GENUINE GREATNESS

Luke 1:15

"He shall be great in the sight of the Lord."

This is the prophecy that was uttered with regard to John the Baptist. It was uttered before John was born. Months later the angel of suffering came to Elizabeth out among her native hills, and she held her first-born son in her arms. The swift years slipped by and he grew to manhood and became a compelling preacher of righteousness. At last he was put in prison for conscience' sake. The prison was especially trying to him because he had lived his life in the great out-of-doors. Then he was further tried with the fact that rumors of the doings of Jesus were trickling even into his prison cell. He heard that He was exercising a power in the big outer world that was beyond the human. He was opening blind eyes and cleansing lepers and even raising the dead. "Why, then," came the persistent question, "does He not set me free?"

This nagging question became more annoying each day. At last John falls into black doubt. He is dreadfully afraid that his ministry has been little more than a mistake. He must know the worst or the best. So he sends two of his disciples with this question, "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" "Art Thou He that should come," — that signifies doubt. "Or do we look for another," — that speaks of faith that stands firm in spite of doubt. "Maybe," John says, "You are not the Christ. Maybe I have made a mistake. Even if I have I will never despair. I am sure that God is going to manifest Himself in human flesh; Therefore,
even if I have spoken out of time, if I have been deceived, I will yet stand upon my watchtower and wait for the rising of the Sun of Righteousness.

When these two friends of John had come to Jesus and had gone away with the message of assurance, the Master, fearing that the multitude might discredit John because of his doubt, said to them, "What went ye out in the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What went ye out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? What went ye out to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, much more than a prophet. Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." So here we have the fulfilling of the prophecy. The angel said, "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord." Jesus says, "He is great."

I

Here, then, is genuine greatness. This is the verdict of Him who sees things greater and sees them whole. So often we mistake the counterfeit for the real. We call pygmies giants and giants pygmies. We distinguish between men and men with distinctions that must seem altogether petty to the clear eye of God. Swift is laughing at this tendency of ours when he tells how the king of the Lilliputians was taller than any of the men of his court by the breadth of his thumb nail, which, he says with biting sarcasm, was enough to strike an awe into the heart of the beholder.

Do you remember that rather crude poem in one of McGuffey's readers where a lad is asking his father wherein Alexander was really great. It begins like this:

"How big was Alexander, Pa
That people called him great?
Was he like some tall steeple high,
His sphere a hundred-weight?"
The boy's idea of greatness was altogether childish. And yet when we call him great because he was a genius at hurling phalanxes with irresistible force against the enemy we are little less childish. Is he really great in spite of the fact that he allowed his appetite to seize him by the nape of the neck and force his lips down to the bunghole of a keg where he drank himself to death? Is Napoleon great because he turned Europe into a shambles while he himself was petty and vain, cruel and selfish and lustful? We need, many of us, to revise our estimates of greatness. Otherwise we shall find ourselves worshiping at an image of clay and thereby gathering dust and dirt, not upon our knees only, but upon our souls as well.

II

In John we see true greatness. In what does it consist?

1. He was great in his self-giving. "He shall drink neither wine nor strong drink." That does not mean that a man is necessarily great because he is a total abstainer. A man may be very sober and very petty. This abstinence from wine stood for the vow of a Nazarite. It indicates that John was fully surrendered, completely dedicated to God. And every life that is truly great is a consecrated life. No man who puts self first can ever be genuinely great.

2. John was great in his spirituality. "He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit." What comes of dying to self? What is the result of this self-dedication on which Jesus insists so earnestly and so persistently. There are those who believe that it means the giving up of all that makes life worth living. They believe that the keynote of Christianity is emptiness. But both the Bible and experience show that the very opposite is the case. When we ask the Apostle John, for instance, what difference Jesus has made in his own life and in the lives of his fellow Christians, he gives this illuminating answer,
'Of His fullness have we all received.' For our blindness has come His vision. For our weakness has come His strength. For our emptiness has come His fullness.

Here is a man who tells us frankly that he has suffered the loss of all things. He speaks of himself as a separated man. But he does not consider what he is separated from. That, he feels, is not worth considering. He rather rejoices over that which he is separated unto. He is separated unto the gospel of Christ. In another place he shouts, "I am crucified with Christ!" What a tragic experience! Yet Paul did not look upon it as tragic in the least. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Life only comes by way of death. The secret of every rich and full life is in its self-surrender. The cause that lies back of our restlessness and heart-hunger and emptiness is just this, that we are not fully consecrated.

3. He shall be great in his usefulness. "Many of the Children of Israel shall return to the Lord their God." The glory of the dedicated life is that it is Godlike in character, that it is also Godlike in service. "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also." To live for the goals for which Christ lives, to be as He was, the mediator of God to men, is to live greatly. It is to be truly great in the sight of the Lord.

III

And the glory of this greatness is that it is within reach of all our hands. The same greatness for which so many are clamoring is beyond most of us. It is a peak that is too high and too forbidding for our feeble feet to climb. It would be useless for me to tell you that you could be a great artist or a great poet or a great warrior or a great statesman. There is no use for you to undertake to flatter
me by saying that I might one day cut a great figure in the business world, that the windows of Wall Street would one day rattle at my footstep. To be acclaimed by the world or any considerable part of the world is absolutely beyond our reach. But that greatness that is recognized by Christ Himself is available for all of us.

How does it come? How did it come to Jesus. Paul tells us in that illuminating passage in his letter to the Philippians: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not a thing to be clung to to be equal with God. But He made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. And to be found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." And what was the outcome? "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and hath given Him a name that is above every name." The way to the crown is always the path of the cross. It was so in the days of Jesus. It is so in your day and mine, "He that seeketh to save his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life shall keep it unto life eternal." That is as true as any formula in mathematics.

There is a story that years ago an old soldier, battered and bruised by the cruel fists of war, was accustomed to stand on a certain street corner in Vienna and play his fiddle for the meager coins that the passers-by might drop into his old worn hat. His receipts were pitifully small for he played but poorly. But one day the greatest violinist of all Europe chanced to pass that way. His heart went out to the beggarly soldier, and having no money with him to give, he gave himself. He asked the beggar for his violin and when the beggar had surrendered it into his hands, the bow that he drew across its strings became a magic wand. The people gathered and filled his battered hat with a wealth that he had never known. And he realized the highest possibilities of his violin by surrendering...
it to another.

So it is with ourselves. Life runs on in pitiful and beggarly fashion for many of us, and then one day we stand face to face with the cross. We stand face with the Christ of the cross and he says, "Son, give me thine heart." And we put our torn and discarded life into His hand in the realization that we have made a bit of a mess of things and must go on doing so to the end of the chapter. Then wonderful to tell, he accepts the poor gift that we offer, and changes its poverty into wealth, its discord into music sweeter than a harp with a thousand strings. He is looking very wistfully at you and me this morning, asking for the gift of ourselves. May we have the wisdom to respond. May we come with this song in our hearts:

"Here I give myself to thee,
Friends, and time, and earthly store;
Soul and body thine to be,
Wholly thine for evermore."

This is the open road to true greatness.
THE BABY

Whatever shall this child become?  
—Luke 1:66 (Moffatt)

Here is an interesting scene. A group of adults—mother, father, near-kin—are gathered about a cradle. In that cradle is a baby, a little boy. They are watching this child with wide-eyed wonder. They seem as fascinated by him as if he were a unique miracle. They are as interested as if nothing like him had ever come before or ever would come after. And indeed they are right. Every baby differs from every other. When God makes a man, he breaks the mold. So they look at this miracle and ask in awed amazement, "Whatever shall this child become?"

I

A baby is ever a fascinating something. Some writer has pictured Carlyle holding a baby in his arms. It was not his own baby. Carlyle never had any babies of his own. That perhaps accounts for much that was lacking in the great Sage of Scotland. It is his cousin's baby. But he cannot leave off marveling at it. "Just think," he is saying softly, "Shakespeare was once like this." Yes, and so was Jesse James and John Dillinger, and Pretty Boy Floyd, and Benito Mussolini, and Adolf Hitler. Yes, and Moses was once like this, and St. Paul, and John Wesley, and Jesus Christ. There is no measuring the fascination of a baby.

"Where did you come from, baby dear?  
Out of the everywhere into the here.

Where did you get your eyes so blue?  
Out of the sky as I came through."
What makes your cheek like a soft white rose?
I saw something fairer than any one knows.

Whence that three-cornered smile of bliss?
The angels gave me at once their kiss.

And how did you come to us, my dear?
God thought of you and so I am here.

1. The baby fascinates us first of all because he is a creature of
mystery. He has in his chubby hands amazing and almost unbelievable possibilities.
These hands may help to tear our deepest hopes into shreds. They may be
stretched out in benediction. They may help to build a better nation and a
better world. These dimpled feet may wade through slaughter to power and
shut the gates of mercy on mankind. They may be made the instruments upon
which Almighty God will walk to the ushering in of a new day. Those tender
lips may give God a chance to speak words of healing and help to the broken
sons of men. The baby fascinates us by his amazing possibilities.

2. Then the baby fascinates by his adorable weakness. We love strong
things I know. We are thrilled by sight and by power. We love the sturdiness
of the hills. We love the sight of the sea as it booms its rage against the
rocks. We admire strong navies and strong armies. But we love weakness too.
It gives us a chance to do something that is God-like. What is God doing
morning, noon, and night from eternity to eternity? He is putting His infinite
strength at the disposal of our weakness. He is undergirding our frailty
with His Everlasting Arms. And when we put our strength at the disposal of
weakness, we are privileged to do something that is God-like. The baby
fascinates us by his weakness.

3. Finally, the baby fascinates us by his amazing power. What a mighty some-
thing is a baby! A wise prophet of the long ago said, "A little child shall
lead them." How profoundly true! It is impossible to live with a baby without
falling in love with the baby. It is also impossible to love a baby without being made a bit better by that love. A baby is so innocent, so pure, so fresh from the hand of God that to love him is to be drawn a bit closer to God. How many of us have understood God better since we have felt the hug of our baby's arms and the kiss of our baby's lips! For how many heaven as ceased to be a far off and unreal place and has become homelike because we have a baby there!

Do you remember Little Nell in the "Old Curiosity Shop"? How tenderly and graciously she led her old grandfather with the hot fever of the gambler in his blood into ways of charity and peace! I love to think of Coset, the little chap who came into the arms of his mother branded by shame. And yet that little child so laid his chubby hands on his mother's heart that she came to love with a love that had caught so ethereal of the love of the Cross. I love to watch little Eppy as she so fills the heart of the miserly weaver of Ravelo until there is no longer room in his heart for the harsh love of gold because that heart has become so full of the love of a little child.

In the "Road Mender," Michael Fareless tells of a rough old organ-grinder who was one day grinding out uncouth tunes in a filthy slum street. But there was a little girl there who was charmed by his music. Out of appreciation she held her little soiled face up to that of the organ-grinder to be kissed. But he was harsh and hard and cruel. He did not love children. They bothered him and annoyed him. So he merely slapped her face and sent her away weeping.

A few days later an accident sent this harsh organ-grinder to the hospital. There he had a little time to think. The wistful face of the child that offered to kiss him haunted him. He resolved that if he ever got well he would seek for her until he found her. So when he was able to walk once more, he bought the records that children loved the most and set out on his quest. Day after
day he hunted, but in vain. He never found the little girl with the soiled and wistful face. But he found other children and as he found them he found a tenderer heart and a purer life. By and by through constantly seeking and constantly loving, he even found the Christ of little children and he was born anew.

While I was pastor in a Texas city, there was a successful merchant that I was very eager to reach, but he was a bit shy of ministers. When I would go to see him in his place of business, he would get extremely busy. He seemed bent on wrapping up everything that he had in his store. I think if he had had a school-bus he would have put a piece of paper around it. Knowing that I could not talk to him while he was busy, I spoke to one of his clerks. "What is your boss most interested in?" I asked. "Has he a hobby?" "I do not know about that," came the answer. "But he has a little girl that he fairly worships." With that information I had to be for the present content.

A few weeks later I noticed this merchant in my congregation. In some measure I forgot the other hundreds that were present and talked to him. I told him something of the importance of religion in the life of a child, of how natural it is for a child to look past an earthly father that he loves into the face of One Who is the Father of us all. I might have told him how that the children of parents who attend Sunday School and Church have a higher personality rating than those who do not. I warned him of the tragic of cheating his child through sheer carelessness out of the supreme wealth. He listened intently. Not only so, but he fought his fight and won his victory.

A few days later I stopped into his store. He hailed me the moment I entered. "Come over," he invited. And when I reached him, he said, "Here is a friend of mine. He has two little girls in his home and he is not a Christian. I am trying to win him." Here again a little child had led. A child fascinates us by its amazing possibilities, by its adorable weakness, by its marvelous power.
II

"Whatever is this child to become?" I have reminded you before that this is a question of supreme importance. It is a question of supreme importance to the child. Whatever your child may win in this world if he fails to win Christ, he has missed the secret of life's highest joy and usefulness. Nobody can miss the values that are represented by vital religion without being miserably cheated both for time and for eternity. What your child becomes means ever-lasting thing to the child himself.

What your child becomes is of vast importance to you. You are bound up in a bundle of life with him. If he goes wrong, he will break your heart. He has it in his power to put in your hands a cup of bitterest tragedy. He also has it in his power to put in your hands a cup of human blessedness. You are bound up in a bundle of life with that joy of yours, that girl of yours. What they become, therefore, is of vast importance to you.

The answer to this question is of vast importance to the church, to the city, and to the world. I have reminded you of that army of invasion that is going to take over every single thing that we possess. That army will take over our homes, our banks, our schools, our churches, our legislatures, our houses of congress, our very all. If ours is to be a better world, it depends upon the child. The world only moves forward as it moves forward on the feet of little children. This then is our big question.

How shall we answer it?

III

"Whatever shall this child become?" Is that an intelligent question or is it not? Is the future of the child a matter of chance or is it a matter of training? I have reminded you that the Scriptures, that science, that common sense, that experience all declare with one voice that what the child
becomes is a matter of training. That is, it is up to us in those homes he lives to decide the quality of his life. We can make him a Christian if we will, and that is the finest service we can render.

Did you ever hear of the Little Palace Beautiful? It is John Bunyan who tells of the Big Palace Beautiful. But another tells us that passing through this world he came upon the Little Palace Beautiful. In that Palace there were four rooms. In each of the four rooms a little child lay asleep. In the room that looked out toward the north lay sleeping the child-that-never-was, a little fellow that was hoped for, dreamed of, but never came. He was like one of Charles Lamb's dream children to whom he used to tell stories in the twilight. When the stories were over, the children would vanish saying, "We are neither of Alice nor of thee. We are the children that never were." So in the room toward the north lay sleeping, the child-that-never-was. In the room toward the west lay sleeping the child-that-was, the little fellow that came and stayed just long enough to gather our hearts into his chubby hands and then went away. He was the child that was loved and lost for a while. In the room toward the south lay sleeping the child-that-is, the little fellow that roams in our nurseries today. In the room toward the east lay sleeping the child-that-is-to-be.

What are we to do about these four babies. The wise author tells us that we are to take all the love and care and tenderness that we would have given the child-that-never-was, that we would give the child-that-was, that we should like to give the child-that-is-to-be and focus them on the child-that-is. In him is centered all the hopes of tomorrow.

These are trying, desperate days, but we can never despair so long as there are babies. That was a dark day when the Hebrew people were living in mud-huts in abject slavery. Had you said to them in their bitterness,
"Cheer up! A baby was born to a slave-woman last night. He will usher in a new day."—they would perhaps have thought you little better than a madman.

If when Rome's eagles had spread their black wings over the world and the beak of Rome's eagles were sucking the heart's-blood of the world you had said,

"Take heart! A baby was born in a certain stable last night!"—those listening might have sneered at you for your pains. But that Baby did lift expired off their hinges and change the whole course of human history. The year 1809 was one of the black years for Europe. Napoleon was doing then just what Adolf Hitler is doing today. Civilization threatened to fall in ruins. But Frank Boreham reminds us that that black hour was shot through with light because of the babies that were born that year. It was in that dark time that William Gladstone was born in Liverpool and Abraham Lincoln was born in the wilds of America. It was in that year Tennyson was born and also Elizabeth Barrett Browning. In that year Frederick Chopin was born in Warsaw, and Felix Mendlesohn at Hamburg. It was a bad year for the armies of England but a fine year for babies. It is God's purpose to change our dark days into one of morning brightness if we by His grace give the right answer to this big question—

"Whatever shall this child become?"

To be intelligently interested in a church or to be interested in your neighbor, school, church, city, state, nation or...
A CHILD IS BORN

"Whatever shall this child become"

Luke 1: 66 (Moffatt)

Here is a group consisting of father and mother and near relations. They are all gathered about a cradle. In that cradle is a crowing, kicking baby. They are looking at this fresh miracle as if nothing like it had ever happened since the morning stars sang together. They are looking as if nothing will ever happen like it again. In so doing they are right. Every baby is unique. Every baby marks a new beginning. To folks with eyes to see a baby remains from generation to generation the most fascinating something in all the world.

I.

Why is the child so fascinating?

1. It fascinates us by its admirable weakness. Here is a lovely little creature that must lean on us for its strength. Of course, we love powerful things. We admire the power of the locomotives. We admire the ruggedness of the hills and the sturdiness of the mountains, but we love weak things too. Weakness gives us an opportunity to do something that is God-like. What is God doing from generation to generation? For one thing he is putting his might at the disposal of our weakness. When we take a little child in our arms we are privileged to do a God-like something. In fact, we have understood God better since we have felt the hug of our babies arms. A child fascinates us by
its weakness.

2. Then a child fascinates us by its power. There is no measuring the power of a little child. When the prophet said, "A little child shall lead them," he was not speaking in terms of poetry, but of sober fact. There is no measuring the helpful changes that have been wrought in hearts and homes by little children. You remember the miserable old weaver of Raystown, named Silas Warner. He had loved a woman who had disappointed him. In bitterness he had come to love his gold instead of the woman who had broken his heart. A more miserable miser could not be found. But one day a change began in him. That change went on till he was completely remade. His winter-gripped heart became colorful with spring. What happened? He came home one night to find a little child asleep on his heart. Little by little he took her into his heart till he himself was completely remade. A child fascinates us by its might.

3. Then a child fascinates us because of its amazing possibilities. It is interesting to grip a handful of wheat. In so doing you know that you have in your hand resources that rightly used might feed a whole nation. To have an acorn in your pocket is to go about carrying a child of a forest. Yes, and given enough time, it is to carry sufficient timber to build a city. But a child has possibilities infinitely greater than that. One has pictured Thomas Carlyle holding a baby in his arms. It is not his own baby. He never had any children. That fact may account for many a defect in his character. This is his cousin's baby. But as he looks at the little handful of life he cannot leave off wondering at it. "Just to think," he said, "Shakespeare was once like this." That is true, so was Socrates, so was Saint Paul, so was Jesus Christ. Yes, and what is equally amazing, so was Al Capone, so was John Dillinger, so was Adolph Hitler, so was Benito Mussolini. All of these, good and bad, the best and the worst started out as nothing but a little bundle of amazing possibilities. They had the possibilities of climbing to the highest heights, or of digging down to the
"A Child Is Born"

Page 3

deepest hell. To wonder, therefore, that this little group asked earnestly
and expectantly, "Whatever shall this child become?"

II.

Is there an answer to this question? Certainly there is an answer. It
would be strange indeed if we could determine the kind of harvest that we are
going to reap in our children and yet could have nothing to do with the kind
of harvest we are to reap with our boys and girls. I want to make four simple
assertions with regard to boys and girls. Perhaps I have made them before.
Perhaps I shall make them again. I feel that I cannot make them too often. They
are fundamental. They contain all our hopes for tomorrow. They hold in their
hands the hopes of us who are parents. They hold the hopes of our children.
They hold the hopes of society.

1. We can if we will make our children Christian. Given the proper
opportunity, every child can be a Christian. This sounds like a truism I
know. The answer of everyone of us is, "Of course." But it is not, of course.
There are millions who still assume that one must be mature in order to be a
Christian. There are still millions who assume that whether one ever becomes a
Christian or not is largely a matter of chance. A child can become a Christian
because it is by nature possessed of those characteristics that enter into the
making of a Christian.

