife followed Jesus, while his two boys followed Him, he refused. "Zebedee, where is James?" "Gone to church." is the answer. "Where is John?" "Gone to church." "Does it not anger you to be left here at home by yourself?" "No." "Do you object to their going?" "No, I am glad for them to go." "Are you going to join them?" "Some time, maybe, but not now."

"But, pardon me, Mr. Zebedee, why do you not become a Christian? Why are you not at church with your wife? You have no right to put the whole responsibility for the religious life of your home upon her shoulders. Why do you not go to church with your boys? There is no fence so strong to keep them in the Kingdom of God as that of a good father's life." And Zebedee's fingers are very busy and he answers: "I have to work." These nets must be mended. Folks got to eat. Don't talk to me now. I am too busy." That is what is the matter with Zebedee. That is what is the matter
with millions of Zebedees today. Their wives and their children are in Sunday School, but they are busy. Their mail must be opened on Sunday, or their bodies must be rested on Sunday. So the wife and the children go to church. They cannot go—too busy.

III

What did "Zebedee" lose by being too busy?

1. He missed the privilege of sharing with his family the friendship of Jesus. "Zebedee, do you know Jesus?" And his fingers are very busy tying a broken cord as he shakes his head. "No" he replies, "I never met Him." "Did He not come your way once and call for your two lads? Did He not come and invite your wife into His friendship?" "Yes" he replies, "but I did not see Him. I was busy with the nets. He came right in the midst of the fishing season. People have to eat. Fish must be caught. They are taken in nets. Nets have to be mended. So I did not get to see Jesus, tho He was very close. I was busy."

2. Mr. Zebedee missed the privilege of hearing Jesus preach. "Was not that a marvelous sermon that the preacher from Nazareth gave us out on the Mount the other day? Did you not tremble as you heard him tell the roadway to highest happiness? "Blessed are the meek!" He said, and "Blessed are the pure in heart." Was it not a marvelous sermon?" "They say it was." Zebedee answers, while his nimble fingers work. "I did not go to church that day. There was nobody to mend the nets. I had to stay at home and get ready for the night’s fishing, and so I missed that sermon."

"But doubtless you heard the others. Surely you heard of the sheep that went astray and how the Shepherd left the ninety and nine and went out into the wilds of the mountains and sought for it till he found it? And certainly you must have been present when He told that story which is the most winsome and gracious that ever fell from lips human or Divine. "There was a certain man had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, "Give me the portion of goods that falls to me."

And the boy went away and squandered his last penny. But when broken in body and broken hearted he came home, his father kissed him and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet and made for him a feast. Truly I hope that you heard that marvelous sermon." "No" he said, "I did not hear that. We had had a bad time with the nets the night before. Some of them were badly rent. So I was busy mending the nets."

"Zebedee, did you notice that it grew dark at noon last Friday? Did you feel the boat quiver underneath you? Did you look up to see the hills totter? Did you hurry away up to Jerusalem and out on Calvary to discover that Christ had died for the sins of the world? Did you hasten to fling yourself at the foot of that Cross with joyful sobbings in your soul that 'He was wounded for your transgressions and bruised for your iniquities?' Your son was by that cross when Jesus died. He heard Him promise to meet a dying thief in Paradise. He received from the lips of the dying Christ this charge: "Son, behold thy mother,' and He took the Mother of Jesus to his home. "Where were you last Friday, Zebedee?" "I was mending the nets."
Again it is Monday morning and I am down by Galilee, and I see a busy and grizzled fisherman and I say "Zebedee, a new day has dawned. Yesterday was Easter Sunday. Yesterday Mary Magdalene came and told your son John and a certain fisherman named Peter that the grave in which Christ had been buried was empty. Peter and John ran to this grave, and fleet-footed John beat Peter there and saw the grave was empty. Possibly you were also in that race to the empty tomb. Possibly you also saw and believed. Possibly you are living in the joyous faith that one day every grave will give up its dead. Did you see the empty tomb Zebedee? Were you among the little company when the risen Christ came and said "Peace be unto you? Were you there yesterday when he breathed on his disciples and said 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.'?" "No" said Zebedee, "I was mending the nets. I was too busy to go."

And now seven weeks have passed and again I passed the seaside where Zebedee is busy in his toil, and I say "Hallelujah, was not that a wonderful service yesterday! Did you ever experience such joy as that which came to us when suddenly there was a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and we were all filled with the Holy Ghost. And was it not wonderful to see three thousand born unto God in a single service. Can you ever cease to shout over the fact that according to His promise, He has not left us friendless, but has come to abide with us in the person of the Holy Spirit." And again Zebedee shakes his head while his fingers are busy with the net, and answers, "I was not there, I was too busy."

Now, answer me this: Do you not find it in your heart to weep bitter tears over Zebedee, and does not his conduct leave you utterly puzzled and bewildered? And when you hear his story, do you not enter into loving sympathy with that vast company of saints who have Zebedee near and dear to them, unsaved men and women, who are a perpetual heartache. And do you not long to put a saving, helping hand on the shoulder of Zebedee and help to unite him with his own loved ones by bringing him into fellowship of Jesus Christ. James and John and their brother missed something through Zebedee's failure. They missed the help and the sympathy that he might have given. But he missed everything thru his failure. He allowed it to separate him in heart and soul from those whom he loved best. He allowed it to separate him from Christ and God.

What became of Zebedee? We do not know. Here he appears in the story for the first and last time. All we can say is that the last time we saw him he was saying to his wife "Good bye, dear." He was saying to his boys. "Good bye, lads, Go on to church. Go on into the fellowship of Jesus. Go on to Calvary and to Pentecost. Go on into an immortality of usefulness. Go on into the abiding fellowship of Jesus Christ beyond the grave. Good bye. I would go along, but these nets are broken and I must mend them." "Want to go with us, Father?" "Not now. Not now. I am too busy with the nets."
And now Mr. Zebedee is an old man. His head is propped upon pillows and his thin white hair falls about his temples. He is very sick. He is sick unto death. In the other room yonder are a few old nets. They are needing mending, but his once cunning fingers are too weak. Zebedee's work is done. Mrs. Zebedee sits at his side. "Father, do you know me?" And he nods. "James has gone to heaven." Again he nods. "But John is still alive. Our John." And he has written a book. Let me read you a bit of it: "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you." And then she looks through her tears to see if there is any light of understanding. But the lips are still and the pulse still and all is still. And poor Zebedee has gone out without Christ.

Nineteen centuries have passed since that far off day. All Zebedee's nets are utterly rotten. All the money that Zebedee made has been squandered centuries and centuries ago. How much real estate did Zebedee own? No real estate at all. What is the worth of the monthly catch of Zebedee as he fishes on the lake? It is worth nothing. Zebedee does not fish any more. Where is Zebedee? I do not know. His wife and his two sons are with Jesus. Zebedee refused to follow Him. I am afraid in heaven that the family circle is broken. I am afraid in heaven that there is an unclaimed crown and a harp untouched by angel's hands. Zebedee might have had that harp and crown, but he was too busy with the nets.

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Our baby. Did you know?
“And when he had looked round about on them with anger.”

Mark 3:5

Here is a scene in the life of Jesus that to some is very perplexing. Personally I think we should be vastly the poorer without it. Look at the picture. It is a Sabbath, Jesus has gone into the synagogue to worship. Religion was at a low ebb in his day. The Church as a whole was dull and lifeless. But Jesus knew that he would not help by merely letting it alone. He had certain religious habits. One of them was church attendance. He was the wisest of men. He was the supreme genius in the realm of religion. We might do well to sit at his feet in the matter of church attendance as well as in other matters.

Arrived among the worshipers he came face to face with a man who had a withered hand. Luke tells us that his right hand was withered. He was, therefore, a man with a handicap. He was at a disadvantage in playing the game of life. When Jesus and this man faced each other the bystanders at once became expectant. They knew Jesus well enough to realize that he could never face a need with indifference. In the presence of human need he always went into action. Therefore the humble worshipers of this congregation were on tiptoe of expectancy. Their faces were aglow with eagerness and enthusiasm.

But this was not true of the congregation as a whole. There were some that looked on with hard eyes and grim and sour faces. These were the Phari-
sees. They were the custodians of the law. They, too, were aware that Jesus was likely to go into action at any moment in behalf of this needy man. That ought to have brought them joy, but it did not. They cared nothing about the man. They were only concerned whether Jesus should keep the Sabbath in their rigid fashion. If he should heal this man they felt that it would be an affront to themselves. It would discredit them. Therefore, they looked on in grim defiance.

Jesus with his sensitiveness could not but be aware of these conflicting emotions. Therefore he put a question to the Pharisees, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath or to do evil to save life or to kill?" But the Pharisees answered never a word. "Then," says Mark who was doubtless quoting an eyewitness, "then it was that Jesus looked round about them with anger." His cheeks glowed and his eyes flashed fire. This was the case, not because he was indifferent to the Sabbath. Jesus said that the Sabbath was made for man. He would certainly not sanction the selfishness and greed that were robbing man of his Sabbath today. But he valued the Sabbath because it ministered to human need. These Pharisees were interested only in institutions. They cared nothing for personality. Jesus looked on personality as the one thing of supreme worth. Therefore he cured this man and gave him a new chance.

At this the anger of the Pharisees knew no bounds. Luke tells us that they were filled with fury. So furious were they that they hurried off to consult with the Herodians how they might destroy Jesus. They determined that they would put this offender who had discredited them to death. But, if they were angry they were not one whit angrier than Jesus. I daresay that those present never forgot the flash of his eye as he looked upon these selfish despisers of human values.

I.

There are those that find this picture of an angry Christ, I repeat, be-
wilderling. The great artists have never dared paint Him with glowing cheek
and flashing eye. We tend to shy away from this picture for very natural rea-
sions. Anger has a God Implication.

1. Anger is so universal. It often takes a strong man to control his
temper, but anybody can get angry. This is true of the cultured and of the
uncultured, the civilized and the barbarian, the Christian and the unChristian,
the old and the young. All of us have seen babies far too young to talk, but
we never saw one too young to get red with rage. The only reason any mother is
alive is because the little fury couldn't kick hard enough to kill her. Since
the most useful and chaffy, therefore, can get angry we mistrust it.

2. We mistrust anger because the Bible looks at it with questioning eyes.
Take the Old Testament for instance. Anger does not look well upon its pages.
The writer of the thirty-seventh Psalm urges, "Cease from anger and forsake
wrath." "Fret not thyself," he says again, "it tems only to evil." Another
one of the Psalmists whom Paul quotes with approval writes, "Be angry and sin
not." By this he implies that anger and sin are very close neighbors. They
are often related to each other as cause and effect. When we are angry our
anger is apt to issue in sin, not positive wrong-doing. The writer of the
Proverbs declared, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty." Thus
hinting that to fly off the handle is a mark of weakness, but to practice self
control is a mark of strength.

When we turn to the New Testament, anger seems even less commendable. Paul
writing to his converts urges them to put away anger. Assuming that they have
allowed themselves to become angry he urges, "Let not the sun go down on your
wrath." Don't stay in a bad humor or your anger will harden into hate and your
hate into malice. When he writes to Titus about the selecting of a bishop, he
says, "No one should be a bishop who is hot tempered." In his immortal poem on
on love, he declares that love is sweet tempered. But it is Jesus who says the most emphatic word against anger. "You have heard that it was said of them of old time, thou shall not kill. But I say unto you, whosoever is angry with his brother is in danger of judgement." Jesus goes back from the effect to the cause, back from the symptom to the disease. He realized that many murders are born of anger.

Then we must confess that our ordinary garden variety of anger does not show up well in actual life. I knew a minister years ago who was normally one of the most winsome and charming personalities that I have ever met. He went on one occasion to a certain city to conduct a series of meetings. One night a poor old chap took a place on the front seat, and wheezed, and heaved, and sneezed and coughed till it was exceedingly annoying. The minister tried hard to drown him out. But at last the sneezer won the day. The unfortunate minister even lost his temper and said some ill-guarded words of which he was later deeply sorry. At last he sent the congregation home realizing that he had been sorely tried, but also finding it hard to believe in the genuineness of his Christianity.

A few years ago a minister told me this story: "He had a friend, a merchant, who was a very fine man, but not a member of any church. His wife was a member, and an earnest and active worker. One day this minister took upon himself the privilege of a pastor and friend, and made a personal appeal to this husband to surrender to Christ and come into the church. As he pressed him for an answer the man told him frankly one obstacle that stood in his way. "My wife," he said, "is one of the best of women. She is a worker in your church. But she has a vicious temper. Now and then she goes on the warpath and the children and I have to take to the woods. Somehow that is not my idea of being a Christian."

Now it so happened that this friend of mine was a beautiful man. He therefore went from the store to talk to this wife. He told her tenderly, but frankly what her husband had said. With an effort she kept her temper. They
had a prayer together. A few days later her husband decided to go fishing. He came into the home and in the process of turning, touched a swinging lamp that fell with a crash that sounded like a hardware store washing away in a thunderstorm. He waited for the next storm, but it did not come. The next Sunday he united with the church. Anger, then, as a rule, does not look good either in the Bible or out of it. What then are we to do about the anger of Jesus?

II

Let us look first at the anger of these Pharisees. Both parties to this controversy were angry. Therein was the anger of the Pharisee wrong and the anger of Jesus right? Let us bear in mind that the Pharisees were not wrong in their anger just because they were Pharisees. No more was the anger of Jesus right just because he was Jesus. Therein was one wrong and the other right? The anger of the Pharisees was wrong for at least three reasons.

1. It was purely selfish. In seeking to prevent the cure of this man they flattered themselves that they were seeking to safeguard the Sabbath. But such was not in reality the case. They were seeking to safeguard themselves. They were the custodians of the law. They felt that Jesus by his cures was discrediting themselves and undermining their authority. Their anger, therefore, was not born in their interest of the common good. It was born solely of their interest in themselves.

That is what makes so much of our anger an evil thing. We can tolerate selfishness, injustice, we can tolerate greed and indifference often times so long as they do not touch us personally. If the other man's ox is gored it is none of our business. It is only when it is our ox that we become fire-eyed and defiant. It is safe to say that the vast majority of all the anger that we experience is born of sheer selfishness. Somebody knocked a chip off our shoulder. Somebody stepped on our toes. Somebody failed to make us chairman of the committee, or failed to invite us to the party. All selfish anger is wrong.
2. The Pharisees were wrong in their anger, not only because it was born of the wrong motive, but it sought a wrong objective. When they went out from this service in the synagogue, hot with indignation, what did they try to do? They tried to destroy Jesus. Their anger was vindictive and destructive. It did not seek to build anything, but only to tear down. It did not seek to heal, but to hurt. They were out to reap vengeance on the one that had offended them.

Here, too, anger very much like ours. The first impulse of most of us when we get angry is to lash out at the one that has offended us. Sometimes we do so with weapons, sometimes with our fists, more often with our tongues. That is the trouble with the average family quarrel. When we get angry we seek deliberately to hurt. We tell the truth that we think will give the most pain. If the truth is not painful enough, we may color it till it amounts to a lie. Did you ever notice how prone we are to cease telling the truth in order to wound somebody?

If it so happens that we are too refined and cultivated to unsheathe the sword of our tongues and stab the one who has offended us, we take another course by which we seek to cause pain. We break off diplomatic relations. We quit. We will not go to his home anymore. We will cut his Bible Class, and we will turn our back on his church. We won't even go home. How typical is the anger of the Elder Son of much we see in our everyday world. There was a great feast going on in his own home. His presence was eagerly awaited. But he stood without and endured his hunger because he thought his absence would pain and embarrass his father. Our usual anger is wrong because it seeks to take revenge.

3. Finally, the anger of these Pharisees was wrong because it was insane and silly. We have another word for getting angry. It is not reckoned as the best of English. Yet, it comes close to the truth. We call it getting mad. That is a fitting description. When we lose our tempers we so often cease to act from the dictates either of love or of reason. We do the unintelligent stupid...
things that we should never think of doing were we not a bit crazy.

I am still trying to learn to control my temper. I began to see the necessity of this years ago as a teacher. I found that when I got angry I lost my head and said silly things that caused me pain if it caused pain to no other. These things made me suffer so that I felt that I must apologize. That apology was so hard that I made up my mind that I would rather forego the luxury of speaking my mind than to have to endure the pain and humiliation of making amends after I had spoken. I was a bit like my friend who had given up dissipation, not because he had got religion, but because he was tired of hurting. When we are mad we are often silly.

When I was a boy there was a man in our community who ran a sawmill. Ours was a timbered country. He was a successful man and a fine machinist. But he had a vicious temper. Now and then something would go wrong with his mill. He would set himself to fix it, but maybe the wrench would slip. It would skin his hand or mash a finger. At once he would go crazy, smash some delicate bit of the machinery with his wrench and then throw his wrench into the mill pond. Did the engine burst into tears and say it was sorry? No, his mill simply stood idle while he sent away for a new piece of machinery, and by and by he went broke, just because he was crazy. As crazy as the man who barks his chin on the chair in the night and then breaks his toe kicking it because he has lost his temper.

But, anger can lead us to be even more silly than that. One of the most gripping stories in literature is the account of Monte Cristo. His hero, you remember, suffered a great wrong. He was unjustly put into prison where he suffered for years. By and by he escaped, came into possession of a great fortune. He then gave his life to just one enterprise. There was one hot passion that drove him on. That was the passion for revenge. He made those who had wronged him suffer. But their suffering was as starlight to sunlight in comparison with the pain that this mad man inflicted upon himself. The Pharisees, then,
were wrong in their anger because it was born of a bad motive. It sought a bad result, it was insane.

III.

But what about the anger of Jesus? His anger was righteous anger for at least three reasons.

1. It was born of love. It is vastly impressive to realize that Jesus never grew hot and resentful over an affront to himself. More than once he was invited into homes only to be insulted. He was slandered, he was pursued by one of the most diabolical set of hounds that ever dogged an honest man to death. But never once when personally offended did he strike back. Never once did he lose his temper. Then fighting Simon Peter after brooding forty years upon what in his character had impressed him most told him that something was, he wrote this word, "When he was reviled, he reviled not again."

But though Jesus never grew hot and angry at wrongs done to himself, he blazed with fiery indignation against wrongs done to others. Here was a man in need. These religious leaders were indifferent to that need. Their indifference filled Jesus with holy indignation. When he saw childhood neglected, when he saw men gripping their possessions, when he saw wealth gripping its possessions in the presence of need, his soul fairly leaped to its feet fire-eyed and defiant. It was this that led him to speak that burning parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. He could not endure to see right trodden under foot of might. He could not tolerate religious leaders that would shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men. He blazed against them, and shouted, "Ye serpents, ye generation of snakes, how shall you escape the damnation of hell?"

2. The anger of Jesus was right because it was never vindictive. It never sought the harm of anybody, not even against those at whom he was angry. Jesus could do that difficult something. He could love the sinner and hate his sin. He rebuked certain sins of his day with words so fiery hot that the rains of
nineteen hundred years have not cooled them. But even while he rebuked he loved, while he blazed with anger, he was willing to die to save them.

This is a characteristic of the anger of Jesus that the world cannot imitate. None of us can achieve it except through his spirit. All of us, I think, blaze at times in the presence of wrong. We cannot see children cheated of their chance, we cannot see one brutal nation devastate its weaker neighbor without the best in us rising up. But we, if we are Christians must guard against giving way to the passion of revenge. One of the greatest Christians of all time, I think, was Robert E. Lee. For four years he fought a fight that ended in defeat. Yet, he said, "Never a day passed that he did not pray for the men against whom he fought." That was sharing in the spirit of Jesus. When Jesus was angry he did not seek to hurt and destroy, he sought to save.

3. Finally, the anger of Jesus was sane and dynamic. His anger was what the fire is in the fire box of the locomotive. His anger gave him driving power. Had he been less passionate he would have been less powerful. Had he burned less he would have done less to change the world. His anger did not send him out to do such an insane thing as getting revenge. The man who gets revenge may hurt his fellow, but he hurts himself still more. His anger sent him out with a mighty passion to work deliverance.

Our day needs something of the holy anger of Jesus. We pride ourselves upon our tolerance. But much that passes for tolerance is not tolerance at all, it is mere indifference. We need a new capacity to burn against injustice, against every evil that in any way robs a brother of his rights. A few years ago an actress told this story. "At a rehearsal a fresh, young blossom of a girl came for the first time. She was evidently as innocent as she was beautiful. But at the close of that rehearsal she was openly insulted by the manager. And though there were twenty young men present they only looked at each other with sickening smiles. This not because they were so clean and strong and tolerant,
but because their moral nature had become honeycombed." I like better the story of Andrew Jackson who took the part of an outcast woman in a dive at Naches one night, though he knew her for what she was, and though the whole mob was against him.

This Christ with his flashing eyes, and his glowing cheeks is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. His anger is the anger of God. It is an anger beyond all love. It is an anger that blazes against every mean and greedy and selfish thing. It is an anger that always seeks the highest good. Let us beware of standing indifferently in the presence of human need as did these Pharisees of the long ago, lest those same tender eyes might have to look upon us with anger.
HIS AMAZING ANGER

He looked around about upon them with anger (Mark 3:5)

Here is a picture of our Lord that not only brings a surprise to most of us, but a positive shock. When we see Him gathering little children in His arms to bless them; when we hear him by the well curbing talking to an outcast Samaritan woman of the deep things of God; when we hear him tell even this bit of damaged goods that she can yet have an inside spring that will meet all her needs, that is altogether fit and pleasing. But, this same gracious man with his cheeks aflame with anger and His eyes flashing fire, that seems so out of character that we gasp with amazement.

PART I

Why does this anger of our Lord take us by surprise?

1.1. Anger does not bear an untarnished reputation. The ancient Greeks and Romans did not put it among the virtues. Paul, in naming the fruits of the Spirit, does not include anger. Jesus, in proclaiming the beatitudes, fails to say blessed are the angry.

Anger is not even distinctively human. Everybody can become angry, but that is no mark of distinction. Beasts can become angry too. It was my privilege to attend the famous Webb School in the days of that great Headmaster William R. Webb. I think "Old Sawmey," as he was affectionately called, was one of the greatest educators our Southland ever knew. He believed in the classics. He emphasized Latin and Greek.

Once a rugged individualist on entering his son, objected strenuously to the study of Latin. "I don't want my son to study Latin," he asserted with some heat. "I want him to have a practical education. I want him to know how to milk a cow." "Yes," Old Sawmey answered quietly, "I too want my son to know how to milk a cow, but I want him
to know something else a calf can't beat him to.

Have you a quick and fiery temper? It is not necessarily anything to be proud of. In my early boyhood I did a harmless act of catching a dog by the tail. But he became so angry that he bit me. Hence I have been afraid of all dogs ever since.

A few days ago the press told of an elephant that became so enraged at a harmless visitor that he snapped his leather, took his trainer in his trunk, smashed him to the ground and walked on him. "How I can rage," he said proudly. But he was not given a medal for his anger. He was simply shot. We can all get angry, but so can the beasts, and even the reptiles.

2. A high capacity for anger is not even necessarily a mark of distinction among men. Brilliant sons of genius can get angry, but so can the stupid. Wise and saintly graybeards can get angry, but so can six-weeks old babies. Indeed if the average baby had physical strength in proportion to the fierceness of his anger, few mothers would ever live until the sweet little angels were a year old. If, therefore, you have a violent temper, it is nothing of which to boast.

3. Then our Lord's anger surprises and shocks because the average garden variety of anger does not have a high batting average in our daily living. It is easy to see why this is the case. When we blow up we do not as a rule say "I got angry"; we say "I got mad". That describes our conduct more accurately. Most of us when we are angry push reason off the throne and show love the door.

In short, we do things that we would not do usually if we were sane.

For instance, out on the golf course not so long ago a chap made a bad shot. He blamed that wrong shot not upon himself, but upon the club. Therefore he proceeded to break the club and toss it into the
feed. But it was a stupid bit of insanity. The club didn't mind in
no one else helped. Yet it posed a problem at the least, but its owner had to invest in another club that might
enrage him as much as the one he left.

I used to know a successful mill owner. He knew his business. He
knew machinery. As a rule when something went wrong with the most
delicate bit of that machinery, he could mend it. But, now and then his
wrench would slip. He would skin his hand, and then smash that delicate
bit of machinery with the wrench and then throw the wrench away. So
what? The machinery never blushed over its misconduct, but the owner
went broke. He went broke because he went momentarily crazy.

Of course one who would smash a bit of machinery in hot anger is
not quite sane. But he is ahead of the man who would smash a friend-
ship for the same reason. He is far ahead of the one who would smash
a happy marriage out of sheer rage, or put a wound on the soul of a child
who was punished not in love but in anger. Television is a wonderful
invention, but it gives what it gets. Among the many falsehoods that
it proclaims about this remedy and that, there is none that I find
quite so offensive as that that pictures some member of the family going
into a rage over naked nothing.

Here is one. A husband is home from his work. "Get ready," says
his eager wife, "We have a meeting tonight". That turns loose a volcano.
"Don't rush me", he shouts, and terror fills the room. Then he takes
at once because he-
a pill and we're sweetness and light. What a silly lie! Such insane
rage needs more than a pill.

4. Anger does not have a high rating in the Bible. Paul had a firey
temper. It got out of control in a conspicuous way when a certain
high priest ordered him to be slapped. Paul burned with hot indignation,
"God shall smite you, you whitewashed wall." But a little later he recovered himself and apologized. Thus he learned from his own experience that word of wisdom, he ceased from the song, "Be angry and sin not".

Thus we see that anger is not completely forbidden, but like other high explosives, needs careful handling. "Be angry and sin not." That last word is added because anger so often gives birth to sin.

Anger makes us break off diplomatic relations with our fellows. Anger causes us to puff up and pout. It even causes many to break with the Church that they deeply love. I was called to see a man some time ago who was far into the years. Once he had been an earnest and active Christian, Superintendent of his Church School. But he got angry at his Pastor. Through anger he quit the Church. He quit it just as his children were growing about him. Now, an old man, he is sorry. Of course God will forgive him, but every chick and child had been alienated from the Church. But in spite of all these charges against anger, we face the fact that Jesus sometimes blazed with hot and fiery indignation.

PART II

How could this be the case?

1. In spite of its many dangers and defects, anger may be a good force. In this respect it is akin to money. Money is not an evil in itself. Money is power. Rightly used it can do much good. Wrongly used it can do endless harm. The same is true of anger. It is power. An angry man can often do what he would not do without his anger.

The anger of Jesus was right, not simply because it was His anger. It was right in itself. It was right because Jesus Himself was right. I take it that Simon Peter was telling sober truth when he said "He knew no sin". Jesus himself urged every man to pray for forgiveness, when others were even for sometime to sin not even did ask to be forgiven. Therefore...
not once did He pray for it, from my heart I can sing with the poet,

Oh what a miss may I forgive in Thee
Jesus good paragon, thou Crystal Christ.

What angers you? If you give a right answer to that question, one can tell the type of person you are. What angered Jesus? Glance briefly at three events that filled Him with flaming anger. One day on going into the Synagogue He encountered a chap with a heavy handicap. One of his arms was withered. Luke tells us that it was his right arm. That day had no place for the misfits. Handicapped were driven to beggary. But Jesus was eager to heal this man that he might give instead of never getting. It did seem that everybody would have agreed with Jesus in this desire, but there were certain religionists present who thought far more of petty rules and regulations than they did of giving a needy man a chance. These fairly dared Jesus to heal him. So what? Jesus looked about upon them with anger. It was an anger that fairly scorched and blistered and burned. It is an anger, that all the rain of the centuries has not cooled. Wherever any man of any race, of any creed, of any color, is robbed of his chance, the anger of Jesus burns against that evil.

2 On another occasion Jesus went into the Temple. The temple, as Jeremiah tells us, was to be a Temple of prayer for all nations. But prayer was not possible here. It was nearly impossible. All possible prayers were drowned by the pandemonium of buyers and sellers. There were those fairly shrieking at each other over the price for cattle and sheep for sacrifice. They were also shrieking over the rates they had to pay the money changers. And their victims whom they were exacting charges.

At this shocking sight, Jesus became intensely angry. Not only so,
His Amazing Anger

but He did about the most shocking something of His entire ministry. He seized a scourge and drove these buyers and sellers out, along with the sheep and cattle. It angered Him beyond words that needy men were being robbed by the Church itself of the chance to meet God.

Nor does His anger blaze any less, but more, against any service in our own Church that tends to hide the face of God, rather than to reveal it. Not all services send people away with a sense of having met the Lord. I am afraid I have participated in more than one service that failed in this respect. Many of our services are little more thrilling and life giving than a wide yawn. Robbing a man of his right to be his best, robbing one of his right to meet God, filled Jesus with holy anger.

Jesus blazed with anger when His misguided friends got in the way of little children who were being brought to Him to be blessed. 'When Jesus saw it, we read, that He was indignant.' I think there is nothing that so fills the heart of our Lord with hot indignation as robbing Him of the privilege of blessing and keeping little children. So tender was His love for them that He wailed them in with a wall of millstones, saying we had better have a huge stone hanging about our necks and be drowned in the sea than to cause one of these little ones to go wrong.

In order to be guilty of this sin, we do not have to teach our children to lie and steal and get drunk. Indeed we do not have to teach them anything. Send them to school to learn reading, writing, and arithmetic, but depend on mere chance to put into their hearts those fundamental integreties by which the soul lives and the nation lives, or it rots down. One of the supreme tragedies of this day is
His Amazing Anger

PART III

Why was this anger of Jesus right anger?

1. Because in every instance it was born not of some insult or injury directed against Jesus Himself. When He was insulted, His fist never clenched. When Simon rode out, perhaps forty years after His ascension, he said with an amazement that had never lessened, "When He was reviled, He reviled not again". To Simon who had "inflammable" written all over him, this was the very queen of that virtue, self-control. Jesus never got angry at a wrong done to Himself. Multitudes of us never get angry on any other grounds. We may can look with quiet eyes as might triumphs over right, as splendor rides on the boney shoulders of squalor. Only when we are wronged do they blaze.

2. The anger of Jesus always led to helpful action. When I get angry I want to strike back at the one who angered me. Not so our Lord. He longs to see the wronged and the wronged a chance, but He also desired to help those who were cheating them. He cleansed the Temple on Monday and went out to die with robbers and those who were being robbed on Friday. The anger of Jesus was born of a right motive.

