I BELONG TO THE CHURCH

"Ye are not your own."

I Corinthians 6:19

Paul is telling these Corinthian Christians that they do not belong to themselves. What he said to them he is saying to you and me. This is true of all mankind. No man belongs to himself. No man has a right to live his own life. We are bound up in a bundle of life with others. You are not your own is a fundamental that we cannot ignore except at our own peril.

I.

While the fact of our belonging to others is inherent in our very existence, yet, this belonging never comes to its best except when it is acknowledged and willingly accepted by ourselves. Many a master has owned a slave without that slave in the fullest sense belonging to his master. Many a man has been man's slave and yet God's free man at the same time. No man can belong in the fullest sense without his consent. "Stone walls do not a prison make nor iron bars a cage." We recognize this in the ordinary affairs of life.

1. For instance I was born in an old fashioned country home. I was dropped into the arms of a sweet Irish mother. Whose eyes were homes of silent prayer and whose lips were full of delicious laughter. I inherited a rugged
father, a bit of a puritan, who was as gentle as he was strong and as strong as he was gentle. I came into a wholesome environment close to the soil. My home was a lovely old house with sturdy apple trees in front and a forest of beech and oak back of it. There was a beautiful farm sloping away to the silvery Buffalo River. All-in-all it was a lovely place. But it was given to me without my choosing. I was not consulted about being born into such a situation.

But in spite of this fact I came to accept it, and to rejoice in it. I came to prefer my mother and my father above all other parents. Never once did I turn on them and say in the language of today, "I didn't ask to be born." To this day, as I look back at that home through the magic maze of memory it is still one of the sweetest spots in all the world. If I had the privilege of being born over again I would choose just the father and mother that I had. And just the lovely old home in which it was my privilege to open my eyes on life's bright morning long ago. So while I was born into this home without my consent I came to consent and to belong to it from my own choice.

2. Then this home into which I was born was a part of a larger community. It was a part of a nation. I did not choose America, I might have been born in Japan or Russia or Germany. I might have been born where personality was of little worth, where the individual did not count. I might have been born in a land of tyranny, where democracy was not known. But without being consulted I opened my eyes in this great land. And now that I am here I like it. There may be those who do not. There may be those in America, as in Holland and Belgium who would serve as a Fifth Column to help to destroy the land that gave them birth. But I choose America above all other lands. I confess that I belong to it. This soil that has become mine through the consecrated toil of millions of worthy men has definite claims upon me. Claims that I am eager
and glad to acknowledge.

3. Then I was born in a very profound sense into the Church and the Christ of the Church. From the beginning I belonged to God because he created me and redeemed me. Then I belonged for another reason. I had a consecrated mother and father. They were deeply concerned in giving me the best possible chance. Therefore, without consulting me, without any understanding on my part, they dedicated me to the Church and to the Christ of the Church in my young and tender years. That is what they meant when they had me christened. It was their way of taking their youngest born and passing him over into the hands of the living God, asking him to accept him and to share with them the high obligation of bringing him to his best possible self. I was not conscious of this dedication at first, but by and by I became conscious of it. By and by of my own choosing I took upon myself the vows that loving hearts had made for me, when I was a little child. Therefore, today it is my humble boast that I belong to the Church.

II.

This belonging of which the Apostle spoke has a forbidding side to it. There is that involved that often offends us and makes us afraid. Such belonging involves the giving of self. That is something that our human nature is very loath to do. Often times in our homes, in our churches, we are willing to give almost anything but ourselves. But there is nothing, absolutely nothing that will take the place of the giving of self. No amount of work, no amount of charity, no amount of decency, nothing is a substitute for self-giving. Right at the door of entrance into the Christian life there stands the Cross. "If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross."

And mark you, this is no arbitrary condition. It is true in the very nature of things. It is true because no man can serve two masters. It is true because no man can have two supreme loyalties. When we make Christianity less exacting
than this we misrepresent it. Sometimes I fear that in our zeal to make disciples we tend to tone down the conditions and make them too easy. Jesus never appealed to any man to follow him because by so doing he would dodge the difficult. When a young man rushed with hot enthusiasm into his presence saying, "Lord I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," Jesus dashed floods of cold water upon his enthusiasm by saying, "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." "I am more destitute than the foxes, more homeless than the birds. If you follow me it will cost you the giving of self. Are you willing to come?"