First, it is one of the fundamentals of Christianity that we are saved by
faith. In order to be a Christian we must believe. Who finds it easier to
believe, a child or an adult? Everybody who has dealt with children knows that faith
is native to a child. A child will believe anything we tell him. It is by de-
ceiving them we teach them to believe otherwise. I have reminded you before that
if you have always dealt honestly with your child, you may take your little fel.
low upon your knee and tell him you climbed up last night and bit a piece out of the moon. He will not ask you how you got there, he will ask you, "How did it taste?" Now, said to say, we often undermine the faith of our children by deceiving them. We promise them prises that we never deliver, make engagements to go with them on picnics or play with them, and then allow something else to interfere. We threaten punishments, some kind of discipline, but we fail to deliver. By and by the child however trustful gets to the place where he cannot trust us anymore. Jesus must have had this in mind when He said, "It is better to have a great millstone around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea, than to offend, to cause to go wrong one of these little ones that believe in Me."

Second, a child is naturally humble. Did you ever walk down the street with your small boy or girl, and you were leading the child by the hand, but he desired to go on his own. This he did till he came to the street crossing, and then he reached for your hand. There is something beautiful and heart warming about that. A child naturally leans on a stronger power. That a privilege it is to take that natural longing for help and make it a means of an enabling of your child to lean on God. We have not come to where we are without having found it necessary many times in our weakness to reach up to the hand of our heavenly Father. Sometimes we grow too self-sufficient to lean on God. But this beautiful humility is native to the child.

Finally, a child is naturally loyal to what he loves. As we grow older we are sometimes a bit ashamed of members of our own family if they are not what they ought to be. A mother said of her girl who had gone to a finishing school, "I spent so many thousands of dollars teaching my daughter that a mother didn't have any sense." That is, the girl had come home to be ashamed of her mother's old fashioned ways. But a child is never ashamed to be loyal to the one he loves. He will turn aside without a blush from the arms of a
queen to hug a black mammy if that black mammy has a place in his heart.

Some years ago I was walking down the streets of a certain city where I was pastor, when I saw a little girl about six or seven years of age with her face pressed against the wall of a brick building. Her little body was shaking with great sobs. I, of course, had never seen her before, but I could not pass her up. I took her by the arm as gently as I could, and turned her around and looked into her tearful face, and said, "What is the matter?" "I have lost my daddy. He was here awhile ago and now I can't find him," she sobbed out. I took her by the hand and said with a confidence that I did not quite possess, "Come on we will find him together. I will help you." and she looked up and smiled through her tears as if she were perfectly sure that I would not let her down. So we walked together hand in hand two or three blocks. Then she suddenly snatched loose from me and struck out in a run. There were a good many folks on the street so I lost her for the moment. But I heard later when I found her with her arms around a rather filthy chap, who struck me as being more than half drunk, and with her face buried in his dirty shirt, and with scarcely favoring me with a glance, she said, "I have found my daddy." Frankly, I would have been ashamed of him, but she was not because she loved him with the loyalty of a little child.

2. Not only can a child be a Christian, but a child can become a Christian easier as a child than at any other time of life. That is just plain common-sense. Jesus said, "Except ye be converted and become as a little child you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." But when is it easiest to become as a little child. Is it when you are thirty, or when you are fifty, or when you are seventy or is it easier when you are a child? Certainly it is easier to be child-like when you are a child than at any other time. Then, the child has not formed habits. In Christian living and unchristian living it is often so hard for us adults to pray. Naturally it is the plainest common-sense that a
child can be a Christian and become a Christian easier than at any other time in life.

3. Then those who become Christians, as boys and girls make the best Christians. That, too, is just plain, everyday, common-sense. This is not to deny that many have been converted in their mature years and have made vastly useful men and women. But those who are carrying on the work of the church today are those who became Christians as boys and girls. Who make the best tennis players? Not those who begin at forty, but those who begin when they are young. Who make the best musicians, the best scholars, the best of anything? Always those who begin when they are young. There are many vast things that we cannot learn at all if we wait till we are old.

Some years ago I was holding a meeting in Saint James, Montreal, Canada. It was then perhaps the largest protestant church in Canada. It was dreadfully cold. Part of the time it was twenty two degrees below zero. Then Saturday came I was invited to a ski party out on Mount Royal. So I borrowed all the clothes I could find and put on all I had and went out to the show. It was marvelous. By and by the friend who had been kind enough to invite me, said in sober earnestness, "Dr, we have brought along an extra pair of skis, would you like to try them?" I looked at him in amazement. "I have a family to support," I answered. I wasn’t then near as old as I am now, but I was too old to start a dangerous pastime like that. A man may be born anew when he is old, but he comes to his best only by entering into this experience when he is young.

4. Not only can a boy or a girl be a Christian, not only can they become a Christian easier as a boy or girl than at any other time, not only do they make the best Christians, but, if they do not become Christians as boys and girls, the chances are overwhelming great that they will never do so. We read a story of an amazing miracle in the Book of Acts. A man was healed. And, the
author says in wide-eyed wonder, "The man was above forty years old." That is something to wonder about. Few men will pass middle life untouched by the gospel of Christ ever become Christians. Therefore, I would press this fact upon the heart of every father and mother, if your boy or your girl does not become a Christian before they reach maturity, chances are that they will never enter into this experience.

III.

What then is the answer to this question? That will your child become?

The answer to that is not a matter of chance. It is not a matter of guess work. It may be a matter of certainty. What your child becomes depends largely upon two institutions.

1. It depends upon the Church. Every child ought to be raised in the Church. I know many join without an adequate knowledge of what it means. But a lamb even if it is silly enough to have no idea of what a sheep-fold is would be better off in a sheep-fold on a winter night than out on the mountain. If the child does not understand what the Church is about, it is your solemn duty and privilege to teach him. For every child ought to be in the Church. The Church can help you to Christianize your children.

2. But by far the supreme influence in the life of the child is the home. You can so act within the home as to make all the teaching of the Church go for nothing. Whatever the Sunday-school teacher may do with his or her brief half-hour each week can go for little or nothing if you show by your personal attitude that you count the Church a cheap and trifling thing. But if you give it the place that its importance demands, if you really put first things first, then the child will see and understand. And you who have shared with God in the creation of a new personality will also share with him in the creation of a new creature in Christ Jesus. This is the biggest of all privileges. May God grant
that it be the experience of everyone of you.
"WHATEVER WILL THIS CHILD BECOME?" Luke 1: 66 (Moffatt)

Here is an interesting scene - a father and mother with a group of relatives and friends are clustered about a cradle. In that cradle is a little boy. He is a small baby who I dare say looks very much like all other babies. Yet this group is gazing upon him with wide-eyed wonder. They seem to be as keenly interested as if he were the only baby that had ever been born. They seem to feel that nothing like him has ever come into the world before or ever will come again in all the centuries. Therefore, they cannot leave off looking at him and asking questions about him.

A child is always the most fascinating creature in the world.

1. He fascinates us by his adorable weakness. We love strong things, I know. We admire the ruggedness of the cliff, the strength of the oak, the majesty of the mountain that climbs toward the dawn behind the stars. We are fascinated by might, but we are fascinated by weakness too. Weakness gives us a chance to do something God-like. What is God doing from eternity to eternity but putting His might at the disposal of our littleness. What is He doing except giving His strength to our weakness. What is He doing but eagerly girding us in our need with His everlasting arms. So, when we give our strength to weakness, it is a God-like privilege. In fact, some of us have understood God better since we have felt the grip of baby hands upon our fingers and the hug of baby arms about our necks.

2. Then the baby is a creature of power. His influence is all but limitless. When the prophet said, "A little child shall lead them," he was speaking the sober truth. How many have been led into lives of unselfish devotion by the tender, clinging hand of a little child. You remember the old organ grinder of the road. He was hard and cynical and sour. But one day when he was grinding out his uncouth tunes in an uncouth street, a little girl held her face up to him in sheer appreciation of joy
his music had brought her to be kissed. But he was too mean and selfish to kiss her. Instead, he slapped her and sent her away in tears.

A few days later, he was hurt in an accident. He was taken to the hospital where he had to endure long weeks of nagging pain. During these hours he had time to think. There was one something that haunted him and that was the face of that little girl with its wistfulness and with its tears. He resolved that when he was well again he would seek her out and try to atone for his unkindness. So when he was once more on his feet, he bought the records the children loved the best and went in search of her. For weeks and months he sought for her, but all in vain. He never found her, but he found other children and in finding other children, he found a tenderer heart. At last, he found the Christ of little children. There are few greater benedictions that can come into anybody's life than the love of a little child. Children are weak but also mighty.

3. Then a child fascinates us by its amazing possibilities. One has pictured Thomas Carlyle with a baby in his arms. It was not his baby. He never had any children of his own - that was his misfortune. It was his cousin's baby, but he looks into the face of the little fellow with wide-eyed wonder. He can never leave off marveling at it. "Just to think," he said, "that Shakespeare was once like this." Yes, and so was Socrates and so was Plato, and so was Saint Paul, and John Wesley and Jesus Christ. Yes, and so were Jack Dillinger, and Pretty Boy Floyd, and Machine-Gun Kelly, and all the other public enemies who have been such deadly enemies to our society in recent years.

Scientists are reminding us how much alike the embryonic man and the embryonic monkey. You could not tell one from the other. Yet in reality they are separated by distances infinitely wider than the spaces between the stars. One of them is going out to an existence that is essentially of the earth earthly. There is no possibility that the monkey will go greatly wrong and there is no possibility that he will go
greatly right. He has no capacity for the heights and none for the depths. In the very nature of things, he must live his life on the dull, drab level of mere animalism. There is nothing that can be done for him that would make him greatly different from the ordinary monkeys about him.

But with the child, the situation is different. In the rather dry genealogy that Luke gives us of Jesus, he closes with this word, "Son of Adam, son of God." That is the truth about every child. He is akin to the lower orders of life. He is also akin to God. Therefore, he is a creature of almost limitless capacities. He has in him unmeasured possibilities. He is a strange mingling of light and darkness, of stardust and mud. He has the possibilities of the deepest hell in him and he also has the possibilities of the highest heaven. No wonder, therefore, that these wise parents and friends of the long ago asked in reverent awe as they looked into this baby's face, "Whatever will this child become?"

II.

Now, I submit to you that the question asked by these parents of the long ago is the biggest question in the world. There is none other that is comparable with it. I know we are prone to forget this. Other things seem to loom so much larger. The questions of our own business, the questions relating to our own pleasures, the big affairs of state, our international relationships - all these loom large, but they are relatively insignificant in comparison with the question of the future of our boys and girls. That is the biggest question that concerns the child itself. It is the biggest question that concerns the parents, though some of us forget it. Yet our life is bound up in a bundle with the life of a child. That above all else is the biggest question that has to do with society as a whole.

This is the case because what our individual life, what our home life, what our church life, what our national and international life is to be tomorrow, depends upon what we do with the boys and girls that are in our homes and in our schools today.
An army of invasion is on the march right in our midst. That army is going to take over every home, every school and college and university, every place in congress, every judges chair, every pulpit, the position of every Sunday school teacher. All that we have today is going to pass into the hands of others. The hands into which these treasures are going to pass are the hands of our boys and girls. If we are to have a better world tomorrow, than we have today, it depends absolutely upon the answer we give to this question, "Whatever shall this child become?" This is far the biggest question in the world and there is no other in the class with it.

III.

Now since this question is so fraught with destiny, it is of highest importance that we find a proper answer. But is it possible to do this? Is it a matter of mere chance what our boys and girls are to become, or is it not? When this father and mother looked into the face of their boy, were they asking this question in sheer desperation, were they asking it in the expectation of an answer such as we so often hear today, "The Lord only knows," or did they believe that they had it in themselves under God to determine the moral qualities of the life of their child? Did they believe that this baby would or would not live a worthwhile life according to some priests, or as a result of what they themselves did? It was their faith that they could determine what their child was to be. That is, that they could give a definite answer as to the moral qualities of this baby's life.

1. Now in so saying, they were in line with the whole teaching of the Bible. There is nothing more emphatic than the insistence of the scriptures on the fact that children are not simply born but they are also made. Therefore, when we hear a wise man say, "Train up a child in the way it should go and when it is old, it will not depart from it," he is stating what he saw illustrated in the lives of men and women about him. John, for instance, became a Prophet of God. It was not a matter of chance,
it was a natural outcome of the training that he received in his young and tender years. It would be strange indeed if we could not tell what sort of harvest we are going to reap in our fields, the kind of harvest we are going to reap among our stock, and yet, the kind of harvest we are going to reap in our boys and girls be left mere haphazard. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." That is as true now as ever. It is true in every department of life - what you sow in your field, you will also reap. What you sow in the heart of your child, you will also reap.

2. This affirmation of the scripture is sanctioned with unqualified assurance by modern science. There is nothing of which the psychologists are more sure today than that children are not simply born, but they are made. They believe that there is a definite answer to this question, that we have it in our power to determine the adventure, the kind of men and women that our boys and girls are to become. Therefore, when as fathers and mothers we ask, "Whatever will this child become," modern science joins it's voice to that of the scriptures in saying, "It is up to you." It depends upon the chances that you give that plastic and growing life.

3. Then these dogmatic assertions of the scriptures and modern science are born out by experience. Across the centuries, the Jews have asked this question and have given it an answer that was assured. When a Hebrew father and mother looked into the face of a baby and said, "Whatever will this child become," they were certain of one thing and that was that child was going to become a Jewish child. They saw to it by taking to heart the command of their scriptures, "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." That is, all life in the home is to be permeated by religion.

When a Catholic father and mother stand beside the cradle and ask this same question, they are equally sure of an answer. They believe that their child is to
become a Catholic child. There are some of the faiths of our Catholic friends that seem to us utterly absurd. We do not for the life of us see how an educated man can be gripped by such beliefs in this age of science. When gripped as they are, it is not because the faith is reasonable, but because they were taught it in their young and tender years. It entered into the very warp and woof of their being and they find themselves unable to break away from it even under the terrific pressure of a fuller knowledge.

But sad to say, when a Protestant asks the question, the answer is often tragically uncertain. We say, "The Lord only knows," and hurry off to business or to the movies. We say with a certain broad-mindedness, "I am going to wait till my child is old enough to know what it is all about and allow him to make his own choice."

Therefore, we have tens of thousands today who are the products of Christian homes who are the products of Christian homes who are still, thanks to their early training, decent thinking and decent living people with a firm sense of right and wrong, but they are giving no such safeguards to their children. They are looking carefully after their physical welfare but leaving their moral and spiritual welfare to mere chance, hoping that through the mere crumbs picked up here and there their children may become the men and women that they long for them to be. Now to take a position like this is tragic beyond all words. It is to sin against your child. It is to sin against society. It is to sin against God. What that child becomes is up to you and if you fail,"you had better had a great millstone hanged about your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea." These are the words of the tenderest  that the world has ever known.

As Christian people, we know that the greatest safeguards that a child can have are the safeguards of religion. This is not speculation, it is not guess-work, it is experience. Ask the psychologists who have the highest personality rating? They are the boys and girls who attend the church school. They are the boys and girls with
religious parents. Ask authorities the source of the delinquency of childhood and youth? Who are these that fill our reformatories and jails in their tender years? They are not those who with their parents find their place Sunday after Sunday in the church. Judge Faussett of New York said that of the 4,000 under 21 years of age that he had sentenced in recent years, only three were regular attendants at Sunday school.

Let me remind you of certain facts. I have mentioned them before and I mention them again without hesitation. A child can be a Christian. He can be a Christian because the qualities that go to make a Christian are inherent in the life of every child. A child naturally believes. A child leans in weakness on a higher power. Not only can a child be a Christian, but a child can become a Christian easier than anybody else.

"Except ye be converted and like little children, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." I submit to you that it is easier to be like a child when you are a child than to be like a child when you are forty of fifty years old. Not only can a child become a Christian, but a child makes the best Christian. Finally, unless we become Christians as children, the chances are that we will never become Christians. Therefore, since it is in your power to Christianize your boys and girls, it becomes at once your highest privilege and your most solemn responsibility.

IV.

Now what are the agencies that make their contribution to the answer to this question? Broadly speaking, they are three.

1. The home.
2. The church.
3. The outer world

By "the outer world" I mean all the influences that are brought to bear on the child and youth outside the home and the church, the day school, the gang, and the movies, and the street, etc.
Now, of course, we may eliminate this issue as a teacher of religion. The state is neutral when it comes to definite teaching of religion. Many of the other influences are definitely opposed to religion. Our social order is not sufficiently Christian to make the streets of our city safe for boys and girls. One of the Old Testament prophets looking ahead to that good day when the Kingdom of God should come, gave this striking prophecy, "The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." There is coming a time when the city streets shall be a safe place even for little boys and girls, but that is not today. It has been recently suggested that we have a curfew law because our streets are not safe. Our fathers used to sing, "Is this vile world a friend of grace to help me on to God?" The answer is No. If then, we are to Christianize our boys and girls, we have only two agencies upon which to depend.

2. The home. This is the first school to which the child goes and the most important. It is a part of the divine plan that the child should be shut away during the plastic and formative years of his life from the evil influences without. It is God's plan that it should be shut in with those who love best, so that a wise and Christian answer may be given to the question of the child's future. It is during these early years from birth to the age of six or seven that the child receives its sense of values. It is also in these years that it receives its conception of God. If our work is well done during these formative years, then the bent of our child is determined and no power in earth or hell can utterly wreck it.

How are we to bring our children to their best? It is by the proper training. We must teach them. There must be formal teaching. A strange school sprang up a few years ago—those were the votaries of self-expression. They made up their minds they would not teach their children religion, they would not compel them to go to any church or church school. They would leave them to form their own choices. Of course, such a position was at once non-sensical and tragic. Oftentimes, it was a mere apology for parents who were too lazy and self-indulgent to be bothered.
How queer that any parents should take this position with regard to religion when they would not take it with regard to anything else in the world. You do not expose your child to dogs and razors and what not by saying you are not going to bias him in favor of certain playthings, but you are going to let him play with whatever he desires: You do not expose your child to water, milk, and lysol saying you are not going to favor him in what he is going to drink, but you are going to leave the choice up to him. You do not give him wholesome food with food that is not wholesome and leave the choice to him. Why? Because he hasn't the data for making an intelligent choice. Neither has the child the data for making an intelligent moral choice unless such is given to it by the father and the mother. We are to teach our children formally. That is not only the business of one parent, but of both.

Then, we are to teach our children not only formally but by what we are. What we say, is of importance, but what we do day by day in the lives we live, this is of far greater importance. How often what we say is entirely contradicted and blotted out from mind that there is quite by what we do. There is nothing so sensitive as the mind of a child. No one is so influenced by a right or wrong atmosphere. If the atmosphere of your home is Christian, the child will become Christian as naturally as the blooming of a flower. "Daddy," said a little chap as he played with his father, "Is God as nice as you are?" "Oh, a lot nicer!" said the father. "Then he must be awfully nice," replied the boy, "Gee, I like Him." That child was on the way to become a Christian.

2. The second influence to help us in the Christianizing of our childhood and youth is the church. Experiments conducted by the greatest psychologists of the day showed that children who attended church school had higher personality ratings than those who did not. They showed that even while children did not go to church school, those whose fathers and mothers attended, had higher personality ratings than those who did not. Therefore, those fathers and mothers who are serious in their religious lives give their children a chance. Those who are not religious do not give them a chance.
That is not the findings of a few preachers, it is the findings of cold-blooded scientists who were out in search of the facts.

But if the church is to make its best contribution to our boys and girls, it must have the cooperation of the home. If church attendance and supporting the church represents to you not a dull drab chore but a privilege, your child will understand it and appreciate it and likewise act accordingly. But if the church is shut into a corner, if you support it with your means with a wry face and give it only the leavings, if you are slipshod and half-hearted in your attendance, then the child will recognize that and act accordingly.