Now we could use such anger today. A man said of his friend recently, "He is not afraid of anything". That is always a bit of a slander. A man who is afraid of nothing is not wise but foolish. Fear may be destructive. It may also be constructive. To say "nothing can anger me", is not to compliment yourself. If that is true, you are morally flabby, and lack at least one characteristic without which
Jesus would not have been a complete revelation of God, and without which He could not have accomplished what He did accomplish. If we truly love, we are going to get angry at times. In the mountains of East Tennessee, a rugged son of battle, with a vocabulary that was as picturesque as it was fiery, was converted. Months later he encountered his devoted Pastor. He said, "I have a confession to make. I haven't had a fight and I haven't cussed a single time since I became a Christian, but I have just come from a very narrow escape. If I was wrong, I hope God will forgive me." Here is what happened:

Several months later, I went into my doctor's office for a little patching up. But just as I was arriving somebody brought in a small negro boy who had been hit by a car and terribly battered. One of his arms was so badly broken that you could see the bone protruding from the skin. The doctor glanced at him and said to me, "Come in and I'll fix you up."

"No," I said, "attend to this boy first. He is suffering greatly. I am not." "No," said the doctor, "come in. He can wait." I said again, "No, I can wait." He is the one who is in pain," said the doctor. "Do you think I am going to keep a white man waiting while I fix up a little nigger boy?" Maybe my answer was wrong, but I said, "You will fix this boy now or I'll beat hell out of you." Perhaps the language might have been improved upon, but when I looked over the shoulder of the recording angel as he made a record of the event, I saw he had marked it, "this one-time son of battle has a plus." If we love, as Jesus loved, we too shall sometimes share His holy anger. Sharing that anger, we shall go out to fight where the victory is to the brave.
"And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." Mark 4:26-29

As we read this chapter of Mark, we find ourselves constantly elbowed by eager crowds. The ground fairly trembles underneath our feet as we listen with the multitudes to the preaching of Jesus. He cast a veritable spell over those who were privileged to hear him. This was due, at least in part, to three facts.

First, Jesus spoke constantly of things that really mattered, those abiding hungers and thirsts that belong to every man in every age.

Second, he spoke about these fundamental matters with authority. Everybody felt as they listened to him that he knew what he was talking about. He brought to them truths that he had hammered out on the anvil of his own soul.

In the third place, he spoke with simplicity. Little children could understand enough to be fascinated. The unlettered as well as the ripest scholar could understand what he said. He did not go to the classics for an illustration. He taught them the common things of life about which everybody knew, and made them into preachers of righteousness.

Here, for instance, he has us out on the farm. Everybody who was listening to him knew something of farm life. It is a language that is very familiar to many of us. It was my privilege to be exposed to the teachings of some of the best schools in America, but I am not sure that I owe more to the school of the farm than to any other. In this brief parable Jesus is not undertaking to tell us everything about farm life. I take it that he is emphasizing one amazing fact and that is the power of growth.
It strikes me that growing power is about the mightiest power that we know. In a day when millions are listening with trembling knees for the explosion of the next atomic bomb, it might hearten us to consider a power that is even more mighty and infinitely more constructive - that is, growing power.

1. Look at this power as seen in the vegetable kingdom. A minister said that a friend of his showed him some very small seed spread in the palm of his hand and asked "What kind of plant do you think produced those seed?" "Seeing they are so small," came the answer, "I should think they came from a very small plant indeed." "No," came the reply, "you are mistaken. They came from a plant that is thirty-five feet in diameter, one hundred and five feet in circumference, three hundred feet in height. They came from the largest redwood tree of California." Yet the seed were so small that I could hold in my hand enough of them to build a city. This is the case because they have tremendous growing power.

When Jesus spoke the parable of the sower, he said that the return from the sowing was thirty, sixty, and one hundred fold. Now, those of you who know anything about corn will realize that for a bushel of corn to produce a hundred fold would be a rather meager, skimpy yield. Corn planted on good ground will produce far more. But assuming that corn produces only one hundred fold, suppose you had one bushel of corn and were to plant it and its product for so brief a period as fifteen years, how much corn would you have? Those of you who still remember geometrical progression can quickly find the answer.
At the end of the first year, for instance, you would have one hundred bushels; at the end of the second, ten thousand bushels; and at the end of the third, one million bushels. At the end of the fifteenth year you would have enough corn, if the grains were rolled together, to make thirty-one and one-half million worlds the size of ours, and the fraction left over would be enough to feed the present population of the earth for millions of years. Growing power is about the greatest power we know.

2. Take this power in relation to ourselves. Skipping the consideration of the growing power of population, take the growing power of a baby. One has pictured Thomas Carlyle with a baby in his arms. It is not his own baby, he never had any children of his own. But as he holds this little armful of helplessness, ignorance, he cannot leave off marveling at it. For you know that of all the creatures in the world, none is more utterly helpless and more utterly ignorant than a young baby. It does not take but two days for a calf to know which side of its bread is buttered, but a baby is as stupid as a guinea pig.

"Just to think," says the great sage of Scotland, as he looks at this baby, "Shakespeare was once like this." Quite true. Yet so tremendous was his growing power that he produced a Macbeth and a King Lear and a Hamlet. Had you been in Epworth Parsonage in the year 1703, you could hardly have dreamed this ugly, little wrinkled piece of helplessness, Jackie Wesley, would breathe on the future centuries like a Gulf Stream. Yet so magnificently did he grow that he did just that.

Dr. Luke finds it impossible to account for Jesus Christ, our Lord, except in terms of this mighty power, "Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man." Growth is a mighty power.
Growth is neutral. It may be our angel. It may also be our devil.

Thus it is akin to so many other powers that we know. Money is a tremendous power, but whether it becomes for us a power to bless or a power to curse depends upon the way we relate ourselves to it. Gravity is a great and essential power. We simply could not stay on the earth without it. But if we do not relate ourselves aright to this power, it will break every bone in us. Whether, therefore, this amazing power of growth helps or hurts depends upon how we relate ourselves to it.

This is the case because whatever seed we sow germinate and grow. Paul emphasized that fact. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." This is a law-abiding world. Nothing walks with aimless feet. A wrong kind of sowing eventuates in a wrong harvest. A right kind of sowing eventuates in a right harvest, not sometimes, but every time.

How did Judas come to end his promising career in treachery and shame? There was a time when the Master chose him as a high adventure of faith, just as he chose his other apostles. Judas was not born a traitor. As Luke tells us, he became a traitor. He grew in the wrong direction. The same law of growth that made him a traitor made once narrow and fanatical John into the apostle of love.

Here, then, is a mighty and mighty power that we may have as our friend and our ally. But if we refuse to have it as our friend and ally, it will become our deadliest foe. We may have it as our angel of light, but if we refuse to have it as an angel of light, it will become a veritable devil. Here is a mighty power in which we can so relate ourselves as that it will begin in the here and now to kindle flames of hell.
for us. Or we can so use it as that it will begin in the here and now to make a blissful heaven for us, and will go on to make it until the end of time and the end of eternity. This mighty power is neutral.

III

Growth is spontaneous.

"The seed sprang up of itself," said Jesus. That is true whether it is a good seed or bad seed. It is true whether the sower desired that the seed should grow or did not desire it. There are some seed that we are eager should grow. There are others that we would give our very life to prevent their growth. But growth is spontaneous.

1. One of our favorite crops when I was a boy on the farm was corn. Sometimes when we planted corn, before the seed would germinate, a mole would get in the furrow and eat every grain of it for a space of ten to twenty feet. When the corn that was left came up there would be blank spaces where no corn grew. If these blank spaces were too numerous, there was nothing to do but to plow up the field and start over again. But if there was just a skip here and there we resorted to what we called as replanting.

This replanting business was quite monotonous. It was not one-half as exciting as fishing or going in swimming. I went about the monotonous job in this fashion. I would put a bag of shelled corn around my shoulders, take a hoe, and go down each row and when I came to a blank space, dig a hole and drop in two grains of corn, then go three feet and drop in two more. One day I got entirely fed up with the job and decided that I would quit, at least long enough to go after a fresh supply of corn. Therefore, I dug a hole in the end of the furrow, dumped more than a double-handful in, covered it up, and tramped it down hard, and said to that planting, "I am through with you." Now, I wanted the corn that I had
planted out in the field to come up, but I certainly did not want this
that I had buried in a lump sum to come up. But it came up nonetheless.
And when my father came by a few days later and saw two or three hundred
stalks growing in a space a foot square, he did not have to be a Sherlock
Holmes to know what I had done. Nor was there any use for me to deny that
planting. However firmly I might have believed in a lie being a present
help in time of trouble, it would have been wasted there with the growing
corn shrieking the story of my unfaithfulness.

One day David desired a woman not his wife. The temptation to this
sowing of wild oats was tremendously appealing. But having sown them, he
was desperately sorry. We can hear that pathetic sobbing across the
centuries, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness."
And God, who always waits to forgive and to forget, did forgive him. David
became a saint. He became a man after God's own heart. If tradition is
ture, he gave us the Shepherd Psalm, the best loved Psalm ever written.

But though God forgave David, he did not save him from reaping as he
had sown. That ghastly sin of the past tortured the sinner to the end of
his days. His greatest suffering, I-daresay, was in the suffering of
those dear to him, whose suffering was born of his wrong sowing. Sometimes
we say of our wrong choices, "It is my business, I will take the consequ-
ces." You will take part of them but you cannot take them all. No man
goes right alone, thank God! Neither does any man go wrong alone. The
wild oats that we sow we ourselves reap with our trembling hands, but the
bitterest heartache of all is that we, see those innocent of our sowing,
reaping along with us. Growth is spontaneous. We can choose the seed, but
having sown, we cannot choose what seed will germinate. We cannot choose the
harvest.
IV

The third fact about growth is that it is gradual. There is a sense in which we are reaping and sowing day by day. But, generally speaking, the seed we sow do not come to harvest within the hour. Growth is gradual.

The fact that growth is gradual often encourages the wrong doer to believe that he is getting away with his wild oats. He nods assent to Paul's great word: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

"Certainly," he says, "that is true for the average run of the mill, but it is not quite true for me. I am getting by. I am a little shrewd than the rest. Others may reap as they sow but I have learned to manipulate the laws of nature and to gather grapes of thorns and figs of thistles."

A certain wise man stated the tragic blunder of the seemingly successful sinner in these words: "Because sentence against evil work is not executed speedily, therefore, the hearts of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

The devil is a shrewd salesman. Here is his offer: "Come into my establishment and anything you want. You can have it immediately. I will send you the bill later."

The very power of temptation is that it offers its rewards at once. That is tremendously appealing. We want what we want when we want it. When Esau came home from the chase he passed by the tent of his brother Jacob, where the delightful aroma of cooking lentils came vigorously to his already keen appetite. He must have his dinner at once.

Therefore, he lifted the flap of Jacob's tent and called: "Feed me, with that red stuff," His hard and shrewd brother looks at him with narrowed eyes. "All right, Brother," he said, "but just as a matter of
form, suppose you give me your birthright in exchange." Esau glared in incipient indignation for a moment, then he pees his finger and says, "Take the thing. I am about to die. What good will a birthright be if I starve to death?" Then the author sums up his pathetic story, "He set down and ate and drank and rose up and went his way."

Thus he got what he wanted when he wanted it. The next day he felt as fit as he ever had. The skies were as blue above his head and his aim as he bent his bow was just as sure as it ever was. Yet there came a time when he realized his tragic bargain. "Afterward, says his story, "when he would have inherited the blessing, he found no place for repentance though he sought it diligently and with tears." God forgave him but there was no way that he could get back into the past and have the chance that was his in youth's bright morning long ago.

Even so we are prone to take the cash and let the credit go. Because we do not have to pay in full at the close of each day, we feel that we may never pay. But sooner or later the bill comes in. There has never been an exception. There never will be. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." That and nothing else.

Just as the gradualness of growth often encourages the wrong doer, even so it tends to discourage the right doer. We like immediate returns for our good deeds. There are returns that are immediate, but often the seed we sow are slow in coming to harvest. I planted a garden as a boy. The next morning I went out to see how it was getting on. When my garden looked as barren and dead as when I planted it, I dug up some of the seed to see what was the matter. I was discouraged about the gradualness of their growth.

I am speaking to some who gave their life to God and to his church
scores of years ago. Yet there are times when you compare what you have won in terms of personal character to the wealthy promises of the New Testament and find yourself very discouraged. How slow your progress has been. It is hard for us to share the fine faith of John. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." If you persist in following your Lord, one day you are going to be like him, but that will take time.

Then there are those of us who have been teaching and preaching for years. Just how much good have we done? When we find the great-hearted prophet Elijah at his cowardly worst, it is just after he has tried to keep books on the results of his ministry. Having added up all that he had done, he found just even nothing. "I, only I, am left," he sobs, and he hoped he wouldn't be left long.

But bookkeeping is not our job. The good seed that we have sown will surely come to harvest some time, some where. That great certainty braced St. Paul as he went up and down the land sowing to the spirit. Convinced of the certainty of the harvest, he gives this bracing thought to you and me: "Let us not be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap." Not if the seed we have sown spring up and grow. That much is sure. "In due season we shall reap if we faint not." If we do not give up courage and quit the fight. Go on, therefore, with your sowing with the realization that what you sow in your own heart, what you sow in the hearts of your children, what you sow in your home and in your church will surely come to harvest.

V

What, then, does this word of the mighty power of growth have to
say to us? To what choice does it call us?

It is not ours to choose what seed will germinate and what lie dormant. All that we sow will germinate. That will be true of the seed whose harvest we dread. It will also be true of the seed whose harvest is our dearest hope. No more is it ours, having sown the seed, to decide upon the harvest. If I plant corn in my field and find when the harvest time comes that the bottom has dropped out of the corn market, that it is worth practically nothing while wheat is worth a fabulous sum, I should naturally like to reap a harvest of wheat where I had planted corn. But such would be impossible. Not all the scientists of all the world could change one single grain of corn into a grain of wheat. But if it should so happen that corn would be priceless and wheat worth nothing, not all the powers of darkness could change my priceless corn into worthless wheat.

The one choice, then, that we have is the choice of our sowing. I recall quite well two well-to-do farmers who were neighbors of each other when I was a boy. One of these farmers was a devout Christian with a lovely Christian wife. The other was an earnest and upright man, but neither he nor his wife was the slightest bit interested in religion. Both raised large families of children. The Christian parents took each chick and child into the church with them, and out of that home came three effective ministers.

When this other father was some sixty years of age he was soundly converted. His wife was in entire sympathy with him. But by this time all their children were grown. I have seen that good man stand up in our little village church and shake with sobs for the waywardness of his children. But he was able to reach not one of them. They
were not only unimpressed by his belated piety; they were ashamed of it. God forgave him but he had to reap in his children what he had sown.

Here, then, is a fact as sure as the multiplication table, as reliable as the law of gravity, as trustworthy as the fact of God. We reap what we sow. Nettles and thorns will grow in this world if you plant them. The wildest of wild oats come to harvest. But if the sowing of wrong come to harvest, it is equally sure that the sowing of right seed will come to harvest. If thorns and nettles grow, also will violets and roses and forget-me-nots. Let us so relate ourselves to this law of growth that it may become our angel, here and forever.
And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." Mark 4:26:29

As we read the Gospel of Mark, we find ourselves constantly elbowed by eager crowds. The ground fairly trembles underneath our feet as we listen with the multitudes to the preaching of Jesus. He cast a veritable spell over those who were privileged to hear him. This was due, at least in part, to three facts:

1. He spoke constantly of things that really mattered, those abiding hungers and thirsts that belong to every man in every age. 2. He spoke about these fundamental matters with authority. Everybody felt as they listened to him that he knew what he was talking about. 3. He spoke with simplicity. Little children could understand enough to be fascinated. He did not go to the classics for his illustrations. He rather took the common things, which everybody knew and made them into preachers of righteousness.

Here, for instance, he has us out on the farm. Everybody who was listening to him knew something of farm life. It is a language that is very familiar to many of us. In this brief parable Jesus is not undertaking to tell us everything about farm life. He is, in my opinion, calling our attention to one amazing fact, the mighty power of growth.

It strikes me that growing power is the mightiest power that we knew. In a day when millions are listening with trembling knees for the explosion of the next atomic bomb, it might hearten us to consider a power that is even more mighty and infinitely more constructive - growing power.
1. Look at this power as seen in the vegetable kingdom. A minister said that a friend of his showed him some very small seed spread in the palm of his hand and asked what kind of plant he thought produced those seed. "Seeing they are so small," came the answer, "I should think they came from a very small plant indeed." "No," was the reply, "you are mistaken. They came from a plant that is thirty-five feet in diameter, one hundred and five feet in circumference, and three hundred feet in height. They came from the largest redwood tree of California." Yet, these seed were so small that one could hold in his hand enough of them to build a city. This is the case because they have tremendous growing power.

When Jesus spoke the parable of the sower, he said that the return from the sowing was thirty, sixty, and one hundred fold. Now, those of you who know anything about corn will realize that for a bushel of corn to produce a hundred fold would be a rather meager, skimpy yield. Corn planted on good ground will produce far more. But assuming that corn produces only one hundred fold, suppose you had one bushel of corn and were to plant it and its product for so brief a period as fifteen years, how much corn would you have? Those of you who still remember geometrical progression can quickly find the answer.

At the end of the first year you would have one hundred bushels, at the end of the second, ten thousand bushels, at the end of the third, one million bushels. At the end of the fifteenth year you would have 31536188 bushels. If the grains were rolled together, to make thirty-one and one-half million worlds the size of ours, and the fraction left over would be enough to feed the present population of the earth for millions of years. Growing power is about the greatest power we know.

2. Take this power in relation to ourselves. Skipping the consideration of the growth of populations, think of the growing power of
a baby. One has pictured Thomas Carlyle with a baby in his arms. It is not his own baby, he never had any children of his own. But, as he holds this little armful of helpless ignorance, he cannot leave off marveling at it. Of all God's creatures none is more utterly helpless and ignorant than a young baby. It does not take two days for a calf to know which side of its bread is buttered. But such is not the case with a baby. He remains for weeks as stupid as a guinea pig.

"Just to think," says the great sage of Scotland, as he looks at this baby, "Shakespeare was once like this." Quite true. Yet so tremendous was his growing power that he produced Macbeth and a King Lear and a Hamlet. Had you been in Epworth Parsonage in the year 1703, you could hardly have dreamed that this little, helpless piece of helplessness, Jackie Wesley, would breathe on the future centuries like a gulf stream. Yet so magnificently did he grow that he did just that. Dr. Luke finds it impossible to account for Jesus except in terms of this mighty power, "Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man." Growth is a mighty power.

Growth is neutral. It may be our angel. It may also be our devil.

Thus it is akin to so many other powers that we know. Money is a tremendous power, but whether it becomes for us a power to bless or a power to curse depends upon the way we relate ourselves to it. Gravity is a great and essential power. We simply could not live on the earth without it. But if we do not relate ourselves aright to this power, it will break every bone in us. Whether, therefore, this power of growth helps or hurts depends upon how we relate ourselves to it.

This is the case because whatever seeds we sow germinate and grow. Paul emphasized that fact. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." This is a law-
abiding world. Nothing walks with aimless feet. A wrong kind of sowing eventuates in a wrong harvest. A right kind of sowing eventuates in a right harvest, not sometimes, but every time.

How did Judas come to end his promising career in treachery and shame? There was a time when the Master chose him as a high adventure of faith, just as he chose his other apostles. Judas was not born a traitor, as Luke tells us, he became a traitor. He grew in the wrong direction. The same law of growth that made him a traitor made once narrow and fanatical John into the apostle of love.

Here, then, is a mystical and mighty power that we may have as our friend and our ally. But if we refuse to have it as our friend and ally, it will become our deadliest foe. We may have it as our angel of light, but if we refuse to have it as an angel of light, it will become a veritable devil. Here is a mighty power to which we can so relate ourselves that it will begin in the here and now, to kindle flames of hell for us. Or we can so use it that it will begin in the here and now to make a blissful heaven for us, and will go on to make it until the end of time and the end of eternity. This mighty power is neutral.

III

Growth is spontaneous.

"The earth bringeth forth fruit of itself," said Jesus. That is true whether we sow good seed or bad seed. It is true whether the sower desires that the seed should grow or does not desire it. There are some seed that we are eager should grow. There are others that we might be willing to give our very lives to prevent their growth. But growth is spontaneous.

1. One of our favorite crops when I was on the farm was corn. Sometimes when we planted corn, before it had time to germinate, moles
would get in the furrow and eat every grain for a space of ten to twenty feet. When the corn that was left came up there would, therefore, be blank spaces here and there. If these blank spaces were too numerous, there was nothing to do but to plow up the field and start over again. But if there was just a skip at rare intervals, we resorted to what was known as replanting.

This replanting was quite monotonous. It was not half as exciting as fishing or going in swimming. I went about the monotonous job in this fashion. Armed with a bag of shelled corn around my shoulders, I would take a hoe and go down each row, and when I came to a blank space, dig a hole and drop in two grains of corn, then go three feet, dig another hole, and drop two more. One day I got so fed up with the job that I decided I would quit, at least long enough to go after a fresh supply of corn. Therefore, I dug a hole at the end of the furrow and planted my whole supply in a lump sum. Then I covered it with earth and tramped it down hard. Then I said to that planting, "I am through with you."

Now, I desired that the corn I had planted out in the field should grow, but I certainly did not desire such response from this that I had buried in a lump sum. But it grew nonetheless. Therefore, when my father came by a few days later and saw two or three hundred stalks growing in a space a foot square, he did not have to be a Sherlock Holmes to know what I had done. Nor was there any use for me to deny that planting. However firmly I might have believed that a lie was a present help in time of trouble, it would have been worse than wasted, worse with the growing corn shrieking the story of my unfaithfulness.

One day David took a woman not his wife. Having made his wrong choice, he became desperately sorry. We can hear his prayer across the
centuries, "Have mercy upon me, 0 God, according to thy loving kind-
ness". And God, who always waits to forgive and to forget, heard his
prayer. David became a saint. But though God forgave him, he did not
save him from reaping as he had sown. The harvest of that ghastly sin,
tortured him to the end of his days. Growth is spontaneous. We can
choose the seed, but having sown, we cannot choose what seed will germi-
nate. We cannot choose the harvest.

IV

A fourth

The third fact about growth is that it is gradual. There is a
sense in which we are reaping and sowing day by day. But, generally
speaking, the seed we sow do not come to harvest within the hour. Growth
is gradual.

The fact that growth is gradual often encourages the wrong doer to
believe that he is getting away with his wild oats. A certain wise man
stated the tragic blunder of the seemingly successful sinner in these
words: "Because sentence against evil work is not executed speedily,
therefore, the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do
evil." The devil is a shrewd salesman. Here is his offer: "Come into
my establishment and take anything you want. You can have it immediate-
ly. I will send you the bill later."

The very power of temptation is that it offers its rewards at once.
That is tremendously appealing. "We want what we want when we want it."
When Esau came home from the chase and passed by the tent of Jacob, the
delightful aroma of cooking lentils came to quicken his already keen
appetite. He must have his dinner at once. Therefore, he lifted the
flap of Jacob's tent and called: "Feed me with that red stuff." "All
right, brother," Jacob said, "but just as a matter of form, suppose you
give me your birthright in exchange." Esau glared in indignation for
a moment, then he popped his finger and said, "Take the thing. I am
about to die. What good will a birthright be if I starve to death?"
Then the author sums up his pathetic story: "He sat down and ate and
drank and rose up and went his way."

Thus he got what he wanted when he wanted it. The next day he felt
just as fit as ever. The skies were as blue above his head and his aim,
as he bent his bow, was just as sure as it ever was. Yet there came a
time when he realized his tragic bargain. "Afterward," says his story,
"when he would have inherited the blessing, he found no place for re-
pentance, though he sought it diligently and with tears." God forgave
him, but there was no way that he could get back into the past and have
the chance that was his in youth's bright morning long ago.

Now, just as the gradualness of growth often encourages the wrong
even so it tends to discourage the right doer. We like immediate
returns. I planted a garden as a boy. The next morning I went out to
see how it was getting on. Because it looked as barren and dead as
when I planted it, I dug up some of the seed to see what was the matter.
I was discouraged by the gradualness of their growth.

It is even so with our sowing to the spirit. There are times when
we grow discouraged as we compare what we have won in terms of personal
career to the wealthy promises of the New Testament. It is hard for
us to share the fine faith of John. "Beloved, now are we the sons of
God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when
he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."
But if we so believe as to persist in following our Lord, one day we are
surely going to be like him, but that will take time.
Then we often become discouraged by the slowness of our progress in our Christian work. When we find the great-hearted Elijah at his cowardly worst, it is when he is tabulating the results of his ministry. Having added up all that he had done, he found it just even nothing. "I, only I, am left," he sobs, and he hopes he would not be left long.

But bookkeeping is not our job. It is ours to sow the good seed and浪潮the results with God. If growth is gradual, it is also sure. This great certainly braced St. Paul as he went up and down the land sowing to the Spirit. Convinced of the certainty of the harvest, he gives this bracing thought to you and me: "Let us not be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." Let us go on, therefore, with our sowing to the Spirit with the conviction that what we sow in your own hearts, in the hearts of your children, in your church and in the world, will surely come to harvest.

V

What, then, is the choice before us?

It is not ours to choose what seed will germinate and what lie dormant. No more is it ours, having sown the seed, to decide upon the harvest. We must reap as we sow. The one choice that we have is the choice of our sowing. Having made that choice, the harvest is inevitable.

If I plant corn in my field and find when the harvest time comes that the bottom has dropped out of the corn market, that it is worth practically nothing while wheat is worth a fabulous sum, I should naturally like to reap a harvest of wheat where I had planted corn. But such would be impossible. Not all the scientists of all the world could change one single grain of corn into a grain of wheat. But if it should so happen that corn would be priceless and wheat worth nothing, not all the powers of darkness could change my priceless corn into worthless
wheat.

I remember two well-to-do farmers who were neighbors of each other when I was a boy. One of these farmers was a devout Christian with a lovely Christian wife. The other was an honest and upright man, but neither he nor his wife had the slightest interest in religion. Both raised large families. The Christian parents took every child into the church with them, and out of that home came three effective ministers.

When this other father was some sixty years of age he was soundly converted. His wife was in entire sympathy with him. But by this time all their children were grown. I have seen that good man stand up in our little village church and shake with sobs for the waywardness of his children. But he was not able to reach one of them. They were not only unimpressed by his belated piety; they were ashamed of it. God forgave him, but he had to reap in his children what he had sown.

Here, then, is a fact as sure as the multiplication table, as reliable as the law of gravity, as trustworthy as the fact of God. We reap what we sow. Nettles and thorns will grow in this world if you plant them. The wildest of wild oats come to harvest. But it is equally sure that the sowing of right seed will also come to harvest. If thorns and nettles grow, so also will violets and roses and for-get-me-nots. Let us, therefore, so relate ourselves to this power of growth that it may become our angel here and forever.
GROWING POWER

"And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." Mark 4:26-29

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I

It strikes me that growing power is about the mightiest power we know. In a day when millions are listening with trembling knees for the explosion of the next atomic bomb, it might hearten us to consider a power that is even more mighty and vastly more constructive, growing power.
1. Look at this power as seen in the vegetable kingdom. A minister said that a friend of his showed him some small seed spread in the palm of his hand and asked what kind of plant he thought produced those seed. "Juding from their size," he replied, "I should think they came from a rather small plant." "No," he answered, "you are mistaken. They came from a plant that is thirty-five feet in diameter, one hundred and five feet in circumference, and three hundred feet in height. They came from the largest redwood tree in California." Yet the seed were so small that one could hold in his hand enough of them to build a city, if they were planted and allowed to come to maturity.

When Jesus spoke the parable of the sower, he said that the return from the sowing was thirty, sixty, and one hundred fold. Now, those of you who know anything about corn will realize that for a bushel of corn to produce a hundred fold would be an ordinary yield. Corn planted on good ground will produce more. But assuming that corn produces only one hundred fold, suppose you had one bushel of corn and were to plant it and its product for so brief a period as fifteen years, how much corn would you have? Those of you who still remember geometrical progression can quickly find the answer.

At the end of the first year, you would have one hundred bushels, at the end of the second, ten thousand bushels, at the end of the third, one million bushels. At the end of the fifteenth year you would have enough corn, if the grains were rolled into popcorn balls, to make \(31,536,188\) world-the size of ours. Not only so, but the fraction left over would be enough to feed the present population of the earth for over a million years. Growing power is about the greatest power we know.

2. Take this power in relation to ourselves.Skipping the consideration of the growth of population, think of the growing power of a baby. One has pictured Thomas Carlyle with a baby in his arms. It is not his own baby; he never had any children of his own. But as he holds this little armful of helpless ignorance, he cannot leave off marveling at it. Naturally, for of all God's creatures, none is
more utterly helpless and ignorant than a baby. It does not take two days for a
calf to know which side of its bread is buttered, but such is not the case with a
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Growth is a mighty power.

II
Growth is neutral. It may be our angel. It may also be our devil.

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This is the case because whatever seeds we sow germinate and grow. Paul
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Here, then, is a mighty power that we may have as our friend and our ally. But if we refuse to have it as our friend and ally, it will become our deadliest foe. We may have it as our angel of light, but if we refuse to have it as an angel of light, it will become a veritable devil. Here is a mighty power to which we can so relate ourselves as that it will begin in the here and now to kindle flames of hell for us. We can also use it in such a fashion as that it will begin in the here and now to make a blissful heaven for us, and go on making it until the end of time and throughout eternity. This mighty power is neutral.

III

Growth is spontaneous.

"The earth bringeth forth fruit of itself." That is true whether we sow good seed or bad. It is true whether the sower desires that the seed should grow or does not desire it. There are some seed that we are eager should grow. There are others that we might be willing to give our very lives to prevent their growing. But growth is spontaneous.

One of our favorite crops when I was a boy on the farm was corn. Sometimes when we planted corn, before it had time to germinate, moles would get in the furrow and eat every grain for a space of ten to twenty feet. When the corn that was left came up there would be blank spaces here and there. If these blank spaces were too numerous, there was nothing to do but to plow up the field and start over again. But if there was just a skip at rare intervals we resorted to what was known as replanting.