Now whoever is willing to come under these conditions can be a disciple however ugly and stained his past. Whoever refuses to meet this condition can not be a disciple however beautiful and harmless his past. Where on the pages of the New Testament can we find a more charming young man than the Rich Young Ruler? One day with a fine high courage, and with a glowing earnestness he ran to kneel at the feet of Jesus. "Good Master," he asked, all eagerness, "What good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus gave a straightforward answer to his question. He saw the central love of his heart. He saw what came first. It was his money. Therefore, he said, "Go thy way, sell whatever thou hast and give to the poor and come and follow me." That was no easy condition. I am not going to throw a stone at this young man. I am not at all sure that I would have carried the situation off any better. But what response did he make? He went away.

Take that word in your hand and look at it---"He went away." Not that Jesus put his hands on his shoulders and turned him about and pushed him away. Not that Jesus read his heart and saw there stains that even he could not forgive. This young man, having the power of choice, holding his destiny in his own hand, turned his back on Jesus and went away. Let me ask you, was he saved? Did he become a disciple? You know he did not. Why? It was not his bad record. It
was not his moral and spiritual ugliness. He failed for just one reason, the supreme reason, because he refused to give himself. He refused to obey. He refused to dedicate his life to Christ. The price was too big. It may be too big for us. Believe me, there is no easier way into the Kingdom than that of the cross.

III.

But if there is that about belonging that is forbidding there is also that which is infinitely appealing. This is true for the following reasons.

1. It is through self-giving that we make possible the highest type of receiving. This young ruler of whom we have just spoken came all eagerness into the presence of Jesus, but he went away grieved. He came with the light of expectancy on his face and went away with an ache in his heart that looked out through his tired eyes. It need not have been so. But refusing to give, it was impossible for him to receive. Our receiving day by day depends largely upon our giving. How much do you receive from your friends? That is very largely in proportion to your giving. Who is the best loved member of the family? To whom do we give the most? As a rule it is to mother. She receives most because she gives most.

That is constantly and forever true in the realm of religion. Jesus was eager to give his best to this young ruler, even as our Lord is eager to give his best to us. But our refusing to give thwarts him and defeats his holy purpose for us. Jesus told of a certain young man who lead a very circumspect life, but he was self-centered even in his decency. He was willing to give of his work, but he was not willing to give of himself. Failing to do this, his life was mean and disappointing. We learn as much from his own lips. "All these years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandments: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends." Having
I lived like a slave. He had the privileges of a garden, but his whole life had been a weary trudge through a desert.

But why was this the case? Refusing thus to give he was refusing to receive. Look at the all-noughtings that he had, over against the wealth that might have been his. "Son thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."

His father was eager to give him his very all, but he could not because his son by refusing to give was incapable of receiving. This law constantly conditions our Christian lives. We receive only in proportion as we give. When we give all we are capable of receiving God's best. When we say wholeheartedly, I am his, we can also say, He is mine. When we truly dedicate our lives to him we can sing, "The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want." Giving then is a privilege because it conditions our receiving.

2. The giving of self is a privilege because it leads to our highest self-realization. We have two selves, the higher and a lower. To deny the one is to enthrone the other. We spoke of the self-sacrifice involved in being a Christian, but such is not in reality sacrifice at all. It is giving up of a lesser good for the better. To take the opposite course is to sacrifice the best for the secondary or for the worst. When the Prodigal went into the far country he thought only of pleasing himself. There was no thought of sacrifice in what he was doing. But he did have to sacrifice in the deepest sense of the word. His adventure cost him his home, it cost him his fellowship with his father, it cost him utter want, it cost him all that he had. Why does our Lord call upon us to deny ourselves? It is only as we give up our baser self that we can come to our best.

Take Paul for example. What a radiant and full life he lived. He went through a hostile world bringing love where there was hate, bringing songs where there were sobs. All the centuries have been the richer for his living. How did it come about? You say it was through the vision that came to him on the
road from Jerusalem to Damascus. That is a part of the truth. The young
ruler had as clear a vision as Paul, but he went away into the night. This
vision might have brought Paul into deep darkness, but instead it gave him a
place at the feast of the fullness of life. Why? Because he gave himself.
"I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." Self-giving is a privilege
because it is the one power to the highest self-realization.

3. Self-giving is a privilege because it is the roadway to the highest
usefulness. All of us at our best want to be of service. How can we best
serve our needy today? Surely of all times this is the one when we need to
do and be our best. How can we help to save our broken and bleeding world?
we can only do so in a superlative degree by the giving of ourselves. The
best we have in the home, the best we have in the state, the best we have in
the Church, the best we have everywhere only comes through life laid down. I
know that we can help by the mere crumbs of our dedication and of our devotion.
But we never do our best except as we give ourselves. "Except a corn of wheat
fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it brings forth
much fruit."