It is my conviction that a few things are needed today more than a deeper conviction in regard to the work of the church and to its unmeasured importance in the safeguarding of our boys and girls. A young chap who had made up his mind to quit the church recognized in the congregation a leader in his business and professional life whom he greatly admired and said to himself, "If that man can see something in religion, then maybe there is something there for me." In making a business of your religion, you are making a contribution to every young life in your community. We forget this, therefore, we weaken our church, we weaken its teaching for us, we weaken its pastor by not giving the church our whole-hearted and constant support. We have more than 4,000 members in St. Luke's. If one-eighth of that number would take their church membership as seriously as some of you take your membership in a civic club, the night service and the prayer meeting would be thrillers that would draw numbers of young people who today never think of coming. Why do you go to your civic club? It is your business. It is equally your business to be in your place when your church is trying to render the highest possible service to the community. I confess to you it is a source of genuine grief and disappointment to me as your pastor when so many of you in positions of leadership leave the responsibility of the difficulties of the church to the few instead of taking some upon yourself. I had a member while I was in the city of Memphis who was president of
twenty-seven different organizations. But I could count on his presence at Sunday school, at the evening service, at prayer meeting as truly as I could count on the presence of the pastor. And the power of that man for good was perfectly amazing. These are difficult days for our boys and girls and young people. They need the church. The only way I know to fence them in the church and hold them is to build around them a wall of earnest God-fearing Christians who will make it their business to be at the services of the church not because they enjoy the preaching or the singing, but because it is their business and because they have an obligation to the community to those taking their places that they can discharge in no other fashion.

Here then is the supreme privilege as well as obligation which we have before us. What bigger or better thing then can we do than to help build a better world through the building of better men and women. I cannot do much with you who are already grown, but there is no measuring of what we, working together, can do with our boys and girls. But it is costly. We cannot slip our way through it without paying the price. Years ago there was a farmer who stopped his team and wagon in front of a country store to chat with a friend. He dropped the reins for a moment and the spirited team took fright and ran away. By an almost super-human effort, he grabbed the reins, missed them, and then managed to seize the bridle of the lead horse close to the bit. He hung on desperately until at last he pulled them up one-half mile down the road. By that time, he was bleeding at the mouth, nose, and eyes. He had allowed the team to pound him to death. His friend caught up with him at last and took his head in his lap and said, "You ought not to have done it. It wasn't worth it." But with his last breath, he whispered this word, "Look in the wagon." When he looked, he saw there sleeping on a pile of straw his six-year old boy and nobody said the price was too great.

I am speaking to you now on behalf of your dearest treasure. There is no contribution you can make to life like that of God-fearing sons and daughters. There is no joy you can know greater than that joy. There is no sorrow greater than the sorrow of
the knowledge of a thankless and neglectful child and realize that he is what he is because of your neglect. Our boys and girls do not all come out of Christian homes. All the more reason that they need the atmosphere of the church. The church and the church alone can administer its best only as its members, especially the leaders, administer their best. Make these services gripping, vital, and spiritual. No pastor on earth can accomplish that result, but it can be accomplished by the pastor and the people working together. Thus working, we can give an answer to this biggest of all questions. I will be an answer that will bring near that good day when the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ.
"She spoke to all who were living in expectation of 
the liberation of Jerusalem." Luke 2:38 (Goodspeed)

Here is a face that having once seen we find it hard to forget. There is 
a fascination about it that compels us to look again and again. The possessor of 
this face is an old woman. She has suffered many a loss. She is now more than 
four score years. These thieving hears have stolen much from her. The have 
stolen the night from her hair and the roses from her checks. They have stolen 
the spring from her step. They have even stolen her loved ones. Her husband 
has been dead for many years. But there is one treasure to which she has clung 
in spite of other losses. That is the treasure of expectancy. She is speaking 
here to expectant folks. She is able to do so because she is expectant herself.

I.

Now I count expectancy as a prize to be coveted. I would say to every one 
of us as we begin this new year: With all our getting, get expectation. It is 
a prize that is of vast worth. It is a prize also, I am convinced, that is with-
in reach of all of us. We cannot all be brilliant or highly successful as the 
world terms success but we can all live expectantly. To live expectantly is to 
live richly.

"Of course," you answer. But it is not of course at all. There are those 
who do not look upon expectancy as a treasure. They regard it more as a liability 
than as an asset. For instance, there is a beatitude that the man of the street 
knows perhaps better than any beatitude that Jesus ever uttered. It runs like 
this: "Blessed are they that expect nothing for they shall not be disappointed."
There is some truth in this pessimistic word. That is the reason it has lived. Any lie that is one hundred per cent pure will soon die. The lie that lives is one that has a bit of truth in it.

What is true about this colossal lie? This, at least, that those who expect much from life are often disappointed. Generally speaking, all of our dreams do not come true. We do not win all the prizes upon which we set our hearts. Moses had one great life purpose. That was to bring his people into the Land of Promise. But he died before his purpose was accomplished. The best chapter of his book, according to his own thinking, was never written. Life failed in this respect to measure up to his expectations.

Such tragedies as this have taken place so often that many timid souls are afraid to expect. But their gains through this failure to expect are far less than their losses. I may refuse to expect to knock a home-run when I go to the bat. This will save me from being disappointed if I strike out. But it is far more likely to keep me from going to the bat at all. If I expect Santa Claus and hang up my stocking, it may be entirely empty on Christmas morning. Even then, that stocking will be just as full as that of the man who did not believe enough to hang his up at all. Besides I shall have had the fun of expecting Santa Claus, while you have missed. If at the end of the day, in spite of my faith in eternal life, I lie down and sleep forever I shall be no more dead than the man who expected nothing. But I, at least, shall have had the joy of expecting.

One of the most brilliant young actress' of a score of years ago made a shipwreck of her marriage. She seemed to have taken marriage far more seriously than the average of her profession. Her failure, therefore, so broke her heart that she declared that she would never let herself love again. From here on, she would expect nothing thus she would save herself from disappointment. But her's was not the road to riches but the road to poverty.
I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage;
The linnet born within a cage
Who never knew the summer woods.

Nor, what may count itself as blest
The heart that never plighted troth;
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, what' er befal
And feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

Surely it is far better to have lived expectantly even if we are disappointed
than never to have expected at all.

II.

What then is the good of expectancy?

1. First, it is one of the supreme secrets of joyful living. It gives a
tang to the feast of life. It is so important that there is no living richly
without it. It matters not how much life dumps into your lap, it matters not
how bountifully the treasures it puts into your hands, if expectancy is wanting,
life has no thrill for you. You will still live under a leaden sky and your
days will be as gloomy and depressing as a dust storm.

On the other hand, if you are rich in expectancy, if you can hear the call of
glad voices from beyond the bend in the road, if you can see the beaconing of hands
beyond the crest of the hill, if you can be sure of the dawn of a better tomorrow,
you can find life rich in joy however empty your hands may be of other treasures.
All the prizes of earth can't make you happy without expectancy. The very least
that life can give you will make you rich if you can live on the tip-toe of
expectancy.

When I was a boy, we had a debating society at Flat Woods. In this great
forum, we would discuss the pressing question of the hour. Among these was: "Resolved married life is happier than single life". The discussion of that question was always worthful in logic and eloquence. But there was no discussion that gave wider play for our vast gifts that this: "Resolved that there is more happiness in pursuit than in possession". That is a big question yet. I came down to marry a couple at the church some months ago. Somebody had put a big placard on the rear of the car in which the newlyweds were to leave. It was the picture of a bored man gazing at a woman who looked fed up. Under it were these words: "When you get what you want, you don't want it."

Well that is true of a few prizes. It is not true of those values that last. But no gains however great, I repeat, can compensate for the loss of expectancy. No present, however weak, can kill our joy so long as we are expectant. To live expectantly is to live joyfully.

2. Expectancy is of worth because it is a mark of real youth. Every Alice who is normal lives in a wonderland. The child who is not expectant, the youth who does not dream of what he is to become and what he is to do is not in reality young. To lose our expectation is to be old whether we are seventeen or seventy.

Here and there along the way I have heard members of the official board say: "We are going to get a young pastor at our church so he will appeal to young people." But a young pastor makes no special appeal to young people. They appeal especially to old people. Youth cares nothing for the age of the minister provided he is young enough in heart to share their hopes and dreams and to speak their language. Any minister regardless of the number of his birthdays would be old to them if he had lost his expectancy.

What do the passing years do to us, generally speaking, that make us old? About the worst that they can do is rob us of our expectancy. Old age that is of the heart ceases to look ahead. It ceases to see visions and to dream dreams. It looks for its golden age back to yesterday instead of forward to
tomorrow. To be expectant is to always be young.

3. Expectation is the pathway to discovery. This is true in every department of life. There are many worthwhile things that we fail to see simply because we are not looking for them. You can sometimes pass a friend without ever recognizing him because you were not expecting to see him. Who have discovered the continents and mapped the heavens? Who have invented the automobiles and the airships? The expectant folks. Who have tracked germs and destroyed dangerous diseases? The expectant people. While millions were saying yellow fever is with us now and will always be with us, there were those who believed it could be abolished. They set out expectant to seek the cause. That brought the mosquito to trial and he was convicted and yellow fever passed away. So cancer will likely go one day. But it will not be destroyed by the hopeless but by the hopeful. Not by those who expect nothing but by those who expect much.

Not only is expectancy the road to discovery in the realm of what we know of the material but of spiritual as well. In the long ago when Jesus came as a little child, who discovered God in that helpless baby? It was the expectant and they only. There were three wise men who had been hoping and dreaming and expectant. There were a few shepherds, there was Simeon, and this woman Anna. Who discovers God in this age? Only the expectant. Expectation is in every road to discovery.

4. Finally, to be expectant is the pathway to our becoming and doing our best. It is the road to our highest usefulness. Here are two young men. One of them tells himself frankly that his opportunities are poor, that his ability is mediocre. That therefore he has no chance. What happens? He is likely to do what the man with one talent did. Throw his opportunity away.

Here is another who has no better opportunities nor no greater gifts but he expects something from life. He expects something from himself. He refuses to bargain with life for a penny. He will go out as did the man with two talents
and multiply himself oftentimes over and over simply because he was expectant enough to do his best. When I went to Webb School, I entered a class with those who in many respects were two years ahead of me. I held that class and finally lead it because I frankly refused to give up my expectancy.

Then expectancy is contagious. It not only sends us resolutely to the task but it enables us to enlist others. Here is a man on board an ancient merchant vessel. That vessel is breaking up under the brutal fists of a tempest that has lasted nearly two weeks. The men on board are defeated. They are hopeless. Their expectancy is utterly dead. Bye and bye a queer chap comes among them, lifts his voice and cries, "Be of good cheer". That man made his way safely to shore. Not only so but he helped to save every man on board.

This high expectancy was one secret of the might of the early church. When this church was young it spread over that Roman world like the coming of spring. What gave otherwise ordinary men and women such tremendous power? They were so magnificently hopeful. There was a word that was constantly on their lips. That word was Marana tha. When they greeted each other in the morning instead of saying goodmorning, they said Marana tha. When they went to one of their meetings, the best word was Marana tha.

What did they mean by that word? They meant "The Lord is come". They lived in constant expectation that their Christ who had been victorious over death was soon to come back visibly and bodily to set up his kingdom. Any morning, any hour, they felt the heavens might blaze with His advent glory and that He would usher in a day of complete victory. This expectancy made them irresistible.

Now we have discovered that in looking for an immediate and visible bodily return of Jesus they were mistaken. But while they were mistaken as to the method of His coming, as they were mistaken about His first advent, they were not mistaken about the fact of it. Jesus did come again at Pentecost. The coming of Jesus is continuous. He will come any moment into your heart and mine,
if we give Him welcome. This ought to make us far more expectant than these early saints. Because a spiritual Christ can do for us far more than a physical Christ could possibly do. About the saddest loss that a church and individual can possibly suffer is the loss of expectancy. And that loss has come to multitudes. To lose expectancy is to lose usefulness.

III.

How can you and I live expectantly?

1. To live expectantly requires something more than to have a sanguine temperment. There are some folks that are naturally more optimistic than others. There are those who by nature seem to look on the sunny side while others cling to the sad side of life as ivy about an old ruin. By expectancy, we must go deeper than temperment.

2. No more is expectancy a matter of circumstances. It is easy for some folks to be expectant, we feel. Life has dealt with them so bountifully. It is hard for others because they have been so battered and bruised with the hard fists of circumstances. But this is not the answer. Many of the most hopeless and bored folks in the world have had everything come their way, while we can find some of the most expectant among those that have suffered most.

Take Jesus himself. The story of His life is the most tragic ever told. Here is one who came with a heart as roomy as the world and hands full of blessings for all men, but in his hour of greatest need His friends forsook him. His enemies nailed Him to a cross. But though they killed His body, they did not even wound His expectancy. He went back to meet His Father declaring that He had finished His work, that He would build His church and that the gates of death should not prevail against it.

3. How was He able to do this? It was not because of His temperment or because of His circumstances but because of His sureness of God. It is only as we find God for ourselves that we can be sure of completely realizing
if we give Him welcome. This ought to make us far more expectant than these early saints. Because a spiritual Christ can do for us far more than a physical Christ could possibly do. About the saddest loss that a church and individual can possibly suffer is the loss of expectancy. And that loss has come to multitudes. To lose expectancy is to lose usefulness.

III.

How can you and I live expectantly?

1. To live expectantly requires something more than to have a sanguine temperament. There are some folks that are naturally more optimistic than others. There are those who by nature seem to look on the sunny side while others cling to the sad side of life as ivy about an old ruin. By expectancy, we must go deeper than temperament.

2. No more is expectancy a matter of circumstances. It is easy for some folks to be expectant, we feel. Life has dealt with them so bountifully. It is hard for others because they have been so battered and bruised with the hard fists of circumstances. But this is not the answer. Many of the most hopeless and bored folks in the world have had everything come their way, while we can find some of the most expectant among those that have suffered most.

   Take Jesus himself. The story of His life is the most tragic ever told. Here is one who came with a heart as roomy as the world and hands full of blessings for all men, but in his hour of greatest need His friends forsook Him. His enemies nailed Him to a cross. But though they killed His body, they did not even wound His expectancy. He went back to meet His Father declaring that He had finished His work, that He would build His church and that the gates of death should not prevail against it.

3. How was He able to do this? It was not because of His temperament or because of His circumstances but because of His sureness of God. It is only as we find God for ourselves that we can be sure of completely realizing
our expectation. The more expectant we are, the surer we are of finding Him and the better we know Him the more expectant we become. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged". Of whom is the prophet speaking. Not of me nor of you. Not of the greatest and best that ever lived. He is speaking of God.

Paul to whom we referred a little while ago had learned the secret of His high expectation. Therefore we hear him pray this prayer: "The God of hope fill ye with all peace that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit." If we are to be hopeful today, we cannot fix our faith in ourselves. Certainly we cannot fix our faith in the political leadership that occupies the seats of the mighty at this hour. This leadership is disappointing beyond words. Now as never before, we are driven back to this word of the psalmist: "Now, Lord what wait I for, my hope is in thee".

It is only in the fellowship of our Lord that we can face the future expectantly. Some years ago a seasoned mountain climber sets out with a youth to scale one of the difficult peaks of the Pyrenees. Night overtook them before they reached the summit and they stopped for shelter in the mouth of a cave. During the night there was a fierce storm. While the storm was yet raging, the horizon blazed with a fierce light. The youth had never seen anything like it before. He turned to his companion in utter terror: "The world is coming to an end", he said. "No", came the quiet answer, "the world is not coming to an end. That is only the dawning of a new day." If we see such a day after this night of storm, we must have a full faith in God.
"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."

It is a Sabbath day in Nazareth. A certain young townsman is present today who has recently become famous. He has just returned from a visit out into the big world. Here rumor has it he has preached with power. He has even performed deeds that were beyond the mere human. And now he is home again and the people are thronging the little church, for they know he will be there. Church attendance has been his habit since infancy.

Those who came expecting to see this young preacher were not disappointed. They noted him early in the service sitting possibly well toward the front. Their interest greatly deepened when they saw him stand to signify the fact that he wanted to read the lesson of the morning taken from one of the prophets. When the roll was handed to him he turned till he found this text: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me." And having read this passage, he proceeded to preach to them a wonderfully winsome sermon about himself.

Now it is not about this particular service that I am concerned to speak to you this morning. I rather want us to consider the elements in it that belong to all times. For all of our regular services ought to have all the fine qualities in it that characterized this thrilling service in the little church at Nazareth so many years ago. I am confident there is never a service, however prosaic, but what has in it many of those elements that belonged to this service of the long ago.

I. Who was at church that day?

The same kind of crowd that attends your church every Sunday. The audience may be large or small, it may be educated or uneducated, it may be a little community gathering or a cosmopolitan mass. But whatever kind of crowd you have there are at least four persons in it that were in this crowd to which Jesus spoke long years ago.

1. In your audience and mine there was a man that was poor. He may not have been poor in this world's goods, but he was poor in spirit. He had a sense of need that the world had not been able to satisfy. He had a burden that within his own strength he could not carry. He had a thirst that the fountains of time had not been able to slake. He had a hunger that the bread of man had not been able to satisfy. He was poor, poor in spirit.
It is that sense of poverty that brought him to the house of God. The week had been a hard, lonely week for him. He had been worried and harrassed. He had been hard driven by his work. He had been vexed by his associates, or those under his authority. He had failed. And with a sense of failure and of need and of Spirit poverty he came out to the house of the Lord. And he sat in your congregation waiting and longing for a word that would change his want into wealth and his poverty into riches.

2. Sitting somewhere in your audience was a man who was blind. His physical sight was as clear as yours. But somehow he had lost his vision. In some way he had been lugged into the dark. And in his mute way he was crying to you as blind Bartimeus cried by the wayside. He was eager for some message from you that had cunning to banish his night and bring him the morning. He sought from you a mystery of enlightenment.

3. Another man who was present was a man who was bound. He was a man who had lost his freedom. He may have been the bond slave of some evil habit. He may have been caught in the toils of some ghastly and ugly sin. Or he may simply have been the slave of himself. But he was there in his bondage. It may be it was an unconscious bondage. It may be that his slavery had crept upon him with such slow and soft foot steps that he was scarce aware of his own slavery. Or he might be conscious of his bondage. He might have been tearing at them with his ineffectual human hands. But conscious or unconscious, he was present, making his mute appeal to you for help.

4. The fourth man who was present was the broken-hearted. You may always count on his being there. Sometimes he does not tell you that his heart is broken. He wears the sack cloth in secret. Shame shuts his lips. Or he conceals his sorrow for the sake of others. But whether his sorrow is known or unknown, he was in your church last Sunday with his broken heart.

From what particular sorrow he had come we do not know. It may be that he had just suffered a financial reverse. It may be that he had just buried his first born. It may be that the pall of a domestic tragedy had settled down like blackest night over his home. It may be that he had disappointed himself and had hung crape upon the door of his dead ideals. But whatever may have been his sorrow, I say he came to you and gave you a chance to help him and a chance to be a blessing to him. So the audience at Nazareth is a kind of a universal audience.

II.

The second element that was abiding in this service was the sermon. What had the preacher to say to this congregation of poor and blind and enslaved and broken-hearted people?

1. He told them good news. He did not come to speculate about beautiful theories. He did not come to discuss the topics of the forum and the market place. He came to tell good news. That is, he told them of certain events that were historical. He informed them of actual happen-
ings. He brought them the Gospel. He told them the old story about which the angels sang. It was a story of how the poor in Spirit might be made rich thru the power of Christ.

2. He told the blind how they might receive their sight. He told those that were in the dark how they might find their way into the brightness and beauty of abiding day. He showed them the pathway that leads to the immortal dawn. He came with the touch of day-light to the eyes that sin had blinded. He told them the way to restore the lost vision of the soul.

3. His message was a message of freedom. He said: "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. He showed that there was no bondage from which Jesus Christ cannot save us, that there is no slavery from which He cannot emancipate us; that even when hand-cuffed by vice and chained by selfishness, He is able to bring us into the large liberty of the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.

4. The preacher had a word of comfort upon His lips. He had been given the tongue of the learned that he might know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. His hands had been made skillful to bind up the broken heart. He told the mourners that as one whom his mother comforted, so should be the comfort of God their Father.

So this sermon was not delivered to the man in the moon. It was not delivered to certain individuals who were not there. The preacher spoke home to the needs of those who were actually present, to those who are always present. And, believe me, you never get any considerable number of people together in God's house but that you find a congregation such as this described here. And what a blessed privilege it is to know that we have a message that is just the message that our congregation needs.