This replanting was quite monotonous. It was not half as exciting as fishing or swimming. I went about the monotonous job in this fashion. Armed with
a bag of shelled corn round my shoulders, I would take a hoe, go down each row
till I came to a blank space, dig a hole, drop in two grains of corn, cover them,
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that ghastly sin tortured him to the end of his days. Growth is spontaneous. We
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IV

Growth is gradual.

There is a sense in which we are reaping and sowing day by day. But, gen-
erally speaking, the seed we sow do not come to harvest within the hour. Growth is gradual.

The fact that growth is gradual often encourages the wrong doer to believe that he is getting away with his wild oats. He nods assent to Paul's great word: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "Certainly," he says, "that is true for the average run of the mill, but it is not quite true for me. I am getting by. I am a little shrewder than the rest. Others may reap as they sow, but I have learned to manipulate the laws of nature and to gather grapes of thorns and figs of thistles."

A certain wise man stated the tragic blunder of the seemingly successful sinner in these words: "Because sentence against evil work is not executed speedily, therefore, the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil." The devil is a shrewd salesman. Here is his offer: "Come into my establishment and take anything you want. You can have it immediately. I will send you the bill later."

One great appeal of a wrong choice is that it offers its rewards at once. When Esau, home from the chase, passed by the tent of Jacob, the delightful aroma of cooking lentils came to quicken his already keen appetite. He must have his dinner at once. Therefore, he lifted the flap of Jacob's tent and called: "Feed me with that red stuff." "All right," Jacob replied, "but just as a matter of form, suppose you give me your birthright in exchange." Esau glared in indignation for a moment, then said, "Take the thing. I am about to die. What good will a birthright be if I starve to death?" Then the author sums up his pathetic story, "He sat down and ate and drank and rose up and went his way."

Thus he got what he wanted when he wanted it. The next day, I dare say, he felt just as fit as ever. The skies were as blue above his head and his aim as he bent his bow was just as sure as heretofore. Yet there came a time when he realized his tragic bargain. "Afterward," says his story, "when he would have inherited the
blessing, he found no place for repentance though he sought it diligently and with tears." That is, though God forgave him, there was no way for him to get back into the past and have the chance that was his in youth's bright morning long ago. Even so we are prone to take the cash and let the credit go.

Now just as the gradualness of growth often encourages the wrong doer, so it tends to discourage the right doer. We like immediate returns. I planted a garden as a boy. The next morning I went out to see how it was getting on. Because it looked as barren and dead as when I planted it, I dug up some of the seed to see what was the matter. I was discouraged by the gradualness of their growth.

It is often so with our sowing to the Spirit. There are times when we grow discouraged as we compare what we have won in terms of personal character to the wealthy promises of the New Testament. It is hard for us to share the fine faith of John, — "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." But if we so believe as to persist in following our Lord, one day we are surely going to be like him, but that will take time.

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What, then, is the choice before us?

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"Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" — Mark 4:40

Why are you afraid? This is a sane question that calls for an intelligent answer. There was a storm on. In terror one of the disciples seems to have taken the Master rudely by the shoulder to wake him up. Then he greeted him with this question, "Do you not care if we perish?"

Thus awakened Jesus looked at him and his fellows with pained amazement. "Why are you afraid?" he asks. The disciples did not answer. When they took their resources into consideration, they realized that they had no real cause for fear.

I

In speaking of fear, we are speaking of something with which we all have to do. My fears may not be the same as yours. Yours may be different from those of your neighbor. But we all know fear in one form or another. Some are afraid of the past; others are afraid of the future. Some fear for their bodies; others for their souls. Some fear economic insecurity; some fear ridicule or criticism. Some are afraid to stand alone. Some are afraid that they will lose their jobs. Others are afraid to find one. Now and then one tells us he is afraid of nothing, but such a one is either mistaken, or he is slandering himself.

Now the fact that everybody knows fear is not in itself tragic. This is the case because fear may be of use. It is like money in one respect. As a servant it is of real value; as a master it is the very devil. We are born with two fears; the fear of noise and the fear of falling. But as we grow older, we often accumulate a vast number of fears. These fears for many not only become more numerous, but more forbidding. Yet fear in itself is not bad. It may be used constructively.
For instance, the student who is afraid of failing on a test may use that fear as an incentive to work. A farmer who plows his ground and cultivates his crop is motivated in part by fear - the fear of want. The youth who faces the future realizing that he has come to the kingdom for a difficult time may use that fear to spur him to an earnest preparation.

Anyone who lives intelligently will avoid needless physical risks. Life is too precious to be trifled away for nothing. An old soldier who was taken prisoner during the War Between the States used to tell me something of his life in a prison that was no more than a shed. No barbed wire shut them in. There was nothing but a dead line that no prisoner was to cross or even touch except under penalty of death. "Yet," said my old friend, "almost every day some prisoner would edge his foot closer and closer to the deadline saying, 'You would not kill a fellow, would you?' At last his toe would touch the line and the guard would shoot him." That was not courage, it was senseless recklessness.

It is not courage to take a needless moral risk. Take liquor sipping, for instance. There are many people who are allergic to liquor. One noted psychiatrist says that of those who are addicts today, over seventy-five percent will never be cured. To be afraid, therefore, to trifle with liquor, to be afraid to mix liquor with gasoline, is a very sensible fear.

Fear is a value in our relations one to another. If you have a friend, you are afraid to treat that friend in any unworthy fashion. If you are happily married, you are afraid of your husband or your wife. This is not a slavish fear. It is the fear that you will not measure up to their hope and expectations for you. If you are parents, you are afraid of your children - that you will not give them the best possible training. As children grow up, they come to be afraid of their parents, not in a slavish way, but in a manner born of love and appreciation.
There was a time when such diseases as yellow fever and smallpox would decimate whole populations. These plagues have been destroyed today partly by a wise use of fear. There is a fear of God, we are told, that is the very beginning of wisdom. This fear does not mean terror. It means holy awe. It means also that, in the realization that God our Father knows how life will work best for us, we are to be afraid to live outside the circle of his will. Fear then can be used in a helpful and constructive fashion.

II

But while fear is a good servant, it is a bad master.

1. To begin, fear is creative. When Job said, "The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me," he was saying a word that is psychologically sound. No man is quite so sure to get sick as one who must look at his tongue the first thing in the morning. When you see a man standing on the street corner holding his pulse, you may know that the physician is waiting for him on the next corner, and possibly the undertaker on the next. Many people frighten themselves into illness.

If you as a student go to a test telling yourself that you are certainly going to fail, the chances are that you will. If you are deadly afraid that you are going to lose your position, the chances of your doing so are thereby increased. If you are constantly reminding yourself that nobody likes you, that you have no friends, that dismal fear is quite likely to be realized. Fear is creative. That which we most fear is likely to come upon us.

2. Then fear is torture. It matters not how ideal your situation, it matters not how abundant your resources, if you are dogged by fear, you are wretched. I am thinking of one now whom I have known across the years.
Whenever it thunders, he is terrified. At least a thousand times he has died in a destructive storm. All this in spite of the fact that in his almost seventy years he has never experienced a storm hard enough to blow away a chicken coop. But in spite of this, he has suffered one death after another. Fear is torture.

3. Then fear is paralyzing. Did you ever watch a cat catch a bird? By rights the cat ought not to have any chance at all. The bird with his ability to fly ought to make him immune from danger. But in the presence of the cat, he becomes paralyzed. In the language of the street, "He is scared stiff."

Years ago while a student at college, for several weeks I met an immense dog every morning as I went to my first recitation. He looked like some grim professor who had just flunked his whole class and was looking for more worlds to conquer. I never liked him, but I tried to hide my dislike and fear by a friendly manner. But one morning when I met him and made my politest bow, he paid me no attention until he had passed me a little more than his length. He then turned with a roar as if he meant to devour me bodily. However, I stood my ground and looked him straight in the eye according to the most approved dog psychology. But this was the case not because I was remembering my psychology, but because I had forgotten my powers of locomotion.

When Pilate was forced to sit in judgment upon Jesus, he was eager to set him free. Why then did he not free him? He had the power to do so. But in spite of his power and eagerness to release him, he gave him over to be crucified. Why, I repeat, was this the case? What was it that made Pilate stain his name with an immortality of shame? Why did he so act that we remind ourselves everytime we recite the Creed of his moral collapse? Pilate was afraid. His fear paralyzed him. When he was on the
point of making the right choice, somebody shouted from the crowd, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend. At that word Pilate became so paralyzed by fear that he left Jesus to the tender mercies of the mob.

4. Finally, fear is brutalizing. This is indicated by Pilate's pathetic story. Pilate did a cruel thing because he was afraid. Many cruelties have been committed not so much because of a vicious and wrong purpose, but because of stark fear.

Recently I was rereading the story of the sinking of the Titanic. The writer said that many life boats put out from that doomed vessel only half full. Those manning the life boats hurried away ahead of time because of fear. A swimmer in that ice water laid hold on the side of one of these life boats in which there was plenty of room, but a woman took an oar and smashed his clinging hands. She doomed him to death not because she was vicious, but because she was brutalized by fear.

Sometimes in our fear we fail to speak up in defense of a friend when that friend is slandered. Sometimes we prove disloyal to our convictions because we are afraid. Simon Peter cruelly denied his Lord. This he did not because his love had turned to hate, he was simply overcome and made heartless by fear. Fear, then is creative. It is torturing. It is paralyzing and brutalizing. As a master, it is the very devil.

III

How, then, can we master fear?

First, to be free from a certain type of fear demands loyalty to the fundamental decencies of life. My old teacher, Sawney Webb, used to haunt us with this word: "Don't do things on the sly." Why not? For one reason, if you are doing things day by day that would shame you if known, you have turned loose the nemesis of fear upon your track. For instance, I talked to a girl sometime ago who was an
unwed mother. She was not a vicious girl. She was of good family. As she told me her story, I knew there was no measuring what she had suffered from fear. This has begun with her first downward step. It had grown more and more as she realized that she must launch a child into life who would never know either its father or mother.

How do you suppose the young fellow at the bank feels who is an embezzler and who does not know what day the bank examiner will come? How does the man feel who has broken the law? Many a criminal has surrendered because he felt that his fear was more torturing than would be the penalty that he would have to pay when his crime was known. To be free from fear, one must be loyal to the fundamental decenties of life.

2. To master your fear you should examine the thing of which you are afraid and see if it is really dangerous. A delightful essayist tells of taking a walk one day when spring was coming to the fullness of its beauty. As he turned the bend of a country road he came upon a beautiful strawberry garden. The ripening fruit was looking out from under the green leaves like so many bright and roguish eyes. It was a scene of rare beauty. There was only one blot upon the landscape. Standing in the very center of this garden was a most disreputable scarecrow. It wore a top hat that was tilted at an ungainly angle that denoted utter drunkenness. Its arms were outstretched as if to clasp any luckless poacher who ventured upon the domain it was set to guard.

But what thrilled this essayist and set his heart to singing was this: On each arm of this terrible effigy was a blackbird. Those two birds had just been to dinner. They were waiting until they were ready for their next meal. But all about, in the neighboring trees, upon fences and telephone wires, there were other birds hungry and disconsolate because they were missing the banquet. This they were doing not because of any
real danger, but they were being cheated by the fear of a scarecrow.

Many of our fears are just scarecrows. Having examined that which frightens us, if it is really dangerous, let us act accordingly. But if it is only a scarecrow, defy it. You will be afraid to do this, of course. But if you refuse to do the thing you are afraid to do, you will not get far. It is said that on the eve of a certain battle an officer called "Old Hickory's" attention to the fact that his knees were shaking. "They are", he replied without shame, "and if they knew where I was going to take them within the next hour, they would shake still more."

3. Then a fine antidote against fear is action. It is easy to be frightened if we have nothing else to do. The most trying time for the soldier is not the actual battle, but the waiting on the eve of the battle. When one asked Marshal Ney, one of Napoleon's bravest marshals, if he was afraid, he replied, "I am too busy."

I have a friend who is deadly afraid of being ill. He goes one season to Mayo's and the next to Johns Hopkins. Both of these great authorities tell him the same thing, "There is nothing wrong with you. Stay away from physicians." Yet he mopes home from such visits to look at his tongue, and feel his pulse, and to eat nothing heavier than moonshine. Then the hunting season comes and he crawls through the swamps shooting wild turkey from 2:00 A.M. until noon. He then eats slabs of ham, the very sight of which would almost cause his death during the days when he has nothing to do but be sick. Being busy is a great antidote against fear.

4. But the supreme antidote against fear is faith in God. A faith that prays is a faith that realizes God. God becomes real to the man who truly trusts him. It is said that the personal presence of Napoleon would change the most ordinary soldier into a hero. There is, no doubt, much truth in this. But here is a certainty: The realization of the
presence of God will change the most fearful of us into a hero. "I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved..." "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth be moved and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."

Here is a fascinating story: Elisha, with his assistant, is spending the night in the city of Dothan. Meantime, a hostile army seeking the prophet has come up under the cover of darkness and completely encircled the city. When, therefore, the prophet's assistant wakes in the morning and sees what has happened, he is stricken with a deadly fear. At once, he rushes to Elisha with the heavy tidings, crying, "Alas, my master, how shall we do?"

At this the prophet begins to pray. I am sure his assistant was not surprised at that. But what did astonish him was that for which the prophet prayed. For Elisha, instead of crying to God for deliverance, prayed after this fashion: "Lord, I have a blind assistant on my hands. Open his eyes that he may see." When the young man's eyes were opened in answer to that prayer, he saw not only the resources of the enemy, but the resources of God as well. He realized that they that were with him and his master were greater and stronger than those with the enemy. Thus his fear was changed into courage. There is no terror that can unman us if we realize God. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me."
THE WOMAN WITH A SECRET

Mark 5:34

"And He said unto her, daughter thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace and be whole of thy plague."

I

This woman is one of the pathetic characters of the New Testament. She was afflicted with a terrible disease. It had tortured her for weary months and weary years. In the springtime of her womanhood she had been possibly a beautiful and charming daughter of Judah. Life was opening to her full of promise and radiant with hope. Maybe she was already loved and is looking forward to that glad day when love should find its consummation at the altar of marriage.

But all these glad hopes had been dispelled. For twelve years she had suffered. To add to the tragedy of her plight, she was afflicted with a shame faced disease. She had a malady that made its victim unclean. It shut her out from the privileges of mingling with the worshippers at the temple. It ostracised her. It made her unclean. It shut for her the doors of wifehood and motherhood. Never could she hope for the hug of baby arms and the kiss of baby lips.

Her disease was incurable. When it had first appeared she had fought it with all her might. At last with shame she had had to tell her story to a physician. He had treated her in vain. Then she had gone to another and another. But all the while her cheeks were growing more and more pale. Her body was growing more weak, her shoulders more stooped. Her beauty was fading like the fading of a flower. Every step seemed to be bringing her nearer and nearer to the door of the tomb.

To add to these calamities, she was penniless. The doctors whom she had consulted had relieved her of nothing but her money. She had spent all that she had, and there was no chance of earning more. No position was open to her. And had there been a position, she was too weak and too sick to undertake to fill it. Thus we find her broken of body, broken of heart, ostracised, penniless, slipping inch by inch nearer to ghastly death.

II

But, wonderful to tell, these twelve lonely and bitter years of suffering, had not prepared her for the grave. That was what she thought they had done. That was what everyone thought. But all unknown to herself they had been preparing her for Jesus. It has been suggested that if Jesus had passed her door twelve years ago, she might not have been interested. She might not even have given Him the boon of an earnest and loving thought. Her cup was too near full. Life was running too smoothly. She was tottering under the burden of no great need. The sun was bright in her sky and she was brushing the dewy flowers of morning. But it is different now. Her health is gone and the sun is set, and the burden of a great need is resting heavily upon her. And while she is tottering under this unbearable load she hears of Jesus. What a listener she must have been! How attentive she was to the winsome story that she heard! She has been thoroughly prepared for it by years of terrible suffering.
"When she heard of Jesus." That means that she took time to listen, that she gave attention. I wonder if you are really listening to me. It seems that the happenings of your yesterdays might have prepared you for this message. You have not found life all roses. You have not done what you once dreamed of doing. You have not arrived. You have known heartache and disappointment and disillusionment. You have been disappointed in others perhaps. You have been sorely disappointed in yourself. You have sinned and come short of the glory of God. That in itself ought to make you eager to hear about Jesus.

"She heard". That means that somebody who knew Jesus had love enough and faith enough to tell this poor creature for whom everybody had lost hope, for she had been sick a long time, remember. We are attentive to those who are sick for a little while, but if they linger on and on our visits become more and more rare. We forget to send flowers. We forget to inquire. We forget altogether. But here was a kindly heart that knew Jesus and knew this sick woman and she took pains to tell her about Him.

Just what she said, we do not know. I am sure of this, that she had nothing but good to say. Have you ever heard anything about Jesus that would lead you to doubt Him. Have you ever heard anything that would make you afraid to put your case in His hands? I can imagine sometime a woman coming to this poor creature, and she speaks to her very tenderly: "Rachel, Jesus is in town today. And your cheeks are very pale and your cough is very hollow and your strength seems almost gone. Why don't you get Him to cure you?"

"Get Him to cure me?" The poor creature answers, almost indignantly. "Don't you know that I love life as well as you love it? Don't you know that I have done everything within my power to get well; that I have consulted physician after physician; that I have spent all my money; that I have fought a losing fight with disease for these twelve long years. The reason I do not get well is because I can't. There is no hope for me. My last doctor dismissed me and told me that there was not the slightest chance; that there was no cure.

"Yes" replies/unknown preacher, "this physician is different. There is nothing too hard for Him. He is never baffled. He never makes any mistake." And perhaps she said "When I met Him I was blind. I had been blind from my birth, but He opened my eyes," or "I was a leper and His touch made me clean." Whatever your need, He can meet it. Whatever your burden, He can lift it from your shoulders. Whatever your night, He can change it into marvelous day. And the fact that you have lost your money makes no difference, for He cures without money and without price.

III

What response did this woman make to this winsome sermon?

She did not hear it with stolid and stupid indifference. She did not go to sleep while listening to it. She did not drink its sweet cadences with half-stifled yawns. How hard it is to hold the attention of many. They have heard the story so often. They know fairly well what
The Woman With a Secret - 3

the preacher is going to say. Therefore, they listen as indifferently as if they had no soul to save.

I do not believe any of us recognize the terrible danger of hearing the Gospel and refusing to make any response to it. This Gospel, while our most priceless possession, is also our most dangerous. It is the savior of life unto life or of death unto death. It either makes you better or it makes you worse. You can hear till you lose your capacity for hearing. You can see till your eyes go out. You can come to that dangerous place of which Paul speaks when he says of certain ones that they were past feeding.

"Oh where is that mysterious borne
By which our path is crossed
Beyond which God Himself hath sworn
That he who goes is lost?"

Indifference here is dangerous and deadly.

Neither did this woman hear and have her heart stirred and her longings quickened, and yet delay action. So many of us make that fatal mistake. I dare say that there is not an unsaved man present that has not made it over and over again. God speaks to you, takes pains to awaken you, to make you hate your sin and long for goodness. But you put off decisive action. You say to yourself, "I know I am not what I ought to be. I know I should be a Christian. Some day I am surely going to be." But you never bring the decision into the here and now.

How we need to learn from this woman. Listen to her story. "When she heard of Jesus she came." Sick as she was, she still had power to make up her mind. She still had the capacity to will. She did not wait for a more convenient season. She did not wait for some fortunate combination of circumstances to force her to become a Christian. She herself, with the power to say yes or no, she herself, with the power to come or to refuse to come, gathered herself together and made the great decision. She came to Jesus. Nothing bigger or wiser or better was ever done by any human soul.

IV.

Notice how she came. There was much in her coming that the outsider might have criticised.

1. She came timidly. She had a terrible dread of the crowd. There was a vast multitude about Jesus. She was well aware that if she went to Him she would be conspicuous. Her very weakness, the pallor of her face, would attract attention. And she was naturally afraid of the starring eyes of the multitude. She was doubly afraid because of the nature of her disease. Therefore, it was a very timid trembling and timid and fear-filled woman that tottered her feeble way to Christ that day. And yet, tho she was dreadfully afraid, be it said to her honor, she came.

2. She came ignorantly. How little she knew about Jesus. So ignorant she was that she thought she could slip up behind Jesus and steal a blessing from Him, and then go away and never have to embarrass herself by
The Woman With A Secret - 4.

telling Him her secret. She thought Jesus was a kind of magician instead of God manifest in the flesh. So ignorant was she that had I met her I am afraid I would have done my best to turn her back. But how clearly her case teaches that it is possible to be very wrong in your head and right in your heart at the same time.

3. She came earnestly. In spite of her fear, in spite of her ignorance, she was determined to make her way to Jesus. She made up her mind that nothing should turn her back. Her need was too pressing. She knew that to turn back meant death. She knew that the grave was walking right at her heels. Therefore, she dared not turn back. She must find Jesus, for in no other way could she find life. Therefore, she was in dead earnest.

4. Then she came expectantly. She did not know as much about Jesus as we do. She was very ignorant. But she knew enough to cherish the wildest expectations about Him. She came with a fine, high optimism. She came encouraging herself as she fought with her fears, as she battled with her timidity. "If I touch but His clothes I shall be healed."

V. What was the outcome? She was healed. Jesus did not disappoint her. He never does. Look at her. She is pressing her way thru the crowd. But the people are pressing about Jesus, and her case at times looks hopeless. Some turn to stare at her. Some tell her she ought to have remained at home. Some jostle her rudely. Others, seeing how sick she is, step aside and try to make her task easy. At last she is near enough to touch "and immediately she knew in herself that she was healed of her plague."

Jesus did not keep her waiting. If you want to be saved, if you want to become a Christian, you do not have to wait. You do not have to wait till this sermon is over. You do not have to wait a single hour, a single moment. Jesus gives an immediate salvation. He will save you the very instant that you turn to Him. Immediately she was saved. And not only was she saved immediately, but she knew it. She was sure of it. Thank God for certainty. Thank God it is possible not only to be His, but to know that we are His.

2. She confessed Jesus. Having been healed, she was preparing to go away and to keep her experience a secret. She was preparing to go away without a word of appreciation to the One who had healed her. But suddenly this question was asked: "Who touched me?" It seemed a foolish question to the disciples. Peter answered, "Thou seest the multitude thronging thee and sayest thou who touched me?" But it is possible to be very near Jesus, it is possible to be in a religious company, it is possible to rub elbows with Jesus, and yet never touch Him in such a way as to be healed.

Why did Christ ask this question? It was not because He did not know. He knew all about this poor suffering woman. He knew just when she was healed and how she was healed. The reason He asked this question was not for His own sake. He wanted this woman to confess. He knew she would make a failure if she tried to be a disciple secretly. It is only the cut and cut, over and above board Christian that wins. For her own sake she needed to do what she did. Fall down before Him and tell Him all the truth. (Hit the first lick)
The Woman With a Secret - 5.

3. She became a blessing to others. When this woman was healed and confessed her Saviour in the presence of the crowd, she received new strength and courage. She also brought help to others. There was a man there, for instance, whose little daughter had just died. How hard it was for him to believe that Jesus could and would raise her from the dead. The man’s friends had given up all hope. They were saying "She is dead. Why trouble the Master any further." But Jesus was saying, "Be not afraid. Only believe." How much this woman’s confession of her Saviour helped to strengthen the faith of this man only He and God can know.

How we need to follow the example of this suffering woman! She was needy, as you are. She came to Jesus, as you may come. She was saved, as you may be. She confessed her Saviour and was used of God for the helping of others, as you may be used. God has made an investment in you. He has locked within you powers for greater usefulness. Why will you squander them? Why will you waste and worse than waste them? Why will you take your talent and hide it in the earth? Why will you make it impossible for God to say to you at the end of the journey "You have been faithful."

A prominent man in the West told this story: "The tenderest memory that I have," said he, "is this: My father was a partial Indian. One spring day as I was going away to the field to work I said 'Father I will not get home till after dark. Would you mind doing a few chores of mine?' He replied, 'I will be glad to.' I came home after dark as expected. I asked father if the chores had been done, and he replied with embarrassment, 'Son, I am sorry to tell you, but I forgot it.'

I started to say something unkind, for I was very tired, but I swallowed my words and started toward the barn. But father called me back, and when I stood near him he said: 'Son, you are a great comfort, because you are always so faithful.' I did the work and came back singing. When I was near the porch I called to father, but he did not answer; I came closer and saw his head bent forward, and I put my hand upon his heart and it was still. But the tenderest memory that I have in this world is this: that the last thing he said to me was "You are faithful." Will you make that word possible for your Heavenly Father?
THE HIGH ART OF INATTENTION

"But Jesus paid no attention to what they said." (Goodspeed)

-- Mark 5: 36

The art of giving attention is one well worth developing. There are so many who can look with seeming intentness and never see anything. There are so many who can listen without hearing. It is perfectly amazing how some students can sit in a class-room from grammar school through college and come out at last without the smell of any intellectual fire upon their garments. Through the years, they have listened without hearing. They have looked without seeing. Their trouble was not paying attention.

But there is the art of inattention which is just as important. Jesus developed it to perfection. He lived in a day when the go-getter was the hero, but Jesus paid no attention to such philosophy. Saying rather, "The meek shall inherit the earth." In his day the whole world shrieked at him that the way to conquer was with a sword, but Jesus paid no attention to what they said declaring rather, "He that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword." They affirmed that the path to power was to avoid the cross. Jesus affirmed that it was "the way of the cross that lifted up -- He would draw all men unto himself."

This story gives us a fine example of the use Jesus made of inattention. A frantic father has just thrown himself at His feet telling him that his little daughter is lying at the point of death. Jesus cannot resist such an earnest appeal. In company with the father, he makes his way toward the House of Pain. But there comes an interruption. A woman who is herself a sufferer demands the
attention of Jesus. I can imagine the father finds it difficult to keep from being filled with inward rage. This woman might have waited for another time, but my child cannot wait, it is now or never with her.

Jesus goes leisurely about his task. He heals the woman in body but he does far more -- he brings her into the rich possession of peace, he refuses to budge until he listens to her story as she tells him all the truth. By that time, it would seem that he had waited too long. Just as he is resuming the journey, two messengers come from the House of Sickness that has now become the House of Death.

These messengers seem to be rather crude chaps who delight in telling news. There are some folks you know who would almost be willing to die, if they could get to announce their own funerals. These messengers seem to have been of that kind. They bustled up and blurted out bluntly, "Your daughter is dead, why trouble the Master any further."

There is a gasp, I imagine, in the audience and the father sobs, "It is too late." But the news doesn't jar Jesus in the least. He does not apologize, he does not say, "I am sorry that I am too late." He paid no attention to what they said. He went quietly on his errand as if nothing had happened saying only to the father, "Be not afraid, only believe." And he never stops until he changes the House of Mourning into the House of Joy.

I.

The first lesson that we learn from this ancient story is this -- that
we never start to do anything worthwhile that somebody doesn't come to tell us how utterly hopeless and impossible it is. Every Columbus appears a fool to his contemporaries. Every astronomer who would think God-thoughts after him must do his thinking amidst the derision of a crowd. Almost every inventor who would change a dream into a reality must do so in spite of the Prophets of Failure.

If there are voices that shriek discouragement at us when we set out to do some physical accomplishment, these become even more insistent when our efforts are in the realm of the moral and spiritual. When a Christian sets out for the Eternal City and cries, "Life, Life, Eternal Life," he must needs stop his ears to shut out the insistent voices who tell him how stupid his adventure is -- and those same voices shriek at you tonight. How hopeless at times it seems -- this mad dream of ours of being Christ-like. Why, not in the twentieth century -- surely, and not in our environment, -- impossible! But we must refuse to pay attention or we will end in moral disaster.

Maybe you have set out to do some definite bit of work toward the building of the Kingdom, maybe your work is with boys and girls, maybe it is with those who are over-grown, you are seeking to make men and women who are selfish -- unselfish. You are seeking to build them into Christ-like men and women. It is a slow and painful process. Oftentimes, many will tell you it is utterly impossible. Or, you have set out to help build a new world. A world of just economic relationships: "A world where men shall beat their swords into plow-shares and learn war no more." To every such worker there come insistent voices that tell them of the futility and madness of their undertaking.
Somebody said that it couldn't be done,
But he, with a shrug, replied,
"Maybe it couldn't,"
But he would not be the one
To say so until he had tried.

So he buckled right in,
With a bit of a grin
And if he worried, he hid it.
He started to sing
As he tackled the thing,
That could not be done, -- and he did it!

Somebody said, "Why, you'll never do that,
At least, no one ever has done it,"
But he took off his coat
And he took off his hat
And the first thing we knew, -- he had begun it!

With a lift of his chin
And a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quidding.
He started to sing
As he tackled the thing
That could not be done, -- and he did it!

There are thousands to tell you
It cannot be done!
There are thousands to prophesy failure.
There are thousands to point out one by one
The dangers that wait to assail you.

But buckle right in
With a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it.
Just start in to sing
As you tackle the thing
That cannot be done, -- and you'll do it!

II.

What shall we do with these voices? We must do one of two things. We
must either listen to them or refuse to give them our attention. If we listen to
them one or two things will happen. We shall either give over our enterprise
altogether and quit trying, or if we keep on, we are likely to be half-hearted in
our efforts. Now to be half-hearted, to be divided in our allegiance -- spells
Years ago when we were boys, my brother and I found it necessary to cross over a branch on our farm. Normally, this little riverlet was so narrow that we could step across it. But there was a rise in the river and the backwater had changed this little riverlet into quite a river. It was now some twelve feet wide, but we determined to jump it. I was to make the first effort, but just as I was getting under way, my brother changed his mind and said, "Stop, stop, stop." I half stopped and half didn't with the result I landed in midstream. There are those today who have not quite given over the fight, but they have been so dampened and softened by the voices of the world that they are only half-hearted.

Then there are some who quit altogether. Sometimes they get their feelings hurt. Again their pride is wounded or they grow so weary with the effort that they give over the struggle. I was in a church some time ago that was passing through difficulties. One gentleman said to me, "The devil has our church. I have quit ever going." But one fine old saint who overheard the remark gave this exceedingly good reply, "He may have your pew, I never see you in it any more; but he doesn't have mine, I occupy it ever Sunday." One had listened and the other had developed the high art of inattention.