Here then is the open road to the highest possible usefulness. It is that
of a dedicated life. I know that God can do more through one man than he can
another because we have different abilities. I am aware that God can do more
with a dedicated million than he can with a dedicated penny. Yet, if my life
is wholly given, though I might not accomplish as much as Saint Paul, even with
my ordinary abilities the quality of my own living will be as fine a quality as
his. God can bring through both the very best. It is said that the great artist,
Pagannini, was to give a concert. A friend, to play a practical joke upon him,
found his violin case and took away his fine violin and substituted a cheap fiddle.
The great artist did not discover the substitution till he was ready to go on the
stage. Then he saw what had happened. At first he seemed shocked and dismayed.
Then his accompanist heard him say to himself, "I will show that the music is not in the violin, it is in Pagannini." And the music is never in ourselves it is in our infinite Lord. But if we give our lives to him, even with the weakest of us, we can make music that will help to woo and win the world. Therefore, I am inviting you earnestly and prayerfully to accept of your own choice this fundamental word, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price."
I BELONG TO THE CHURCH

"Ye are not your own,"

I Corinthians 6:19

I.

No man rightfully belongs to himself. Yet, in the end all real belonging must be voluntary. Of course, there are certain institutions and persons to whom we belong by birth. Years ago I was born in a lovely old fashioned home in the heart of the hills of Tennessee. I was dropped into the arms of a beautifully winsome and witty Irish mother. I fell heir to a rugged puritan father. As tender as he was strong and as strong as he was tender. I became a part of this home, but it was through no choice or merit of my own. My good fortune was destined out to me by a kind providence without my being consulted in the slightest. But as the years came and went the choice that was made for me became my own choice. As I look back at that dear scene through the magic maze of memory it is just the home with just the parents that I would have chosen above all others. But this is not always the case. There are those who really never accept those whose lives interlock with their own.

Then, through no choice of mine, and through no personal merit, I was born a part of a certain community. The citizen of a certain great nation. Here again I was not consulted. I might have been born in Africa, or Japan, or Germany. This choice was made for me. There are some perhaps who were
born in America who do not accept it, who in their hearts are in rebellion against it. But I am glad to belong. I am glad to call this land my land. I am happy to be a part of it. I consider it my business, belonging to it, to share its obligations as best I can to help shape its destiny.

Then there is a very real sense in which I was born into the Church. I flatter myself that the particular branch of the church to which I belong makes a very definite appeal to me. But honestly, had I been born into some other church, it doubtless would appeal with equal strength. But my father and mother without consulting me dedicated me to the Church and to the Christ of my church in my young and tender years. Through the beautiful symbol of baptism they took me as a little child and handed me over to the keeping of their Lord. This beautiful act of devotion might have had little effect upon me, but when I came to years of discretion, as the ritual says, I took upon myself the vows that they assumed for me in life's bright morning long ago. Of my own free will I came to belong to the Church. Then there are other types of belonging that have nothing to do with birth but are purely voluntary. For instance, as a young chap just out of college I went to teach school in a lovely village across the Mississippi. Soon after my arrival there I became vastly interested in one of my pupils, a rare and lovely girl at the winsome age of sixteen. After four years, to the surprise of many, and to the pity of some, she gave her hand and heart to that penniless teacher, who was on the way to becoming a Methodist preacher. Since she gave so much it was my privilege and joy to give the little that I had and was. And for thirty years now it has been my joy and pride to belong to her. By right, all of us belong to God and to each other. But this belonging only becomes real through our own personal choice. It is incomplete and imperfect when brought about by any outward compulsion.
II.

Now this belonging to another has a stern and forbidding side to it. To make a right marriage one must give oneself. Nothing less will do. Really to belong to God requires also a complete self-giving. I know that there is a very profound sense in which we are His, whether we ever acknowledge His ownership or not. We are His by right of creation. We are also His by right of redemption. But we never become His in the sense of which Paul is speaking except at the price of the giving of ourselves.

This means that standing at the very door of entrance to Christianity is a rugged and forbidding something called a cross. "If any man will come after me," said Jesus, "let him deny himself and take up his cross." There is danger in making discipleship too easy. Jesus never made that mistake. He never appealed to the soft and lazy of those whom he sought to win. When a young man came to him one day all enthusiasm and said, "Lord I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," Jesus quenched his enthusiasm with this startling word,—"Foxes have holes and the birds have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." If you come after me it will cost you something. It will cost you the very giving of self.