III.

The final element that entered into this service was the preacher. It was a task of no mean proportions to meet the needs of a crowd like this. It is no mean task to meet the needs of the crowd that faces you Sunday by Sunday. It is a task infinitely beyond our powers unless we have the assistance that this preacher had in the long ago. It is easy to say a piece, but it is not easy to set the captives free. It is not easy to restore lost vision. It is not easy to bind up broken hearts.

How will the preacher be able to accomplish this?

He was not able to do so thru any gifts that are natural to himself. You cannot set men free by mere eloquence. You cannot open blind eyes by oratory. You cannot bind up broken hearts by epigrams. You cannot enrich the spiritually impoverished by giving them glittering phrases and musical sentences.
Now can we expect to accomplish these high results by profundity or breadth of learning. The preacher ought to be educated. He ought to have the highest education. No amount of culture will accomplish the high task that he is called upon to perform. The he has all knowledge and understands all mystery, his ministry will yet prove fruitless if he goes to his preaching without the essential equipment that is mentioned here in the text.

What, then, is the secret of effective preaching?

Just this. The preacher must have an experience. He must be able to say humbly yet truly just what the Master said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He hath anointed me to preach." The men who have materially influenced the world have differed in a thousand particulars. They have been temperamentally different. They have been different in point of culture, in point of native ability. But they have all been alike in this. They have been men who were full of the Holy Ghost. This is the one thing needful.

The Apostles were wonderfully trained men. They had been taught by the most marvelous Teachers that ever set foot on this planet. When His miracles were performed, they were there. When His wonderful parables were spoken, they were privileged to hear. They companied with Him in beautiful intimacy. They leaned upon His bosom. They saw the sun darkened and the graves open and saw all nature shudder at the agony of her expiring God. Then they saw visions as He had risen from the dead. They were by when He ascended into Glory. Marvelously were they equipped.

And yet their Master did not think that they were ready for the ministry. They had a wonderful story to tell. Peter was ready to tell how he had been forgiven and taken back after that awful night of shame. John was ready to tell of his beautiful intimacy. But Christ said: "Not yet. Tarry ye in Jerusalem till ye be imbued with power from on high."

Not only was this baptism of the Spirit necessary for the disciples of Jesus. It was necessary for the Master Himself. He did not go about doing good in the energy of His inherent Divinity. The secret of the life He lived while in this world was this: He was anointed by the Holy Ghost. It was in this power that He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil. And it is well for us today to remember that the disciple is not greater than His Lord. If Jesus could not do His work unassisted by the Spirit of God, then you and I may not expect to do ours unassisted by that same Divine Spirit.

And, believe me, my brethren, you will meet the needs of our congregations and of our world in no other way. The Devil is perfectly willing that we shall have all other equipment if we leave off the power of the Holy Spirit. Without Him you may go forth with a million dollars worth of ability and only buy a poor penny's worth of usefulness. With Him you may go forth with only a penny's worth of ability and buy a million dollars worth of service.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me." Can you say that? You
Text: Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing. 
Luke 4:21

This subject was given to me by your Program Committee. However, had I been choosing a subject for myself, I couldn't have chosen one that is more congenial. Through the long years of my ministry I have preached constantly and consistently from the Bible. One reason for this, I am sure, is that when I entered the ministry, that was the uniform custom. Every minister was expected to take a text and in some fashion expound the scriptures.

Naturally I formed this habit from the beginning. As I grew older and more experienced, as I listened to and read the sermons of others, I have never had the slightest inclination to do other than Bible-centered preaching. I am not forgetting that there are those who preach some good sermons without any special use of the Bible. There are those who first prepare the sermon, then hunt a text so as to give it a scriptural flavor. They first build a pop corn stand, then seek to clothe it with a theatre.

Now I am not going to say that these do not do good and helpful preaching. But in my opinion, they would do better if they made greater use of the Bible. It was not entirely easy for the Israelites to make bricks when plenty of straw was furnished, but when they had to turn out at least two bricks a Sunday without any straw, they became as desperate as many preachers.

I use the Bible not because it is an end itself, any more than is a sermon. I use it because it makes the task of
preaching far easier. I have been a persistent preparer of sermons. What I have lacked in quality I have in some measure made up in quantity. But I am sure that I could not have produced one-fifth of my output without the help of the Bible. I use the Bible, not primarily because it needs me. I use it because I need the Bible. I simply could not get on without it.

I think it is not only the easiest way to preach, but, if we use it wisely, far the best way. There are not as many people interested in the Bible as we should like to see. But, even so, far more are interested in it than are interested in any other book. When you face your congregation any Sunday there is at least one something on which your most forward and your most backward saints and sinners agree. All of them would like a simple gospel sermon.

Bible preaching is not only the easiest and the most helpful, but it is the most fresh and up to date. This is the case for many reasons. Supremely it is the case because it is concerned with two entities that never change. The first is God. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The second is human nature - man. Individually he is capable of all but infinite change, but as a race he remains the same. George Eliot pointed that out many years ago. She was impressed by the broad sameness of the human lot "that the heart of humanity remains unchanged through all the centuries, ever pulsating to the same great needs, the same great loves and longings". The Bible is ever fresh because it comes up out of life. Its great truths were lived before they were written down.
That we may see the importance of the Bible in our modern preaching, let us ask the question "What ought a present day sermon be?" Here in my opinion are some of its characteristics.

First. A sermon ought to be interesting. That is a fundamental necessity. You say it ought to be true. Of course! We are assuming that. But we all know that it is possible to speak the truth in such a slovenly fashion that an ordinary lie enthusiastically told would dance like Fred Astair in comparison with it. What we say may be as true as the Sermon on the Mount, and as fundamental as the Decalogue, but if nobody is listening we had better be making mud pies. We are wasting the time of our congregation. We are wasting our own time. Worse still, we are vaccinating our people against preaching, so that the real thing won't take when it comes along. We are training them in the tragic art of inattention.

Bible-centered preaching is interesting, because, intelligently done, it is always relevant. Take for example those two believers of long ago, Abraham and Lot. In the language of our day, they were both good churchmen. Yet, though both were religious, in the richness and fullness of their personal lives, in the influence they had upon their own families, in the influence they had upon the generation of which they were a part, and the influence they have had upon the centuries, they are as far apart as the spaces between the stars.

Why this difference? It was not that one was honest and the other a crook. They were both honest men. It was not that one sometimes looked to the heights in prayer when the other fixed his eyes upon the world. They both prayed. But while Lot was a
a religious man, his religion was never a vocation. It was always an avocation. With Abraham, on the other hand, his religion was the biggest fact about him. He put God first.

These two men are as up to date as your last heart beat. There were never before so many people in the Church as there are today. Elton Trueblood tells us that there are three times as many as there were 100 years ago. That is there are three times as many in proportion to the population. But the question can not but haunt us: Are we three times as salty, three times as joyous, three times as dynamic? Our failure is that of Lot — we are not fully committed. If the preacher will let these ancient saints and sinners that walk the paths of the Bible speak their own message in his pulpit, he will have a word that is invitingly gripping.

Second, Our preaching must be positive. A gospel of denunciation won't win. Of course, there are times when we must tear down in preparation for building, but the preaching that truly matters is positive. The whole Bible backs this, Jesus above all.

"Resist not evil" He urges, "or resist not him that is evil". What an amazing word from the lips of one who resisted evil more mightily than any other that ever lived and who resisted it even unto death. What is He urging? He is surely not urging a listless attitude toward evil. He is rather pointing out the way of victory over evil, so He declares we must employ wiser tactics than a frontal attack upon evil. He is urging that we use wiser tactics. He seems opposed to the frontal attack upon evil.
authority of the letter. We may have that. But there is the higher authority of the truth itself.
The great truths of the Bible are not true because they are in the Bible. But rather they are in the Bible because they are true. Take for instance the greatest problem of our day. It is learning how to get on with the other fellow. Our failure here works itself into our international relations, between labor and management, between group and group, between individual and individual. But here is a solid rock upon which we can build our human relationships. So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so unto them. This fundamental principal will work when all else fails, and God has been pleased to use it so in the modern world.

Then there is the authority of experience. I should never have selected that soiled rag of a woman who encountered Jesus at the well as a promising evangelist. Yet she was no ordinary woman. It would be hard to find a finer piece of dialogue in the Bible or out of it than that which took place at the well. Do this wistful outcast Jesus introduced himself. That done, she hurried back to the village to tell her story. Now listen to her report: "Many believed because of the saying of the woman." Why? She had a note of authority born of a first hand interview with Jesus.

Fourth. The need of a sermon in our modern day is that it be encouraging. One of the most radiant characters of the New Testament is a man named Joseph. That was an honored name. But this great man outgrew it. He had such a knack for changing gloom to gladness, cowardice to courage, that his friends gave him a new name. They called him Encouragement. What a helpful name! To pass him on the street was to get a breath of spring.
"There they crucified Him." There is no going beyond that. But that is not final. "There they crucified Him, but God raised Him from the dead." In this amazing book over against the worst that man can be or do we are constantly heartened by the best that God can be or do.

Now a sermon that is interesting, positive, authoritative, encouraging, will always be up to date. The preacher who preaches to bewildered people with broken hearts, will have a timely message. By forgetting his congregation, he may prove a sheer futility and bore. Emerson has a word like this. "I have been to Church today and I saw something that made me feel as if I never want to go again. Everything was real except the minister. He alone was spectral. He never said a word that indicated that he had ever loved or ever hated, ever laughed or ever wept, ever sinned or ever repented; "just an ecclesiastical nonentity killing his time and killing the interest of his people."

Robert Louis Stevenson has the other side of the picture. He writes "I have been to Church today and am not depressed." As you know he had much to depress him. His life was one long battle with disease. He wrote many of his books with a temperature sometimes as high as 104, but he met it with fine gallantry:

Under the broad and starry sky
Dig me a grave and let me lie
Gladly did I live and gladly die
And I laid me down with a will
And this is the line you may carve for me
Here he lies where he longed to be
Home is the sailor home from the sea
And the huntsman home from the hill

Listen to him! "I have been to Church today and I am not depressed." He seems to say "I was depressed. The clouds were in my sky and the burdens that lay upon me seemed greater than I could bear, but I went to Church and a tall son of God stood in the pulpit and parted the clouds for me and I caught a glimpse of the blue. Better still, I caught a glimpse of the face of my Lord and came away with my burden lifted."

I should like to have been the preacher that day. I can be that preacher tomorrow, and so can you. For God can give us the tongue of Him that is taught that we might know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. Of all the books that help us thus to minister, none, I think, is equal to the Bible.
THE THRILLING FACE
Luke 4:25-26

"There was a widow in Israel at the time of Elijah, the prophet, but unto none of them was sent but to a widow of Seraphy of Sidon."
Weymouth

Here is a woman, a widow, whose name we do not know. She was one of those great personalities who got so busy doing their task that they failed to leave us their autograph. Who invented the alphabet? We do not know. Who invented a thousand other conveniences that help to add zest to life? These, too, are nameless, as this woman, they failed to leave their calling cards.

But though we do not know the woman's name, we know the woman herself. That is far better. We know something of her character, of her insight, of her faith, of how she looked at life. It is Jesus himself who reminds us of who she was and of the service she rendered. She had been dead nine hundred years when he thus calls her to remembrance. The dust of oblivion had blotted out almost all the familiar faces of her day, yet she was still remembered.

Other nineteen hundred years have past since Jesus reminded us of who she was, of the service she rendered. We remember her to this day. Countless millions of forgotten faces have passed forever from our view, but we still see this face. It is so thrilling to this hour that face glowing upon us from the far distant past like a star.

Why do we remember her? We do not remember her because of her wealth. She was miserably poor. We do not remember her because she was a mother in Israel. She was not. She was a pagan woman. She came from Sidon. Jezebel. That was the homeland of the worst hated woman of the Bible. We do not remember her for her social position. She lives to this day in the sacred records because she chose to be hostess to the prophet Elijah.
She furnished room and board for the greatest prophet of his day.

Why was it necessary for Elijah to go outside Israel to find a boarding place? It was not because he was in any sense an inferior man. It was not because he was rendering little service. He did more for his nation than any other man of his day. It is almost safe to say that he did more than all others. The fact that the religion of Jehovah was not destroyed, the fact that it lived to make possible other great prophets and to make possible the coming of the Son of God is due more to this man than to any other of his day. Why, then, did he not find a boarding house in Israel?

1. One reason, I daresay, was this. Times were very hard. A blighting drought had cut off everyone's water supply. Poverty began early to pince the poor. Soon even the well-to-do were finding it difficult to obtain enough food to keep soul and body together. It had become necessary for almost everybody to economize. Expenses had to be cut down.

Now, when times get hard, when it becomes necessary for us to spend less, where do we usually begin to economize? Some fine and gallant souls begin to economize on themselves. They eat coarser food, wear less fine clothes. They deny themselves. But the average run begin economies on what they do for others. When they must cut down expenses, often the contributions to the church, or to missions, or to the Community Chest are the first to feel the knife. Times were distressingly hard and they did not feel that they could take on an boarder.
2. Then, for them to entertain the prophet would have been a fairly sure road to unpopularity. Owing to the fact that Jezebel, the queen, was a pagan woman who was doing her terrific best to destroy the religion of Jehovah, to stand up and be counted on the side of Israel was not possible. Multitudes were finding it easier to go along with the crowd. When one dared to remind them "You are compromising your faith, you are spitting in the face of your conscience," they received no more heroic answer than this, "Well, everybody is doing it. You can't expect me to stem such a heavy tide."

3. Not only was it unpopular to entertain the prophet and to be his friend, but it was positively dangerous. This prophet had a price on his head. One day he had come out of the rugged land of Gilead and had dared to crash the palace. Here he confronted Jezebel and Ahab with their sin. He reminded them that they were going to reap as they sowed. He told them that if they had cut themselves off from the water of life, so they had cut themselves off from the returns of heaven. Having said this, with the keys of the clouds slung to his girdle, he disappeared and left the royal seething with rage.

Why were they so angry? They were angry because this physician of souls had told them the sickness from which they were suffering. But instead of getting angry at the disease, they got angry at the doctor. Instead of seeking to find the ill by conquering the disease, they sought to find the ill by killing the physician. Thus they sought evil for the prophet who had dared to rebuke them. No good Israelite was willing to endanger his life by helping this prophet.

4. A final reason, I think, for their failure to give hospitality to Elias was that they did not really recognize him. To see a mole hill you must stand close up, but to see a mountain it is necessary to stand
at a distance. Elijah was a mountain-like man. He was so tremendously great that those standing close to him failed to recognize him. They saw in him little more than a backwoodsman who couldn't mind his own business.

Jesus used this fact in explaining the failure of his fellow towns- men to recognize him. "No prophet," he declared, is recognized by his own people." In proof of this, he cited the case of Elisha. "There were many lepers," he affirmed, "at the time of Elisha. Perhaps no less than half a dozen lived in the same block, but no single Israelite was cured. The only man who availed himself of the God-given power of Elijah was a foreigner named Naaman. The prophet's fellow countrymen were too close to him to see him.

It was so in the case of Jesus. When he first began to speak, everybody was charmed. They wondered at the gracious words that fell from his lips. But when he spoke so well of these two pagans, the widow and Naaman, they began to suspect him. Above all, when they had put their heads together and remembered that he was a home boy, that Joseph and Mary had lived in their block, that Jesus' four brothers and at least two sisters were still in the midst, they said, "He can't possibly be a prophet." It is a mark of our sense of inferiority that we so often feel that just because we know a certain person, that person cannot be much account.

Thus, knowing Elijah, they said, "Oh, yes, he used to live up here in Galgal. I knew his father. Not much to him." Therefore, they shut their doors in his face.

II

Why, then, did this pagan woman receive him?

It was not just because she was a pagan, but in spite of that fact. Nor did she receive him because he was better off financially than the people
of Israel. She stood face to face with starvation. Why, then, did she receive him?

1. I think she was **HΧΟΧ** full to an unusual degree of the mark of human kindness. It is sometimes shocking and disappointing how we fail to find kindness where we expect it. But it is exceedingly thrilling to find ourselves greeted with kindness where we had no right to expect it. I have been gladdened and amazed by this in my own life more than once.

Paul tells us of the landing of that ship-wrecked crew on the Isle of Malta long years ago. These were **ΧΙΟΧΟΧ** thoroughly pagan people, but in spite of that fact, he reminds us that they showed us no small kindness. This widow welcomed the prophet because she was too kind to turn him down.

2. She welcomed him because she was a woman of insight. She saw in this rugged, hunted man what others did not see. She recognized him as God's friend and God's spokesman. She looked past the outward and the accidental **ΧΙΟΧΟΧ** to the inward greatness of the man. She gave him welcome because he was God's friend. She gave him a welcome because she believed that in receiving the prophet in the name of a prophet, she would receive a prophet's reward.

3. She received him because she was a woman of faith. It took faith for her to welcome this prophet under the circumstances. Read the thrilling story in the seventeenth chapter of the Book of Kings. One day, as this woman went out to gather a little wood to make her last fire, to cook her last meal for herself and her lad, this rugged man spoke to her. She was startled at first. Then, reading the **ΧΙΟΧΟΧ** tenderness and strength of his face, her fear left her.

"Go, **ΧΙΟΧΟΧ** bring me a drink of water," he requested. As she went to obey, he called after her again and said, "Bring me a bit of food that I may eat." That stopped her in her tracks. Water was scarce enough but
bread was impossible. "I can't do that," she said. "I am out now gathering a little wood to cook the last meal for myself and my son. Having eaten that, we are going to face death."

But her answer did not stagger the prophet in the least. He still insisted on being served first. "Bring me first." How selfish it sounds. No, it was not in reality selfish at all. The prophet knew that God never allows himself to be in anybody's temptation. He knew that if she trusted him enough to obey, that God would see to it that she did not suffer.

Therefore, in spite of the fact that she was forced to take from herself and take from her son, which was still harder, she obeyed the prophet and found her scarcity turned into plenty and her want into inexhaustible wealth.

4. Not only was she a woman of faith, but because of her faith, she was a woman of courage. She dared to obey the prophet when it looked like starvation for one that she loved better than life. She dared to shelter the prophet when she doubtless knew as well as any that the long arm of Jezebel was after him. Jezebel had come from her country. She knew her devilish cunning and cruelty. Yet faith that is real always dares. It always ventures. If faith does not lead to action, it is not really faith at all.

III

What was the outcome of her exercise of faith and courage?

1. God met her physical needs. That is a promise still. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you." Putting first things first is to find other things secondary.

2. By thus receiving the prophet, she helped to make possible the great service that he rendered. But for him, I remind you again, the purest religion of Jesus might have been lost. He stood at the gap and kept the flood of a destroying paganism from blotting the possibilities of the nation. So gladly and graciously did he live that when Jesus needed some one about whom he could speak with understanding, Elijah was the one who was chosen.
It was this great man who came back to the Mount of Transfiguration to talk with Jesus of the ____ that he was to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Helping thus to make possible the high service of this prophet, she herself had a part in all that he was and all that he accomplished. The better day that came to Israel because of the ministry of this great man was made possible not by him alone, but also by the pagan woman who did not even see fit to give us her name.

This story is at once unique and universal. As God through his prophet knocks at the door of this poverty stricken widow of the long ago and enlisted her help; as he made of her faith and devotion a roadway along which he walked to the accomplishment of his purpose, so he comes to knock at your heart and mine. Not one of us is left out or neglected. There is not one of us on whom he does not call, not one at whose door he fails to knock.

This is God's voice: "I stand at the door and knock. If any man will open the door, I will come in." If you will open the door to your Lord who is knocking tonight, he will come into your life. Come in, he will remake you. Come in, he will fill you with his Spirit. Come in, he will use you to his glory. It is your high privilege and mine tonight and through eternity, if we will only claim it, to be workers together with God.
"And they . . . were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city." They were filled with wrath, yet they were religious folks. They were folks whose hands a moment ago were fingering the Holy Scriptures. Now they are clutching at the garments of Jesus Christ himself, seeking to cast him from a cliff top to his death. These people were religious. They had in their veins the moral momentum of a pious ancestry. For forty centuries the nation of which they were a part had had its face turned in expectation of the coming Messiah. At last he has come and instead of receiving him, he has only filled them with white-hot rage. So angry are they that the congregation that met for worship has been transformed into a mob.