But how are we to do this? It is not a mere negative process. There are those who when they set out to be Christians seem to follow the example of those three monkeys -- who hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil. But you
cannot make a saint out of mere cycles. Nobody is a Christian by virtue because of the wrong things he refuses to do. If that were the case, a wax figure might be a saint.

If you happen to have a radio in your home, how do you escape listening to tons of rubbish? You may do so in one of two ways. You may turn your radio off altogether, but in that case it becomes entirely useless. Or you may tune out the undesirable by tuning in all of the desirable. On the first pages of Genesis, we read that "God said" and the "serpent said." That is, God is always broadcasting and so are the powers of evil. It is up to you to tune in all the voices that you desire to hear.

The art of inattention, therefore, does not consist in hearing nothing at all. It consists in hearing the higher voices rather than the lower. This is what Paul meant when he said, "This I say, walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Fill your hands and your heart full of the best and there will be no room for the worst. "If there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things and all baser things will be crowded out."

This is the way of victory and the only way. Merely to try not to listen is to listen the more intently, just as merely to try to forget is the surest way to remember. Stanley Jones tells of a certain thinker who claimed the ability to make gold. He had a vessel of water set before him. He put in some chemical to color the water and began to stir vigorously and as he stirred, he was able to drop a few gold nuggets into the water without being seen. When a little later he poured the water off, there were the nuggets. Once a merchant bought his recipe for a good sum. The faker turned it over to him with this word of
explanation, "This plan will certainly work except under one condition, if you
think of a red monkey while you are working it, it will fail you." Of course, the
merchant could never stir without thinking of a red monkey because the harder he
tried to forget the more he remembered.

Here is one of the heroic figures of the Old Testament. One day he
left Ur of the Chaldees lured on by a mighty dream. He was going out with the
hope of being the father of nations, but the years slipped by and nothing came
of his mad dream. Springtime is gone, summer is gone, autumn is gone, and
now he is in the gloomy days of mid-winter. Still he holds on refusing to listen
to the voices of defeat that clamour for his attention. How did he manage?
He was too busy listening to the voices of God. He considered not his own body,
"Now dead.....being fully persuaded with what God had promised, he was able also
to perform." This was the way of victory for the saints of long ago. It is the
way of victory for you and me.
"The Foxy Church-Goer."

Mark, 6: 20.

Hear the text: "He heard him gladly." He went to preaching and enjoyed it. He listened to a personal and pointed rebuke. He heard a sermon on God's love of righteousness and His hatred against sin, and he enjoyed it. He thrilled under it. Some folks go to sleep while the preacher is preaching, but not this man. Some folks become angry and want to kill the preacher, but not so with the church-goer of the text. "He heard him gladly."

Who was this man that delighted in listening to sermons? Who was this ancient church-goer? You might think he was some noted saint. You might come to the conclusion that he was a man conspicuous for his holiness. You might make up your mind that he was one widely distinguished for the whiteness of his life. But should you come to such conclusions, I assure you that you would be greatly mistaken. He was far from being a saint. He was thoroughly weak and wayward and wicked.

Jesus knew this man through and through. And when He spoke of him He could use no name more complimentary than "fox." He speaks of him as "an old fox." He speaks of him in that impolite way because that word best describes the type of man that he was. He was a foxy man. He was a shrewd, scheming, writhing, gliding sort of a fellow. He trusted more in cunning and treachery than he did in openness and sincerity. He was a creature of plots and shifts and compromises. A real sly soul was he, hard to grip, hard to hold, hard to get into a corner, hard to induce to face any situation squarely and manfully.

This tendency to foxiness marks almost his entire career. As Tetrarch of Galilee he had been well married. He was wedded to the daughter of the king of Arabia. But soon after the marriage he met another woman and became infatuated by her. This woman was his own sister-in-law, the wife of his brother Philip. But that did not matter. He was smooth. He was foxy. He stole his brother Philip's wife.

So this delighted church-goer was a home wrecker. He had broken up his own home. And his father-in-law would have given him the punishment that he deserved had not the treacherous son-in-law with his characteristic foxiness appealed to Rome.

He not only broke up his own home, but he broke up his brother's home. And these suave and shrewd home wreckers did not die with the passing of Herod. I am sorry to say that not a few of them live today. I wish I might be able to say what ought to be said along this line. How many broken homes there are all about us today! For these pathetic wrecks sometimes the woman is to blame, but more often the man.

There is a type of man, in fact, who seems to think that he has a perfect right to do such things. In fact, he rather congratulates himself upon his cunning, upon his ability to put over the hellish job. He almost flatters himself that he can do with impunity that which he would murder another man for doing. He rejoices in the fact that being a man, he can do that for which he would divorce or murder his own wife.
How many tragedies of this kind does the preacher meet! Some weeks ago a woman of culture and refinement came into my study. I do not know her name. She never gave it, but she wanted help. She was married to a leper. He had dragged the holy relationship of marriage into the gutter. He had cast the woman who loved him into a living hell, a hell from which she could not free herself because she wanted to give her child a chance.

There may be worse crimes than this, but I am not sure that I know just what that crime may be. Do you believe in hell? It is altogether possible that you do not. Do you believe that this universe is ruled by a God of justice? If you do then you must believe that sometime, somewhere, somehow the balances are going to be adjusted between that man and the woman whose life he wrecked, whose hopes he blighted and whose heart he broke and trampled under his unhallowed feet. Believe me, that of all the corruptible scoundrels that will ever creep into the dark hell it will be that man and that woman who have eaten the ash apples of lust at the price of another's heart-ache and another's tears.

Yes, this man was a home wrecker. And there is no worse man than he. The man who finds purity and leaves impurity, the man who finds sunshine and leaves shadow, the man who finds love and leaves suspicion and hate, the man who comes upon a little heaven of happiness and leaves behind him a hell of woe, - that man has a heart in him whose hardness must be the envy of the very prince of darkness himself.

This man Herod being the sinner that he was, was a man of an uneasy conscience. Though he had given rein to every lust, he was not a happy man. He was not a man at peace with himself. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." There was civil war in his soul, and no man at the beginning can be quite as bad as he wants to be. And no sinner, however successful, ever succeeded in doing at last one thing, and that is making the one who committed it happy.

So this man of the troubled conscience seeks for relief. He has heard of one who is a preacher whose marvelous power has emptied the cities and filled the wilderness. The solitudes of the Jordan valley have been made to tremble under the tramp of multitudes. He will hear this man. Maybe he will help him. At least he will give him a new form of entertainment.

Thus John was invited to preach at court. For John the Baptist is the name of this preacher that Herod heard with gladness. You are a little surprised doubtless that he was glad to hear John. For John was no ordinary preacher. He was no ordinary man. Certainly he was not the type of man that you would have picked for a court preacher. He was a man who had dwelt much alone. He was a man who had ranged the wide out-of-doors. He was a man of rugged honesty. He was also a man of intimate fellowship with God.

You would never have thought of him, I repeat, as a court preacher. He could not flatter. It was not in him to fawn or soft soap. He was a man. He was a great man. That is the verdict of Jesus Himself, and Jesus did not misjudge men. He said "a greater had never been born of woman."
Now I can imagine there was no small stir among John's friends when they learned that this rugged preacher had been invited to preach at the court of Herod. And assuming that human nature is the same in all centuries, I feel quite sure that John was given some very excellent advice as to how he should behave himself in the presence of Herod.

Doubtless they spoke to him after this fashion: "Now John, you have the chance of your lifetime. It's a great honor that has come to you. Herod will be your patron. From him, if you will manage it right, you can get anything you want. Now for your own good, I want to tell you a thing or two. You know Herod stole his brother Philip's wife. Therefore my advice is when you preach before Herod don't mention the Ten Commandments. Don't mention the sacredness of the marriage relation. Avoid all these things or you might trample on Herod's toe."

But John, I am happy to say, was not made out of that sort of stuff. He no sooner had the privilege of speaking before this foxy king than he brought him face to face with his own sin. I like his straightforwardness, his directness. He did not beat about the bush. He did not tell Herod how hard it was for him to say what he felt it his duty to say. But straight from the shoulder, as if he had been speaking to the humblest peasant, he said, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother Philip's wife."

Understand the basis upon which he made his appeal to Herod. He didn't say, "Herod, it is not good politics." He didn't say, "It is not expedient." He did not say, "It doesn't look well." But he said, "It is not lawful. It is not right. You are doing wrong." And he held him up face to face with the almighty God. He held him up before the tribunal of the Judge of all the earth. "It is not lawful for thee to have her."

And you will notice too that the preaching was personal. Herod was not in any doubt as to whom was meant. John did not utter a tirade about the sin of infidelity to the marriage vow and say, "It may be possible that some of you are guilty." As Nathaniel said to David, so he said to Herod, "Thou art the man."

Now, I may have said before that it does not take any great courage to speak the truth and speak it plainly oftentimes before a large audience, but to speak it to one man and that man your patron; to speak it to one man and that man a man of position who is trying to be your friend - it takes a real hero to do that. The man who does that is no reed shaken with the wind. He is a man in the presence of whose courage that heroism that dies on the battle field is but child's play.

And mark you, John did not thus speak to Herod because he delighted in saying uncouth and unkind things. There is a type of character that enjoys sitting in judgment upon the other man's sins. There are those who enjoy playing the role of porcupine. John was not of that type. Rugged he was, but he had a heart of love and his one purpose in speaking the truth to Herod was that he might save him.

And did this preaching have any effect upon Herod, I wonder. Was he at all influenced by it? Yes, he was influenced and influenced greatly. John held his intensest attention. John gripped him with a profound admiration. Herod admired his goodness. He admired his courage.
And there was more even than interest and admiration. Herod not only admired John, but he longed, I am sure, in some measure to be like him. Those days in which this man sat under the ministry of John were certainly the best days of his life. They were days in which he struggled to be free, though he struggled but feebly. They were days in which he looked interestingly and even eagerly toward the heights. Not only did he look, but he even tried to ascend. He sought to reform. "He did many things", the text tells us.

"He did many things", for not only had John made godliness and righteousness look attractive to this weak and foxy man, but John had also made him afraid. Somehow it was easy for him to believe as he listened to John that there was a wrath to come. Somehow he felt strangely sure that one day he was going to have to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. John made him afraid.

You will notice that Herodias was not stirred at all by the preaching of John. At least she was not stirred in the same way. While Herod was made heart hungry and afraid, while he was resolving to do better, - she was filled with anger and resentment and with a determination to destroy this rude and fearless preacher who had dared to tell her face to face of her sin. And she set at once about the accomplishment of her purpose. But Herod, weak man though he was, would not allow John to be killed. However, he made this fatal blunder. He compromised.

He could not, you see, get away from his foxiness. When John had preached to him of repentance he reformed somewhat, but could never be brought in a vital and clear-cut way to repent. He would not break with his sin. He would not stand true to his conscience. He compromised. So with Herodias he compromised. He said, "I will not kill John as you desire, but I will put him in prison."

Now the man who compromises loses. It was true in the case of Herod as in that of countless others. Having refused to obey his conscience, little by little it ceased to speak to him and he sank deeper and deeper into sin. Then comes that fatal birthday party of his. There was plenty to drink and he and his friends were having a merry time.

Standing now behind the scenes is Herodias. She has been waiting for a long time to get even with John. It may be tonight her time has come. She sends in her daughter to dance the dance of the gazelle. It was a suggestive and coarse dance and as hard on modesty almost as the modern dance. Though this may be said to its credit that she danced it alone.

Herod looks on with admiration. The worst in him is appealed to and he makes the rash vow of an inflamed and drunken fool. He promises her anything that she would ask to the half of his kingdom.

I see her now as she darts out to speak to her wicked and watchful mother. She tells her what the king has said. And her eyes sparkle and she says, "He's mine." And she laughs a soulless laugh and says, "At last he's mine." And back into the banquet hall comes Salome. And she says, "Give me here the head of John upon a dish."

The king's maudlin face becomes serious. What says the story:
"The king was sorry. Nevertheless for his oath's sake and for the sake of them that sat with him at meat he commanded it to be given her."

Here it is again, the old, old story of a man doing the thing that he did not want to do, of a man doing the thing that he hates, that he does not have to do, - and yet that he does none the less. After your first step down you buried your face in your pillow that night and wept your heart out and what you said was, "I did not want to take that step." Yes, but you took it just the same.

Herod, do you want to kill John? "No." Do you hate him? "No." Are you going to kill him? "Yes, I am going to kill him." Why? "Ah," he said, "The crowd is against me. Everybody here thinks that I ought to kill him. I am afraid of them." And thus because he is cowed by the crowd he dips his hand into the blood of the man whom he honored and admired.

An order was given. And by and by as the servants hurry here and there bearing rich dishes into the banquet hall, there came in a servant with the most gruesome dish that was ever served: The head of a man, pale of face, blood stained here and there, the eyes still open from which a great soul had just now looked out, the lips unclosed from which once had come a message of love and fire. It was not easy for Herod to forget that dish.

Days pass on and Herod in spite of the fact that he lays the blame on the crowd or on Herodias or on Salome, is a haunted man. He is also a man on the way down, but he had one more good chance. He had another great opportunity. Stirring news is brought of the preaching of another peasant preacher. He is not at all like John. Yet no sooner does Herod hear of him than his face goes white and memory is busy and conscience is awake.

He sees the horrid scene of that night of debauch and murder. And for once in his life he seems to be honest. For once he is made to face his sin as his own sin and not that of another. He says, "This is John whom I beheaded. He is risen from the dead." Understand he does not lay the responsibility on anyone else. He faces the deed as his own deed. And mark me, there come times in all our lives when we are made to face our sin as our very own.

But even then Herod did not repent. His ghastly fear vanished little by little. He made up his mind that John had not risen. Therefore he was in no immediate danger. Therefore there was no special call to give up his sin. He comes now to desire to see Jesus, not because He is God's Son, not because He is able to save, but because he wants to see Him perform some conjurous trick. He wants to be amused by Him as by some mountebank.

At last Christ and Herod face each other. But Herod seeks nothing at His hands except the satisfaction of a morbid curiosity. He begins to question Christ. But will you notice this: Jesus answered him never a word. There are some men to whom Jesus Christ will not speak. There are some men in whose presence He is absolutely dumb. He will not speak, not because He does not care for them but because He knows that there is absolutely no use to speak. Herod before he got to this interview had thrown away his chance.
And I call you again tonight to face that solemn declaration of God's word: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." A man may resist the truth till it absolutely loses its power to appeal to him. And when that day comes the man is hopeless, for that is the sin against the Holy Ghost.

What then was the ruin of Herod? It was not the fact that he did not have a chance. It was not the fact that he had never been to church. At one time he had been a church-goer. It was not the fact that he did not like preaching. He enjoyed the preaching. It was not the fact that it did not appeal to him. It did appeal to him. It makes an appeal to every man. Why did Herod go away into the night? It was not because he was a drunkard. God has saved many a drunkard. It was not because he was a libertine. God has made many an impure man pure. It was not because he was a murderer. Murderers have been forgiven and saved by the power of God. The ruin of Herod was just this, that he would not deal fairly with the truth, that he refused to follow the light when it shone upon him, and persisted in his refusal till the light went out and left him in darkness forever. And God said, because he was forced to say, "He is married to his sin. Let him alone."
of his little girl. As she looked in, she said "Daddy, may I come in?" Daddy gave her a welcome. She tripped across the room, climbed into his lap, hugging his neck and kissing his lips, then putting her childish hands up to the side of his face she said "Daddy I didn't come to ask you for a thing, I just came to climb upon your lap and tell you what a good, kind, sweet Daddy you are." No wonder that the preacher's strength was renewed, no wonder that his tears flowed in sheer joy not shame. It was a simple thing, but so vastly richer. We cheat ourselves as well as others in not practicing it more. Therefore, let us take our souls in hand as did this ancient psalmist "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."
"Their minds were dull." Who are these dullards? They are not certain enemies of Jesus, but His own chosen disciples. In what respect are they dull? They are not mentally stupid. They are dull in that, though they have experienced again and again the power of Christ to meet their every need, they still have not learned to trust Him. That is a common tragedy. As we take a glance over our yesterdays, we realize that some of them were full of sunshine and some full of shadow. Yet we realize, too, that even in the shadows, we did not have to walk alone. But in spite of all this, we are often too dull to trust for today and tomorrow.

We thank Thee, O God, for Thy blessing upon our yesterdays. Grant us, in the realization of Thy goodness, to say with Thy servant, "He rescued me...He rescues still, and I rely upon Him for the hope that He will continue to rescue me."

(II Cor. 1-10 Moffatt) Amen.
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DULL FOLKS
Mark 6:47-52 (Weymouth)

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"He was transfigured before them."

This is one of the mountain scenes in the life of our Lord. As you read the story of Jesus you can not but be impressed with His love for the mountains. Again and again He goes into the mountains to pray. When He uttered His most famous sermon He was in the mountains. "And seeing the multitude He went up into a mountain; and when He was set His disciples came unto Him and He opened His mouth and taught them."

When He achieved one of His great victories over the devil it was in a high mountain. "And he taketh Him unto an exceeding high mountain and showed Him the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them." When He died it was on Mount Calvary. And when He was transfigured He was in a high mountain apart.

Mark tells us that Jesus was transfigured before them. That is, His transfiguration took place in the presence of the three chosen disciples, Peter, James and John. Of course the transfiguration had a deep meaning in the life of Jesus Himself. But we are to consider its teaching this morning for the apostles who witnessed it and also for ourselves. "He was transfigured before them." That is, this wonderful event upon the mountain had a purpose for the disciples present and for all the disciples who should come after them. Let us reverently and prayerfully approach the scene that we may gather something of its wealthy teaching for our own needy lives.

PART I.

The first lesson that we learn from this scene is the transforming power of communion with God. Had you questioned Jesus as to the purpose of His going into these mountain heights He would not have told you that He was going to be transfigured. He would not have said, "I am going that my face may shine and that my garments may become white
THE TRANSFIGURATION

as the light." The purpose of His withdrawing into the mountains was not to seek an illuminated face. It was to seek God. He went up into a mountain apart, not to be transfigured, but to pray. The transfiguration came as a result of His intimate fellowship with God.

Now while it is true that we shall never be transfigured in the same sense that Jesus was; yet, even for ourselves there is a genuine transfiguring power in communion with God. You remember when Moses came down from the mountain that his face so shone that the people found it difficult to look upon its unearthly brightness. His countenance was lighted with a holy light that had come from long and intimate communion with God in prayer. And such praying has not lost its transforming power. Such praying opens the windows of the soul toward the heavenly Jerusalem and allows the light from the Divine countenance to stream in. Such praying brings the Holy Spirit to dwell within so that Paul's great word becomes genuinely true: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?"

Now if Christ dwells within us in the person of the Spirit it is not to be wondered at that this heavenly guest makes known His presence in some measure by the very look of our faces. I remember when I was a young school teacher in Tennessee that I boarded with a certain woman who was deeply schooled in the things of God. I have seen this woman again and again take her Bible in the morning and go to a little private room. Sometimes I would hear soft laughter from within. Then, after an hour or two hours, I would see her come back. She wist not that her face shone. Yet it was strangely alight and those of us who knew her intimately took knowledge of her that she had been in the secret place of the Most High.

This is the explanation of that rather strange passage in Revela-
tion: "His name shall be in their foreheads." When I was a boy I used to wonder how people would look with the name of Jesus written across their foreheads. I thought that it would be spelled out in legible type just as if it were printed on the page of a book. But of course that is not the case at all. Name here stands for character. "The impress of His character shall be upon their foreheads. The beauty of the Lord shall be upon them. The winsomeness of the King shall transfigure them as the sunshine transfigures the hills."

This is what Paul meant when he said, "We beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed in the same image from glory to glory." Hawthorne was seeking to tell the same story when he wrote "The Great Stone Face." You remember how the lad looked upon the kindly face carved in the stone and yearned for the day when he should come whose face should be like the Great Stone Face. Then one day as he spoke to his friends about him who was to come they discovered that the face of the speaker had taken on the lineaments of the face carved in the stone. So long had he gazed upon this alluring face, so long had he waited in eager expectation for him who was to come, that his own face had been transformed.

So communion with God has transforming power. Communion with God transfigures the soul. It makes us Christ-like in the inner deeps of our being. And the transformed personality pictures itself in some measure in the face. So much is this the case that one of the greatest living photographers declares that the best evidence he knows for the truth of Christianity is the type of face that the genuine Christian has. And mark you, this transformation is not just for the few. It is for anybody and everybody who will take time to really pray. Prayer will work miracles in the world without. But it will work the sublimest of all miracles in the world within. This we learn while we are with Christ and these disciples in the holy mount.
THE TRANSFIGURATION

PART II.

A second blessing that comes to us as a result of beholding this transfiguration scene is a satisfying certainty of the after life.

Heaven is very real to us here on the Mount of Transfiguration. "There appeared unto them two men, who were Moses and Elijah, talking to Him." Now Moses and Elijah had been gone from this world long centuries. Moses had been buried in an unknown grave. Elijah had been translated. Where are they now? Had you asked the man of the world he would have said, "They are dead. They are dust and ashes, that is all." But here we see them alive. They are not even asleep. They are not even in some intermediate state waiting for the resurrection. They have not even lain down for an aeon or two, as Kipling tells us, "They live, and Moses is still Moses and Elijah is still Elijah. Their individuality remains intact. And transformed as we see them we know that our own who have died in the Lord are not simply going to live by and by, but know that they are joyously and consciously alive at this present moment.

You will notice also that the Record says that there appeared unto them two men. Moses and Elijah are still human. They did not come back with wings. They have not been transformed into angels. You will hear a mother speak sometimes of her baby who is gone into the world of light as being an angel now. You sometimes hear folks speak of their departed mother as their "angel mother." That is wrong. The mother is not an angel. Neither is the baby. They are still human beings. I like that. I think I should be rather homesick in a heaven that was made up of angels. I am afraid I should feel very queer and out of place. But if I should be among folks, especially folks that I have known the best and loved the best, folks that are still human in spite of having passed through death, then I am confident I should feel at home. Oh, it is a joy to know that those we have loved and lost are just as
THE TRANSFIGURATION

truly human in God's house as they were when they lived in the old home down here.

Then I think it is beautifully significant that these disciples knew Moses and Elijah. It is true that they had never met them. It is true that they had never been associated with them. Yet here in the illumination of this experience they know Moses and they know Elijah. They hear the two speaking and they can distinguish the two distinct personalities just as they could distinguish one another. That makes me very confident that we are going to know each other in the House of Many Mansions. If these disciples knew men that they had never seen, surely they will be able to recognize those whom they have known through years of beautiful intimacy. Surely we ourselves shall not fail to know those with whom we have looked arms and with whom we have walked in loving fellowship on this side of the narrow stream called Death.

Our faith is further strengthened by hearing these three, Jesus, Moses and Elijah, speak of death. To them it is only an exodus. "They spake of His exodus that He should accomplish at Jerusalem." Death, then, is not a going out into a blind alley. It is not a going down into a muddy grave. It is not a terminus. It is a roadway. It is a going out of Egypt into the larger liberties and joys of Canaan. It is the passing from one room of God's house that has not been without its joys and its sorrows, into that larger and better room where sorrows never come and where our joys shall be infinitely multiplied. What a harmless little dwarf death looks when we see it in the light of the Holy Mount. And how near and dear and satisfying is Heaven, that Heaven that sometimes seems so far away as we try to realize it from the fogs and the mists of the valley.

Part III.

The third lesson that we learn on the Mount of Transfiguration is
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the supreme lordship of Jesus Christ. Here we realize His ultimate and absolute authority. Let us reverently hear God's voice speaking once more as it spoke on that distant night: "This is my beloved Son: hear him." "Hear him." The whole Bible is summed up in that command. All of Christianity is epitomized in these two words. "Hear him." That is discipleship in all its fullness. That is discipleship in its beginning.

There is no becoming a Christian at all without a genuine submission to Jesus Christ. That is Christianity in its course. There is no sustained fellowship with Jesus without our life is a life of daily obedience. That is discipleship in its consummation. The best that Heaven can bring to us will be the blessing of a full and perfect obedience to Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus Christ is the answer to all our questions. Do you want to know God? "Hear Him." He is the revelation of the Father. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Do you want to know the way that leads to God? "Hear Him." "I am the way." Do you want to know the Truth? Again "Hear Him:" He declares boldly, "I am the Truth." Do you want life, life that is good today and that will be good tomorrow and that will be good through all the eternity of tomorrows? "Hear Him." He declares "I am the Life. I am come that they might have life and have it in abundance."

There are some of you young people who have not yet found yourselves. You know that you ought to do some worthy something with your lives, but you do not know exactly what that something is. You have thought of some special Christian work. You have thought of the ministry. You have considered the mission field. But you are not sure what you ought to do.

How can I help you? The greatest assistance that I can give you is this word that comes to us from the mountain top: "Hear Him." He says, "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Every life, he tells us, is a plan of God. Or better stated, God plans every life. He knows
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just where you will fit in. He knows just what you can do the best.

Bring your life to Him in full surrender. Give Him yourself and He will accept the gift. Give Him yourself and He will fill you with His Spirit. Give Him your life and He will give you guidance and you will walk with gladness in your heart that comes to those who are able to say: "To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world."

"Where cross the crowded ways of life, Where sounds the noise of race and clan, Above the tumult and the strife We hear Thy voice, O Son of Man."

The final lesson we learn in this holy mountain is the use to be made of this high knowledge that has come to us. You remember the use that Peter wanted to make of it. When he looked about and saw the glory and the splendor he said, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee and one for Moses and one for Elijah." And the record very clearly indicates that Peter was speaking not wisely, but with exceeding great foolishness. The utter absurdity of Peter's remark may be accounted for in some way by the fact that he was very recently awakened out of sleep. In the sudden surprise of waking upon such a glorious scene he blurted out the first thing that came to his mind.

As you read this story you cannot but realize that the disciples came very near missing this marvelous experience by the fact that they could not stay awake. When they were fully awake, Luke says, "They saw His glory." Would it not have been tragic indeed had they slept through it all? Many a man has done the like. There are those of us who come up to the house of the Lord Sunday after Sunday, but we never behold the glory. We never really hear any life-giving message. The trouble of it is, we are asleep. Some of us are literally asleep, others of us are asleep spiritually. Either way we miss the glory.
it is impossible for God to reveal Himself to one who is listless and drowsy and indifferent. The revelations that Jesus Christ makes are to those who are awake, who are fully awake, who are alert, expectant, in earnest. "He that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." These men came near to losing the power and inspiration of this service by sleeping through it.

But, when they were fully awake, then Peter offered his very silly and foolish suggestion. Six days ago, you remember, he had declared his faith in the divinity of Christ. Then when Jesus had disclosed the cross, Peter shrank back. He said, "Be it far from thee Lord. This shall never be unto thee." "You have power, but what is the use of power if you do not employ it in your own interest? What is the use of kingship if it leads only to a cross where you are to die for the sake of others? But up here on the mountain Peter sees the glory. He has shrunk from the cross. He doesn't want that. He cannot endure the thought of his Master undergoing that shame. But this glory is to his liking. So he said, "Let us stay up here. There are no nagging Pharisees here. There is no opposition, no noise and battle and conflict and turmoil and sin and tears. We are away from it all. Let us stay away."

That was human enough, but it was foolish as it was human. And Peter soon learned that the glory was impossible without the suffering, that the cross conditioned the crown. "When the clouds passed they saw no man save Jesus only." And in His company they took their way back down the mountain. And even then the other nine disciples were being defeated by the powers of evil. And even then a father's heart was being broken and his expectations killed. And even then an only son was being left in bondage. They must go from the Mount of Privilege to the Valley of Service.

And that is to be the issue of all privilege and of all spiritual
blessings in ourselves. "I will bless thee," said God to Abraham. But the outcome of that blessing was not to be simply Abraham's salvation. It was not simply that he should rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. "I will bless thee and thou shalt be a blessing." Every gift that comes to us is to be used in the interest of others. To refuse to do so is to lose the blessing. It is even more than that. To refuse to do so is to change the blessing into a curse.

My brother told me sometime ago of a gentleman who came to his Church saying that he had suddenly been cured of rotting kidneys by an application of Christian Science. He then asked him what he had been doing since that wonderful cure had been wrought. And the man could not name one single good or useful thing that engaged him. And then my brother asked the quite natural question: "What was the good of your being cured? So far as this needy old world is concerned you might have rotted all over, and nothing at all would have been lost."

A woman came to me recently who told of a great blessing that had come into her life. I asked her what she was going to do with it. And she told me of her plans to leave the Church and to get into something where she could be satisfied and where she could enjoy in full the blessed experience that had come to her. How like Peter she was.

The test of the great day is going to be the use we have made of the treasures of opportunity that God has given to us. Some of us have so much and make so little out of it. Over in the Ozark Mountains on the Osage River there is a ferryman. When that ferryman was young he was converted and made up his mind to enter the ministry. But on the eve of his departure for school he met with a serious accident and became almost a helpless cripple for life. When he was able to hobble
about on crutches he became a ferryman on the Osage River. And the man who told me the story said that there were seventy men living in that mountain community that had been led to Christ by this man. And his only opportunity to preach to them had come when he was ferrying them across the river. He had ten cents worth of opportunity and bought a million dollars worth of service. We have a million dollars worth of opportunity and so often we buy only ten cents worth of service.
"Help Thou mine unbelief." Here is the story of a father who came to the Master on behalf of his afflicted son. Jesus was away at the time, but the father appealed to the friends of Jesus. These friends bungled the job with the result that the father's faith was greatly weakened. Therefore when Jesus came upon the scene, the best that this father could say for his faith was that it was quite imperfect. "Lord, I believe," he sobbed, "help Thou mine unbelief." But by virtue of this imperfect faith, his boy was healed. God is constantly responding to our imperfect faith and using our imperfect lives. This is our greatest hope.

We thank Thee, Lord, that Thou dost receive sinners, and having saved them, dost use them in spite of their imperfections. So use us, we pray, in answer to our imperfect prayer. Amen.
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Amen.
"They could not." - Mark 9:18

"They could not." That is a depressing word. There are some texts that sing. This one soar. There are texts that breathe battle into us and send us out to fight where the victory is to the brave. But this tends to clip the thongs of our strength. It tends to leave us with a sense of weakness and fear. "They could not." That has a strange flavor of weakness, defeat, failure. It is a failure that is all the more tragic because the task that had been fumbled was so worthwhile. It is more tragic still, because it was a failure that was so needless. These disciples were miserably inadequate when they might have had a thrilling adequacy. They were shamefully defeated when they might have been splendidly victorious. Nothing could be sadder than that.