We can play with Christianity, we can trifle with discipleship on a less exacting basis than this, but we never find Christianity real except at the price of life laid down. This brings us to the secret of more weak and disappointed and failing church members than any other one cause. We have never really put Christ's cause where it must be put, and that is first. That was the trouble with the Rich Young Ruler. How much he had in his favor! Rich, youthful, gifted, enthusiastic. So eager to follow the Master that he ran down the road to kneel before him with this biggest of questions trembling on his lips,—"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"
But in spite of all his splendid gifts, in spite of the fact that he was clean, chaste, and courageous, he missed the highest quest upon which he had set out. Jesus told him frankly that discipleship involved the giving of self, the putting of himself and all his possessions into Christ's hands. Therefore, though he was eager for discipleship he was not eager enough. He went away. He went away because he was not willing to pay the price.

Paul went right where the young ruler went wrong. How did he come into possession of his rich experience? How did he come to live so grandly, so joyfully, so usefully? It was not because he had a better chance than the young ruler. I am not forgetting the vision that came to him from Jerusalem to Damascus. But this vision might have gone for nothing but for the fact that Paul made the proper response. As he journeyed, there was surrounding him a flash and a fall, and Jesus was saying, "What will thou have me do?" He sums up the whole story of his life in this:--"I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

We need then to face this fact that being a Christian involves the giving of self. Since we ourselves belong to God all that we have belongs to him. That means that we are to use our time, our talent, our wealth, not according to our will but according to his will. We are literally to put our lives upon our hands and hold them out daily to him. Paul expressed it all in a sentence:--"I beseech you therefore by the mercies of God that you present your bodies, your self, your whole personality, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." A religion, therefore, that calls upon us to give our very self is no cheap religion. It is one of which a great many of us are afraid.

III.

But if Christianity thus presented has its forbidding side it also has a
tremendous appeal. If it costs much it is also worth much. If it asks everything at our hands, it puts everything of real worth into our hands. So as we look with half frightened eyes into the face of our Lord, as he asks us for the giving of ourselves, and as we question, "Must I?" he answers, "You may." Because this seemingly forbidden idea of self-giving is far and ahead the most enriching something in all the world, what would happen if we really gave ourselves wholeheartedly to our Christ and to his Church?

1. It is through self-giving that we come to our highest self realization. I know sometimes we feel that for us to give ourselves might help others. But what a price that is to pay. "Where do I come in?" we asked peevishly. Carlyle tells us of how the natives of Samatra pierced a certain insect with a stick then that insect as it dies gives out a light that illuminates their path through the jungle. Well enough for the natives, you say, but how about the insect? Very good for those who profit from the sufferings of those who go to some Calvary, but how about the sufferers themselves?

Well, there is an answer to that question both in the New Testament and in human experience. Jesus tells us that it is as we give life that we really find it. That is just as true as the law of gravitation. Here are two wives, both are beautiful in face and figure. But one gives herself. She passes again and again through the valley of shadow in order to bring another life into light. She divides the roses on her cheeks with beautiful daughters. She gives her strength to stalwart sons. The other merely looks after herself. But what is the difference? It is the one who gives that really lives and not the one who saves herself. We have come to our best only at the price of life laid down.

2. It is only through self-giving that we can in the highest sense really live. There is one of the loveliest springs on our old farm that ever held its sparkling lips for the kiss of thirsty men. There is a basin and that does
nothing else but give itself to the gurgling spring that flows out from the heart of the hills. But there is another side to this self-giving. If the basin gives itself to the spring, the spring also gives itself to the basin. Because this is true, that basin which would otherwise be parched and empty and ugly as a death-head, becomes a frolic with life all the year around.

It is so even in our relationship to Jesus Christ. As we give ourselves to him we make it possible to do what he is always yearning to do, give himself to us. Jesus told the story of a certain young chap who while decent and respectable thought it was his highest wisdom to look out for number one. He had a prodigal brother, but he never shared his pain and shame. When at last drawn by the love of his father the Prodigal came home. This selfish brother showed no interest in him except to get angry. In his anger he told his experience. He lets us look in through the window to see his impoverished soul. "All these years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandments: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends." Here I have slaved through the years, he said, and I have got nothing out of it.

What was the matter? This elder son had given almost everything except himself. He had refused to give himself. Therefore, he made it impossible for his father to give him what he so longed to give. Listen to the father's answer, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." But he lived a starved and disappointed life because through his own unwillingness to give he made it impossible for his father to give. But when we really give ourselves to Christ he in turn gives himself to us. It is through such giving that we are able to sing with the Psalmist, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

Here is a man on a battered ship in the Mediterranean Sea. That vessel was pounded by the tempest for many days. Listen to the story, "When neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope
that we should be saved was then taken away..." But here comes a man out of whose eyes look a deathless hope and an unbelieveable courage. "Be of good cheer!" he calls, "For there stood by me this night the angel of God that I belong to." Out yonder on the road to Damascus Paul had given himself to Christ. Christ had in turn given himself to Paul so that now with the storm in his face and with his world going to pieces he could claim God as his very own. There can be no richer privilege than that. And it comes in only one way, at the price of life laid down.