That religious people should sometimes become angry does not at all discount their religion. Anger is not in itself inconsistent with the highest type of Christianity. Jesus Christ himself was capable of intensest anger. But not once did He get angry at a personal insult or slight. When men wronged Him, denied Him, lied about Him, crucified Him, he remained in a perfectly good humor. It was in the presence of wrong done to others that His cheek glowed and His eyes flashed fire. It was when right was trodden down under the foot of might that His soul became fire-eyed and defiant.

This Church row is a very interesting and also a very pathetic affair. It is not the only one that has ever occurred. I am sorry to have to confess that. Church people are the best people in the world, but they are not perfect. They are not above being disagreeable at times. Of course they do not get positively angry, if you hear them tell it, but they get hurt. There are a lot of people who have no serious interest in the church except a fighting interest. They care little about it till something happens that gives them a chance to get mad. These people, then, are not the only ones that ever went away from a church service filled with rage, rather than "the peace of God that passeth all understanding".

Look at the picture. The scene is an old-time village church. As a rule this church is none too well attended, but today it is crowded to the doors. Extra chairs are being brought in and the ushers are looking anxiously about, wondering where they are going to seat the other attendants, should more come. And others will surely come for the hour for services has not yet arrived. Dull as the services have been on other days, it seems that people are going to be actually turned away today.

The reason for this unusual throng is very evident. A certain young preacher is in Nazareth today. Nazareth is his home town. He is back visiting the homefolks. Recently he has made a preaching tour out in the great world. During that preaching tour he has become famous. He has preached in Jerusalem, the capital city. He has created no small stir by cleansing its defiled temple. No less a personage than the famous Rabbi Nicodemus has come to him to seek an interview. He has preached his message to a notorious outcast woman of Samaria and through her had brought the whole village to his feet. Rumor has it also that nor a few miracles have been performed by him. And now he is home again. No wonder the church is crowded.

Look over the congregation. There are the stern faced fathers. They have known this young man from his infancy. He has played with their own sons and daughters. There is a man that is reminded of him every day because
he yoked his cattle with a yoke that this carpenter had made. There is another man who can point to this and that utensil that was fashioned by him down at his old shop. Here are sturdy young men with whom he used to play. Here are his brothers looking on, some solicitously and some cynically. Here is a sweet faced woman named Mary, wearing the garments of widowhood, for Joseph is dead. By her side are her blooming daughters. They are waiting with joy and with anxiety.

"Are you sure he will come?" one man whispers to another. "Oh, yes. He will certainly be here. There is no doubt of that. He always goes to Church." Every man acquainted with Jesus knew that. The story reads: "He went up to the synagogue as his custom was." There are a great many folks today who have outgrown the Church. They have become entirely too wise for the Church. They are so strong that they have absolutely no need of it. But let us not forget this fact, that Jesus as long as He lived in this world was an habitual Church goer.

There is nothing more common than to meet people who feel that they have run clean past the Church. They will tell you that they are strong enough to live their lives without its help. But Christ was also strong. One never lived so strong as He. And yet He was constant at His Church attendance. There are those so enlightened that they no longer attend Church. Christ also was wise. In Him "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." But He went to Church.

"But", you are ready to say, "His Church was not so dead as mine. The services to which He had to listen were not so dull and dry and stupid as the ones to which I listen." But here you are wrong. The Church was never more dead than it was in His day. This little synagogue in Nazareth was centuries behind the time. Its services sometimes made minutes seem like hours. But instead of making the deadness of the Church an excuse for staying at home, it became an added reason for his being there.

Oh that we might be thus wise. Is the Church in your little village languishing? Is the Church of which you are a member drab and dull and listless and lifeless? What is the remedy? It will certainly not improve if its own members neglect it. It wounds will not be healed by your doing nothing except grumbling. Moral graveyards will not be transformed into standing armies by petty criticisms and cowardly whines.

A farmer was digging up sprouts in his field in the early spring. His old lean hound was lying near, whining and howling. "What is the matter with your dog?" said a friend who chanced to be passing. "Not a thing," was the reply. "He is just lying down on a bur and is too lazy to get up." That is the situation with many dead members of dead Churches. They try to remedy the situation by lying down and howling instead of getting up and working.

Jesus went to Church. He did not do so because the Church was perfect. He did so because He as a man needed the Church and the Church needed Him. And it is enough for the servant that he please his lord.

So these people waited in confidence on that distant Sabbath morning. They were sure that the young man who had gone away unknown and had come home famous would not break away from the habits of his whole past. They expected him to come to Church and they were not disappointed. There was a
A church row #3

A churoh row. Necks were craned. Jesus, the carpenter, was seated in their midst.

The service begins. There is a song of praise. And now Jesus rises to His feet to signify that He wants to read the morning lesson. The Word of God is handed to Him. He turns through till He finds the place for which He is seeking. He has a definite text in His mind. He knows exactly the passage from which He proposes to speak to these, his old friends and fellow-townsmen. Ah, here is the place. Oh to have heard Him read it! "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted; preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind." After He read His text He returned the Book to the man in charge and sat down to deliver His sermon.

And what a sermon was His! Some of these present have been attending Church for many years, but they have never heard a man speak like this man. He was interesting. He held His hearers spellbound. It was impossible for them to think of anything else while He was speaking. He was so earnest, He seemed so to embody His own message that they could not turn their eyes away from Him. He compelled those present to listen to what He had to say. He gripped their attention. As a preacher Jesus was profoundly interesting. He was interesting, for one reason, because He was so simple. They could understand Him. The great rabbis thought it was kind of a shame to be understood. They did not speak directly to the people at all. They spoke to an assistant and had the assistant interpret the message. They were too big to get down on a level with their hearers. And if they were especially great rabbis they spoke to one of their pupils and the pupil spoke to the assistant and then the assistant delivered. But Jesus spoke direct and He spoke in a fashion that those who heard Him could not but understand what He meant. I know that would not give Him a reputation for scholarship, but it did enable Him to get His life-giving message to the people. And what could be sadder than for a preacher to realize the truth of Billy Sunday's criticism? He told a group of preachers in Pittsburg that the trouble with them was that the congregation would go to the devil while they were trying to study out what they meant.

Then Jesus was interesting because practical. I know that some people might be interested in other kinds of preaching. A few folks might like abstruse argument and wordy discussion. A few people might come to hear me construct verbal bouquets. But as a rule people who are conscious of sin and of sorrow and of loneliness and of heart-hunger and need want practical preaching. They want something that helps them to live. That was the way Jesus preached. "Today is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

You see what He is doing. He is taking the truth out of God's Word and bringing it to bear on the lives that you and I are living in the here and now. When is your hour of need? It is today. When is your hour of weakness? It is today. When is your hour of great opportunity and solemn responsibility? It is today. If we would only lay hold on God's promises for today that is enough. They will take care of yesterday. They will take care of all the dangers and devils that threaten in tomorrow. If you will grip God's hand today, if you will walk with Him in the here and now, then I have not the slightest fear for your eternity. But if you refuse to appropriate His word in the here and now, then I have no hope for you in that distant tomorrow. Jesus was a practical preacher.
A church row

What did He talk about? What is He telling these villagers? He knows them. He has been in their homes. He has associated with them intimately. He is telling them just what He tells ourselves, that He is here to preach good tidings to the poor, to set men at liberty, to open the eyes of the blind. That is, He is telling these people that they are poor and blind and enslaved. And what is true of them is true of every man that is born into the world, except by the grace of God.

What is it to be poor according to the conception of Jesus? It is to be without God. It is to be bereft of His fellowship and friendship. We may have all else. We may have houses and lands and friends and honors. We may have the treasures of a world, but if we have not Him, then we are unspeakably poor.

But on the other hand if we have hold upon His hand, if He dwells within our hearts and within our homes, then we are unspeakably rich, though we drape our hungry bodies in rags and though starvation glares at us from an empty storehouse. "I know thy poverty and thy persecution", said Jesus of an ancient Church. They were a people who had been plundered and robbed and made beggars. And yet He said of them: "Thou art rich." So He tells these townsmen of his of their poverty and their possible wealth.

He tells them, in the second place, that they are blind. And yet do they not see? Are they not even then looking into the face of the carpenter preacher? Yes, they see, but only with eyes of the flesh. They have no vision of God. They are blind to the things of eternal value. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall see God and they only." For it is only as a divine oculist opens our eyes that we are able to truly see.

Blind and groping in the dark were these ancient worshippers. Blind and groping in the dark are you, unless you have been let into the light by the Lord Jesus Christ.

He told them further that they were slaves. They were suffering from the same kind of bondage from which we suffer today - the bondage of sin. "He that committeth sin is the bond servant of sin." Sin means slavery yesterday, today and forever. There is no freedom for any of us, except as our fetters are snapped and our chains broken by the power of the Lord God Almighty.

Not only did Jesus tell them of their need, not only did He tell them of their poverty and blindness and slavery. He told them of their possibilities of wealth and vision and freedom. He told them, also, that all these blessings come through Himself. He did not hesitate to tell these people who had known Him from His infancy that He was the theme of the prophet's prophecy. He did not hesitate to tell them that He was the one who was to do for them what the infinite God alone could do. "Today is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. I am the one of whom God was speaking through His holy prophet. At this moment I am able to meet all your needs. At this moment I am able to do for you all that God can do."

That was a very blessed sermon, was it not? A present deliverance for people conscious of bondage; present vision for those conscious of blindness; present richness for those conscious of poverty. A wonderfully winsome message. There is no denying that. There was not one person that day who denied it. "They all bore witness", the story says, "to the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth." They all acknowledged their beauty. They all acknowledged that the story that this man was telling was the most wonderful story ever told, that the message that He was proclaiming was the
most marvelous that ever fell from human lips.

Why then did they not accept it? Why then was not the altar crowded that day with eager seekers and with eager accepters, instead of their going away with anger and murder in their hearts? They did not reject Jesus because they had no need of Him. They were willing to acknowledge that they needed just such a gospel as He preached. They were as willing to acknowledge their need, possibly, as you are.

They did not reject Him because He was unwilling to help them. He was eager to help. He longed to help as no mother ever longed to help and protect her own child. Not only was He eager to help, but He was able. There was absolutely nothing too hard for Him. There was absolutely nothing too wonderful for Him to have done for these friends and acquaintances of His who had gathered together on the Sabbath day in that little village Church. What was it robbed them? What was it cheated them out of their birthright? What was it that sent them away with hate and hell in their souls instead of the joy of the Lord?

The answer to this question is that they were cheated and defeated and destroyed by their prejudice. There is nothing that more successfully blinds our eyes and stops our ears than prejudice. Bunyan, in his famous allegory, "The Holy War", pictures Prince Immanuel marching to the capture of Man's Soul. There are five gates, he says, that guard the entrance to Man's Soul. The most important of these, he declares, is Ear Gate. Since this is so important it must have a keeper of peculiar power and skill. Now the officer that was set to guard this gate, he declares, was old man Prejudice. And truly he is a hard citizen to get by. He defeated God's message on this occasion and he has done the same millions of times since then.

Look how he works. They are almost being swept into the kingdom by the impassioned appeal of this winsome preacher. "But", whispers prejudice, "you remember that little carpenter shop, don't you? You know that table he made. I suppose you are acquainted with Mary. You know, also, those head-headed brothers of his, Simon and Joses and James and Jude." Understand they were not saying a thing against Jesus Himself. They were not denying any of His claims. They were being side-tracked to a consideration of outward circumstances that were entirely non-essential.

And the preacher saw the direction in which they were headed and tried to shut them off. He said, "I know that you are being blinded by the fact that you know me, that I did not come from some faraway place. You are just like your fathers were. When Elijah sought for someone with faith enough to feed him during the famine he couldn't find anybody in Israel that would do it. They said, 'Oh yes, we know him. He used to live up here in Gilgal. Fairly good fellow. Nothing extra.' And so he had to go to the heathen to find someone to keep him from starving."

The same was true with Naaman, the leper. Elijah, by the power of God, was able to cure leprosy. But it is on record that he cured only one man in his entire ministry. And that one man was a foreigner, a heathen. Why was he the only one thus blessed? Not because he was the only leper in Israel. The Record says there were many. I have no doubt that there were lepers rotting and dying by the inch that saw Elijah pass down their
street every day. Why then were they not cured? They didn't ask him to cure them. They didn't ask him for the simple fact that he was so near that they couldn't see anything out of the ordinary about him.

Human nature hasn't changed in the least. We still have a tendency to feel that it is the distant, the far away that is worth while. "The fool's eyes," said the wise man, "are at the ends of the earth." The owner of the Golconda diamond mines could see nothing in his own garden. He must needs go seek the treasure in the uttermost parts of the earth. So these people rejected a present and personal Savior, not because they did not know who He was and where He came from, but because they did know. They wanted a Savior more distant, more bewildering, more perplexing and mysterious. They belonged to the great tribe that delights in being humbugged, just as people today turn away from the daylight simplicities of the Gospel to be tricked by mediums, who, like owls, fly only in the dark.

The atmosphere becomes tense. Everybody can see that the audience is resisting and resenting the preacher. By and by they break out into open violence. They drag the preacher from the Church. They will throw him off the cliff to His death. Women shriek. Mary puts her face in her hands and sobs and then follows the mob. "Did they kill him, James?" "No", is the reply. "He passed through unharmed."

Why did they reject Him? Not because they had no needs. Not because of any personal objections they had to Christ Himself. They had no fault to find with Him any more than you do. They were influenced by certain circumstances that had nothing definitely to do with the matter in hand. They rejected Him because they knew His brothers and sisters and His mother and His home and His shop.

Why do you reject Him? Because there is so much conflict between the Churches? But that is not the fault of Christ. Because there are so many hypocrites? There is always room for one more. Because we, His so-called followers, represent Him so poorly? That is not his fault but our own. If you will give one reason for rejecting Jesus Christ because of any fault in Himself, then I will declare you guiltless. But if you reject Him for any other reason, I must declare you guilty before God. You have not only rejected Him, but you have rejected Him without cause. May the Lord grant that you may stop your ears to the call of prejudice and open your heart's door to Him even tonight.
"The Man Who Dared."

Luke 5:4

"Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught."

Jesus is preaching on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. In their eagerness to hear Him the crowds are about to push Him into the sea. What a fascinating preacher he was. He spoke to people in language that they could understand. He spoke to them about the deepest needs of their lives. He spoke with authority, the authority of the truth. He gave them a sure word from God. And the crowds heard Him gladly.

So eager was the multitude to hear Him that the preacher was last forced to borrow a boat to keep himself from being pressed into the water. The man whose boat he borrowed was named Peter. He knew Peter and asked him to allow him to use his boat for a pulpit. Peter consented, and standing in this borrowed boat the Master completed His sermon.

Now, when the service was over Jesus said to Peter, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught". It seems as if the Master is determined to make some return to Peter for the service the fisherman has rendered to himself. No man ever does Jesus a favor that he is not repaid. The peasant girl at Cana of Galilee who was thoughtful enough to invite Jesus to a wedding feast did not want for wine. No soul ever rendered Him the slightest service that He did not remember and amply repay. Even the one who gives a cup of cold water in His name shall receive his reward.

So He said to Peter, "Launch out into the deep", and when I read that I said, "That is exactly what the Master is saying to you and me today. That is what He is saying to the Church all through the centuries. Launch out. Do business in great waters. Be aggressive. Depict the nations. Make the kingdoms of the world to become the kingdoms of the Lord and His Christ.

Christ is ever calling on us to venture something for His sake. He is asking us to stake our very lives upon the faith that His Gospel is true and that it can do today exactly what He claims it can do. A certain soldier who was killed in the late war said that faith was "betting your life that God was true". That is the kind of faith for which Christ is calling in you and me. He wants us so to believe in Him that we will recklessly venture all for Him.

I can't find a single instance in all the New Testament where Christ praised anybody for prudence and self-satisfied conservatism in matters of religion. His praise is for those and those only who dared everything. He speaks very highly of a certain widow who staked all that she had on her faith that God was true. He uttered a commendation for Mary that would outlast the stars. He commended her, not for her prudence, but for her reckless giving. I do not find that Christ has any place in His Kingdom for that individual who dares nothing, who ventures nothing, for the faith that He has in Himself.

Christ commends in us the spirit of adventure and the spirit of daring because He knows that that is the only spirit that wins. That is true not only in matters of religion but in all other matters. The man in the financial world who ventures nothing makes nothing. Sometimes he doesn't even make when he ventures. I invested in a patent medicine company once that went broke declaring no other dividend than a dividend of
pills. A man may venture on a business proposition and lose but no man ever loses who ventures on God.

There was a man once who declared that the earth was round. Men laughed at him and thought him a fool, but he staked his reputation on the fact. He staked his money, what little he had. He staked his toll. He staked his life, and venturing all, he proved the truth of the proposition in which he believed.

Believe me, the victories are won by the men who dare. When the British were trying to capture Quebec the general in command called for the oldest officer in the army. He said, "Can you take the Heights of Abraham?" The man replied that he could not. He called for the next oldest. He said that the issue would be exceedingly doubtful. And then in desperation he said, "Send me a madman" and they sent him General Wolfe. And so the Heights were won. And so heights have been won through the centuries. The conquests of Christianity to this good day have been made not by the smug and the conservative and the prudent. They have been made by the people who, at the command on their Lord, have dared launch out into the deep.

Now, that is just the task to which I think God is calling you and me today. That is the command we are seeking to carry out in our effort to bring about a revival in this church. A revival is a launching out. It is an invasion of the enemy's country. It is an aggressive attack hurled against the foe. God is calling us to this high task for very definite reasons. The type of Christianity that you possess you feel is hardly worth having. What is the matter with you? The chances are this is the matter. You have never dared anything for your Lord. You have never been aggressive. You have sought to conquer new territory but simply to hold your own. Now, there is no individual in the world strong enough to do that. You have got to go forward or you will go backward.

Second, for God of Church.

What is the matter with the church? There are many of our churches that are so sound asleep that they are practically dead. Why is it true? Again, I say, it is a lack of aggressiveness. They have been satisfied to face a siege instead of launching a campaign against the enemy. They have sought to hold their own instead of to capture new territory.

And no church can hold its own under such circumstances. The Church and the individual that seek only to hold their own will lose. They will lose every time. So we must be aggressive or we will backslide. Believe me, we will never make a touchdown while we allow the devil's side to have the ball. But if we will get hold of it ourselves and seek with all our might to advance it we will advance it and a glorious victory will be won.

"Launch out into the deep". The command was very direct and plain, yet there were many reasons, and seemingly they were good reasons, why Peter should have refused to obey this command. He might have refused in the first place because the time seemed altogether inopportune. Peter was a born fisherman. He had followed the sea all his life. He knew when the best time to catch fish. He knew the only time. That time was the
The man who dared

night. But when Jesus Christ gave this command it was broad daylight. Therefore, Peter might have said, "Lord, I'll do it sometime, tonight maybe or tomorrow night, but it is absolutely useless to do it now."

And did you ever know a revival to come just at the right time? I have been preaching now for some years and I have held quite a number of revival meetings but I never have found a time yet that in the mind of some folks was the proper time. I have no idea that the meeting that we are soon to begin here will suit everybody. Some of you have already suggested that the time is very inopportune.

Then it is exceedingly hard to find a fit time to speak to our friends personally. Dr. Trumbull, who was possibly the most expert personal worker that we ever had in America, said that he never undertook to speak to a single individual in all his long fifty years of experience but that the devil suggested that it was not the proper time. That same suggestion has come to you again and again, and again and again you have yielded to the temptation to wait. But that sort of thing has not got you anywhere. It never can. What we do we must bring into the here and now.

Then Peter might have refused on the ground that what he was being asked to do was not customary. You know folks are great for doing the customary thing. We are not afraid to do wicked and worldly things if they are customary, but we are much afraid to do the very finest and holiest thing if it is not according to custom.