I.

Look at their big opportunity. In their community there was a certain home that was among the shadows. No doubt it was only one of many. The tragedy of this shattered home was the fact that it had in it a boy, an only son, who was the victim of some strange malady. His parents thought him demon-possessed. Perhaps he was an epileptic. But whatever his trouble, it was making a wreck of him. He was missing the best in life. The joy that his birth had brought had been changed into sorrow. Sadder, still, in spite of all that love could do for him, he was growing worse. As his father put it, as he told his story to Jesus, he was wasting away.

There are many shadowed homes among us today, and for reasons siblings akin to these we find in this story. Some inmate of the home is slowly wasting away. Not that they are physically ill. They are suffering from a worse malady. They are wasting away in their moral and spiritual lives. We suffer keenly when disease lays its destroying hand upon those we love, but if we have eyes to see, we suffer more keenly when sin takes them in its defiling fingers. There are those of us who have had to witness the slow a
spiritual death of some that we love. We have seen them grow more and more blind to the beautiful and best. We have seen them become more and more deaf to the voice that calls to the heights. We have seen them become less and less sensitive to the voice of the Spirit. This tragic spiritual death tells the story of the heartache of many a darkened home. It may tell the story of yours.

But this father was devoted to his son. He refused to lose him without a struggle. Therefore, when he heard of Jesus and of His amazing power to heal, he resolved he would give his afflicted ladbie a chance. And I like the way he went about it. He did not send him to Jesus by his mother. We fathers are exceedingly prone to toss all the religious responsibility for our children upon the shoulders of our wives. Neither did this man trust his child to the care of some faithful teacher. He took his need upon himself. He brought him to Jesus. Thank God for fathers like that! Some of us were thus blessed in our childhood. This is the reason we are here at this hour.

But, when this father reached the place where he expected to find the Master, He was not there. With three of His disciples, He had gone into the mountain to pray. But this should not have made any difference. For, if the Master Himself was not there, nine of His friends were. These friends had been commissioned by their Master to do the very kind of work that this father was calling upon them to do. Therefore, they faced the high privilege of giving this boy a chance, and thereby lifting the shadow from the hearts of those that loved him. In fact, there was no measuring the good they might have done through the saving of this one boy, for when we save a child we may save a home, we may help to save a community, a city, a world.

II.

But what did they do with this big opportunity? They bungled it. They threw it away. They failed this boy in his hour of desperate need. They failed this father. Worst of all, they failed and disappointed their Lord. When He came on the scene the best that He could say to them was, "O, faithless generation, how long shall I be with
you? How long shall I suffer you?" That word is hot with indignation and wet with tears.

There is only one bright spot in this story of failure, so far as the disciples are concerned. When they had failed, they had the courage and honesty to face the facts. They did not claim the victory when they knew that they had been defeated. They did not pretend that they had won when they had lost. Such failure is bad enough, God knows. But to pretend in the presence of miserable defeat that we have been really victorious, that is tragedy at its climax.

Not only did they face the fact that they had failed, but they grieved over it. They had the grace to take it to heart. There is hope for those who do that. One trouble with many of us is that we are not only failing, but we seem content to fail. We are not only failing pathetically short of what we know we ought to do, but we seem satisfied with ourselves. Few tragedies can be worse than that. To be in the far country by the swill trough is bad enough, but to become content to be there, to persuade ourselves that this is God's best for us, that is very hell.

Not only did they face the fact of failure, not only were they discontented with themselves because of their failure, but they sought a way out. They believed that their failure was needless. They hadn't allowed themselves to believe that God had no higher purpose in their lives than that they should be the humiliated and defeated blunderers that they had been. Therefore, at the very first opportunity, they went alone with Him and faced the facts in His presence. They asked Him a plain question, "Master, we had a big chance. Ours was an opportunity to save a boy and through him to save a home. It was our privilege to have worked an untold blessing, but we bumbled it. How did it come about? Why did we fail?"

III.

Why did they? Let us face the facts about them. Maybe it will help us to face the facts about ourselves.
First, they did not fail because of their indifference. When the father came with his afflicted son, the pathetic plight of the boy appealed to them. They were genuinely interested. They were in no sense indifferent to his needs. Of course, indifference accounts for the failure of vast multitudes today. I daresay it is the most damning sin in the Church at this hour, just plain indifference. Too many fail seriously to be touched by the needs of our broken world. Too often still, we shrug our shoulders and ask that blood-stained question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Meantime, our Lord continues to ask us, "Is it nothing to you, O, ye that pass by?"

You remember that rather strange word from the lips of the prophet Ezekiel. It tells how the Lord called to His side a man with an ink horn in his hand. He bade that man go through the city and to set a mark upon the foreheads of all those that sighed and cried for the abominations done in the midst thereof. That is, they were to mark the brows of the men and women that cared, the men and women that took upon themselves the wants and wounds of a world gone wrong. And the man with the ink horn did as he was commanded. Then, followed a second startling command. He was ordered to go through the streets and slay with a sword every one with an unmarked brow. It was the Prophet's way of telling us that indifference is a terrible something, more deadly than the sword.

But if these disciples did not fail because of their indifference, no more did they fail because of that which so often results from indifference—a lack of effort. When this father made his appeal to them, they were interested. They were so interested that they did their best to help. They went as far as they could in the energy of the flesh. That was good. Many of us do not try. Our indifference has paralyzed our effort. Why are there so many empty churches today? It is not because there are so few church members. They are very plentiful. It is not because these members cannot come. It is because they care so little that they are not willing to take the trouble to come.

It is just our unwillingness to give ourselves any serious trouble in the doing of the work of the Church that constitutes one of the major tragedies of this generation. Our ease in Zion has become with many only a stale and threadbare joke. We state it in
this fashion. Asked if we are Christians, we say, “Yes, but I am not working at it much.” And then we smile as if we had said something a bit smart. Yet I daresay the crap shooters tossing dice under the shadow of the cross, with the seamless garment of Jesus for the prize, were far less guilty than ourselves. Suppose the whole membership of the Church in America cared enough, and believed enough to declare their faith by being in their places of worship once a Sunday for a whole year, what would happen? I believe that even this much interest on our part would make it possible for God to bring about a genuine spiritual awakening. But so many are too spiritually lazy to give Him a chance.

This same spiritual laziness accounts also for the unreality of much of our religion. We wonder that we have such a vague sense of God. We wonder that the Lord should ever go to the cross to bring into human life a treasure as worthless as that which we possess. But what is the matter? We expect Him to give all, when we give nothing. We do not expect to succeed in business without an effort. We do not expect to become proficient in the commonplace matter such as playing bridge without giving it some time and thought. Yet we wonder that we do not get on in the supreme enterprise of living Christ-like lives when we allow it to cost us nothing at all. These disciples failed, it is true, but it was not because they were indifferent, nor because they did not try.

No more did they fail because their trying circumstances made success impossible. They were in a desperately hard situation. They were a small minority facing a big majority. This big majority was made up of those who were either hostile or indifferent. There were some, these scribes for instance, who were positively antagonistic. Of course, they made the task of these disciples more difficult. Then, there were a greater number who were simply indifferent. They were there as spectators and were not concerned at all. These were possibly more hurtful still. The church can always easily afford to be fought, but it can never afford to be ignored.

Then, the whole membership of this church was not present. Three of the lead-
ing members were away. Of course, they were away on the King’s business, but they were absent nonetheless. Every enterprise that this church undertakes, every enterprise that other churches undertake, it has to undertake with only a fraction of the membership participating. We are never unanimous about anything. Approximately only forty percent of our members ever attend church. Only twenty-five percent help to support it financially, only ten percent do any work. This is the record for the Church as a whole. What surer proof do we have that Christ is in the Church than that it can live under such conditions? But our Lord does not have to have every member of the church present and fighting to win a victory. Of course, He would win a greater victory if this were the case. But He can still win, if He only has a few on whom He can depend.

Then, another circumstance that made their situation trying was that the case of this boy seems to have been one that was especially difficult. No two individuals are exactly alike. No two churches are exactly alike. No two situations are exactly alike. There are places where it is harder to win than at others. But no man, and no group of men, need be defeated just because of the difficulty of their situation. The harder the situation, the greater His grace. For, His grace is always sufficient. Therefore, though these men were only a fraction of the group to which they belonged, though they were surrounded by an indifferent and antagonistic crowd, though the task that they were undertaking was peculiarly difficult, all this is not the real reason of their failure.

Why, then, did they fail? When Matthew tells the story, He has Jesus saying that their failure was due to their lack of faith. Faith is always the supreme essential. It is the mightiest force in the world. Without faith, the writer to the Hebrews tells us, it is impossible to please God. Without faith, it is impossible to do anything that is worth doing. Faith is a source of strength, regardless of the object to which it is directed. A man is vastly stronger for faith in himself. The story of the experiment of a certain psychologist has been often told. He took three soldiers and tested their strength by a gripping machine. Their average when they were normal was 129. He then
hypnotized them and told them that they were very weak, and their average was only about 30. He then told them that they were very strong, and their average went up to 141. That is, faith made them approximately five times as strong as they were without it. But if faith in ourselves adds to our strength, faith in God enables us to do the impossible.

Mark says that Jesus told them that their failure was due to lack of prayer. There is no conflict. Their lack of faith had made them prayerless. Their lack of prayer had further lessened their faith. Real prayer makes contact with God, and enables us to do the impossible. This, Jesus said repeatedly. He not only affirmed it; He proved it. He did it here.

Look at the story. "If Thou canst do anything," said this desperate father, "have mercy on us and help us." His faith has not grown through contact with the disciples of Jesus. It has become weaker. Much of the lack of faith that we find outside the Church is due to a lack of faith within the Church. I wonder if our altars would not be thronged by eager seekers, if the heedless world out yonder, with its desperate heart-hunger, were only convinced that we really believe what we claim to believe. Faith begets faith, and unbelief begets unbelief. This man was losing what little faith he had, and that by contact with the disciples of Jesus.

"If Thou canst do anything," he sobs, "have mercy on us and help us." By this he is saying, "I have done my best. If my boy is not cured, it will be through no fault of mine." But what has Jesus to say to this? "You have not done your best, is His reply. "You have not believed in Me yet. You have not done your best till you believe. You are putting the 'if' in the wrong place. It is not 'if I can,' it is 'if you can believe.'" "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." And the father, feeling this desperate weight of responsibility upon his shoulders, cries out with tears, "Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief." And the victory is won, as it is always won when we really trust in God.

Now, this is not theory with which we are dealing - this is fact. We, as these disciples of the long ago, are surrounded by multitudes, part of whom are hostile, most
of whom are indifferent. They do not fight us, they just ignore us. They do not know we exist. In our personal lives there is a wide-spread sense of disappointment and defeat. In the Church, there is too little of that sense of power and joy that comes with the assurance of an ever-growing victory. How are we to conquer? We are to do our best. But this is not enough. We cannot win in the energy of the flesh. "It is not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, sayeth the Lord." Therefore, let us take our place at the feet of Jesus with these chastened disciples of the long ago, and in so doing we shall learn that the way of victory for us as for them, is the way of prayer.
"WHY COUNT FOR SO LITTLE?"

Why could not we cast him out.

Mark 9:28

This is a very sane and practical question. I am quite sure that Jesus was used to hear such a question presented. I knew by it that these men were seeking to become and to do their best. "Why," they said "are we counting for so little?" Or to put it positive, "How can we count for more?" How can we get the very best out of ourselves?

I.

It is interesting to know why these friends of Jesus ask this question.

1. It was born of the sense of failure. They had just been confronted by a great need and also by a great opportunity. A father had come to them, bringing his afflicted boy. I have always had a keen appreciation for this father. He took the desperate sickness of his boy upon himself. He refused to stand from under and pass a responsibility that was his very own to another.

Therefore, when he sought healing for his son, he did so in person. But he was doomed to disappointment. The disciples were willing enough, but they were not able. "They could not." is the sad word that we read about them.

Their failure was a deeply tragic. The boy so greatly afflicted was
made no better by their efforts to help. The father, who had come so expectantly had his faith greatly weakened, if not shattered altogether. The indifferent crowd that might have been aroused had these disciples been successful remained in their indifference. The scornful scribes, who might have had their scorn turned to wonder and awe remained all the more scornful. The fight was lost, the failure was complete. They were a disappointment to others, a disappointment to their Master, and a disappointment to themselves.

But while the picture is black enough, there is some bit of brightness about it. For one thing, these disciples are clear-eyed enough to recognize the fact that they have failed. Sometimes we get so color blind that we cannot tell the difference between moral victory and defeat. Not only do they recognize their failure, but they frankly confess it. They do not claim to have won where they have lost. They do not claim that they have achieved the best possible when their Master won where they failed.

2. Not only do they recognize their complete failure, but they conclude that it was their own fault. They are sure that their failure was needless. They were confident that had they measured up to their possibilities they would have won. The situation was difficult it is true, the boy was in a bad way. They themselves were surrounded by an interfering crowd. But they cannot shut their eyes that their failure was due to some difficulties, but to some lack within themselves.

3. Not only are they honest enough to face the fact of failure and that failure was their own fault. But they care enough to grieve over it. They do not take their failure lightly. They do not take it so lightly that they are willing to go on failing. Had they taken this course they would have been hopeless. To be useless is bad, but to be content with our uselessness is worse still. For the Prodigal to leave home and end in the hog pen is bad. But if the day should ever come that he should be content with the hog pen, they that would
sound the death-knell of all his possibilities. These men were grieved over the failure; therefore, they come with this question.

Not only is this question born of failure that was needless and grievous, but it was also born of faith. When the Master had come down from the mountain, he took the situation in hand. He did what they had failed to do with such noise and serenity and consummate ease that it filled them with joy and wonder. But it was haunted then with the high conviction that they could win in somewhat the same fashion.

It is said that a brilliant young artist stood years ago gazing upon a wonderful picture by Titian. He stood in awed amazement and adoration, marveling at how this great master artist spilled out his dream upon the canvas. But there was something in that picture that spoke home to his own heart. There was something in it that whispered to him of his own possibilities. Therefore, as he gazed, he whispered under his breath: "I, too Titian, I too am a painter." And he went forth from that scene to realize his possibilities. So as these men looked at Jesus they said: "We too can be like These, and thus make the best out of our lives." Therefore, believing such possible they asked this question: "Why cannot we?"

II.

Now in asking this question they were asking a question of vast importance. It was so for them; it is so for ourselves. There cannot possibly be a more important question for us this evening than just this: "How can we, how can you and I make the best out of ourselves?"

1. This question is of the utmost importance for us as individuals. It is the roadway to our highest happiness and usefulness. You have a self in your hands. There is no escaping from it. What is so important, therefore, as
seeking to make the best out of it.

It is important because it is only as we seek to do this that we can find a unified personality. If I take the low road, my lower self may be gratified. But my better self will give me no peace. These two selves will begin to quarrel and fight and make each other miserable just as do some husbands and wives. H. G. Wells speaks of one of his characters as being not so much a personality as a civil war. Paul felt this defeat so keenly that it tortured him until he cried, "O wretched man that I am who should deliver me?"

Now Paul found forgiveness, he found it as you and I might find it, by realizing his best possibilities as he did through Jesus Christ. It has been well said, "that no man can be as bad as he wants to be." That is, no man ever has, or ever will, there are always higher voices that disturb us. No one can find the real joy of living except as he seeks day by day to become his best.

2. But this question is not only of importance to ourselves individually. It is of importance to others. There are times when we think a discussion of this kind is too small. When there are so many big problems national and international. Why give our attention to one so small as the problem of the individual? For the simple reason that what touches the individual touches the world. It has been well said that we cannot be interested in anybody without being interested in everybody.

What you do with yourself is certainly of interest to those who live with you. It is of deepest and permanent interest to your father and mother. It is of possibly deeper interest still to your children. How much it will mean to your boy for you to make the best of yourself. How tragic if you make the worst. A father was killed the other day accidentally. When the message reached his home, a boy of twelve threw his arms around his mother saying "Mother aren't you glad?" That father's contribution had been one of heartache.

Not only is our answer to this question of importance to those near to us, it is of importance to everybody. This is true because all our lives touch each
It is true also because the only way to build the best possible world is to build it out of the best possible humans. When every man and woman realizes this, any other good the Kingdom of God shall have come in. So in seeking the answer to this question, we are disguising a problem that is of utmost importance to the individual and to the wide world.

III.

What is the answer?

We can get some light on it by asking why those friends of Jesus had failed. Maybe they failed for the same reason that we are failing. Why then have they failed?

1. It was not because they were indifferent to the appeal of the matter of the box. There are those who are doing little or nothing for the world today because they have ceased to care. There are those who say amidst the high opportunities and the appalling needs of our modern life and seem entirely indifferent. They have no sense of bearing their burden. They tearful cry of the prophet, "Is it nothing to you?" never has arrested them. These disciples cared.

2. No more did they fail because they did not try. When this opportunity for service came their way, they sought earnestly to take advantage of it. They really worked at it. They did the best that they knew. They were not willing to be useless any more than you and I. All of us at our heart want to be useful.

All of us must sing at times:

"Make use of me, my God
Let me not be forgotten
A broken vessel cast aside
One whom Thou needs not?"

"All things do serve Thee here
All creatures great and small"
Make use of me. Of me, my God.
The means of them all.

These men so desired to be useful that they worked at the task with all their might.

No more did these fail because circumstances were against them. Of course, they were. We seldom face a situation where all the circumstances are in our favor. From this occasion, some of their strongest friends were not present. Some of their bitterest enemies were present. They too, they saw their Master succeed where they failed. Therefore, they could not lay their failure upon circumstances.

But then, I repeat, did they fail? Jesus gave the answer. They failed because they refused to avail themselves of the resources that were at their disposal. That was the reason that they were to blame. We are held responsible, not simply for what we can do in our own strength, we are held responsible for what we can do in our own strength plus our resources that are available for us. The failure, therefore was a needless failure. They might have succeeded if they had met the condition by using their available resources.

Now we can realize the importance of this in our everyday affairs. The difference between our present world and that of the cave men does not grow out of the fact that ours is a vastly different world from his. Electricity was just as willing to light his cave as to light our homes. Coal was just as willing to warm him. The other waves were just as willing to carry his messages. But he did not know how to use the resources that were at his disposal. We might know how to use them and yet refuse to do so. It would be possible for a man to live today in his primitive fashion as the cave men. But he would be greatly handicapped.

For instance, the other night I desired to speak to my brother who was in
But if we should lose much by failing to avail much of our material resources, we must even more by failing to avail ourselves of our spiritual resources. How shall we come to our best religiously? Many are seeking the answer to that question because many are disappointed. “I used to think,” a friend said the other day, “that if I should ever become a Christian, I would be the right kind of Christian.” But she said sadly, “I find that I am about like the rest of them.” She was not bitter; she was just disappointed. She felt that she was a bit of a failure. Why? If we may believe our Lord, if we may believe the choicest of the saints, she was failing because she did not avail herself of her resources.

IV.

Now what are these resources? I can mention them only in the briefest fashion.

1. If you are in earnest about becoming your best, you ought to avail yourself of the resources that are found in the best literature: “Reading makes a full man,” Bacon said. Read the best religious books. You can sit down alone and have Isaiah and Jeremiah and Paul and Jesus talk to you, if you will.

When Paul was in prison, he wrote a letter to his son Timothy: “Dear Timothee, he said, “It is bitter cold in this prison cell. To make matters worse, I find that I have forgotten my coat, and left it in the house of Carpus.” When you
come, bring it with you." But he added perhaps thinking that Timothy would have too much baggage. "If you come, bring my cloak and books. Leave out the cloak, if you are over-loaded and bring the books. I can afford to be cold, but I cannot afford to be without my books." Thus speaks one of the greatest things in the maturest sense of the centuries.

2. If you are going to realize your best, you must do that in the fellowship of the best people you know. A brother got angry with his pastor a few years ago. When visited the other day, he declared he was still a Christian. He just stayed at home and read the Bible himself. But the New Testament knows of no such Christian. If you are a real Christian, you must be one in fellowship with others. You cannot realize your best apart from your fellows. As you live and work with others, you come to your highest possibilities as says the Bible, so says modern psychology.

3. Finally, if you are to come to your best, you must claim the resources that are for you in God. No man can be his best without him. No man can do his best without him. "Apart from me," says Jesus, "you can do nothing." That is scripture, that is also experience. Just as the light cannot shine without the lamp, so we cannot be the light of the world without God. To undertake to build a new life or a new world in your own strength is to end in disappointment.

But if we really avail ourselves of the infinite resources that are in our Lord, we cannot fail. Paul speaks out of his own experience. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." But this, the Apostle does not mean that through Christ he could paint like a Turner or dine like a Caruso. He does mean this: that through Christ he can realize God's purpose in his life. We may not do all that we should like to do, but we can through Christ do all that we would mean us do, and that is life at its best.

Are you asking to avail yourselves of these resources? Jesus answered by prayer. By this, he does not mean that we can coax God into doing for us what
he does not desire to do. The prayer that Jesus meant is a prayer that does not
heed our way, but makes us willing to go His. It is a prayer that lifts
the blind so that our darkest souls may be flavored with His light. It is a
prayer that is a receiving from God what he is so infinitely eager to give. Even
too he is bending very wistfully toward each one of us. He is holding out his
eager hands saying, "Receive ye! If we will accept, there will come to us a grow-
ability to be our best.

I read sometime ago of a certain athlete who was the hope and hero of his
team. But before the biggest game of the year this hero began to break his
training rules. He began to do forbidden things. He began to refuse those
wholesome rules that were necessary to bring him to his best. A night immediately
preceding the game, he went on a debauch. The next day in the most critical
stants of the game, he broke. His failure lost his team the game. It came to be
known in the halls in his university that it was the game lost because he was not
fit. What game will be won in the soul of the individual, in the home, in the
church, in the world, within coming days, because you and I are fit. These will
be many if we avail ourselves of the infinite resources that are in our God.
Here is the story of one of the most charming personalities that we meet on the pages of the New Testament. Of all the men with whom Jesus dealt in his earthly ministry, it would be hard to find one more promising than this man. Yet we read of him this tragic sentence. "He went away." One day he came into the immediate presence of Jesus but he did not remain there. He did not become his follower. He went away. This he did of his own choice. Certain tragic circumstances did not drive him away. Jesus did not put his hands on his two youthful shoulders. The Master did not read the book of his yesterdays and find soiled pages which made discipleship for him impossible. But the man himself, holding his destiny in his own hands, having the power of choice, turned on his heels and went away. Surely this is the tragedy of a soul. "If it is hard to find a man in his youth, why? Is it because he is not worth finding?"

He went away. In spite of many fine qualities.

1. He is known as the Rich Young Ruler. He was possessed of material wealth. Sometimes we pretend to dispise money but Jesus never did. The man who belittles money is likely to be the man who has never known want. Money is power. Money is condensed energy. Money is canned sweat. Money is a handle by which we can open the door of opportunity to our fellows. It is a great power and therefore, a great responsibility. This man was rich.

2. In addition to material wealth, he was young. He was brushing the dewey flower of life's morning. Now no one is further than I from looking upon youth as the only time of life that is really worth living. In spite of all the fundamental rot that we talk about childhood and youth, it has never been in my heart to sing "Backward, turn backward, O time in your flight". To say that youth has everything and middle life and old age have nothing is to say
what is utterly false.

Yet it is a privilege to be young.

"How beautiful is youth, how bright it gleams
With its illusions, aspirations, dreams.
Book of beginnings, story without end
Each maid a heroine, each man a friend."

One beauty of youth is that it has not yet squandered its treasure. You who are close to the morning time have a whole life to give to God and man. That is worth considering. Bear in mind always that God can do more with the whole of life than he can do with a mere fraction of it. He was a young man. Then he was a ruler. That doesn't mean that he was head of a state. It doesn't mean that he wore a crown or that he exercised kingly authority. It does mean that he belonged to the highest court of the land. He was a member of the Sanhedran. That gave him both political and social prestige. He was a member of the select four hundred. Thus rich and young and of the highest social position, he was possessed of the very treasures that most people intensely desire.

2. But though possessed of all this wealth, he was not satisfied. He was too fine to be contented with mere things. There was about him a noble restlessness. He was in love with Life. He wanted life that was good today, that would be good tomorrow, that would be good through eternity.

3. He was so eager for this something that he called Life that he was willing to do something about it. Oftentimes we wish for certain values but are unwilling to bestir ourselves in order to win those values. When one came his way who claimed to have life at his very finger tips, he was not contented to sit quietly in his palace and wish to meet this amazing man. He was not satisfied merely to dream. He put forth a real effort to make his dream come true.

When my brother and I were in Webb School years ago Old Sawney told us
about a visit he had made to the top of Pike's Peak. There was no cog road going up to the summit at that time. Those who ascended had to ride in a carriage or on a不要. In looking about for a conveyance, he found a carriage that had this motto written over it, "Pike's Peak or bust". I took that carriage because I wanted to be sure to get there.

A few years later my brother and I were visiting Colorado. The day after our arrival we decided to climb Pike's Peak. It was a terrible ordeal. When I would fall behind my brother would say, "Pike's Peak or bust". Than I would speed up until he fell behind, then I would shout, "Pike's Peak or burst". You will never know how nearly it came to being that latter.

Here and there along the road we would meet climbers who were returning. "Have you been to the top?" we would ask. "No," they would answer. We are going to try again tomorrow." More than once we came nearly to giving it up. But as we were on the point of turning back, we would look once more to the heights and something would say to us, "You haven't seen the best yet." So we kept on climbing until we reached the summit. This young ruler had had a glimpse of the best. He was so wooed by that best that he did something about it. He actually ran to fall at the feet of Jesus and asked him this question, "What good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

The fact that he ran indicated earnestness, genuine enthusiasm. We are often ashamed to be in earnest about things that really matter. Of course, to grow enthusiastic over a baseball game or some other amusement is perfectly all right, but to get enthusiastic about eternal life is a bit fanatical. But this young man was not afraid to be in earnest about the best. Earnestness is beautiful in many good causes. Without it nobody is ever interested. But enthusiasm for the highest is supremely beautiful.

Not only was he enthusiastic/in earnest, he was courageous. He had
courage of the highest type. He dared to run down the road and kneel at the feet of Jesus in the people's gaze. This he did in spite of the fact that the men of his class had turned against Jesus and were already plotting his death. This he did in spite of the fact that he himself belonged to the nobility and the man at whose feet he kneeled was only a peasant. He was rich and this carpenter was penniless.

Not only did he run to kneel at the feet of Jesus, he ran alone. It is easy to run with the crowd. It is easy to do what everybody else is doing. But to stand alone, to kneel when nobody else is kneeling, to pray when nobody else is praying, that takes courage. That takes courage of the highest type, moral courage. Many a man who could face the enemy in battle without flinching would turn coward in the presence of those who do not share his convictions.

4. This young man was reverent. He was a young man of prayer. He knew how to bend the knee. I think more people today are coming to believe in the reality and worth of prayer than perhaps in any other day. Life has grown so hard and dismal that they have been driven to prayer. They have to have help and they have found that nobody can really help but God. This young man could still reverently bow in prayer.

5. Finally, he was clean. When Jesus put to him the moral laws, he could say,"All these things have I obeyed from my youth." Of course, he had not killed anybody. He had not gone about stealing whatever he could put his hands on. He had not even been bearing false witness and thus stealing reputations. But though a young man he had kept morally clean. He had not ventured on any wild oat sowing. In a day when laxity was expected even as it is in our day, he had kept himself without spot.

Here, then, is a young man at his charming best. A man of fine ideals, a man who refused to be content with anything less than the best, a man who was
willing to do something in order to realize his dreams, a man who was courageous and reverent and clean. No wonder it is said that Jesus loved him. He loved him with the love of approval. He was so full of charm, so full of promise, and yet he went away.

He went away in spite of his deep needs. He was possessed of many a treasure but he did not have the supreme treasure. What had he missed?

1. He had missed life. I stood years ago by a baby's bed in which lay a little girl who was suffering from brain fever. By and by I saw one little hand rise up and touch her forehead and fall limp at her side. I saw the father and mother bury their faces in their hands and sob. And yet the little girl looked very much as she did a moment ago. The hair was just as sunny, the hands just as shapely. Yet I had to say, "Bessie, darling, one thing thou lackest. What you lack is life."

What this man lacked was spiritual life. Who said so? The young man himself. When he came and knelt at the feet of Jesus he asked this question, "What lack I yet? What is the matter with me? Why have I not arrived? Why not am I living abundantly? How have I missed the trail?" "There is something missing in my life," he said.

What did Jesus answer? He did not tell him that he was morbid. He did not tell him that he was too introspective. He did not tell him to go away and forget about it. Had he done so the young man would have known that he was not able to meet his need. "Yes," said Jesus. "There is something wrong with you. One thing thou lacketh." One thing. That one thing was not courage and decency. It was not even religion. It was life.

Then the Master told him how he might find the treasure that he had missed. "Go thy way," he said. "Sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor and thou shall have treasure in Heaven, and come and follow me."
man understood the conditions fully.

Look at the picture. There he is, all eagerness, upon his knees, looking into the face of Jesus. "How am I going to get hold of eternal life?" Jesus gives a plain answer. "Part with the old life. Come and take up the new." And the light goes out of his face. He rises slowly to his feet, turns his back on the Master and goes away. I can imagine that I am a close friend of this princely young chap. I meet him a few months later as with lagging steps and downcast face he is starting back to his palace. "Where have you been?" I ask him. "I have been down to see the prophet from Nazareth." "Why did you go to see him?" "I wanted eternal life and he claimed to have the power to give it." "Well, did he tell you how you might have it?" "Yes." "Did you follow his direction and claim it?" "No." "Why didn't you?" "It costs too much." Not being willing to pay the price he went away.

III

He went away in spite of the high cost of his going away. We are accustomed to speak of forsaking all to follow Jesus as sacrifice; we are accustomed also to speak of turning your back on Jesus to live your own life as self-indulgence. That means that to the average man being a Christian is very costly, while the rejection of Jesus Christ costs nothing at all. Now that is about the greatest falsehood ever told. When the devil got across that lie he made his master stroke.