Now, when Christ comes to you saying "Ye are my witnesses", when He tells you to bring forth fruit and that every branch that bringeth not forth fruit is cast out and withered it is a poor answer for you to say that "In my circle it is not quite the thing to speak to a man personally about the salvation of his soul". If it is not the customary thing then all the more is the pity. There was a time when it was the custom. Those brave men and women who a few years ago were driven from their homes in Jerusalem for their faith, what says the record of them, "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." Almost everybody who has been won to Christ through all the centuries has been won through the personal touch of another. There are those that you can win if you are willing to fling customary aside and try.

Then Peter might have refused because he was tired. He had been at work all night. He was a man of many duties. What he was being asked to do was very troublesome. It was a good deal to ask a tired, hard worked man who had been on the sea all night to turn and go again.

And this business of launching out into the work of a revival, that is not easy. That is hard work. I do not know of any task that is more exacting. There never was a revival that was cheap and easy. There never was a conquest for God that did not cost something. If we have a revival here it is going to cost. If you win your friend it is going to be expensive. If you invest nothing you will get nothing. That is absolutely sure.

I have handed out cards asking you to pledge yourselves to do three simple things, pray, work, attend. Some of you haven't made up your minds to pay that much price yet. Now remember, that you haven't any right to ask another to do what you are unwilling to do. Ask yourself then what sort of revival we would have if nobody prayed for it, if nobody worked for it, if nobody attended it. That is what you are promising to do, naked nothing.
When a man takes that attitude it leads me to wonder very seriously if he believes his own gospel. Do you believe men are lost without Jesus Christ? Do you believe that your Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth? How strong do you believe? We are accustomed to speak of Thomas as a doubter. He did doubt, but he was willing to stake his life even on the doubts. How much are you willing to venture on your faith?

Dr. Drummond said that while he was preaching once at the University of Edinburgh he got a letter from a young fellow that was bitter in his blatant atheism. He said that night he had an opportunity to speak to a young fellow who was a Christian whom he knew to be a friend of this young atheist. And the friend replied to his story that he knew the man's condition and that he was seeking to win him to Christ.

This conversation took place near the end of the year. The young man who was seeking to win his atheistic friend was a senior. He graduated that year and it was his purpose after graduation to return to America where was his home. But at the opening of the next term Drummond said to his surprise he saw the young American at college again. He asked him why he returned and his reply was, "I didn't reach my friend last year. I returned to reach him this year. I thought if I could get him to become a Christian it would be worth one year of my life." And that young atheist, when the American missionary had ended, was a Christian. He won him. Of course he did.

Oh heart, believe me, a real revival means hard work but it is joyous work. There is nothing finer. And we can win if we are only willing to pay the price.

Then Peter might have refused in the fourth place, because he had just toiled all night and caught nothing. He had failed once. Why try again? Now you know failure is a hard thing to bear. We hate failure and we have a right to hate it. We fear it and we ought to fear it. And Peter might have said, "Lord, I tried last night and it didn't get me anywhere. I'm not going to try any more." Yes, failure is bad, but the supreme failure is to be so afraid of failure that you do not try.

Now, you know that is one big reason why so few of us will do any personal work. We are afraid to fail. If you knew that you would certainly read the man to whom you spoke then surely you would speak. If I could convince you that the man that you invited to become a Christian would become a Christian beyond the slightest shadow of a doubt then you would speak to him gladly. But you are so afraid of failure that you will do nothing. But, heart, your duty is not to make him a Christian but it is your duty to speak to him and you can not afford to do less. Press the solemn responsibility home upon his own heart. Having done that you have done your part as a Christian and having refused to do that you have not done your part.

So Peter had many good reasons for refusing to launch out into the deep. On the other hand there was a reason for doing so that was so gripping and mighty and compelling that it outweighed all the reasons against it as this solid earth would outweigh a piece of down. Why launch out into the deep? The first big reason and the supreme reason was this: Jesus Christ had told him to do that very thing. It was his not to ask what all the results would be. It was his to obey.
A storm was raging off Cape Hatteras. A ship was blowing to pieces. The captain of the life-saving crew ordered the lifeboat to be launched. "Captain," said one of the men, "it is useless to go. The wind is seaward. We can reach the ship but we can never get back." And the captain answered, "It is not necessary to get back but it is necessary to go." And that necessity is laid upon us today. It is not necessary that we do all that we hope to do but it is necessary if we are to be christians that we obey our Lord and do our best.

Then it was reasonable for Peter to do, in the second place, because Jesus Christ is too wise to send him or us upon a fool's errand. Did Jesus know the sea? Did He know about fish? He did. He knew all about the fish and the sea. He knew exactly how to cast the net in order to make a catch. And Peter very wisely concluded to do as he was commanded, in the faith that Jesus was too wise to command him to do a useless and a foolish thing.

And when our Lord sends us to bear witness for Him, when He sends us to make disciples of every creature, we can rely upon His wisdom. He knows men. He knows that there is that in every human heart to which His Gospel appeals. He knows that every man is salvable. He knows that every man has in him the possibilities of perfection. He knows that His Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation unto every man that believeth." Therefore we have a right to go knowing that our going will not be in vain.

Then Peter is right in obeying this command in the third place, not only because it is a command and because the one who gave it knows, but, also because Christ Himself is proposing to go with him. Last night conditions were unfavorable so far as the eyes of man see. But there is this big difference and it makes all the difference. He has Christ in the boat with him today and last night he did not have Him. And, Heart, it is His presence that changes defeat into victory and fear into confidence and failure into glorious success.

Go out to your work for Christ in His fellowship, dominated by that love that seeked not its own and you may meet many fortunes but not that of defeat. His grace is sufficient for us and today He is saying to the very weakest of us, "Have not I commanded thee, be strong and of good courage, for the Lord, thy God, is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

So I stand on the shore and watch Peter launch out into the deep. And I say, "Poor old Peter. He's tired. He failed last night. He is far more sure of failure today. All he'll do is to get his nets dirty again, that he has had such a hard time washing." But listen! I hear Peter shouting. He's calling to John. "Come over, John. There are so many fish in this net that they are about to tear it to pieces." Now that's what I call real fun. They have gone fishing and not only have they gone fishing but they have actually caught the fish.

And believe me, that's what I want to do when I go fishing. I never had a real good time fishing in my life when I didn't catch anything. I hear some men say that they can enjoy sitting on the river bank all day fishing whether they catch anything or not. They like to commune with nature. Well, I like nature, too, but when I go out to commune with nature I leave my fishing tackle at home. I can't do two things at once and nature has got a mighty poor chance at me when I'm fishing. Yes, Peter fished. He not only fished, but he caught something.

Now, that is just what we want to do and that is just what we can do.
I no more doubt it than I doubt the fact that we are here. You launch out into the deep. You go among men with God in your heart. Go prayerfully and lovingly and tactfully to speak to your friend and you will win him. Oh, I know what you say. You say, "I am so inexperienced. I do not know what to say." Believe me, it is not glib speeches that win folks. It is something else. There was an old blacksmith, ignorant and hard handed, who set himself, with his saintly old wife, to pray for a certain brilliant sinner in the community who was doing a great deal of harm. One night they prayed till three o'clock in the morning. They then left off with the determination that the old blacksmith would speak to him the next day. The next day he went to see him. There were many things that the simple old saint intended to say but he got confused and forgot them all. With the tears running down his rugged old face he simply said, "My wife and I prayed for you last night till three o'clock in the morning". He could say no more, but that was enough.

Peter caught the fish. Not only that but he caught a larger faith. He had believed in Christ before but he believed in Him far more after this experience. A church can not go through a revival without winning a larger faith in God and you can not, as an individual, do your duty without winning a larger faith. The reason your faith is so weak today is because you have failed to live up to what you actually believe. Speak to your friend. Win him or do your best to win him and you will find a larger faith gripping your own heart.

Not only did Peter find a larger faith but quite naturally as a result of the faith, he found a larger usefulness. Do you want to be useful? Do you long to be a blessing? Begin now to use what you have for God and God will increase it. "To him that hath shall be given and he shall have abundance, but from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away."

I have delivered my message. It is to the unsaved as well as to the saved. If you will hear God's voice and yield to Him He will use you regardless of who you are. The close of this revival will find you more fruitful or more barren, stronger in faith or weaker in faith, capable of a larger and higher service or more useless than you were before. What it means to you depends upon one thing, your obedience to God.

"Launch out into the deep". That is God's call to service. Will you hear it? Will you yield? The service that you can render depends somewhat on your ability, I know, but it depends most of all on the completeness of your surrender. Will you surrender to Him now?

(The sword of the victorious officer.)
"The Lost Spirit of Adventure."


Hear the text: "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught." The Master has been using Simon Peter's boat. In return for the favor of the humble fisherman Jesus Christ is proposing to do him a favor, though it is a bit hard for Peter to understand where-in the favor lies. So when the sermon is over He turns to His friend with this command: "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught." Get out from the shore. Get out from the shallows. Go out into the great waters. Go out to where the fish school. "Launch out into the deep."

This is a command which God has been laying upon the church and the individual throughout all the centuries. He is ever calling us to launch out into the deep, to sail our vessels out where the need is great and where the opportunity is equally great. And there are few worse calamities that can come to us than those which come as a result of our refusal to obey this command. If I were to put my finger on one of the weakest spots in the religious life of the average individual today, I would put it upon this spot: the lost spirit of adventure. We have so little of daring in our Christian lives. We venture so little. We stake so little upon our belief in God and upon His commands and upon His program for the conquest of the world.

That is the reason so many of us are continuously hugging the shore. Some of us have stayed in the shallows till we have been battered against the rocks. We have clung so close to the land that we have almost been pounded into wreckage. Some of us are even high and dry and stranded upon the sand. The secret of our failure is just this, we have been afraid to launch out into the deep. We have been afraid to dare, afraid to venture, afraid to stake our all upon our faith in God and His commands upon us.

A stranded boat is a rather perplexing and unsightly thing. Suppose I have never seen a boat in its native element. One day I am walking down the beach and I find one lying high and dry on the sand. I seat myself in it, take one of the oars, push at it, but it will not move. Then I wonder if there is no place where it will fit in. I say to it, "You seem a rather ugly piece of uselessness, is there no place where you are at home? Is there no situation in which you would cease to be an interrogation point and become an assertion? Is there no element where you would be transformed from a monstrosity into a poem?"

Then in the faith that it is good for something, I tug it down to the shore. And the sea opens its arms to it and the old, cumbersome craft lies lightly and gleefully upon its bosom, and the worthless has become worthwhile, and the waste has been made into wealth. And the boat has found itself. It was not made for the shore. It was not made for the land. It was not made for a sheltered place in the dry. It was not intended to be put in a safety vault and hermetically sealed. It was made for the open seas. It was made for the broad miles of rolling water. It was made to move under far horizons. It was made to dance upon great depths, far out from the shore.

"Launch out into the deep", says our Lord. That is where you will find yourself. That is the purpose for which you were made. God did not send us into the world to be coddled and fondled. We are not here to
to take things easy and to lead sheltered and easy and protected lives. We are here to do business in the great deeps. We are here to strain at the oars amidst the mighty waters. We are here to do battle with wind and tide when the waves are high and the storm king tosses from his red hands the thunder. God meant us for the great deep. God meant us to be adventurers, discoverers in the realm of the spiritual and of the eternal.

"Launch out into the deep." It is the only way to find ourselves. It is the only way to find our brothers. We are to be life savers. We are to go out where men are. We are to go where the crowds are. I love to read these gospels. They continually shake with the tread of the multitude. Jesus Christ was alone at times, but pre-eminently He was a man of the throngs. He was elbowed and pushed and tugged hither and thither by the masses of the people. His ship sailed among the great deeps.

And there we must sail if we do His bidding. There we must sail, I repeat, if we find our brothers. I read of a ship wreck that took place on the Italian coast years ago. And the captain of the life saving crew reported the wreck and so many deaths, and added that he "gave all the help he could through the speaking trumpet." But the speaking trumpet was not enough, and the fatality list was high. He was afraid to launch out into the deep.

Now, when Jesus gave this command to Simon Peter there were some of the best of reasons for his refusing to obey. Simon might have refused and have acted, so far as the opinion of the world goes, with the highest and finest of logic. The truth of the matter is that to those wanting in faith and that fine spirit of adventure that always goes with faith, to obey was unreasonable. To refuse to obey was the only rational course to pursue.

To the faithless it was unreasonable to obey in the first place because this was not the time for fishing. It was broad daylight. The waves were shimmering in the flare and glare of the sun. The time to catch fish was at night. That every fisherman knew. No man was more familiar with that fact than was Simon Peter. He had followed the sea from childhood. He had earned his living by fishing all through the years. He knew that this was not a proper time to launch out and let down the net for a draught.

I have been preaching now for some few years and I have held quite a number of revivals, but I do not recall to have ever begun one single revival when everybody thought it was a good time. There were always those who believed and declared most emphatically that the time was altogether inopportune. And the enemy seems exceedingly eager that we make no mistake in the matter of the time in which we are to do the Lord's work.

One of the greatest personal workers that ever lived in America was Dr. Trumbull. For more than half a century he made it the fixed habit of his life to speak to those in whose company he was thrown of their personal relation to Jesus Christ. And he declared it as his experience after these more than fifty years of thus doing personal work that never had he started to speak to a single individual but what there came to his mind a suggestion that it was not the right time.
He said that Satan was always very fearful that he would injure the cause by speaking at an unfit season.

How many failures you and I have made just here! How many precious opportunities of witnessing for Christ have we thrown away simply because we allowed the suggestion that the time was not fit to frighten us and to make us into utter cowards. When is it that you are to bear your testimony to the saving power of Jesus Christ? It is when you have an opportunity. When is it that you are to speak to your friend, to your husband, to your child pointedly and personally about those supreme facts that lie closest to your heart? It is when you have opportunity. The truth of the matter is, the time that we are to win our friends, if we win them at all, is not in the yesterday nor is it in some far off and hazy tomorrow, - but it is today. It is now. And in the here and now God is whispering into our souls, "Launch out into the deep and let down your net for a draught."

Then it was unreasonable to obey Jesus in the second place because such fishing as He was commanding was not customary. Peter knew that. His partners, James and John, knew it. And not only so, but the great multitude standing yonder on the shore knew that it was not customary to go fishing in the daytime. And what a foolish thing it is to go against custom! What a foolish thing it is not to do just as we have always done! How mad to dare to be ourselves, to assert our own individuality, to speak the message, to do the work that God has committed peculiarly to us! The only wise thing, the only safe and sane thing is to obey custom. Do the thing as everybody else does it. Be absolutely conventional.

So most of us believe. At least, so most of us act and have acted all our lives. We are more afraid of doing anything out of the ordinary for God than we would be of a contagious disease. It is not customary in your circle for men and women to make a personal effort to win their friends for Christ. Therefore, you never make such effort. It is true that Christ has commanded you to bear witness. It is true that He has said that "every branch that beareth not fruit shall be taken away, cast off, withered, burned." It is true that God's only plan of saving this world is the "Win-one" plan. For mark you, the Kingdom will never come at the hand of the preacher, nor will the world ever be brought to the cross from the pulpit alone. God knows this and you know it. Yet I am talking to men and women who have been in the church for ten, twenty, thirty years and you have never won a single soul for Christ in all your life.

Now if you are going to follow custom, in heaven's name follow a good custom. Sad to say, it is not customary for the average church member to be a soul winner, but there was a time when it was customary. In the early days of the church when persecution was rife and when the fires of God burned hot upon the altars of the soul, every Christian was a witness bearer. When the little church was scattered and driven in every direction from Jerusalem we read that they went everywhere preaching the Word, though there was not an ordained preacher among them. They literally set the world on fire with their personal testimony. And there is no greater need than that custom be revived. "The next great revival", said Mr. Moody, "will come when a man is willing to take a walk with his friend for Christ's sake."
Lost spirit of adventure

Who are the men who have done most for the spiritual conquest of the world? They are those who in a noble spirit of daring have set aside custom and have dared to speak God's message in their own way. They are men who have ventured all for God. And thus venturing they have witnessed for Him not simply from the pulpit, but man to man. I know of no great spiritual leader who was not also an ardent and earnest personal worker. Wesley declared that he did not speak simply when he felt moved to it, but as he had opportunity. The same was true of Moody and of Charles G. Finney and of Chapman and of those who have been great spiritual forces for world evangelization. Peter might have shaken his head and said, "No, Lord, it is not customary." Some of us are doing that very thing and are serving custom with a loyalty that we dare not give Him whose name is above every name.

It was unreasonable to obey this command in the third place because Peter had just made an effort and had failed. Hear what he says: "Lord, we have toiled all night and caught nothing. Why go back and repeat the failure? Why continue to blunder? Why continue to fall down on the job? We have tried once, but we did not get anywhere. We made one effort, but nothing came of it. And so we will just quit now and give it up and not go fishing any more, because if we go again we may fail again."

And how that fear haunts every man that sets himself to do any work for Christ! We are so afraid we will fail. We are so afraid that we will blunder. I know of nothing, absolutely nothing, that requires a finer courage than does the task of speaking to a friend face to face about his personal salvation. We are dreadfully afraid. And one of the chief elements in our fear is that we will not succeed. If we only were absolutely certain that we would win that would be a different matter, but we are afraid of failure.

Now, I suppose you are familiar enough with the fact that the man who succeeds at any undertaking in the world has got to venture something. He has got to run a risk, and one big risk he runs is the chance of failure. The man who learns to skate must be willing to fail at it for a while. The man who learns to swim must be willing to fail for a season. The man who learns to box must also expect a number of preliminary failures, failures that may cost him a bit of humiliation, plus a bruised and bleeding nose. The man who enters business must risk failure. Now, God does not promise you that every soul to whom you speak will hear you and be saved. What He tells you to do is to speak. That is your job. "Speak and hold not your peace", and leave the results with Him. It may be that you have tried faithfully to win some one individual and have not succeeded. Don't let that make a coward out of you. Don't let it close your lips. Don't allow it to make you disobedient to the definite command of Christ. I know a defeat makes it harder for you. How many times has the suggestion come to me as a preacher at the close of a sermon, "Don't make a call now. Don't make any proposition. You might fail. There might not be any response." And there were times in my early ministry, not a few, that I listened to this suggestion of the enemy. But I have quit it. When I show the goods for my Lord I am going to give those to whom I have shown them a chance to order. They if they fail the responsibility is upon themselves.

Whatever may have been your failure or success in the past, I
beg you that you will continue to try. Do not become possessed of a
dumb demon. Do not allow yourself to become fruitless. Remember God
cursed the barren fig tree. True He had not died for that fig tree,
he had not invested His heart's blood in it, - but when it waved the
leaves of profession and bore no fruit, He cursed it. And God will not
hold you guiltless if you refuse to bear fruit. Paul spoke on Mar's
Hill and they laughed at him. And he seemed to have made almost an
utter failure. When he came to Corinth he seemed to have been silent
for a while. He said, "There is no use. My message is a stumbling
block to the Jews, and to the Greeks it is foolishness. I will just
quit." But the Lord said, "Fear not, Paul, speak and hold not thy
peace." And however dismally you may have failed in your effort to
witness for Christ, yet He is putting upon you the solemn obligation
of witnessing for Him today.

"Launch out into the deep", said Christ, "and let down your net
for a draught." And I see this hard headed old fisherman getting ready
to obey. He knows as well as anyone how unreasonable the command seems.
And yet I see him pushing off from the land. I am a fisherman and I
stand on the shore and shout at him and say, "Peter, where are you going?"
And Peter turns his wind browned face toward me and says, "I am going
fishing." "When? Now, in the daytime, after you have toiled all night
and caught nothing?"

"Yes", Peter answers back over his shoulder, "I'm going." "And
what do you mean? Do you think the habits of fish have changed? Have
you procured a longer net? Is the wind coming from another direction?"
"No, that is not the secret. I am going simply because the Master says,
'Go.' That is all. From the standpoint of reason everything seems
against going, nevertheless", he says to his Lord, "At thy word I will
let down the net."

"At thy word" - that is what made the course that Peter took
the only reasonable course, however silly it might have seemed in the
eyes of men. It is always reasonable to obey Jesus Christ. It is
always unreasonable to refuse to obey. It may seem as if our errand
would be entirely fruitless, but that is not our business. I shout at
Peter as he gets further from the land and say, "Peter, you are going
to make yourself perfectly ridiculous. The laugh will be on you when
you get back."

But Peter says never a word. He knows that if that fishing
trip is a failure that the laugh will not be on himself. It will be
on the shoulders of Him who is responsible for it. If the errand seems
foolish and ridiculous he knows that it is the foolishness of Him whose
breath kindled every sun and in the hollow of whose hand the seas rage
and roar. It is not my business to say what the results will be every
time - I do not know. It is not your business to know for sure that in
speaking to your friend you will certainly win him. But it is your
business to speak. It is your business to obey orders. And that is
what Peter did. And that is what you and I ought to do.

And Peter's course was reasonable. It was reasonable first be-
cause of the wisdom of Him who gave the order. "Launch out into the deep."
Who said that? Jesus said it. Does He know the deep? He does. Does He
know where the fish home? He knows. Does He know the nature of the fish?
Certainly. Does He know how to cast a net? That also He knows. Then to
obey One who knows is not folly, but good sense.

"Launch out", says our Lord to you and me today. "Speak and hold not your peace." Does Christ know men and women? Does He know their needs? Does He know their hidden thirsts and their secret longings? Does He know the adaptability of His own Gospel to their needs? He knows it all. And when He tells you and me to go and make disciples of all the nations, to set about the task at once, to respond at once, to cry in glad surrender, "Here am I, send me" is the highest of all wisdom. For he who goes forth at the command of Him who is infinitely wise goes upon no fool's errand, and he will not go in vain.

It is reasonable for Peter to respond in the second place because the One who gave the command cared. Christ was interested in Peter. Christ was interested in Peter's success, in how he made his living, in the upkeep of his home. Christ was interested in everything that interested Peter. He cared and He cared infinitely.

Now, when our Master puts the command upon us to launch out into the deep, when He sends us forth to the conquest of the world - remember that it is the command of One who cares. He cares for ourselves. He cares for those to whom we go. He is infinitely interested in us both. I am interested in the sermon that I am trying to preach this morning, but there is One who is interested infinitely beyond my capacity for interest, and that is Jesus Christ, my Lord. He wants the sermon to be as effective as possible. He wants it to be as mighty as possible. He wants it to be as helpful and life giving as possible. He is interested in it. And just in proportion as I am willing to receive His help, He is helping in the delivery of it.

And as you go to speak to that friend of yours whom you desire to see saved remember that God cares about the results, that He has been to your friend before you. And many a time if you will only dare to do this work you will find, as Philip found, that God had been to his friend ahead of him, that He had opened the way, that He had made the approach easy and that He had made victory a blessed possibility. We can not lose our pains if we go forth for the love of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Then, the response of Peter was wise and reasonable in the third place because Christ Himself was with him as he went out to the fishing at this time. Last night the conditions seemed far more favorable. Last night there was every reason to expect success so far as Peter could see, but there was one element wanting. There was one vital factor missing. Jesus was not there. And not having Jesus with him, he failed.

Maybe that is the secret of your failure and mine. Maybe we sought to teach our Sunday School class in our own strength. Maybe we spoke to our friend relying on our own ability to persuade and to convince. Hence we failed. Hence some of us will continue to fail, for "as the branch can not bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me." Through our failures and defeats, through our humiliations and our bungled efforts we have to learn again and again that apart from Jesus we can do nothing.

But this time, though the time seems totally inopportune, the circumstances anything but favorable, Peter will go, for he has Him in the boat who is mightier than all circumstances and who is able to overrule and override all opposition to His glory. No wonder he will go
gladly and willingly and expectantly under these circumstances. And you and I sitting in our smug contentment will say of Peter that he would have been little more than a mad man if he had not gone.

And yet the same Christ who was with Peter pledges Himself to be with us. He sends us forth, but He never sends us forth alone. But always there is that blessed command, "Lo, I am with you." And this, heart, is to be your consolation, your source of courage, your sure expectation of victory. He will not let your efforts prove futile. He will not allow your words spoken for Him and in His fellowship to fall to the ground. You may not see all that you wish to see, you may not accomplish all that you long to accomplish, - but you will not fail, for "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless return again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

And then notice the blessed results that followed in the wake of Peter's obedience. The net is cast according to the command of his Lord. And now they are tugging at it and they can feel the jerk and the flutter of the fish, daytime though it is, following hard upon a night of failure though it does, - there are fish here. There is a great catch in so much that the net is not strong enough to hold the full weight of it.

Don't you see what happened? As he obeyed the Lord he won. As he followed His orders he succeeded, not because he himself was so skilled in fishing. The night before he had failed in spite of all his skill. He succeeded because he had One with him as his helper of whom the Book declares that "He shall not fail nor be discouraged." I am about ready to believe that you can win any man for Christ in His fellowship you really set out to win.

Yes, Peter pulled up a net full of fish, but that was not all that he caught in that net. He also caught a larger faith, a larger vision of God, a deeper insight into the heart of his blessed Savior. There came to him that day a new sense of sin, a new revelation of his own weakness, of his own uncleanness. We find him crying, "I am a sinful man, Oh Lord!"

Are you as large a Christian today as you want to be? Would not you like to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might? Wouldn't you like to be able to know more of the joy of salvation? I can tell you how your longings may be realized. It is a remedy that will work with absolute certainty. Set yourself definitely, earnestly, prayerfully to win some other soul. Get your brother and introduce him to Jesus. And as you introduce him you will become better acquainted with Christ yourself.

The weakness and downright puniness, and I use that sickening word simply because it is sickening, - I say the downright puniness of the average church member is not to be wondered at. You don't take enough exercise to keep anything alive. My boy gets out of bed some cold morning and instead of beginning to dress stands with absolutely nothing on and complains of being cold. I told him one morning just to stand perfectly still and he would soon get up a sweat. No, that is not the way. Treat your Gospel as if it were false and worthless and to you it will become false and worthless. Act as if you really believed it, fight as if you really believed there was something worth fighting for,
become a propagandist as if you believed you had a gospel worth propagating, - and the truths that you only half believe will become vitally believed. And as you catch your brother you will also catch a larger faith and a firmer grip of God.

But to refuse is to remain sickly and weak and worthless. To remain so is to become guilty of a positive sin. For God has set us watchmen upon the walls and has told us that if we see the sword coming and do not give warning that the blood of our brother will be required at our hands. And the fact that it takes fifty church members a whole year to win one single soul to Christ shows that the garments of many of us are blood stained and that there are few indeed who will be able to say with Saint Paul, "I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men."

Not only did Peter catch a larger faith along with the draught of fishes, but he also caught a larger usefulness, a larger sphere of service. If you will honor God in the use of the opportunity that He gives you today He will give you a greater opportunity tomorrow. If you will use the talent for personal service that God gives you today, that talent will be increased tomorrow. But if you refuse to use it it will be taken from you tomorrow, for "to him that hath shall be given and from him that hath not even that he hath shall be taken away." If you want to do more remember that the pathway is a pathway of being more. Christ said to this man who had caught a draught of fishes and also a larger faith at His word, "From henceforth you shall catch men."

God wants to bring you into a larger faith and into a larger service just as He brought Peter. He will if you will only let Him. Nobody ever dreamed that Peter would become the man that he did become. Nobody but Jesus Christ Himself sees and understands the possibilities in you. If you will only give God a chance, if you will only present your bodies a living sacrifice, if you will only let Him minister through your hands, walk in paths of service through your feet, speak through your lips, - the results will be a glad surprise to yourself both in its power on your own life and that upon the lives of others.

So I call you this morning to a revival of the spirit of adventure. Dare something for God. Stake something on your faith. Be brave enough to be humiliated, to be defeated if need be. Risk even seeming a fool for Christ's sake. "Launch out into the deep." Throw yourself away on God. And so shall you find yourself and so shall you find a larger faith and a larger service. And so shall you find your brother. (King Arthur's sword.)
ADVENTURING FOR WORLD PEACE

"Nevertheless, at Thy word, I will let down the nets." Luke 5: 5

Peter is here called upon to make an adventure of faith. The odds seem against him. All he knows about fishing makes his adventure seem silly. There is only one reason for his letting down the nets, that is the word of Jesus. He has so much confidence in this Master of his that he cannot believe that He will send him on a fool's errand. "The whole enterprise," he seems to say, "looks futile and even foolish. Nevertheless, at Thy word, I am going to undertake it." It is in this spirit that I am asking you to join with many others in an adventure for world peace.

It is heartening that more people are thinking in terms of world peace today than in any other day in all human history. This is the case, not because we are better and wiser than our fathers. We have been forced to think by what we have suffered. Our generation has tested the adequacy of war on a scale larger than that of any other generation. A little less than a quarter of a century ago, a small avalanche started in a backward nation of central Europe. That avalanche gathered volume and momentum till twenty-four nations had slipped into an abyss of bloody tears. These nations tested more thoroughly and on a wider scale than was ever known before the value of war.

If they found the enterprise a disappointing and ghastly failure, it was not because they did not give it a thorough trial. We often fail in worthy enterprises by lack of consecration, but our consecration to the war was whole-hearted and complete. We gave it our man-power. We gave it largely of our colleges and our churches. Some of us preached militarism as if Jesus were the supreme militarist. We gave to it our money and mortgaged our future. We gave to it our press. We must always have the press to propagate the necessary lies and hammer our individual thinking into the mob mind. We gave to it our man-power. We did this giving with eagerness and abandon.

You remember the call that came to us from the battlefields of Europe:

"In Flanders Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders Fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields.

You remember our heroic response:

Rest ye in peace, ye Flanders dead!
The fight that ye so bravely led
We have taken up, we will keep
True faith with you who lie asleep
With each a cross to mark its dead
And poppies blowing o'erhead,
Where once his own life blood ran red!

So let your sleep be sweet and deep
In Flanders Fields!
Fear not that you have died for naught.
The torch you threw to us, we caught.
Ten million hands will hold it high
And freedom's light will never die.
We have learned the lesson you have taught
In Flanders Fields!

We are now far enough away from this costly adventure to confess that the promoters of the war, whether with their lies or against them, were equally selfish and vicious. We are ready to confess that those whose duty it was to fight and die were equally sincere and heroic. There was much idealism on both sides. We were fighting a "war to end war." We were endeavoring to "make the world safe for democracy." We gave to the task, I repeat, our very best! What did we get out of it? What were our assets when the mad and bloody conflict was over?

The answer is almost oppressing. We got a world-wide economic depression with a moral and spiritual depression that was far more tragic. We won vast millions of graves and vaster millions of men broken in body and hope. We reaped an era of dis-
illusionment and bitterness. We did not make the world safe for democracy, we rather made it safe for autocracy. More people are living under an autocratic form of government at this moment than in any other day in human history. Real freedom is scarcely known outside of the Scandinavian peninsula and the Anglo-Saxon world.

But, you say, we at least won the war. Did we? When a few months ago Germany again took possession of the Rhine, a certain militarist said that thus Germany won the war. He also added that we ought to go over and whip them again. This was, of course, in order to enable them to march back after another twenty years and win the war again. Thus we could keep up a vicious circle until civilization was exterminated.

But assuming that we did win the war, our victory was as costly as defeat. I was speaking at Lakeside, Ohio last summer and Frederick W. Norwood recently of the City Temple was the other speaker. He declared that the entrance of America into the war was a great calamity. "Had you not entered," he said, "there would have been no decisive victory. We should have fought to a muddled draw and then we would have made peace on the basis of humanity and compromise, as it were. Your entrance made our victory decisive. We did not make peace on the basis of compromise, we re-carved the map of Europe and thus made future wars far more likely, if not inevitable." Thus our total winnings were infinitely less than nothing. War has certainly been weighed in the balance and found wanting.

II.

Since this is the case, what are we going to do about it? It is estimated that only 2/5 of 1% of our people want war. What are we who constitute the 99 3/5% going to do? Those who oppose war are divided into quite a number of groups. We do not by any means agree among ourselves.

First, there are those who hate war but believe that nothing can be done about it. This group is divided into two classes - they are very far apart. Some who take this position have no faith in either God or man. They say that man is a fighting
animal. He fought yesterday and he will fight today and tomorrow and there is nothing we can do about it. Then, there are those who take practically this same position who are very religious people. They hate war but accept it because they feel they must.

I had a minister of this type in my pulpit some months ago. He is a man for whom I have the highest respect. He is a genuinely beautiful and sincere character. He deplored war, but he reached the dismal conclusion that since the Bible says that there are to be wars and rumors of wars until the end of this age, there is nothing we can do but to go on fighting. But it strikes me that this is fatalism pure and simple. It is little less than high treason before the Lord Almighty. How a Christian can take such a position is beyond my comprehension. There is scarcely a sin known to our race that is not born of the sordid wound of war. War makes for hate, for lying, for lust. War makes for suspicion, prejudice, lying fury, ghastly murder. We call His name Jesus because He saves His people from their sins. If He cannot save them from war when they co-operate with Him, then from what sin can He save them. He taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come...." but the kingdom can never come till men cease to fight. If, therefore, war must last until the end of the age, then to pray for the coming of the kingdom is sheer madness. Peace, therefore, will certainly not be brought about by those who accept war as inevitable.

Second, there are those who look for peace through preparedness. This remedy has been suggested so persistently that to some it sounds sensible, but in reality it hardly rises to the height of dignified nonsense. To take the position that the way to have peace is to prepare for war is to fly in the face of history. To say that the way to have peace is to prepare for war is to contradict the law of sowing and reaping. To say that the way to have peace is to prepare for war is to throw dust in the eyes of reason and spit in the face of common-sense. If the way to have peace is to prepare for war, then the way to have educated people is to destroy the school buildings and exterminate the teachers. If the
way to have peace is to prepare for war, then the way to promote religion is to dynamite the churches and execute the ministers. If the way to have peace is to prepare for war, then the way to have good health is to disregard all laws of sanitation. Mark you, I am not arguing at present whether we should or should not have an army and navy, I am only saying that armies and navies are not the path to peace. We believe that if we prepare the way of the Lord, the Lord will travel over it. We believe with equal conviction that if we prepare the way of Mars, Mars will travel over it. We who long for peace, therefore, cannot expect it at the hands of preparedness.

Third, then there are those who seek peace through isolation. We in America are separated from seething Europe by 3,000 miles of ocean. Let us live to ourselves. Let us pass strict neutrality laws and refuse utterly to be drawn into a European war. Now to all this, I say "amen." I believe in strict neutrality laws - not only so, but I believe if those neutrality laws are violated by other nations it would be wiser for us to submit than to fight. If a man were to put a gun in my face and ask me for my dollar, I should give it to him, not out of charity, but because I considered it the lesser of two evils. And if one of our ships is sunk, I shall be sorry, but I believe it would be better to lose an hundred men than to lose a million.

But while isolation may serve as a temporary help, I cannot trust it as a final remedy. This is the case for the simple reason that we are a part of a constantly contradicting world. Last summer, I went fishing and got poison oak on my left ankle. I remember that as a boy I used to treat this annoying malady with carbolic acid, but I forgot one item - that is, that I used to dilute the acid. Therefore, I put it on straight. Not only so, but I rubbed it in. When it began to burn to the bone, my whole body was indignant. My hand said, "I will have nothing to do with it. I am far enough away to stay out of it." My head said, "I had nothing to do with putting it on, therefore, I am going to bed and sleep and let the ankle look after itself." But in spite of all resolutions, my best memory is that we all stayed awake together. Which leads me to this conclusion,
America is going to help the world make peace or is going to help the world make war. Isolation is not a solution to the problem.

Fourth, what then shall we do? We are to adventure for world peace. We are to make peace. Pacifism is not a popular word. This is the case because the pacifist is looked upon as one who does nothing but simply refuse to fight - his attitude is negative. But this is pacifism, the word pacifist has a "fist" in it, as another has suggested. It is not a male fist, but one that requires a far higher type of courage. If we have a war-less world, we must co-operate with each other in the building of it.

III.

How shall we go about it? Of course, you do not expect me to speak the final word, but I offer the following suggestions. Before we have a war-less world, we must have a new type of patriotism. The patriotism of yesterday will not suffice. This is true for the following reasons:

1. The old patriotism said, "My country, may she always be right, but right or wrong - my country." The new patriotism must say, "My country, may she always be right, but if she is not right, I will say so and act accordingly." This I will do, not because I am less patriotic than the militarist, but because I have a definite idea of service. I say of my boy, "My son, may he always be right, but right or wrong - my son." That means I will love him in honor or shame, but it does not mean I will add and abate him when he embarks on a course that I know will end in disaster. The more I love him, the more determined will be my opposition. The old type of patriotism, the type of the one hundred percenter, asked me to love my own country so well that I hate that of everyone else. The new patriotism enables me to interpret and appreciate the patriotism of all my brothers everywhere. I shall, therefore, respect and love their country too. I will not flout my preparedness in their faces. I shall act on that very same principle that the greatest service I can do for my country is to make for it friends and that I might as well
be an enemy to my country as to make an enemy for my country.

2. The old patriotism reached its climax in those lines of Tennyson —

Theirs not to reason why,
Tliirs not to make reply,
Tliirs but to do and die!

This sounds very noble. It did have much that was beautifully heroic about it, but these same lines might have been written about the horses in that cavalry charge as well as the men. I believe we render our highest service when we do "reason why" and when we act in accordance with our reasoning. There is no higher service can be rendered than that which is rendered by men who obey God rather than man.

This brings us to the most damning indictment of the whole military system. It leaves no place for the conscientious objector. In the story of the crucifixion of Jesus, we read this word, "The soldiers crucified Him." Why so? Did they think Him an imposter? Did they hate Him? Did they want to wipe His memory from the earth in the interest of truth and justice? No! They crucified Him simply because it was their business to obey orders. And the damning work of crucifixion will continue just so long as we proclaim as our highest ideal, "There is not to reason why, there is but to do and die!"

Now the greatest hope of today and tomorrow is in this new patriotism. It is already accomplishing something. The nations of the world have passed up more good opportunities to fight in the last five years than they have in the last 5,000. How has this come about? Because it is partly economical. They have not been financially able to prosecute a costly war. But there is another reason. In many of our strongest nations today, there is a growing minority of men of good will who are sacrificially and aggressively banded together against war. These are having their influence. Such minorities have in them the building of a new order. They have in them the bringing about of that good day when men shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks and learn war no more!"
THE TRAITOR

"And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor." Luke 6:16

We are thinking now of about the most tragic and perplexing character in the literature of the world. To the vast majority the name Judas spells only one thing—-that is treachery. Thus we take one single act of his life and look at it to the exclusion of all else. He had gone on missions of love and mercy with his fellow disciples. Doubtless he had many a kind deed to his credit. But we forget all this. We remember only the last sad chapter of his life, that he betrayed his Lord with a kiss.

Naturally this is not quite fair. Sometime ago two beautiful young girls of my native state were out driving when they tried to beat a train to the crossing. Their car was wrecked and their lovely bodies mangled. Had I looked at these girls and reported on how horrible they looked, you would naturally answer that I saw only the final view. To understand them I should have seen them before the wreck. Judas brought upon himself a great and tragic wreck. But his treachery is not the only fact about him.

In studying the character of this pathetic man, I think we can almost all agree on three assertions:

1. Judas was human. That sounds trite, I know, but it needs to be said. He was not a monster, but a man. We need to remind ourselves of this fact because it is so easy for us to look on those who have gone tragically wrong as being so different from
ourselves. We like to think of them as made of the slimy ooze of things, while we are made of quite different and finer material.

For instance, G. Campbell Morgan was one of the great expository preachers of his day. I have both heard and read him with pleasure and profit. Yet even this great Bible student affirms that Judas was not a man in the ordinary sense of the word. He affirms that he was an incarnate devil created for Hell's work. But, of course, this cannot be the case. If Judas was created an incarnate devil, who created him? If he did the work he was sent into the world to do, then he was not to blame for being a traitor? God was to blame. In fact, to carry out God's purpose in our lives is to fulfill our destiny and to claim the highest rewards of sainthood.

Let us then face the fact that Judas was just as human as we. There was certainly no treachery in him when he was a baby. When his mother looked a lovelight into his eyes, she saw no tragic wickedness there. Traitors are not born, but made. That is the case of all others who go wrong. When we study Judas, therefore, we are studying one who is closely akin to all of us.