1. It does cost something to be a Christian. For me to stand here and tell you that you can be a Christian on your own terms would be to speak/utter falsehood. The terms that Jesus set for this young man were not easy. The Master, seeing the central love of his life, seeing that while he was deeply interested in becoming a Christian he was yet more interested in his possessions, called upon him to renounce those possessions, not in any arbitrary fashion but because
in the nature of things, he could not become a Christian in any other way.
Christ must occupy first place or he has no place at all.

2. But what we forget is the high cost of not being a Christian. If it costs something to deny your lower self, it costs infinitely more to deny your higher self. "Take what you want," says God, according to an old Spanish proverb, "take what you want and pay for it." That is a law of life. In some kind of coin we must pay for everything we get, whether good or bad.

I am thinking of two young men, both meeting in a definite and sharp temptation, the appeal of the sex. One took the way of immediate satisfaction. He contracted a social disease from which he thought himself cured. By and by, having married a woman to whom he was deeply devoted, he discovered his mistake. She became an invalid and the children for whom they both longed never came. This other young man who was beautifully moral, faced the same temptation but said, "I am not going to allow anything to rob me of the privilege of giving what I demand on my wedding day." Both denied themselves, but the latter, as he faced the call that comes to every man, said "It cost too much." And here were two fathers. A small boy said to one of these fathers, "Is God as nice as you are?" "Why, ever so much nicer," the father answered. "Gee," said the lad, "he must be awful nice." The other father said, "I can drink when I please regardless of my children." And two of those children were hurt today and the third is dead. You have to deny one self or the other.

Here are two men that meet us on the pages of the New Testament. One is this rich young ruler. He might have been a great saint. He might have been a mighty preacher of the gospel. But he said, "It cost too much." Therefore, he went back to what had not satisfied in the past and could satisfy still less in the future. Had you visited him in his palatial home and congratulated him...
on his luxurious living, he would have said, "Yes, it ought to be mighty good. It cost me the privilege of knowing Jesus."

The other man was Paul. When Paul stood face to face with Jesus he tells us his that he was not disobedient to the Heavenly vision. He turns/back on the old life. He suffered the loss of all things. Both these men practiced self-denial. One denied himself of having his own way. The other denied himself of living within the will of God. Which one lived the more richly, not in some kind of heaven, but in the life that now is?

Here then is the plain truth. Some form of self-denial you are going to practice. That is the way life is made to work. You can sell life for a mess of pottage and get immediate satisfaction. In fact, that is the secret of the power of temptation, that it offers what you want immediately. But if you indulge that self, you miss the highest.

On the other hand, if you say no to your lower self, if you really put God in the center of your life, if you seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, you will find the highest self-indulgence. God never allows us in have his debt. Really to be a Christian is to have the best in the life that now is, as well as that which is to come. That best our Lord can give us if we follow him, but he is powerless to help if we go away.

Near to Shore. Why not keep some money? Can't too much.
THE FATAL CHOICE

"He went away."
—Mark 10:22

This is a story of a splendid young chap who one day hurried all enthusiasm to kneel at the feet of Jesus. He was in quest of life. He wanted life that would satisfy today and tomorrow and through eternity. But when Jesus told him the way that life could be his, instead of claiming it, we read of him this tragic sentence: "He went away." Not that Jesus drove him away! Not that the Master put His hands on his two shoulders, turned him about and pushed him away! Not that he read the book of his yesterday and saw in it soiled pages that made discipleship for him impossible! But this young man, standing at the forks of the road, having the power of choice, turned from the presence of Jesus and went away.

It would be impossible to overstate the tragedy of that choice. Of all the men who came to Jesus during the days of His flesh, few if any were so full of promise as this man. He seems to have had almost every treasure in his hands and heart. He had so much to give, yet he gave so little! He had such marvelous opportunities, but so far as his story goes he flung them away as worthless nothings! What a tragedy to have so much and to make so little out of it! What ruined him was his fatal choice. "He went away."

I

Who was this man? The Scriptures leave him nameless. Some have speculated that he was young Saul of Tarsus. That is an interesting speculation, but personally I see no evidence of its truthfulness. The record, I repeat, leaves him nameless. Therefore, we have given him a name. We call him the rich young ruler. The name itself is suggestive. It hints at some of the rich resources of this
disappointing man. Look at these resources a bit more closely.

1. He was rich. All three of the evangelists emphasize the fact that he had great possessions. That means that he had great possibilities for service. It means also that he had great temptations. The Bible never minimizes money. It recognizes it always as a power, a great power for good if rightly used, a great power for evil if used wrongly. Money is a marvelous servant, but a ruinous and damming master. This young man who came to interview Jesus was a man of great wealth. He was, therefore, a man who might have opened the doors of opportunity to thousands through that wealth if he had only dedicated it to the Master.

2. He was a ruler. This does not mean that he held any political office. He belonged to the court of the Sanhedrin. He was an aristocrat, a Pharisee. He belonged to that class that with few exceptions constantly opposed Jesus and was influential in His crucifixion. As a patrician blue-blood, he had influence—he had much to give. He might have been useful beyond the ordinary if he had dared to become a Christian.

3. He was young. That was a tremendous asset. By this I am not taking the position so often taken that childhood and youth hold all the joys that life brings. Only this week I heard a gentleman reading a poem over the radio. The purport of this poem was that, having passed through the days of childhood and youth, nothing was left that is worth having. Generally speaking, that is sheer sentimental rot. I do not recall any time in my childhood that I lived as richly as I am living now. The beauty about this man's youth was that he had a whole life to give to the Master. It is fine to become a Christian at any time. It is magnificent to give the last poor inch of life's dying candle to your Lord if that is all that is left to you. But how much better to give a whole life with its fine hopes and possibilities!

"How beautiful is youth, how bright it gleams
With its illusions, aspirations, dreams,
Book of beginnings, story without end,
Each maid a heroine and each man a friend."

He was a young man.
4. Better still he was not satisfied with these splendid assets. He might have lost himself in a round of pleasure. He might have in a measure forgotten his high hungers in the squandering of his wealth. But he had glimpsed in the face of Jesus something that made him restless and heart-hungry. Having seen the best, he could be satisfied with nothing less. When I was a student at Webb School old Sawney told of visiting Colorado. He decided to go up on Pike's Peak. The cog road was not built at that time. There was no way to get there except to walk, to ride a burro, or go in some sort of conveyance. In looking about for a conveyance, he fixed on one that had across its sides this ambitious motto—"Pike's Peak or bust."

A few years later my brother and I went out to spend a few weeks in Colorado. The day after our arrival, we set out to climb Pike's Peak. It was a terrible undertaking and we encouraged each other by the motto of our old teacher—"Pike's Peak or bust." When I would fall behind, my brother would look around and say, "Pike's Peak or bust!" And I would spur up a bit. When he would fall behind, I would administer the same stimulant—"Pike's Peak or bust!" You will never know how near it came to being the latter. Now and then we would meet folks coming down. They would tell us that they had not been to the top—they had already seen enough and were going back. But when we were tempted to turn, we would look again to the heights and that shimmering peak would say, "You have not seen the best yet," and so we would continue the journey. This young man was hungry for the best.

5. Then he was possessed of a fine courage. He had a brave and gallant heart. When I met him as he came out of his palace one day with a face that was one gaunt wistfulness, I said, "What is the matter?" "I want life," he said, "life that will be good now and good when youth is gone, good when the world has vanished!" "I am sorry," I replied, "but I cannot do anything for you further than to say that a young Man passed down the road just now who claimed to have life at His very finger tips. In fact, he casts a spell over people, the spell of a Man who is alive."

Then what? This young aristocrat set out all haste in pursuit. He overtook
the Master, and there with the eyes of others upon him, he knelt in the presence of Jesus. That took courage. Remember that not a man of his class was daring openly to confess Christ at this time. Remember he was an aristocrat and Jesus a Man of the people. He was a man of the schools but Jesus had no diploma. He was rich while Jesus was poor. His hands were the tender hands of a patrician; the hands of Jesus were the hands of a day laborer. Yet this daring man knelt before the Carpenter.

6. Not only did he have courage, but he had a beautiful enthusiasm. The story says that he ran. He was all eagerness. That is very beautiful. The Orient moves at a pace that is far more leisurely than ours. People do not run often there. Yet this young nobleman gathered his Oriental robes about him and actually ran to kneel at the Master's feet. Enthusiasm is always beautiful, but it is doubly beautiful when it is enthusiasm for the best.

7. Finally he was morally clean and religious. When Jesus put to him the moral law, "Thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, defraud not, honor thy father and mother," this young man answered, "All these have I observed from my youth." He was religious and took his religion seriously. He was clean. He had not sowed any wild oats. He had kept himself without spot.

In making this high claim, you are not to think of him as self-deceived or as hypocritical. He was telling sober truth. Had such not been the case, Jesus would not have responded as He did. When the young man said, "All these have I observed from my youth," what was the response of Jesus? He did not rebuke him. Instead His heart went out to him. "Then Jesus beholding him loved him." No wonder—he was so lovable! Don't let it shock you that Jesus loved this young man in a peculiar fashion. He loves all of us with an everlasting love, but since it is better to be clean than unclean, honest than dishonest, Jesus can love the clean with a love of approval that he cannot give so fully to the unclean. Looking thus at this splendid young man, we feel that he has almost everything. We hardly see
how he could be improved upon. What a magnificent creature he is! We should be glad to have him as our friend. We should be glad to receive him into the church. We should be glad to put him on the official board. We should be glad to introduce him to our son or to our daughter. In every way he is a choice young man. But though he possesses so much, he does not really possess everything. There is something wrong with him.

II

What is wrong? Who said there was anything wrong? To answer the latter question first, we have two most credible witnesses. The first one is the young man himself. What question did he ask as he looked so eagerly into the face of Jesus? This was the question, "What lack I yet? What is wrong with me? How have I missed the trail?" Jesus did not tell him that he had not missed it at all. He did not tell him that he was morbid, that he was an introvert, that he spent too much time digging about in his own inner life. Instead he agreed with this princely chap. Yes, he lacked something. It is hard to argue against these two. The young man and the Master agree that there is something wrong! What did he lack? He did not lack honesty and decency. He did not lack earnestness. He lacked what he said he lacked—he lacked life. He lacked that priceless something that Jesus came to give—life abundant. The reason he lacked it was that he lacked God. He was serious-minded, genuinely earnest, beautifully clean, but he had not found God. He seemed to have found almost everything else, but lacking God he lacked everything that eternally counts.

Now it strikes me that this young man was close akin to multitudes that we have in our churches today. Many of them are in the pew, some are on the Official Board, some are in the pulpit, some teach Sunday School classes. They are earnest, upright, religious, but without a sense of God. They have a form of Godliness, sometimes an attractive and appealing form. But somehow the power, the reality, is not there.
What does Jesus have to say to all such? What did He have to say to this young man? He told him how to find what he lacked. He answered his question frankly and fully. What did He tell him? It sounds very drastic. It is drastic. If you don't think so, it is because you are looking at it across the far spaces of the years. If you bring it for yourself up to the here and now, you will see how drastic it is. Listen: "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast—your houses, your lands, the inheritance that has come to you from your fathers, those large interests that make you a financial power among men. Go sell them all. Having sold them, do not put the money in the bank. Give it all away, then come empty-handed, and follow me."

That is drastic enough, isn't it? A friend accused me sometime ago of trying to perform a major operation without resorting to an incision. Perhaps he was right, but Jesus never made any such mistake. He made the conditions drastic here because it was necessary. This young man could live under no other conditions. Jesus put his finger on the fatal disease from which he was suffering—that was love of money. Things were bigger with him than all else. They were bigger than God. Therefore, he had to break with things, or he could not find God.

But why, you are ready to answer, was Jesus so much more drastic with him than with others? He was not. All Jesus was asking from this man was that he put first things first. He was asking what is at once the minimum and maximum for all of us. That is for surrender, for the dedication of our lives to Him. He is asking us to say in our heart of hearts, "Not my will but Thine be done." Any man who says that is saved regardless of the blackness of his yesterdays. The man who refuses to say that cannot be saved, however beautiful his yesterdays and today. God has no plan of salvation for an unsurrendered heart.

What response did this choice young man make? He did not shake his head in
bewilderment and say, "I have no head for religion. The demands of God are too perplexing." He understood fully and clearly what he ought to do. He understood the surrender that must be made. He had the promise of the reward that was to follow. But facing these facts, he clung to his wealth and threw life away. Look at the picture. There he kneels in the presence of Jesus, his face one eager wistfulness. "Go," said Jesus, "part with the old life. Come to the new." Then the light fades out of his eyes, and the eagerness vanishes from his face. He rises slowly to his feet and turns away. It is unspeakably tragic. I have felt that, had I been there, I should like to have run after him and seized him by the arm and to have said to him, "Old fellow, you are a million miles ahead of me in many respects. Don't make this tragic choice. You are throwing away your best chance for time and eternity."

But he went away. Where did he go? Back to the palace. Back to his wealth, back to the old life with its dissatisfactions, back to his heart hunger that became more gnawing, back to his burning thirsts that became more torturing! By and by he went away from his youth. By and by he went away from his wealth. His hands have been empty of the treasures for which he bartered his Christ for nineteen hundred years.

Now this question. Did this young man find what he sought? In the language of our fathers, "Was he saved?" Had I been his friend and met him the next day I might have said, "Congratulations, old chap! The last time I saw you, you were on your knees before the Master. You were asking how to find life and He, all eager tenderness, was telling you. Let me congratulate you on your finding what you so eagerly desired." But he answered, "I did not find it. I went away." No, God Himself cannot give us what we will not have. Tonight you and I take our places in the presence of that same Christ at whose feet this choice young man knelt. He had his chance and missed it. We have ours. Let us remember, as we tarry there for a moment, that his need is ours. The conditions for him are the conditions for ourselves. "Follow me," says this same Christ. If wholeheartedly
we follow him, we live. If we go away, we go not toward life but toward death.
inspired, "all scripture is inspired of God". (2 Tim. 3:16)

Now having read this Revised Standard Version suppose one were to put into our hands for the first time the King James version, what new doctrine would it give us, what fresh? None at all in my opinion. As the new takes nothing in the way of doctrine from the old, so the old would add nothing to the new. We should simply find ourselves with a book of wondrous beauty, but a little more difficult to understand.

IV.

In thus praising the Revised Standard Version I am not claiming that it is perfect. I am sure better translations are yet to be made. I am not even asserting that I intend to cease to read every passage that has been left in the footnotes. For instance, I am not going to surrender that priceless story of the women taken in adultery (John 8:1-11) I think the scholars are right in affirming that they do not know where it belongs. Certainly I do not, yet I still believe that it does belong. The conduct of the scribes, Pharisees, and the women is too consistent. Then having witnessed the reaction of Jesus, I feel sure that this is just what he would have done. But I am equally sure that there was no genius of that day who could have imagined such conduct before it took place. Therefore I feel that this is the most readable translation yet made. I believe it is going to be read by many who have heretofore have neglected the Bible. If the present rate of sales keeps up, almost three million copies will be sold the first year. If this new translation does result in a wider
Jack: Something’s wrong.

Jane: There is a man with whom I was once engaged. He is not a handsome man, an entitled, he is not engaging. In a sense of your act.

Jack: Not at all, down, he is not just looking at the thing. He is not for any great institution. He is an honest man, and there is something lacking. That is in the best mind of the man, he is not well. I mean, regarding that. There meaning can

Jack: Then he is a little in this... Stay there and wait...

I: What have you been in... really... I'm not sure of what you're saying.

1. Rich, valuable, same, in touch, to
2. Read, in here, in picture, the many, you can
3. Young, not once, to win, will be
4. For people to see in the course of the
5. Biggest fact, time, time, honest, must try
6. Eager learning
7. Courage to have, that never changes

IT: List of had he never said
1. Not high he gives, in it
2. hit the way and comes in, to be of honor
3. Fire: God, he tells you and... hold
4. You on fire, he always learning
5. His last parties there in the course of the
6. The way to take in: Take to and…

IT: The way to take in: Take to and...
1. In same, same, forever, and
2. Doubles - I saw, that is the one second, with the forever, going the weight, time, space.
3. And that time said the way, through that baby
4. That was not a word, to the first... how to do it with
5. He was wrong, because all... If you knowing
6. In place the us...

IT: He doesn’t know, in at the school of, a.
1. He can’t, you know, in her own judgment
2. He made away - church, come to in one decision.
3. Did you not - there is last time I saw you, in a
4. Did you, you would be why, I?
5. In the way, everyone's, with we...
"He went away." This brief sentence contains the tragedy of a soul. Here is one of the most promising and charming young men that we meet upon the pages of the Bible. He seems to possess everything. And yet, read about him this tragic sentence: "He went away." That does not mean that circumstances too strong for him compelled him to go away. It does not mean that Jesus put his hands on his two youthful shoulders and turned him about and pushed him away. It does not mean that he saw the book of yesterdays that he had written and saw that there were soiled pages in it that made discipleship impossible. But this splendid young man standing at the forks of the road, holding his destiny in his own hands even as you and I, turned from the very presence of Jesus and went away.

I

Look at the rich treasure that this young man brought to this interview with Jesus.

First, he is known as the rich young ruler. That is, he was possessed of wealth. Now, wealth in itself is not of necessity a blessing. It may be changed into a curse. As any other power it is neither moral nor immoral; it is non-moral. Gravity may be a blessing, or it may crush and break every bone in your body if you relate yourself to it in the wrong way. Electricity may be a most useful servant, or if you misuse it, it may burn you to a cinder. Wealth is a source of power. It may be a means of endless good, or it may bind you, even though it is a golden chain, as if the chain was made of rusty steel. This man was rich. That is, he had a great capacity to serve if he would only consecrate his wealth to the highest.

Second, it says that he was a ruler. That does not mean that he was the head of any government. It does mean that he belonged to the highest court of his day. He was a member of the court of the Sanhedrin. He was a blueblood, an aristocrat. He was possessed of high social position. That, alone with his money, increased his capacity to help if he desired to help. It increased his capacity to hurt if he should take the wrong direction.

He was a man of wealth and a man of the highest social position.

Then, he was young. Now, I am not speaking of one who overrates youth. It is a tragic absurdity that so many people assume that childhood and youth are the only parts of life that are really worth living. Now, that is frankly false. I think
I had a normal childhood and youth, but I do not hesitate to say that I am finding life far richer right at this moment when I am three-score and ten than I found it in the days of my youth. I do not believe that our Lord intended that life should begin as a climax and end in an anti-climax. When all our joy is in youth and none in old age, it means that we have misused our youth. Life ought to move to a majestic climax. The young stream frets and roars and laughs toward its source, but as it comes to the sea, it ought to become more placid and more deep and more capable of carrying in its arms the commerce of the world. He was a young man.

Second

2. But in spite of this rich treasure, he was not satisfied with life as he was living it. He could not be satisfied with mere things. No more can you. What did he want? He wanted eternal life. He wanted life that would satisfy the need of today. He wanted life that would satisfy tomorrow. He wanted life that would satisfy when the last feather of the raven's wing had fallen from his hair and when the last petal of the rose had dropped from his cheek. He wanted life that would walk with him to the grave, life that would be rich and roomy unto the end of eternity. He wanted the best.

When therefore I met him and he told me of his dissatisfaction and of his hunger for the highest, I said to him, "I cannot give you eternal life, but I know one who can. A young carpenter just passed along the road. He has life at his very fingertips." Part of the secret of the spell that Jesus cast over men was the spell of one who was so vital, so tremendously alive. He could give it to you if you will only ask him.

3. Not only did this young man desire eternal life, but he desired it enough to do something about it. Now, there are few of us I think that would not like to have a rich, warm, radiant religious experience if we could only have it on our own terms. There is no student in school quite so sluggish that he would not like to make a hundred on every recitation if he could make that hundred on his own terms. But every prize has conditions attached. If you want life, you must want it enough to do something about it. Not only so, but you must want it enough to do anything about it that is necessary to attain it. This young man was willing to act.

Therefore, when I told him that Jesus had passed along the road, he gathered his oriental garments about him and set out on a run to find this man who could give eternal life.
life. That tells us another fact about him.

And that is, that he was not only willing to act but that he had courage. He was willing to run when he had to run alone. Not another man was running down the road to kneel to Jesus at that time. But this young man was so eager for eternal life that he hurried down when nobody else was hurrying. It is easy to run when you run with the crowd. It is easy to run when everybody else is running. But to run when you run alone, that took courage. This young man was a man of fine courage.

Not only so, but he was a man of deep earnestness. He had genuine enthusiasm. A man wrote a book a few years ago on how to win friends and influence people. I think a better name for the book would have been, How to Win Friends and Use People. Now, I can tell you how not to win friends. Just go through life an incarnate yawn. Cultivate the habit of never getting in earnest about anything. There are some people who are so listless and indifferent that they cannot even shake hands. Did you ever shake hands with anybody that if you did not do all the shaking, there would not be any shake to it? This young man had earnestness, and he had enthusiasm.

Another fine characteristic that he possessed was that he was reverent. He could still pray. He could still get on his knees. How long since you have bowed reverently in the presence of God? This young man ran alone and bowed on his knees in the presence of Jesus. Aristocrat that he was, he kneeled down before this peasant fresh from a carpenter's shop, and prayed to him and said, "What good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He was religious. Not only so, but when Jesus put to him the moral law, he was able to look the Master in the face and say, "I have kept it from my youth."

This brings us to another beautiful characteristic. His religion had meant something to him. It had kept him morally clean. There was not one who could accuse him of dishonesty. There was not one who could accuse him of having wounded or hurt one of his fellows. There was not one who could accuse him of moral uncleanness. He had not seen fit to take a bath in pitch. He had not so lived that he was incapable of giving what he demanded on his wedding day. He was morally clean. In fact, so beautiful was he in his life that it was said, "Jesus, beholding him loved him." Not that he does not love everyone, but we need not be offended that he loved some with the love of approval, and this was the love he gave to this man. There was so much that was winsome, so much that was fascinating. There were such fine possibilities in him that the heart of Jesus went out
to him. And we can understand why. He was so winsome that it seems that he had everything.

II

Yet, in spite of the fact that this young man was possessed of such rich treasure, he had not really arrived. What then was wrong with him?

Whatever was wrong, it was not so much in what he had done as in what he had missed. Jesus, throughout all his teaching, was always most afraid of that type of sinner that failed to do the positive right instead of the one who did the positive wrong. He was afraid of the one who missed the highest, did not lay hold of the value that might have been his instead of the one that took off in the vicious opposite direction.

What then, I repeat, was wrong with this man? He himself said there was something wrong. That is the reason that he came to Jesus. What was his question as he bowed in the presence of the Christ who had cast a spell over him? This was his question: "What lack I yet? I have missed the way in some fashion. I have not laid hold of the treasure that I long to lay hold of. I have not found what makes life rich, what makes life useful, what makes life plentiful."

Not only did this young ruler say there was something wrong, but Jesus agreed with him. Jesus did not tell him he was too introspective. He did not tell him that he was being a bit morbid. Looking into the young man's life, seeing all the beauty of it so that it took captive of his heart, yet he had to agree with the young man. He said, "There is something lacking. One thing thou lackest." What was lacking? Just this: that he had not found eternal life for which he was seeking.

Now, what does the New Testament mean by eternal life? It does not mean endless existence. It means endless right existence. Everybody is going to live, but everybody does not have eternal life. "This is life eternal: that they might not know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Eternal life is the life of God in the soul. Eternal life is that rich possession that comes to us, that inner inward well that becomes ours as we follow Jesus. This young man had failed to find it. He knew it. And Jesus knew it.

So often, when I have approached some friend and asked, "Are you a Christian?", he has given the answer, "No, I am not a Christian, but I'm not so bad." But that is not enough. A wax figure in a show window is not bad. A mummy is not bad. A stuffed shirt
is not bad. The tragedy is in what you miss. I stood some time ago and watched a beauti-
ful little girl as she swung like a pendulum between life and death. Then I saw one love-
ly little hand go up and stroke a curl on her forehead and fall limp at her side. And
those who loved her sobbed. Yet, as I stood, she was very much then as she was five min-
utes ago, but there was one difference—life had gone. And as I stood and looked at her,
I said, "Oh, darling, one thing thou lackest." That was what was lacking in this young
man. He did not have eternal life.

III

Then Jesus, with that engaging frankness that ought to take captive our hearts,
told him how the rich treasure that he had missed so far might immediately be his. The
conditions sound a bit jarring to us. He said to him, "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou
hast, and give to the poor, and come and follow me." Now, Jesus does not say that to
everybody. He called on this young man to give up his wealth because that wealth was
the supreme love of his life. He saw that it was the chain that bound him. It was to
be given up because he saw that the young man could not follow unless he did give
it up. But that is not what is essential and fundamental in being a Christian.

For instance, this young man might have gone and sold every treasure that he possessed.
Having sold every treasure, he might have given away every penny of it and still not have
been a Christian. Paul said, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, though I
give my body to be burned and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." It would not have
been enough for this man to have sold his wealth, to have parted with his very all. That
was only preliminary, not even necessary in many instances.

What then was Jesus commanding? What is fundamental in the instructions that Jesus
gave? Just this—"Follow me." What does God want from you? What does He want from me?
He wants ourselves. He wants our obedience. If you give Him yourself, He will give
you Himself. That is the whole of Christianity, the yielding of yourselves unto God.
That is the door of entrance. That is the life you are to live. That is Christianity
in its consummation. Self-dedication is the least you can do and be a Christian at all.
It is the most you can do in time and in eternity.

IV

What response did this young man make? "He went away." Though he was kneeling in
the very presence of Jesus, he rose to his feet and walked away. Jesus could not help it. All the powers of life could not help it. "He went away." Going away from Jesus, he went back to his old life. It had not satisfied him in the past. It satisfied him, I daresay, still less in the future. By and by he went away from his youth. By and by he went away from this world altogether. But as he went away, he did not go with a song. He might have gone with laughter in his soul. But we read that he went away grieved because every step that any man ever takes away from Jesus, he always takes not toward life but toward death, not toward laughter but toward tears, not toward his highest usefulness but toward, in some fashion, utterly squandering his powers. "He went away."

Now, I ask you, "Was this young man saved?" "No," you will have to confess, he would not have what Jesus wanted to give him. But whose fault was it? It was not the fault of Jesus. It was the fault of the young man. If you miss following him, who is to blame? Not the church, not the minister, not your friends, not even the devil, you are to blame. Here he stands confronting you at this moment, giving you this invitation, "Follow me." That means that you can follow him if you want to. That means that you can put your life into his hands if you want to.

Now, I close with this word. If you will give yourself to Jesus, he will accept you. If you will give yourself to him, he will remake you. He will begin here and now to transform your life and to make you Christ-like. If you will give yourself to Jesus, he will use you to his glory. That is true of every single one of us. Every life can count if that life is a dedicated life.

Here is an old story and yet it has in it an abiding truth. When King Arthur lay dying, he called to him his last surviving knight and put his sword in his hands, the sword with which he had fought his battles, and said, "Go back and throw this sword into the lake." And the knight went in good faith, but he said to himself, "Before I throw it away to rust in the mud in the bottom of the lake, I will at least take a look at it." And he drew it from its scabbard, and it was so beautiful, and its hilt was so bejewelled that he said, "It is too priceless to throw away." So he hid it among the rushes and went back to his king. When the king asked him if he had done his bidding, he told him a false story.

Then the king sent him again and said, "Go and do my bidding." But a second time he was caught under the spell of the beauty of the sword and failed to do his bidding. Then
the king raised upon an elbow and pointed with a ghastly finger and said, "Go at once, or I will rise up from my deathbed to slay you." So the knight hurried back and, without giving himself a chance under the spell of the beauty of the sword, he threw it with all his might and watched as it splashed in the water and disappeared to rot and rust in the mud at the bottom of the lake. But ere it touched the surface, a mighty hand reached out and gripped it and wielded it three times and then disappeared.

Then the knight rubbed his eyes and marveled, for he realized that he had not thrown the sword away to rust in uselessness at the bottom of the lake, that he had only passed it into a mightier hand than his own. And so as our lord passes and says "Follow me," he is not asking you to throw yourself away. He is asking you to put your life into the hands of one who will receive you and who will transform you and who will use you now and use you throughout eternity. May God grant that you may have wisdom to rise up and follow Him.
SHOCKING ANGER

"And He taught, and said to them, 'Is it not written my House shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'."
Mark 11:17

This is a part of the story of the cleansing of the temple. This event, seemingly the least Christ-like of any in the earthly life of our Lord, took place on Monday after Palm Sunday. Here Jesus seems acting out of character. First, though he had no love for the spectacular, though he rebuked the religious leaders for their love of display, this event is about as spectacular as a street parade. It was a glaring and open defiance of the religious authorities, and would have resulted in his death had no other charge been brought against him.

Then Jesus abhorred violence. But this is a scene, that is about as violent as outraged Carrie Nation used to make when she invaded the old time saloon with her hatchet. Here we see birds, beasts, and men hurrying pell mell out of the court, leaving their furniture upside down. There were doubtless also coins scattered about that these money grubbers were too frightened to pick up.

Most shocking of all to some is the attitude of Jesus as He performs this spectacular and violent deed. He is not doing it with a serene face and gentle smile. Instead His cheeks flamed with hot anger and his eyes flashed fire. He is the farthest possible from that saccharine, name "The meek and lowly Nazarene". Here is no Christ uttering too sweet words as bon bons soaked in honey. He struck terror into the stoutest hearts of the wicked.

Part I

Now that sight of an angry Jesus should make some of us look (with averted eyes and look) into the opposite direction is not surprising. This is the case on many occasions.
A terrible hunger
March 21, 12-16

Intro - He found confession, He added to it. He repeated over and over, over, over until it was in his bones. By the power of a force, physical violence, by the power of a force, that conviction, it was in his bones. Then he was offering it in a picture that is not altogether foreign.

I Hunger has no good reputation.

1. It is no means, remorse, sorrow, woe, destruction.
2. Toils - remorse - woe.
3. It is often purely self-pity, the garden variety. Come with a self-pity, an entirely alien, not have been hit by grief, kept off by talent, not by talent - hitting by emotion - neglected - with violence - hitting by emotion.

II Hunger may be a high virtue.

1. It is abuser perhaps your need.
2. True when born of love.
4. At times when man were turned.
5. Their places (a) without place (b) children.
6. First (a) Reform, maybe a helpful.
7. So today (a) there are neglect, who were third places have been gone yard instead of kept by the hand.