2. I think we can all agree further, not only that Judas was a human but as hinted above, that he was not always a traitor. There are those who affirm that the New Testament declares that Judas was a devil from the beginning. But the New Testament says no such thing. In John 6:70 Jesus said, "Have not I chosen you the twelve and one of you is a devil?" Jesus said that when the treachery of Judas was about a year away. By that time Judas had begun to face in the wrong direction. But in calling him a devil, He was not affirming that Judas was wholly bad. Judas was never wholly bad. The way his heart broke of his gutty deed indicates
that. Jesus meant only what we mean when we say one is devilish. When, for instance, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Get thee behind me satan," he did not mean that Simon Peter had become an incarnate devil, but He was talking the language of self-seeking such as Satan would speak himself.

3. Not only was Judas not always a traitor, but he was once a friend. I think we may be sure of this for two reasons: First, we may be sure of it because Judas chose of his own free will to follow Jesus. John indicates that Judas was a lover of money. Yet, so great was the spell that Jesus cast over this money lover that one day he turned his back on his business to follow Jesus who was a confessed son of poverty. He did not have to make this choice. He made it of his own free will.

Now, if you answer that Judas was not altogether unselfish in his choice, that his motives were mixed and that he was expecting Jesus to set up his earthly kingdom, and that he was condemned for this, so must his fellow disciples be condemned. Everyone of them expected Jesus to set up an earthly kingdom. James and John who belonged to the inner circle came hiding behind their mother's skirts to seek for special positions in that kingdom. The plain truth is that Judas so felt the spell of Jesus that he followed as wholeheartedly as his fellows. Second, not only can we believe that Judas was a friend because he chose to follow Jesus, but we can believe that Jesus chose him not merely as a disciple, but as a member of the twelve. Why did Jesus do that? He certainly did not choose Judas because he saw that he was a rascal and a traitor. Henry Long declared that he chose a certain man for office for two reasons: 1) he had the hide of a rhinoceros and 2) because there was not a straight
bone in his body. But Long condemns himself as well as the man he chose. If I chose a man to the official Board because he was a crook, you would be apt to suspect my own straightness.

Why, then, did Jesus choose Judas? It was not because he was entirely ignorant of the kind of man Judas was. He knew that he was capable of going vastly wrong; he knew also that he was capable of going vastly right. Any soil that can grow rank weeds can also grow rank wheat. In fact, Jesus chose Judas just as He chose Peter and James and John. He chose him as a high adventure of faith. He had in him possibilities of becoming a great saint.

3. Not only can we agree that Judas was human, that he was once a friend, but that he became a traitor. Had he always been a traitor, it would have been impossible for him to have become one. Now so ugly is the sin of Judas that there have been many across the years who have tried to explain it away. The standard contention is this. Judas believed in Jesus with all his heart. But Jesus was not moving as fast as Judas thought he ought to move. Being the passionate patriot and also being sure that If Jesus were put on the spot he would assert his supernatural powers and set up his kingdom, Judas decided to put Him on the spot. For this reason Judas was not a treacherous man who did a damnable thing. He was rather a misguided man who did a foolish thing.

Now, of course, there is not a right thinking man who would not like to believe this. But the trouble is there is not one word of Scripture to back it. Those who take this position do so at the price of reflecting on the honesty of the evangelists who tell this story. Never once do they speak of Judas as an
unfortunate and misguided man, but always as a traitor. This also is the position of Jesus himself. He found some excuse for even the soldiers that nailed him to the cross. He threw about these misguided soldiers this protecting prayer, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." But for Judas he has no appollating word. To his face He called him a traitor. "Betray thou the son of man with a kiss?" From a friend, therefore, Judas became in spite of his high privileges an enemy.

- II -

How may we account for this terrible downfall and ruin?

1. We may be sure that Judas did not become a traitor all at once. He went down a step at a time. There came a tragic hour when he faced away from Christ instead of toward Him. Always the biggest fact about any of us is not what we are, but what we are becoming. There came a day when Judas faced wrong. From that hour he went down a step at a time. Dr. Jekyll did not become Mr. Hyde all at once. Judas did not become a traitor in a single moment.

2. I am convinced that he took his first wrong step through resentment. His resentment of Jesus was the result of a number of circumstances.

First, Judas was the only one of the apostles who was not a Galilean. He alone came from Judea. The judeans considered themselves far superior to their crude followers from Galilee. There is a tradition also that Judas belonged to the nobility. For these two reasons, he was likely to have felt himself superior to his fellow apostles. But Jesus failed to recognize this superiority. Judas had not been long an apostle before he discovered that there was an inner circle. This inner circle was made up
of Peter, James, and John. Judas, who thought exceedingly well of himself, was not among the number. This outraged his pride and stirred his resentment.

Then Jesus roused his resentment by what seemed to Judas as slow and impracticable methods of setting up his kingdom. One day an enthusiastic crowd came to take Jesus by force and make Him king, but instead of taking advantage, Jesus hid himself. Later still when the multitudes hailed Him as king when he entered Jerusalem, Jesus instead of accepting the crown, sobbed over the city. Judas felt an increasing resentment against the Master because he felt He had let him down.

Third, I can well imagine that Judas, feeling himself thus cheated, began to tell himself that he could not make the adventure a total loss. He must get a little out of it. Therefore, he began to take a small sum at a time from the treasury. At first, I dare say, he told himself it was a loan. Then as he failed to pay back the loan, he told himself that it was a salary, far less than it ought to be. For did he not have all the worry of attending to the business of the group? Thus, in his resentment, he began to give way to his lust for money.

Finally, Judas felt, and rightly so, that his dishonesty and disloyalty were known to the Master. Those searching and kindly eyes saw through him. That made him uncomfortable. In order to live with himself, he had to repent or to resent the Master's knowledge. Therefore, as he rationalized, he told himself it was not his own fault, but the fault of Jesus. And his antagonism to the Master, whom he once loved, became all the more bitter.

If this seems to you impossible, I appeal to your own experience.
It is often hard to forgive one who has done us a great wrong. It is harder still to forgive one whom we have wronged, unless we are willing to apologize. Judas thus became so antagonistic that he was willing to sell his Lord.

What then were the motives that actuated Judas? One was greed. The fact that Judas received for his Master such a small sum does not mean that that was all he expected. But while greed was one motive, that was not the only one, nor do I believe it was the strongest.

If greed had been the predominant motive, I am sure there would have been no kiss. Judas would simply have led the mob out to the garden and pointed Jesus out. But why the kiss? He kissed Him lavishly. I cannot explain the kiss except in bitter hate. Judas has brooded over his fancy wrongs until he takes loves tenderest caress and forges it into hate. Thus in spite of his great opportunity, he deserted and betrayed his Lord.

What were the consequences of his treachery?

I am sure Judas did not expect the consequences of his betrayal to be as tragic as they were. Many a man who has longed for revenge has not felt the same hot anger when he saw his foe lying dead. We seldom look back on any sin with joy and appreciation. When Judas saw that his Master would be done to death, he was filled with remorse. I see him as he hurried back to the men who rebuked him. He throws the money at their feet and says, "I have sinned."

It is easy to see that with all the treachery of Judas, they are far worse then he. They merely shrug their shoulders without pity and say, "What is that to us?" With this heartless answer
surging in his ears, Judas hurried out to hang himself.

One writer pictures Judas's reception on the other side, received by the Master as a loyal but foolish saint. Now the Bible is beautifully reticent about the fate of Judas. Simon Peter does not tell us that he went to hell. He says only that he went to his own place. Wherever traitors will fit in, there Judas went.

The words of Jesus are even more awful. He does not say one single unkind word about his betrayer. He does say, "Good were it for that man if he had not been born." More terrible still, in His last prayer, he uses this word, "Those whom thou gavest me I have kept, none of them is lost, but the son of perdition." That is Jesus looking into the very face of His Father confessing with sadness unspeakable, in spite of all the good he saw in him, in spite of all he saw to do for him, in spite of all his fine possibilities, "I have lost him." Whether He will find him again in the life of the unseen, it is not for us to say. But for the life that now is, He lost him.

What has this to say to you and me? We misread the story and certainly misread our own hearts if we do not realize that a like tragic fate might happen to us. We may sell Him for our own pleasure, for our own selfish gain. In the presence of this tragic downfall and ruin, I have but one question and that is the question of the awed followers of Jesus in the long ago, "Lord, is it I?"

Which way then are you facing? If right, there is no telling what you may become at the last among the daring sons of the morning. If wrong, there is no measuring of the depths you may go. There is a tradition as to how the artist set about painting the twelve
apostles. He found a man of unusual charm and beauty whom he painted as St. Joh. Then he painted the other apostles one by one until he came to Judas. He could find nobody to fit that horrible role. At last in a slum he found one shrewd hard person whom he asked to sit for Judas. He consented to sit for a price. When the artist had finished, he told with cynic laughter, "I have fit for you before, but the other time it was as John." Yes, you have the making of a friend with the Christ-likeness of John. You have also the capacity to become a Judas. Which way are you facing?

No man is ever lost because he has sinned. One becomes to refused to accept forgiveness.
WHY BE DECISIVE?

"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Luke 6:46

This same question is addressed to the undecided. In speaking to you on the business of being decisive, I am speaking on a subject of major importance. This is an essential for successful living. If you know where you are going and are determined to get there, almost any old jalopy will serve the purpose. But if you cannot come to a definite decision as to your goal, then a Rolls Royce will be of little avail. It would wear out and fall to pieces before you would reach your goal. Truly, for the ship that is bound for no harbor, no wind can be favorable. No wonder, therefore, that our Lord is constantly calling us to be decisive. "Let your yes be yes, and your no be no." He urges.

How essential that is, and yet how difficult! So often our yes has in it a tincture of no and our no a tincture of yes. To give utterance to a yes that is one hundred percent affirmation is about the most difficult task that we are called upon to perform. The burden of choice is so heavy that many people go to pieces under it. There are young men who were happier in the army than they had ever been before or since. This is the case because there they were in some measure relieved of the burden of choice.

It is difficult to get people to think. It is more
difficult still to get them to be decisive. What a keen thinker was Hamlet, Prince of Denmark! There are those who believe that the story of this prince is somewhat autobiographical. They believe that Hamlet, with his vast ability to think and his inability to act, is in a measure a picture of the poet himself. Be that as it may, Hamlet found action next to impossible. He did not like his situation. He rebelled at the fact that his world was out of joint and that he was ever born to set it right. He contemplated suicide, thought of it with brilliant clearness, but could never quite decide to go through with it.

"Who would these fardels bear,
   To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
   But that the dread of something after death,
   The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
   No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
   Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
   And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
   And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
   And lose the name of action."

- I -

Look now at this question of Jesus, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" We can readily realize the kind of folks to whom this question was addressed. Our Lord is not speaking to those who are out and out against Him. He is not speaking to his avowed enemies, nor to those who ignore Him. Neither is He speaking to those who are wholeheartedly for Him. He is rather speaking to people very like many of us. He is speaking to those who admire Him, who honor Him to the point of calling Him Lord, and yet who are not fully persuaded to follow Him. They give Him an intellectual
assent, but have failed wholeheartedly to give him themselves.

Mark tells us of a man of this type. One day this gentleman came to Jesus with this question. "What is the greatest commandment?" When Jesus answered that the greatest commandment is to love God and man, his questioner approved his answer. In fact he gave the answer of the Master such a wise approval that Jesus commended him for his answer and then paid him this compliment. "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." It was a beautiful commendation, and yet it was not enough. Though so near the kingdom that his foot was almost upon the threshold, he was not in it. One decisive step would have brought him to life's finest adventure, but so far as we know, he failed to take that step.

Now this company of the undecided is a vast company. It is not uncharitable to say that it includes a large per cent of the members of our churches. This does not mean that these undecided folks are hypocritical. Very few of them are. It does not mean that they do not refrain from certain evils everyday out of loyalty to Christ. It does not mean that they do not do certain deeds of service every day because of that loyalty. It does mean that while they are obedient in many things, they still do not put the kingdom of God first. Though decent, religious and respectable, there are areas in their lives that they have never dedicated to Him whom they call Lord.

Not only does this company of the undecided include vast numbers that are in our churches, it includes even more who are outside any church. As I have spoken to various clubs and organizations outside the church, I have discovered
that it is by no means unpopular before such groups to sound a definitely religious note. Any reference to Jesus Christ, any word honoring Him is met with almost universal approval. Also as I have spoken to men individually who were outside the church, I have found plenty of those who were harshly critical. These were often critical of the ministry. They could point out numerous flaws both in the church as a whole and in the individual members. But when I confessed that we were a faulty group all of us, and then asked this question, "What about Jesus Christ? What fault have you to find with Him?" I do not recall ever to have heard from these one harsh criticism. In spite of all our faults, there is a sense in which Jesus Christ is the most popular character in America today. Our tragedy is not that we are out and out against Him; it is rather that we are not out and out for Him.

- II -

"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" Now what does Jesus say? What is he asking at our hands? Let us get away from what is incidental to what is really essential.

To begin negatively, Jesus is not asking primarily for our church membership. By this I do not mean that it is not the duty of every Christian to belong to some church. I realize that there are many decent and right thinking people outside the church. But it is my conviction that those who take Jesus seriously will join some church. The church at the time of Jesus was even more faulty than the church of today, yet Jesus did not stand apart from it and stone it. He rather attended it as a matter of habit and conviction.
He knew that what help he brought, he must bring as a member, and not as an outside antagonist.

Here and there I find people who have become too pious to belong to the church. I was preaching to a congregation some years ago in which was a brother who was giving me most encouraging backing by his heartily amens. Now I approve of saying amen. When a hearer makes such a response, I feel he is on my side. But this man over did it. He was talking almost as fast as I was. By this I knew I had not yet rebuked his particular sin.

Then it happened. I said, "I believe in the church." "Amen!" was the response. "Now and then," I continued, "I have found people who became too good to belong to any church." "Amen."

"If I lived next door to a man like this," I continued, "I would lock my garage every night."

He started to say amen and it slid off like a feather-edged shingle. When the sermon was over, I learned the truth. He had quit the church because the Lord had said, "Come out from among them and be ye separate." Personally I believe that if you take Jesus seriously you will belong to some church. But he was not asking for that first and all.

No more is Jesus asking first for our work. Of course, if we are in earnest about following him, we are certain to do something about it. But his first demand is not for our work. Neither is he seeking our money first of all. Naturally if our Christianity is real we shall be glad to give, but money does not come first. No more is our Lord asking for some kind
emotional response. He is seeking neither for our laughter nor our tears. For what, I repeat, is he asking? He is asking for ourselves. He is saying to us what he said to Matthew long ago. "Follow me." This publican was decisive. He at once left all, rose up and followed. This also we are to do. Jesus is asking what Paul urged in these words: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice." He is asking for our complete and unconditional dedication of life. Nothing less than that will meet his demands.

If that sounds difficult, I am ready to agree. Jesus never hinted that discipleship was easy. But when He set out to redeem us he did not seek an easy way. He took the way of the Cross. "This is my body," he declares, "and it is given for you." "This," he is saying, "is myself, my very all, my everything, and it is given for you." He asks that in return we take our discipleship seriously. As he gave his all, we are to give our all. We are to say day by day, "Not my will but Thine be done."

Why should we do this?

1. We ought to be wholehearted in our decision because nothing else will satisfy our Lord. He is never pleased with half-hearted devotion. In fact, it would seem, as we turn the pages of the New Testament, that that is just the attitude that He hates most. He even prefers out and out antagonism. "I would you were cold or hot." What are we here to do? Not to win success primarily. Certainly not here to fail. We are here to do the will of God. It is only by a wholehearted dedication to Him that we can please Him and thus fulfill God's
purpose for our lives.

2. It is only by our wholehearted loyalty that we can find satisfaction for ourselves. There is no peace for the undecided. The most wretched hours of our lives are those hours when we are unable to reach a decision. Even a wrong decision brings more peace than does indecision. The wise story of Jonah emphasises this fact.

Listen to this. The word of the Lord came unto Jonah saying, "Arise and go unto Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it." There were two possibilities open to this prophet, to go or not to go. He decided against the call of God. We have that amazing power. Having reached a definite decision to renounce God by disobeying Him, he went on shipboard and fell fast asleep. The days and nights that had preceded this decision had been full of agony. When he at last decided, even though his decision was wrong, that decision brought sufficient peace to make sleep possible.

But the trouble with the peace born of a wrong decision is that it will not last. This is the case because God simply will not let us alone. He refuses to leave off His loving efforts to win us. "No man can be as bad as he wants to be." Sometime ago I stood on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. The voices of the heights were calling to that ocean, but it was refusing to go. For centuries it has said no and has remained in its ocean bed. But though it has rejected the upward call, it has not been at peace. It is always tossing and restless. We may thus reject the high calling of God, but our rejection will bring us no permanent peace. It is only when we have fully committed ourselves to God that we come to know peace that
Then a wholehearted decision to follow Christ brings peace because so many lesser questions are decided by it. There are those for whom no moral issue is finally decided. Every morning they must decide whether they will pray or not pray, whether they will look into God's word or neglect it. Every Sunday church attendance is an open question. These are, therefore, in constant conflict. They remind one of that old story of the man who possessed a dog whose tail was far too long, but desiring to give the dog the least possible pain he decided to cut it off an inch a day rather than all at once. If you take Jesus seriously, a thousand lesser decisions will then be made in advance.

Not only will this one great decision include many that are smaller, but it will make every other right decision easier. The choice you made today was born quite largely of the choice you made yesterday. Every wrong choice makes the next wrong choice the easier and the surer. When Rip Van Winkle used to swear off drinking, he would return to his bottle saying, "I will not count this one." But even if he failed to count it, his weakened will did not. It chalked that failure against him. Now just as every wrong choice makes the next wrong choice easier, even so every right choice makes the next right choice easier and surer. We can so cultivate our right choices in the fellowship of Jesus that they become all but spontaneous.

3. Then we ought to be fully decided in the matter of following Christ, because this alone brings us to our highest usefulness. Indecision means weakness. Years ago when we
were boys, my brother and I in passing through the fields had to cross a spring branch which was normally two or three feet wide. But heavy rains had given this little stream a breadth of from ten to fifteen feet. In spite of this we decided we could jump it. I was to adventure first. So I gave myself a good running start and was on the way to victory when my brother changed his mind and shouted, "Stop! Stop! Stop!" The result was I lost my decisiveness. The further result was that I landed in the middle of the stream. But my failure was not due to my lack of athletic ability. It was due rather to my indecision.

In those dark days when Israel was being swept off its feet by Jezebel, it was Elijah who saved the day. Standing before a great throng, he flung at them this sane question, "How long hault ye between two opinions?" In other words, "How long are you going to allow yourselves to be crippled by your indecision?" To be thus undecided is as silly as trying to win a foot race with a ball and chain on your ankle. Indecision then brings weakness. Decision brings strength.

Years ago I watched a company of men move the side of a mountain. They were not using bulldoziers as we do today. They were using hydraulic pressure. When that water fell from the heavens, it doubtless fell so gently that it would hardly have hurt a baby's face. But now under its tremendous pressure small trees were being uprooted, and rocks were being pushed out of their places. Why the difference? This water was saying, "This one thing I do." It is only as we are wholeheartedly for Christ that we find our highest personal satisfaction and highest usefulness.
4. Then we ought to decide definitely for Christ because by refusing to do so, we decide against Him. There is a fable that a donkey once stood between two delicious bundles of hay. The donkey was hungry. Both bundles offered just the satisfaction he needed. But when he would turn toward the one, the other would seem to call to him. Thus he could never make up his mind just which bundle he would eat first, therefore, he hesitated between the two until he starved to death. His death was not the result of a decision to commit suicide. It was rather the result of his failure to decide to eat.

Even so we miss knowing Jesus Christ through lack of decision. Right now He is offering Himself to us. Most of us have declared to Him our allegiance in some fashion. But in spite of this some of us are keenly conscious of the fact that our religious lives have often been quite disappointing. We wonder at times if we had not better renounce the whole venture as a failure. What is the way to victory? Make a whole hearted decision. God longs to give you the best, but He cannot without your cooperation. Remember that God's one plan of salvation is for a surrendered heart.