III What hunger you - heart lead.

1. Teaching, you are teaching 2, Cor. 3, 16.
Hearken Anger. Matt 21:12-16

On Monday - He-teachers a kind of parable

He said, "The Scribes and the Pharisees, as they came into the city, the temple became angry. So angry that they wanted..."
First, Anger is not a mark of distinction. A genius can be angry, but so can a moron. A highly civilized philosopher can get angry, but so can a savage. A white haired saint can get angry, but so can a baby. Indeed anger is not even distinctly human. The lower orders of life can get angry. I had to do with an angry dog on one occasion, therefore, I am afraid of dogs to this day. Even reptiles can get angry. A rattlesnake is quite a gentleman until he is angry, then it is best to pass by on the other side. Anger, therefore, is no mark of distinction.

Then, anger does not show up too well on the pages of the Bible. It is not ranked as a virtue. Paul urges, quoting from the scripture, "Be angry and sin not". Thus he is implying that anger and sin are about as close as Siamese twins. That even when anger is not a sin in itself, it readily leads to sin, as we all know. We are told that even Moses, the greatest man of the Old Testament, after a life-long struggle to bring his people into the land of promise, had the door shut in his own face because he lost his temper.

(3) If anger does not look good on the pages of the Bible, no more does it as we witness it in everyday life. This is true because the ordinary garden variety of anger is so often a form of insanity. We say, and say correctly, "I got mad, I got mad." Thus asserting that reason was pushed from the throne and love was shown the door.

Yet we often do. If every golf club that had been broken in anger would groan at this moment, it would sound like a cannonade and shake like an earthquake.
I used to know a successful mill man, but more than once when something went wrong with his engine and he sought to fix it, his wrench would slip and skin his hand. Then he would smash that delicate machinery with the wrench and then throw the wrench into the mill pond, and force the mill to stand idle for days. He at least broke a heart because he could not keep from going crazy.

If it is crazy to get angry with the inanimate, it is often equally so when we take it out on our selves. I was in a home some time ago where a lovely little girl, about four years of age, got so mad at her Mother that she dropped on her hands and knees and bumped her head against the floor as if she were trying to knock her brains out. She was as crazy as that friend who barked his shin when he got up in the dark, kicked the chair which did not suffer injury, but himself suffered a broken toe.

If such loss of temper is madness, how much more insane is it to get angry and smash friendship! Or how insane to get angry and break us with your church, turn enemy to the institution to which you pledged allegiance and for which Christ died!

Worse still, some of you get angry and wound those you love the best. We even go to the extent of slashing them with our tongues, or, what is often quite as wounding, puffing up like a poisoned pup and pouting. A young fellow told me he had been married one year and pouted seven months of that time. Sometimes we get so angry that in our madness we wreck a home.

All this has given anger such a poor rating that we find it easy to question the Christianity of one who cannot hold his temper. I knew a minister of unusual ability who was preaching in one of our cities a few years ago. Great congregations were attending. One night an old gentleman took up his place on the front pew and began to sneeze and wheeze and puff and blow until
he was attracting more attention than the minister. It was very trying. At last the minister lost his temper and blessed the old chap out in a rather shameful way.

So what? Perhaps he did not hear a word that the minister said. He took his place on the front seat doubtless because he was hard of hearing. But the congregation heard. They heard so clearly that the minister may as well have packed his grip after that service. He was almost as totally discredited as if they had detected the fumes of liquor on his lips. But in spite of its poor reputation, anger is not always bad. It may be a decided virtue. Our sinless Saviour got angry. Therefore there is an anger that is not a sin. If Jesus can be angry without sin, so could we. Whittier is right in saying "Nothing can be good in Him that evil is in me". There is such a thing then as righteous indignation. Such was the anger of our Lord.

Part II

Wherein was the anger of Jesus righteous? What made him angry? What makes you angry? If you will tell me what angers you, I can tell you with great accuracy what kind of person you are. What angered Jesus?

Jesus was never angered by any insult or affront to himself. Few men in so short a ministry had to endure so many insults. During His trial He met with every indignity that His fiendish torturers could inflict. Never once did His face grow red, nor did His eyes flash fire. He was always in complete control of himself, and we feel further, of the situation as well. His anger had no self-reference, whereas with us the opposite is generally true.

What then, I repeat, did anger Jesus? He was angered at wrong done to others. This scene here is not the only time Jesus was indignant. One day he went into the temple to find a man with a
hand. He had a handicap. He was therefore withered in his opportunity, withered in his hope, perhaps withered in his heart. The hard religionists, concerned only with their petty rules, looked at Jesus saying silently "I dare you to heal him!

So what? We read that Jesus looked round about upon them with anger. It was an anger that scorchcd and blistered and burned. It was a scene that I am sure they could never forget.

On another day when little children were crowding into his arms to receive his blessings, certain misguided adults got in the way and tried to hinder them. At this Jesus was indignant saying "suffer the little children to come unto me". Indeed so intense was his love for these little ones that He walled them in with a wall of milestones, saying that it would be better for one to have a big milestone hanged about his neck and be drowned in the sea than to cause one of these little ones to go wrong.

Here He was enraged at the desecration of the temple, the church, His Father's House. His anger was not born primarily of His love for the building, but of his love for the people, that were being robbed in this temple, instead of being enriched as was God's purpose and should have been their privilege. By their selfish blindness they were changing what was intended to give wings to the soul into a dead weight.

"You have made it." That is a suggestive word. You and I are also making something of the church. What are we making of it? Some of us are making it as silent as a funeral vault at midnight by not being there. Some of us are making it a thing of boredom instead of a blessing. "It was high noon on Sunday", says a fiction writer, "and the church on the corner was giving up its dead". We sometimes make the church into a thing of death
rather than a thing of life.

Years ago I went into a church that had a membership of more than 3000. Yet just before I came on the scene a friend told me that they were having some thirty to fifty at their evening services. As soon as I arrived I called my Board together, and told them I was doing this at once so there could be nothing personal about it since I did not know who was supporting this service and who was not. Then I added "You may think a service of that kind is helping your church, but it is not. It is doing it great harm. You may think such a service is honoring your Lord, but it is not. It is dishonoring Him. Furthermore", I continued, "I am not going to be a partner to it. I still practice my private devotion, but I do not do so at 7:30 Sunday evening in the pulpit. Either we work at this thing together, or we quit together".

Then I took the matter before the congregation, preaching a sermon on it, the very best that I could. At the close I set a date six months ahead. Then I added "I want everyone of you who will agree to attend every night service for these six months, unless there is a reason for you not doing so, to stand up". Between four and five hundred stood and we had a nucleus around which to build a service that would help instead of sending away the few who dared to come bumping on four flat tires with their spare stored.

Then the anger of Jesus was right because it led to a right action. The anger with which we are most familiar is an anger that leads to wrong action. When we get hurt our first impulse is to strike back. Jesus' anger sent Him into helpful action. He drove out those that bought and sold. That, of course, was purely
negative. If He had done nothing more, His cleansing might have
been worse than nothing. He drove out the triflers that He might
bring in the sick and the needy and those that longed to be
taught. Even the shouts of little children were heard, once more.

Part III

Now I am quite sure that we all agree that we have all too
much of this selfish type of anger. It comes when we are left
off the Board, are not made chairman of the committee, are not
invited to the party. Drummond, I think, was right in saying that
that type of anger has caused more tears and heartaches than any
one thing in the world. If you can not control your temper in
your own strength, remember there is one who can help. "The
fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, gentleness, self control." That Spirit can give
quiet and serenity to the most tempestuous heart.

If we have too little of that petty anger that is born only
so hurt, we have far too little of that righteous anger that is
born of love and sends us forth with a high determination to help.
How tolerant we have grown! But the grim tragedy of it is that
much that passes for tolerance is not in reality tolerance at all.
It is crass indifference. That mule that walked through the wire
fence was not blind, you remember. He simply didn't give a cent.
How many evils swagger before us in our homes, in our churches,
in our city because we are too loveless to have indignation
enough to oppose?

You have heard of the blue hen chickens. I have known that
blue hen personally. As a small boy I witnessed in our backyard
a blue hen with her small chicks about her. Suddenly a hawk
swooped from the sky, gathered one of those chicks in his great
talons and was away.
But as instant as the swoop of the hawk was the response of his indignant mother. She rose upon her own wings and was after that bird of prey. As is the case with every robber, he was afraid. He dropped the chick. So what? That night when more tolerant hens were singing "where is my wandering chick tonight", this blue hen was gratefully answering the question for herself - "Mine is safe tucked under my wings".

Our rate of juvenile delinquency has doubled in the last 8 years. If we had more mothers and fathers who would take a leaf out of the book of this loving and angry blue hen, that would not be so.
When Jesus fell under the weight of his cross, Simon was compelled to take over. This he did in all probability, not gladly but in hot anger and shame. By and by, however, Jesus so took captive his heart that he bore this hated burden with joy. Thus we see what cross-bearing really means. It is not just any load that life may lay upon us, with or without our consent. It is one that we bear of our own choice. This is what Jesus is saying when he declares, "No man taketh it (my life) from me, but I lay it down of myself". It was as Simon thus took up and bore the cross for love's sake that he, himself, found life. It was as he thus bore the cross that he found life both for himself and others. Was this true life for others? It must have been, for Jesus said, "My cross is a load that I lay down for you and for others."
THE SPELL OF JESUS

Mark 13:37

"The common people heard Him gladly."

When Mark tells us that Jesus was gladly heard by the common people he does not mean, as we generally suppose, that those who appreciated Jesus were made up solely of the ignorant as contrasted with the educated, or of the plebeians as contrasted with the aristocrats. He means that the mass of the people, the multitude, heard Jesus gladly. That is, Jesus appealed to all ranks and conditions of men. He cast His spell over gray-haired scholars and over little children, over white-souled women and women of the street; over a young enthusiast like Stephen and a chronic doubter like Thomas. The common people, the crowd, the multitude, heard Jesus gladly.

To be convinced of this it is only necessary to turn the pages of the New Testament. Everywhere we go the ground is fairly shaken with the tread of many feet. In the fifth chapter of Matthew we read, "And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain; and when He was set up, He opened His mouth, and taught them." In the second chapter of Mark Jesus is in a certain house in Capernaum. When the news spread that He was there, the place was at once jammed. Even four daring men who were determined to get their friend into the presence of Jesus, found it necessary to climb to the top of the house and let the man down through the roof. In the fourth chapter of Mark Jesus is preaching on the seashore. The crowd so pressed upon Him that He had to get into a boat to keep from being pushed into the water. Again He goes on a picnic.
for a much needed rest. But no sooner does He find Himself in His place of retirement than the people begin to gather, first by the hundreds and then by the thousands, till there are five thousand men present besides women and children. Nothing is more evident than that Jesus cast a spell over the men of His day.

But the spell of Jesus is not confined to a far-off yesterday. Men have felt it all through the centuries. No man who has honestly exposed himself to the mind of Jesus has escaped the tug of His fascination. Many have rejected the church. Many have been little moved by organized religion. But all have felt His matchless magnetism. "We still say with Pilate, "I see no fault in Him at all." We sing with the poet, "O, what amiss may I forgive in Thee, Jesus, good paragon, Thou crystal Christ." Strip from the art galleries and the libraries the works that He has inspired and they will be pathetically impoverished. Take out of the world the spiritual progress that has come out of His hot heart and humanity will be infinitely the poorer.

II

What was the secret of the spell of Jesus?

1. His was the spell of a man who knew. When a congregation went home one day from hearing Him preach, they did not remark upon His eloquence, nor upon His scholarship, but they said in awed voices, "He spake as one having authority." On another occasion they asked in bewilderment, "Ho' knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" There was no question as to His knowing. They were sure of that. What amazed them was how He came to know. Then certain officers were sent to arrest Him on one occasion, but before they could make the arrest they were caught under His spell.
When they returned without the prisoner they gave as their reason for not bringing him, "Never a man spake like this man." Here was one with a knowledge and an understanding that cast a spell upon men.

And we are amazed to this day at the fullness and richness of His knowledge. Men felt themselves known through and through in His presence. They felt that here was a man that not only knew what was in men, but who knew God. Here was one who was in possession of the fullness of spiritual certainty. No wonder those hungry to know were constantly thronging and asking Him questions! Some of those questions were asked honestly and some with the desire to trap Him. But however asked the keenness of His answer amazes to this day.

For instance, one day His enemies put this question to Him: "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?" That was a question that seemed absolutely to demand a yes or no answer. If Jesus said "Yes, it is lawful," He would enrage His own people. If He said, "No, it is not lawful," He would be guilty of rebellion against Rome. Therefore, whatever answer He gives, to their thinking He is ruined. They do not see how He can possibly escape. But He did escape. "Show me a penny," He says. And when the coin is put into His hand He asks, "Whose is the image and superscription?" "Caesar's," they reply. "Render, therefore," He commands, "to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." That fairly took their breath. No wonder they dared not ask Him any further questions.

2. The spell of Jesus was the spell of a man who was alive. Life is a fascinating something. Everybody loves life. Nobody normally loves death.
"Tis life whereof our loves are scant,  
And life, not death, for which we pant,  
More life and fuller, that I want."

No wonder the inspired dreamer pictures his pilgrim as he sets out for the Celestial City, thrusting his fingers into his ears to shut out all distracting voices while he hurries on his way, crying, "Life, life, eternal life!"

Now Jesus gave to those who came in contact with Him the irresistible impression of being tremendously alive. He declared that the very purpose of His coming was that we might have life and that we might have it in abundance. His supreme heartache and disappointment was that while He felt the lure of life, there were some so wedded to death that they did not want His wares. One of the saddest words that ever fell from His lips is this: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." But while some resisted His spell, all who came in contact with Him felt it and resisted only by a struggle.

Again and again eager-hearted souls questioned Him about life. One time a young aristocrat left his palace to run down the road to kneel at His feet. How tremendous must have been the spell of Jesus to induce this blue blood to prostrate himself before a man whose palms were calloused with the handling of the tools of a carpenter's shop. Why did the young ruler come? He wanted life. Here, he felt, was one who was alive and so, though he was far above Him in the social scale, he flung himself at His feet to ask this question: "What shall I do to inherit eternal Life?"

On another occasion Jesus was preaching to a vast multitude. He was at that time very popular. The people were wildly enthusiastic. They even wanted to take Him by force and make Him king. But Jesus saw that they had misunderstood Him. He must make them face the truth.
In an effort to do this He threw whole fountains of cold water upon their enthusiasm. By and by the people lost their patience and began to leave, first in twos and threes, saying sadly with a shake of the head, "There is not much in Him after all." Then they left in hundreds, then in thousands. At last the vast multitude has run down to a pitiful little handful of only twelve. These are horribly bewildered and seem to be looking over their shoulders for some place of safety into which to run.

Jesus understands their feeling and their restlessness. "Will you also go away?" He asked. How courageous He is! In all His heroic life there was hardly a test sharper than this. It is terribly hard to deliberately change wild enthusiasm into disappointment and contempt, but Jesus did it and did it without any apology, and He stands ready now to be forsaken even by the twelve rather than compromise. "Will you also go away?" And Peter gives the grand answer. "To whom shall we go but unto Thee. Thou hast the words of eternal life." "Lord," he seems to say, "we would have gone already, the storm would have swept us off our feet were we not anchored to Thee by our hungering for life." The spell of Jesus then was the spell of a man who was alive.

3. The spell of Jesus was the spell of one who believed. Never man trusted other men as did Jesus. This does not mean that He shut His eyes to the fact of human guilt. He never blinked the fact that man was a sinner. He declared emphatically that it was for sinners and for sinners only that He came. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." He faced the fact constantly that this is a lost world. "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost."

But while He believed in the lostness of men, He believed most emphatically in his salvability. He saw men as they were. He
also saw them as they might be. He believed that the fluctuating son of Jona might become a rock of Christlike character. He believed that the demon-possessed Mary might become a heroine of the resurrection. He believed that the outcast Matthew might become an evangelist and write a gospel that would leave a track of light through all the centuries.

And what a bracing and fascinating something is confidence! We bloom into our best in the presence of those who believe in us as naturally as a rosebud opens at the kiss of the sun. I hope you saw "The House Beautiful." If you did not, see it if you ever have an opportunity. It tells how a home that might have been sordid prose was made into exquisite poetry by a woman's daring faith. It shows how a commonplace husband was transformed into a hero by a wife who courageously trusted him.

You remember the young runaway slave that was converted in Rome under the ministry of Paul. When he went back to his master Paul gave him a letter. In this letter he said, "I am sending you my son who in times past was to thee unprofitable, but now is profitable both to thee and to me." I can well imagine that more than once this young Christian was tempted to turn aside and lose himself in some strange city that lay between Rome and far-off Colosse. But when the temptation gone he read this letter again, "But now is profitable both to thee and to me," and he said to himself, "He trusts me, always counting on me to make good. I cannot disappoint him. And that confidence helped him through. It is also doubtless causing him to thank Paul even to this day.

But when we look for the supreme example of confidence we turn to Jesus. Never man trusted others as did He. And this He did in spite of experiences that would have embittered and made cynical a lesser man. Jesus was misunderstood by His friends. One of them
denied Him and another betrayed Him. He was persecuted throughout His entire ministry by His enemies. What they did to Him on Calvary they were doing every day. They were always crucifying Him. Yet He never lost His confidence. Even as He faced the cross He declared that lifted up from the earth He would draw all men to Him. And He went back to His Father, having tumbled the weight of His Church upon the shoulders of a handful of faulty men, declaring that the gates of hell should not prevail against them. No wonder men have found such confidence all through the years all but irresistible.

4. Finally, the spell of Jesus was the spell of a man who cared. Had you and I passed through one of the villages of Judea or of Galilee we should doubtless have remarked upon the quiet content of the people. But when Jesus came into those villages all sorts of wretched and discouraged and sinning folks gathered about Him. They felt one had come to town who cared. Here was one who was interested in them personally and individually. He was not simply a lover of souls. He was a lover of folks, all sorts of folks. His was the spell of a lover.

And what a spell that is! Mr. Moody says that one day he met a little lad on the streets of the city of Philadelphia. It was Sunday morning. "Where are you going?" he asked him. "To Sunday School," was the reply. "Where is your Sunday School." And he told him a certain church that is at least three miles across the city. "Why do you go way over there?" Mr. Moody asked in surprise. "You pass a dozen churches or more on the way." "I know I do," was the answer, "but I go way over there because I love a fellow over there." That was reason enough. That makes any church attractive. That makes almost any house into a home. The supreme appeal of Jesus was just in the fact that He cared. He was brotherly. Even His enemies could not deny that. They undertook to say something ugly
about Him. They meant it to disgrace Him. They meant it to hurry
Him to the cross, as it did. But it also crowned Him. They said
that He was a friend of publicans and sinners. What an encouraging
word! A friend to sinners - that is your friend and mine, and
everybody needs a friend. We turn our faces toward Him today because
we cannot resist the spell of His friendship.

Again, when Jesus hung on the cross and they were trying
to add to His torture by driving sharp nails into His heart as they
had driven into His hands and feet. This is what they said of Him:
"He saved others, Himself He cannot save." He saved others. Was
anything finer ever said by either friend or foe? But this was the
verdict even of His enemies, that while He walked among men He gave
Himself not to exploiting men, not to putting heavy burdens upon
their shoulders, not to robbing men. He was here to save them. And
to this hour we feel the spell of One who is come to seek and to save,
even though the salvation that He brings is at the price of the cross.

There is another fine sentence written about Him by a
friend, and that is this: "He went about doing good." He literally
gave Himself to that great task, the task of leaving darkened lives
a little brighter, the task of lifting burdens off of stooped shoulders,
the task of giving rest to the weary. There were those who knew Him
personally, who felt the love that beat in the heart of Him. And
there have been untol millions who have been caught under the spell
of this love through the centuries. Paul, the bitterest enemy of the
early Church was changed from a persecutor into a preacher because
he could not resist the spell of the love of Jesus. "Then he accounts
for his transformation, when he accounts for that brave life which
was a daily dying, he does so in these tender words, "He loved me
and gave Himself up for me."
Now the spell that Jesus cast over men in the long ago He casts over them still, for He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Here is One who knows, here is one who is alive, here is one who believes the best of us, here is one who cares. It may be you have broken with the Church. It may be that you have flung away from organized religion as totally inadequate to your needs, but how about Jesus? Can you resist the compelling spell of His appeal? It is easy to find fault with your fellows. It is easy to find fault with the Church, but what fault can you find with Him?

The appeal of Jesus is absolutely universal. No man can expose himself to this great soul without an impulse to follow Him. But that impulse can be resisted. We can either shake the restraining hand of Jesus from off our shoulders. Millions have done it. The young ruler did it. So can you.

But there is another road open, and that is the upward road. You may respond to His appeal. Millions also have done that and heaven and earth are today the richer for their choice. One day Jesus stood in the presence of a man named Matthew. Matthew had money. He was getting more money. He had a magnificent house in which to live. But Jesus said, "Follow me," and under the spell of that appeal he rose up and that day life for him took on a new departure and we sit at His feet and learn to this hour. Tonight He is appealing to you. Face to face with your soul He stands, saying, "Follow me." You hear His voice and know it for His own. Will you say no, or will you, like Matthew, rise up and follow?
A BEAUTIFUL WORK

Mark 14:6

"She hath wrought a beautiful work on me."

I

This marks the last friendly feast that Jesus ever attended. The religious leaders have already sentenced him to death. The fact is already determined. They are only looking for the means by which it is to be accomplished. The atmosphere has become increasingly hostile, till now it is full of hate. But this dinner among his friends is for Jesus like an escape from a bitter night of storm into a free atmosphere like that of home. A feast is held in the house of Simon the leper, a man who possibly owed his life and health to Jesus. Martha, efficient, gentle, loving, is serving. Mary is there with overflowing heart. The occasion affords her an opportunity to give a last proof of her devotion. She brings a precious cruse of perfume and breaks it and lavishes the whole of it upon her Lord.

At once there is a difference of opinion about this gracious act. Judas is indignant over it. He is present at the feast. He makes his contribution to it. What does he give? His is a very common contribution. It is criticism. He does not play the game himself. He stands on the side line and criticizes those who are trying to play.

Now criticism may be at times a worth while contribution. If it is honest and sincere, if it is constructive, it may serve an excellent purpose. Judas is not to be condemned simply because he criticizes. That which condemns him is the nature of his criticism and the motives that lay behind it.
1. Judas claimed to be looking after the poor. He claimed to be seeking the best interests of the kingdom of God. His criticism therefore sprang from an earnest desire for the common good. That is what he would have us believe, but such is not the case. Like so much of the criticism to which we give utterance, it was not in reality born of love at all, it was born of selfishness. Judas was not looking after the interests of others. He was looking after his own interests. His criticism was vicious not simply because it was wrong, but because it was made vicious by a bad motive.

2. His criticism was wrong because it was stupid. I know it sounds exceedingly wise and reasonable. "Why," he says, "was not this ointment sold for three hundred shillings and given to the poor?" At once the other disciples open their eyes, they nod their heads, they nudge each other and whisper under their breath, "A wise man, this Judas, very practical, very shrewd, very level-headed. He never goes off at a tangent. He never allows sentiment to get the better of his common sense."

But in spite of the fact that it sounds very sane and sensible it is, after all, quite stupid. The trouble with Judas is that he could think of no friends except those measured in terms of dollars and cents. He could think of no way of helping anybody except through food or clothing. Of those high spiritual wants he seems to have no knowledge. His scales for weighing values would do well enough for a junk dealer, but they would have no place in the shop of one who deals in those gems that are of supreme value. Judas might be trusted to weigh scrap iron and fertilizer, but beyond that we could hardly trust him, for we know there are things of great value weighed upon the scales of the heart that would be almost worthless everywhere else.
For instance, what is that faded flower worth that you pressed away in a book at home? What is the value of that worn baby shoe? What is the good of that old letter brown with age and spotted with tears. Even that thin band of gold that the widow wears upon her finger, why does she in her poverty part with the carpets from the floor and the furniture that she needs, rather than part with it? The heart knows values that the marts of trade do not know.

II

But while Judas condemned Mary, Jesus did not. He commended her. What she did appealed to him to an unusual degree. So much is this the case that he gave her about the finest compliment that he ever paid during his earthly ministry. He said the work that looked so silly to Judas was really a thing of beauty. I think the opinion of Jesus may be trusted here. He has the seeing eye. Then He is the creator of all beauty.

What did Jesus see beautiful in this deed?

1. It was beautiful in its motive. What made the criticism of Judas ugly? A base motive. What made his kiss hideous? An ugly motive. That which made this deed remarkable in its beauty was that Mary did it not in any spirit of show or self-seeking. She did it for love’s sake. We remember her today not for her beauty or her culture or her charm. She doubtless had all these. But we remember her because of her great heart.

3. It was beautiful in its recklessness. When she gave she did not do so in a prudent or calculating fashion. She gave with a mad abandon. Never once did Jesus praise anybody for cautious and conservative giving. All His praise was for those who gave with what the world would term a mad recklessness.
3. It was beautiful in its uniqueness. She could not serve as Martha. She could not preach like Peter. But love is inventive. It will do the big thing if it can. If not it will do the little thing. It will beautify a palace if it may. If not it will glorify a cottage.

4. It was beautiful in its kindliness. Jesus could say of her, "She came aforehand to anoint my body for burial." Nicodemus brought a hundred pounds of precious spices and perfume after Jesus was dead, but he got there too late. That is often our tragic blunder.

"Seven cities vied for Homer dead
   Through which the living begged his bread."

How often the same thing happens to those we love, only on a smaller scale. A wife died some months ago and her husband sent a princely offering of flowers. But those who knew her realized that the simplest little field daisy that he might have plucked and brought home would have meant more than all the flowers now.

"It is easy to be gentle when
Death's silence stills our clamor
It is easy to discern the best
Through memory's mystic glamor.

"But O, for a will for thee and me
E'er love is past forgiving
To take this gentle lesson home
Be patient with the living."

III

What was the good of this beautiful deed of Mary's?

1. It brought unspeakable joy to her own heart. She had the commendation of Jesus. Jesus said of her, "She hath done what she could." That is, she has done her best.
3. It gladdened the heart of our Lord.

3. It has enriched the world through all the centuries. Judas said it was wasted, but it is the wasted things that are the saving salt of civilization. The mothers that waste themselves, burn up their beauty, fling away their roses in giving birth and guidance to their children. These are the makers of a better world. It is because Jesus allowed Himself to be broken in body, it is because that he was willing to waste Himself that we have met here this morning.

The things that are truly wasted are the things that are kept. The lives that are wasted are those that are used for selfish purposes. As our Lord looks upon our pleasure-mad day how he must say, "Why this waste?" As He sees strong souls squandering themselves for dusty nothings that will perish with the using, He must ask in amazement, "Why this waste?" Judas looked out for number one. But the end of it all was that we see his broken body at the foot of the cliff where he has died at his own hands, and as we look we cannot but ask in sadness, "Why this waste?" Mary squandered her treasure for love's sake and the breezes of all the centuries have caught it up; and its sweet fragrance comes in through these windows this morning and everyone of us is made better by what was thrown away twenty centuries ago. Jesus was right, "She hath wrought a beautiful work on me."
"She hath wrought a beautiful work on me." Mark 14:16

The scene of this immortal story is in the village of Bethany. It is in a private home, the home of Simon the leper. Who Simon was we do not know. Of this we may be sure that he had once suffered from a ghastly disease. He had been a leper so long that the ugly disease from which he suffered had become a part of his name. But though we may be sure that he was once a leper we may be equally sure that he is not a leper anymore. He has been cured. In all probability the one who cured him is now the guest of honor at this friendly feast.

Naturally we do not know how nor when Jesus had cured him. I love to imagine that Simon was that broken and embittered man who threw himself at the feet of Jesus with that very imperfect prayer on his lips, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean". Life had dealt so harshly with him that he had lost faith in the willingness of anybody to help him, even Jesus. He believed that the Master had the power, but he was doubtful of his willingness to use it on his behalf, so he prayed this imperfect prayer. But Jesus responded wholeheartedly and said, "I will, be thou clean!"

But regardless of how or when his cure had taken place, Simon is now sound and well, therefore out of deep gratitude he is giving Jesus this feast, the last He had in this world. Present at this dinner party are the intimate friends of Jesus, His disciples and Lazarus. Instead of sending to Jerusalem for a caterer Simon has had the good sense to invite the best in all the land to take charge. He has invited Martha. So here we find Martha at her best doing the things she...
loved best to do. Mary also was present, it would seem, not as a guest at the feast but as an onlooker. As she watched this feast with clearer eyes than any other except the Master himself, she felt that she must make some contribution so she hurried away to come back with her greatest earthly treasure - a flask of costly perfume. She recklessly broke this flask and anointed her Lord with its contents.

That was certainly a surprising procedure. It was the very opposite of the conventional. Nobody expected anything like that, perhaps not even Mary herself. But when the extravagant deed was done, all those present did not react to it in the same fashion. As the sweet perfume pervaded the room, as Judas inhaled its fragrance he did not smile but frown. "What a ridiculous waste," he said to himself. Then he spoke his mind, "Why was this waste of the ointment made? It might have been sold for more than $300 and been given to the poor". It would seem that his fellow disciples agreed with him. "A very sane and practical man is Judas", they seemed to say, "he never allows his heart to get the better of his head".

But the honor Guest took the opposite view. Therefore when He saw Mary shrinking under such sharp criticism, He rose eagerly and indignantly to her defense. "Let her alone", He commands, "she hath wrought a beautiful work on me. It is a work that is so beautiful that it will never be forgotten. As I go on my world mission to all the nations and through all the centuries in a profound sense she will go with me. For wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout this whole world, this also that this woman hath done shall be spoken of as a memorial of her." That sounds a bit extravagant. If this deed was beautiful, wherein was it beautiful?

I

First, it was beautiful in its motive. The moral quality of every deed is determined by its motive. Mark you, I am saying the moral quality. A gift may
have certain usefulness that is given from a mixed or impure motive. Money given out of sheer selfishness will still keep its purchasing power. Clothing given in pride and contempt will still bring some shelter to those who wear them.

Just as good deeds done through bad motives may be helpful, so bad deeds done through good motives may be harmful. In fact there are few who can do greater harm than perfectly sincere and earnest people who are dead wrong.

I have never questioned the motive of a certain gentleman, recently much in the limelight, who a few years ago sought to promote prosperity by killing pigs and plowing up corn and cotton. But his good motives resulted in utter waste in spite of their goodness.

But no deed, however seemingly beautiful, that is done from a base motive can be really beautiful when its motive is understood. In a terrible hour of danger and death, Judas went boldly to the side of his Master and kissed Him. That kiss has blackened the name of Judas as no other single thing that he ever did. But what made the deed so ghastly? It was done from a bad motive. Had the motive of Judas been pure, had he kissed his Lord because he was determined to be loyal to Him even until death, that kiss would have made his name one of the most beautiful in all human history.

Because the motive determines the moral quality of the deed, nothing that we do however great, is the worth to the doer that has no good will behind it. That is what Paul is saying in his immortal ode to love. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and though I give my body to be burned and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." But just as the greatest gift without love is of no worth to the giver, so the least with love is something of surpassing value. So small a sum as two mites given for love's sake becomes a treasure beyond the power even of those accustomed to thinking in terms of our national debt to compute. The deed of Mary was beautiful in its motive.
II

Second the deed of Mary was beautiful in its uniqueness. There was a fine spontaneity and originality about it that gave it charm. Here was a feast to which Mary came. Because she cared so deeply, she desired to make some contribution. But she did not have Martha's skill at serving. Perhaps she was not even needed for that kind of service. A lesser soul unable to give as Martha gave might have done nothing at all. Does not that happen again and again? If you could give as much as another how liberal you would be but because you can give so little, you give nothing. If you had another's skill for doing personal work, how constantly you would engage in this high venture, but lacking that skill you do nothing. If you only had five talents you would soon turn them into ten, but having only one you bury it in the earth.

Such a course is a mark of pride, not of love. Where we really care we give what we have. Love will do the big thing if it can, if it cannot it will do the little thing grandly. Love will beautify a palace if such a large opportunity is granted, but if only a cottage is given it will make that cottage the most winsome and home-like place that it can possibly be. Love will give largely if it is rich in goods. If it is all but penniless, it will give two mites so grandly that the world will be made to wonder and applaud. Mary could not give as others, but she could give what was her own with beautiful originality. She loved.

III

Mary's deed was beautiful in its wholehearted recklessness. She could have anointed her Lord with only a small fraction of that precious perfume. But instead she broke the cruise and spilled the whole contents in one act of devotion. It was this giving with abandon that made such an appeal to the heart of Jesus. It is the kind of conduct that appeals to most of us. We are often afraid to be wholehearted. We are often timid about giving ourselves recklessly to any great cause. Yet we give our highest admiration only to those who do just that. "I hate folks that are half
and half", says the author of the 119 Psalm. So do we, so does our Lord. We hate such not with a vindictive hatred. We only hate them as we hate things that make us sick. It was a lukewarm church that Jesus found disgusting to the point of nausea.

It was this giving with abandon that Jesus found beautiful because it showed Mary's kinship to himself. There is no doubt that Jesus saw in this reckless giving of Mary a picture of His own self giving, even unto death. As she broke her priceless cruise in one single act of devotion, so he was giving Himself to be broken for the world. "This", He says looking at Peter and at John and at Judas, yes and at you and at me, "is my body which is given or broken for you." Jesus found this deed of Mary unspeakably beautiful because it indicated the dedication of her life that was akin to the dedication of Himself.

IV

This deed of Mary was beautiful in its timeliness. Many deeds that we do are robbed of much of their beauty for lack of a right timing. So often we speak our tenderest words in ears that no longer hear. We send our lovliest flowers to those who can no longer be thrilled by their color or their perfume. The words that might have kept our friends upon their feet, that might have enabled them to meet life's sore trials victoriously are often spoken too late.

We have all been guilty here. I recall one exception in my own ministry. That I remember with joy. While pastor in Texas, there was an excellent family that belonged to my church with the exception of the father. I was eager to win him and promised myself to seek him out for a personal appeal. One day I met him on the street. He was in a bit of a hurry and so was I. In spite of this fact, I drew him aside and made a definite appeal for his surrender to Christ. To my joy he responded eagerly and promised to join the church the next Sunday. From that interview he went to an accidental death that was only a very few hours away. It was a joy to me to be able to tell his broken hearted wife and children of his glad acceptance of Christ. For once, I was not too late.
That was a part of the beauty of this deed of Mary. Jesus said, "She has come aforetime". A little later Nicodemus and Joseph came with a whole hundred pounds of precious spices and perfume, but Jesus was dead then. Of course their gift was beautiful, but not so beautiful as it would have been had it been on time. Mary on the other hand, with the fine intuition of love, saw death coming toward her Master and said "I will beat death to Him". So when death reached him, her anointing made even its cold fingers to smell of perfume. Mary's deed was beautiful in its timeliness.

Finally, Mary's deed was beautiful in its usefulness. When Judas with his friends saw Mary break that flask and pour its precious contents in one single act of devotion he said, "Why this waste?" Well, it does look as if Judas had something to say for himself. Every man in Bethany was just as hungry after Mary's deed as he had been before. Every beggar was just as ill clad. Mary's deed did not then and there feed or clothe anybody.

But that does not mean it was worthless. To Judas, nothing was of worth that did not make some material contribution. The trouble with Judas was that his scales were just good for weighing pig iron and fertilizer. They would have no place in a jeweler's shop where the finer values are weighed. Then Judas thought this was wasted because it was given instead of being sold. But is it not true that most things that are sold are finally wasted. It is only the things that are given that are really kept. Had Mary taken the advice of Judas and sold her ointment, it would have been wasted and forgotten for hundreds of years. But instead she wasted it by giving it away. By so doing, she conserved it. She used it in the highest possible fashion. Thus while Judas sounds practical, what Mary did was really practical. This was the case for at least three reasons:

1. It was practical because of what it did for Mary herself. By thus
squandering her dearest treasure she brought to herself far greater treasure. By giving she enriched others, but to a far greater degree she enriched herself. Thus she discovered by her own experience the truth of those immortal words of Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive". It was by her giving that Mary drew to herself the commendation of Jesus. It was this beautiful deed that earned for her the greatest compliment that even Jesus could give: "She hath done what she could".

2. Not only was this deed of Mary's practical and helpful for what it did for Mary herself, but because of what it did for her Lord. By this gift, Mary showed that she understood what was going on in the heart of the Master as no one else alive at that time. She expressed this understanding and love and sympathy by the giving of her best. Her gift, therefore, warmed the Master's heart. It heartened Him for the hard ordeal ahead. I am quite sure that Mary did more to strengthen Jesus to endure the Cross than any other human soul.

3. Not only did Mary by her gift enrich herself and hearten and please her Lord, but she has helped to enrich the whole world. In fact, it would be utterly impossible to measure the fountains of benevolence that her beautiful gift has set to flowing since that distant day. The story says that the odor of the ointment filled the room. So it did, but it was not confined to that one room. By and by it filled the village of Bethany. It was blown out over that harsh Roman world. Since then, it has crossed all the seas and invaded all the continents. It comes through the windows and doors of this building where we are met to worship even now. All of us, I take it, are a bit the richer for Mary's deed.

Now you will miss the point of the story if you look upon it as entirely unique. The fact that Mary gave her dearest treasure with abandon was possible because she had first given herself. That broken cruise of ointment is a symbol
of life laid down. Thus giving, she received. To keep any treasure is surely to waste it. To keep yourself is to waste yourself. That is not theory, that is fact. All the blessings that have come to the world have come through the men and women who have been willing to waste themselves, to throw themselves away for others. Not only have these and these alone brought life to others, but it is these and these alone that have really lived. This is the case because it was true then as it is true now that "He that seeketh to save his life shall lose it, but he that loses his life shall keep it unto life eternal".
THE PASSER-BY

"They compelled a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross."

Mark 15:21

Some of the most interesting biographies of the Bible are very brief. Take the story of Enoch for instance. It is condensed into a single sentence. "Enoch walked with God." Had I been writing his biography I might have hidden the essential under the rubbish of the nonessential. But the inspired author tells in a word what life meant to this radiant saint of the long ago. It meant fellowship with God. The brief story of Simon tells us but little, yet that little is enough to make us long to know more. We find ourselves eager for a better view of his face. The little we know, filled out by the imagination, makes him one of the charming characters of sacred story.

I

What do we know about Simon?

1. He was a man who had journeyed from far away Cyrene in northern Africa to Jerusalem. It is possible that he was a Jew who had come back to the city of his fathers. It is also possible and even probable that he was a native son of Africa. In the first verse of the thirteenth chapter of the Book of Acts, we read: "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon (or Simon) that was called Niger, (or black)." If these two Simons are the same man, as seems likely, then we may conclude that he was an African Negro, a convert to Judaism who had come to Jerusalem to worship.

2. A second fact of which we may be sure is that he became a Christian. Not only so, but if he is the same man who some fifteen years later was numbered among the prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch, he became a Christian minister. It was from this church of which Simon was a
2. The first missionary activities to the Gentiles were sent. Here is a bit of the story:

"While they were worshiping the Lord, and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then after fasting and prayer they laid their hands on them and sent them off." It would seem therefore that among those who ordained these two great men, Barnabas and Paul, for their missionary task was a black man, a Negro, named Simon.

3. A third fact of which we may be reasonably sure is that Simon led his family to Christ. He not only became a Christian himself, but he built a Christian home. John Mark, who as you know, wrote for the Romans states specifically that Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus. There would have been no point in his making this assertion if Alexander and Rufus had not been well known to the church in Rome. Paul confirms this in his letter to the Romans:

"Great Rufus, eminent in the Lord, also his mother and mine." The fact that Alexander is not mentioned might mean that he was away or that he was dead.

Not only did Simon win his sons to Christ, but it would seem that he won his wife also. That I know is out of the ordinary. Women so often are stronger in their religious faith than men. Many a woman will go into the church and take every chick and child with her when her husband is a rank pagan. But not often do we see a husband stand true to the faith without the backing of his wife. But Simon had that backing. This good woman had doubtless been hostess to Paul more than once. So well did he know and love her that he adopted her as a second mother. Therefore he wrote "Greet Rufus ------also his mother and mine."

Of this much then about Simon we can be reasonably sure. He was an African Negro who as a convert to Judaism had come to Jerusalem to worship. While there he became a Christian. From this experience he went to be an evangelist to his own family and to become one of the helpful builders of the primitive church. He
built it not only through his personal ministry, but through the ministry of his wife and children.

II

How was Simon converted?

With a little reading between the lines I think we can answer this question with a fair degree of accuracy. On that fateful Friday of long ago, about nine o'clock in the morning, a procession took its way along the narrow streets of Jerusalem. That procession led by Roman soldiers was headed for a skull-shaped hill outside the city where they were to execute three prisoners. Near that same hour an African, Simon by name, was bidding his host good-bye to hurry to join the great crowds that thronged the sacred city. Just why he had spent this night in the country we are not told. His race might have played a part. His host might have been a dear friend, or he might have stayed because of the crowded condition of the city.

But be that as it may, as Simon neared Jerusalem he ran into a great throng going in the opposite direction. This no doubt astonished him as he thought to find others as eager to gain the city as he was. At once his curiosity became alert and alive. There he asked the reason. When one of the crowd told him that three prisoners were to be done to death, he was more curious still. Perhaps he was eager to see the bloody show. At least he keenly desired to see the men who were to be executed. Therefore being a husky chap he elbowed his way through the throng till he secured what amounted to a ringside seat.

There go the prisoners. They are so close that he could almost reach out and touch them with his hand. Two of them are fierce, rugged men to whom he gives a grudging admiration. They ask no questions as they walk jauntily forward under the weight of their wooden crosses. They are lith and sinewy and as hard as nails.
They are soldiers of the . Like men they have fought, like men they are determined to die.

The other prisoner presents a sharp contrast. He is not fierce of face like his companions. Instead, his eyes look an unspeakable pity. Simon has a strange feeling that his pity is not for himself, but for the hostile crowd. Then, too, there is a sharp physical contrast. There is no spring in the step of Jesus. This does not mean that he was a physical weakling as a recent writer of fiction maintained. The fact that Jesus could bear his cross at all indicates that he was a strong man. He had endured enough in recent hours to have killed a weakling. There was the struggle in the garden, betrayal by one of his friends, denial by another, forsaken by all. There were four torturing sham trials: Before Annas, Caiphas, Herod and Pilate. At last there was a scorging that was so savage that it alone sometimes brought death. Weakened by these hard ordeals this prisoner seems ready to fall in his tracks.

Simon is puzzled as he looks, but there is no admiration. He rather mutters to himself, "He shouldn't have begun a career that might end in execution if he could not see it through." Even as he is saying this the prisoner's knees buckle and he falls to the ground.

At this perhaps Simon decides that he has seen enough. With mingled pity and contempt he turns to make his way into the city. Then something happens that takes him completely by surprise. A heavy hand grips his shoulder and a voice, stern with authority shouts, "You, there! Take up that cross and get going." Simon goes hot and cold. He cannot believe that he has heard aright. He pretends that he has not heard at all. He tries to shrug off that rude hand, but it grips only the tighter. Then there is a flash of cold steel and a Roman soldier hisses, "Be quick." So, hot with shame and anger, anger at himself for allowing his curiosity
to entangle him in this ghastly mess, anger at this Roman bully who is forcing him, even with anger at the Prisoner who is too weak to bear His own cross, he shoulders his shameful load and falls into step toward Calvary. What, I wonder, did Jesus say to this outraged man? Did He say anything? We are not told. But if He said nothing with His lips we may be sure that He said something with His personality.

Had one told Simon that he was going to thank God through all His days and through eternity for this experience, he would have been amazed. Yet, that Roman soldier had forced him into the most transforming fellowship that a human soul can know. In the heart of Africa Drummond tells us that he came across black men and women who remembered the only white man they had ever seen before, David Livingstone. He declared further that their black faces would light up as they spoke of the kind doctor that passed that way years ago. They could not understand a word that he spoke, but they felt the love that beat in the heart of him. If Doctor Livingstone produced that impression upon these Africans, surely Livingstone's Master produced no less an impression upon this other African of a more distant day.

So far as the record goes Jesus never spoke a word to Simon. However I love to imagine that He did. It would have been so like Him. Glancing for an instant into that shamed face and into those angry eyes, He might have said, "I am sorry to have had to involve you in this." If that word from the lips of Jesus startled Simon, he was even more startled to hear himself answer, "That is all right. If it is any help to you, I shall be glad to carry it.

Thus they journeyed until they came to the foot of that skull-shaped hill. Then perhaps Jesus said, "You have been very kind. But let me bear it the rest of the way." But Simon will not hear of it. "I will bear it to the end, to the very top of the hill. Then I shall be rid of it, but it will not be so with you."

Thus Simon bore the cross to the place of crucifixion. Having borne it that far, he forgot his errand into the city. He remained to watch while the nails were
driven home. He heard the prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He stood by until the darkness settled down. Not only so, but he stood by until the darkness passed and the light broke afresh, the light of an everlasting morning. Then Simon, whose heart had been broken by such amazing love, took up the cross with a new eagerness and understood. That, I think, is how Simon was converted.

III

What does this story have to say to you and me?

1. It tells us what bearing the Cross really means. I am persuaded that there is a good deal of loose thinking with regard to cross-bearing. Now and again a friend will say to me, "Life went on smoothly until I had this tragic experience. I lost my health. I lost one that I dearly loved. I experienced the setting of a great hope in my life that was like the going down of the sun. Living has not been the same since then. But I have managed to bear it. That is my cross." Thus they think of the cross as any burden that we bear, whether we bear it willingly or unwillingly.

But to think of the Cross in such fashion is to misunderstand its meaning. The Cross is not just any burden. It is a burden that we bear voluntarily. Jesus made that plain with regard to His own Cross. When he spoke of the laying down of His life, He made it very plain that death was not thrust upon Him. His enemies were not to wrench life from gripping hands and clinging fingers. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." When Simon first shouldered the cross of Jesus, it was a shameful and hated burden and nothing more. But by and by as he bore it, he came to bear it willingly. He came to be glad to bear it. Its weight was changed into wings. This is one of the best possible illustrations of how a vexatious burden may be transformed into a Cross.

2. The second lesson we learn from this beautiful story is that the Cross is for all men and may be borne by all men. When Jesus staggered and fell under its
weight, it was not because of any weakness in spirit, as another has pointed out. It was because of the weakness of His body. In the presence of that weakness, he was not afraid to use the strength of a stranger from Africa. He does not lay his cross only upon the shoulders of the privileged. He does not lay it only upon the shoulders of the white man. He lays it upon the shoulders of any man who is willing to bear it.

3. The third lesson this story teaches us is the transforming power of the cross. When Simon shouldered that cross, he was hot and rebellious. But as he bore it in the fellowship of Christ he was re-born. So it may be with us. The cross is a load that lifts. 

4. It is not only through the Cross that we live, but it is through the Cross that we give life to others. As long as the grain of wheat determines to live its own life, it remains by itself, alone. But when it is willing to fall into the ground and die, it becomes fruitful. At first, forced to bear the cross, Simon bore it in bitterness. But when he came to bear it willingly he turned his face back home with a wonderful story to tell. It was a story that made a new home. It was a story that sent from that home beneficent streams that brought life to the world.

That is what the cross will mean to you and me if we take it seriously. On that great day of the feast, Jesus cried and said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me out of his inner life shall flow rivers of living water." What does it mean to believe on Jesus? It means to surrender to Him. It means to dedicate our lives to Him and to His service. It means to give with something of His full measure of devotion. Thus giving, from our lives as from that of Simon in the long ago, will flow rivers of living water. It is only such living water that can slake the thirst of men. It is only through the outflowing of such rivers that we can hope to change our desert world into a garden.
THE CONScript

"And they forced a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross—One Simon, a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus."—Mark 15:21 (Goodspeed)

Who was this Simon? We know enough about him to make us eager to know him better. I find myself wishing for a clearer view of his face. If this we may be sure, he gave to the world two well-known Christian ministers. Mark, who wrote especially for the Romans, reminds us that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus. Naturally, this fact would have been of no interest to those who did not know Alexander and Rufus. These two men were well-known to the church at Rome. One of them Paul specifically mentions in his letter to the Romans. "Greet Rufus, that eminent Christian, and his mother and mine."

Not only had Simon given two eminent Christians to the world, but he was blessed by being married to a Christian wife. This woman had had the privilege and honor of being hostess to Saint Paul. He counted her as one of his dear friends. She was even more than a friend. She had been a mother to him. "Greet Rufus, and his mother and mine." Therefore, since he was blessed by a Christian wife, we may be sure that he himself was a Christian.

This useful Christian was from North Africa. It is possible that he was a Jew who had come to Jerusalem to worship. I think it more probable that he was a native son of Africa. It is highly probable that he was a Negro proselyte. He is referred to again in the New Testament. This is in the first verse of the thirteenth chapter of the Book of Acts: "Now there were in the church at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene." Simeon is the same as Simon. "Niger", of course, means black. There were then in this church two men from Africa, Simon and Lucius.
I think there is a further hint as to this man's race by the fact that he was forced to bear the cross of Jesus. He was certainly not the only spectator present. There were doubtless hundreds of Jews belonging to that procession. Why then did they single out Simon? It is impossible to say with accuracy. But it would seem that these Roman soldiers knew how averse any orthodox Jew would be to bearing this cross. Many of them had rather die than to have touched it. The bearing of it would have made them ceremonially unclean. Here was a stranger, a black man. He would have no such scruples. Therefore, they forced the cross upon him. But whether white or black, Simon was a Christian in the Early Church who gave to his church and to the world a Christian family.

II

How was he converted? We can read his story between the lines. On that fateful Friday morning a mournful procession moved out from the praetorium and took its way down the narrow street, Dolorosa. Three prisoners are that day to be executed. These prisoners walk forward, surrounded by soldiers and by spectators. Each prisoner is bearing his own cross. Two of them walk jauntily forward. They are lithe, and sinewy and hard as nails. The other seems to be finding his burden too heavy for his strength. Jesus was not a weak man physically, as a recent novelist has indicated. The night before this execution had been one of such terror and torture that most men would have gone to pieces under it altogether.

First there had been the terrible emotional strain of Gethsemane. He had passed through that fateful hour when he had to take the will of God in His hand and look at it with perplexed eyes, wondering if this could really be God's choice for His Son. "Father, if it be possible," He prays, "let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Then, followed the shock of seeing the little group of friends that loved him best lose their nerve and flee like frightened sheep.

This was followed by the shock of the arrest. He was hustled in the small
hours of the night to stand four successive trials. First was the trial before Annas. This cunning old spider tried to entrap him in his web and induce him to say something that would incriminate him. One of his ruffians went so far as to salute him on His face. Failing of his purpose, He was hustled off to Caiphas. Here he was further outraged by hearing a religious leader about blasphemy in direct hypocrisy because He Himself had spoken only the truth. Third, there was a trial before Herod. This miserable fox had treated him as a fortune-teller and mountebank. At last he had decked him in an old horse-blanket and sent him with loud guffaws back to Pilate. Finally there was the trial before Pilate.

This was more than a trial; it was a partial execution, for Pilate, unwilling to sentence his Prisoner to death, sought to take the middle ground by having him scourged. This was a punishment so terrible that it often resulted in death. A whip of nine thongs, each thong tipped with lead, was used. Sometimes the man under torture was disemboweled in this gruesome process. In addition, Jesus had to be crowned with thorns and to wear the more torturing crown of the shameless lies that were told about Him to His face. No wonder He was so physically weakened that His cross was very heavy upon His shoulders!

As this procession was getting under way, Simon was leaving the home where he had spent the day in order to go to Jerusalem. He might have tarried outside the city on account of his race. As he comes near the gates of Jerusalem, he runs into the procession that is heading toward Calvary. At once his curiosity is aroused. "What is going on?" he asks one of the mob. "We are going to Golgotha," is the answer, "to execute three criminals."

At once Simon's curiosity is aroused. He has perhaps never witnessed an execution. This is his chance. Perhaps he will not care to see the show through to its bloody end. At least he will see the prisoners. Being a bucky chap, he elbows his way through the crowd until he gets what amounts to a ringside seat. There go the prisoners so close he could almost touch them with his hand. Two of them attract his attention at once and challenge his grudging admiration. As they walk
bravely forward under the weight of their crosses, they ask no mercy. With the jeering crowd they exchange gibes for gibes. Like men they have fought; like men they are determined to die.

But the one Prisoner is vastly different. His face is not hard, but very tender while very strong. His eyes are not fierce and cruel as are the eyes of His fellow prisoners. Instead they are full of unspeakable tenderness, as well as an infinite sorrow and pity. He looks upon the crowd as if they were the sufferers rather than Himself. Simon is not puzzled. He is half contemptuous too because the man does not seem able to take it like His two companions. "He ought not to have set out on a road that would take Him to such a goal," he said to himself, "if He has not the grit to face it." Then even as he looks, the knees of the Prisoner give way and He drops under the weight of His burden. With mingled pity and contempt, Simon decides that he has seen enough and turns to make his way into the city.

Then something happens that takes him completely by surprise. A heavy hand grips his shoulder and a voice, stern and authoritative, is shouting at him, "You, go! Take up that cross and carry it." Simon goes hot and cold. He cannot believe that he has heard aright. He is going to pretend that he has not heard. So He tries to shrug off the gripping hand, but it holds only the tighter. Then there is a flash of cold steel and the Roman soldier's sharp sword is pressed above his heart. "Be quick," he said fiercely, "or you'll die like a dog." So cursing inwardly, he takes up the fallen cross and heads toward Calvary.

This stranger is not with shame and anger. He is indifferent at himself for being so foolishly curious and entangled in this ghastly mess, He is angry at the Roman soldier, at his bullying tyranny, and at all for which he stands—that military despotism that lives like a crushing weight upon the world. He is even angrier at the Prisoner because He is too weak to bear His own cross. He turns to the Prince of this dominion and falls into the lowly glance at Him with fierce anger looking out from his eyes.

What did Jesus say? Did He say anything? We are not told. He said nothing with His lips, He certainly said something with His personality. Had
one told Simon that he was going to thank God through time and through eternity for this everyday experience, he would have looked at you in amazed awe. Yet unknown to himself, that Roman soldier had forced him into the most transforming fellowship that a human soul can know. In the heart of Africa near the great lakes, Drummond tells us that he came across black men and women who remembered the only white men they had ever seen before, David Livingstone himself. He declared that their black faces would light up as they spoke of the kind doctor that passed that way years ago. They could not understand a word that he spoke, but they felt the love that beat in the heart of him and could never forget. If Doctor Livingstone produced an impression upon these Africans, surely Livingstone's Master produced no less an impression upon this other African of a more distant day.

So far in the General Jair of Simon, however, perhaps Jesus never spoke a word. I love to imagine that he did. It would have been so like him. Gazing fervently into that shamed face and into those angry eyes, He smiled a bit wistfully: "I am sorry," He said, "to have had to entangle you in this." You know I am not quite up to myself today. Under ordinary circumstances I could have carried this cross well enough." Then Simon notices how panned that word from the lips of Jesus. Simon saw His back and His shoulders. What Jesus said to him had startled him, for he was even more startled to hear himself say, "That is all right. If it is any help to you, I shall be glad to carry it. After all, it isn't very heavy for me because I am rested."

Thus they journeyed until they came to the foot of that skull-shaped hill. Then Jesus said, "You have been very kind. But I can bear it the rest of the way." But Simon will not hear of it. "Let me bear it to the end," Then I will be more than I have borne it, but it will not be done with you," He thought. Simon knew the cross with it, but you won't." And so he bore it to the top of the hill. And having borne it that far, he forgot his errand into the city. He remained to watch the nails were driven. He heard the prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He stayed until the darkness settled down. Yes, he stayed on until the darkness passed and the light broke afresh. That was when the lights went on and as they always doing in the presence of Jesus. Eventually how Simon was converted.
III

What does this story have to say to you and me?

1. It tells us what bearing the Cross really means. I am persuaded that there is a good deal of loose thinking with regard to cross-bearing. Now and again a friend will say to me, "Life went on smoothly until I had this tragic experience. I lost my health. I lost one that I dearly loved. I experienced the setting of a great hope in my life that was like the going down of the sun. Living has not been the same since then. But I have managed to bear it. That is my cross." But to think of the Cross in this fashion is to misunderstand its meaning. The Cross is not any burden; it is a burden that we bear willingly. Jesus made that plain with regard to His own Cross. When He looked at the laying down of His life, He made it very plain that death was not thrust upon Him. His enemies were not to wrench His life from gripping hands and clinging fingers. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." When Simon first shouldered the cross of Jesus, it was a shameful and hated burden and nothing more. But by and by as he bore it, he came to bear it willingly. He came to be glad to bear it. Its weight was changed into wings. This is one of the best illustrations in all the world of how a vexatious burden may become a Cross.

2. The second lesson we learn from this beautiful story is that the Cross is for all men and may be borne by all men. When Jesus staggered and fell under its weight, it was not because of any weakness in spirit, as another has pointed out. It was because of the weakness of His body. In the presence of that weakness, He was not afraid to use the strength of a stranger from Africa. He does not lay His Cross only upon the shoulders of the privileged. He does not lay His Cross only upon the shoulders of the white man. He lays it upon the shoulders of any man who is willing to bear it. So of the South as I am, I confess that some of the most beautiful Cross-bearers I have known have belonged to the race to which I think
Simon belonged.

When I was a boy, among the ex-slaves that lived on my father's farm was a saint of unusual moral loveliness that we called "Uncle Jesse." Uncle Jesse had been more than my father's slave; he had been his friend, and that for more than half a century. They knew a common secret, these two men. And when my father was in his last illness, it was Uncle Jesse who was one of the watchers at his bedside. It was Uncle Jesse who was present when he slipped away. His tears mingled with our tears and when all was over on this side, I saw Jesse sitting under the shade of a tree on the lawn. As I went to him, he looked up and smiled and said, "I wonder where the Squire is now." Then he laughed softly to himself and said, "He is meeting my Father and his Father." And I understood why these two men, though separated from each other by the wide chasm of race, and by the wide chasm of culture and of ignorance, and by the wide chasm of master and slave, were yet bound together in bonds of a sweet and gracious brotherhood. They were sons of a common Father who had knelt at the foot of a common Cross. He is all-men's Christ, offering all men His Cross. We who compose the church today are His body. We are the ones who must bear His Cross if it is to be borne.

3. The third fact this lesson teaches us is the transforming power of the Cross. When Simon shouldered that Cross, he was hot and rebellious. But as he walked with its load upon his shoulder in the fellowship of Christ who was to die upon it, he was re-born. He learned to give somewhat as Jesus gave. So the Cross does for us, "As he laid down his life for us," says the apostle, "we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." It is only through life laid down that we truly live. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." For the Cross is a load that lifts.

4. It is not only through the Cross that we live, but through the Cross that we give life to others. As long as the grain of wheat determines to live its own life, it remains by itself, alone. But when it is willing to fall into the ground and die, it becomes fruitful. At first, forced to bear the Cross, Simon bore it
That is what the Cross will mean to you and me if we take it seriously. On that great day of the feast, Jesus cried and said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me out of his inner life shall flow rivers of living water." What does it mean to believe on Jesus? It means to surrender to Him. It means to dedicate your life to Him and to His service. It means to give with something of His full measure of devotion. Thus giving, as from your life and mine, as from that of Simon in the long ago, will flow rivers of living water. It is only such living water sources that can slake the thirst of men. It is only through the outflowing of such rivers that we can hope to change our desert world into a garden.

But in Hospital
THE CONSCRIPT

Mark 15:20-24 "And they compel one Simon to bear his cross". Mark 15:21

When Jesus fell under the weight of his cross, Simon was compelled to take over. This he did in all probability, not gladly, but in hot anger and shame. By and by, however, Jesus so took captive his heart that he came to bear the once hated burden with joy. Thus we see what cross-bearing really means. It is not just any load that life may lay upon us, with or without our consent. It is one that we bear of our own choice. This is what Jesus is saying when he declares, "No man taketh it (my life) from me, but I lay it down of myself". It was as Simon thus bore the cross for love's sake that he found life for himself and was able to give life to others.

Lord: We thank thee that thy cross is a load that lifts; that it is a weight that gives wings. Grant us, to share thy cross today that we may come to know this through our own experiences. Amen
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