3. It is through this self-giving that we reach our highest usefulness. I am aware that we can do many helpful and worthwhile tasks without going to the limit of self-dedication. But, I repeat, life never brings its supreme harvest except at the price of utter dedication. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it brings forth much fruit." This is true not simply in the realm of religion, it is true everywhere. All the superlative work of the world has been done at the price of self-giving. The great books are the books that Milton calls "The precious life blood of a master was embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life." That is characteristic also of the greatest art.

There is an old story of a certain artist whose pictures had a charm and beauty and power about them that made him the envy of all. They were touched with a beautiful and winsome crimson that they found it impossible to imitate. By and by, the story goes, that the artist died. When they were preparing him for burial they discovered an old half healed wound above his heart. They learned then that he had dipped his brush in his own life blood.

This is above all else the secret of victorious Christian living. "It does not take much of a man to be a Christian," William Booth used to say, "but it takes the whole man." There is no measuring what Christ can do with one life that is wholly dedicated to him. I know we differ much in temperament
and talents; I know our Lord can do more with a consecrated million than he can with a consecrated penny. But the truth remains that other things being equal, the biggest factor in usefulness is self-dedication. It is said that the great violinist, Pagannini, opened his violin case one night when he was to play a concert to find that for his own wonderful violin there had been substituted a cheap fiddle. At first he was dismayed. But he pulled himself together and met the test saying, "I will show that the music is not in the violin, it is in Pagannini." We reach our best both in character and usefulness through self-dedication. Because the real capacity and power are not in ourselves, but in our matchless Lord. Therefore, when Paul says,—"Ye are not your own," he is not asserting simply a forbidding obligation he is asserting what is our supreme privilege and the pathway to our highest possibilities.
Lest I myself should be a castaway. 1 Corinthians 9:27

"Lest I myself should be a castaway". When Weymouth translates this passage, instead of castaway he uses the word rejected. When Moffit and Goodspeed translate it they use the word disqualify. "Lest I myself should be disqualified". The danger that Paul is dreading is not the ultimate loss of his soul, though that might be included. He is rather facing the peril of becoming useless, degenerating into savorless salt that is good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men.

Now, this word of Paul's is very arresting.

1. It is arresting because of the man who said it. Paul had had a wonderful yesterday. In the language of our fathers, "He had been mightily saved". One day as he journeyed from Jerusalem to Damascus there had been a flash and a fall. Then he arose, brushing the desert sands from off his garments, to say out of his own experience, "It is a true saying and worthy of universal acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners".

Not only had Paul been mightily converted, but he had been greatly used. Even his enemies had to confess that he had turned the world upside-down. He had gone over that hard Roman world, and had breathed upon it like a reviving springtime. It would be next to impossible to over-estimate the usefulness of this man to his own generation. So great was it that we feel the impact of his passionate personality at this hour.

Not only had he been mightily saved, and not only had he been greatly used, but he had been a growing Christian and a growing minister. At the hour of his conversion Jesus had spoken to him this word, "Rise and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I
our faces, wound us, and blind our eyes with tears. Yet nobody can disqualify you but yourself. The other day a minister whose ambitions had not been realized said to me with bitterness "I never got the breaks". He felt that he had been in large measure disqualified, but that the fault was not in the least his own. Of course he was mistaken. This was the case, because, I repeat, no man can disqualify a minister but himself.

When Samuel was at the height of his powers he was superannuated. That this unjust treatment filled him at first with angry resentment is evident. "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you", he said to those who had wounded him. Why did he say this? Because that is just what he was tempted to do. He said in his heart, if not openly, "You have retired me, you do not desire my services. Well, you do not have to have them. I'll never seek to serve you again, not even by praying for you", but he could not carry out his wicked resolve. Therefore, he rendered by far his finest service after he felt himself disqualified.

How then for the service of the ministry are we to keep fit to preach?

I

In answering this question it is necessary for me to use an outline that is entirely conventional.

If we are to keep fit to preach, we must look well to our physical needs. We have run far past our fathers in a right regard for these bodies of ours. They regarded the body as something inferior if not positively wicked. To them, the body was not an asset but a liability. It was a kind of ball and a chain about the ankle of the soul that held back the runner from making the speed that he could have made had he not been thus hampered. One of the greatest of the saints, you remember, spoke of the body as an ass. The body was, therefore, something to be neglected and treated with the least t
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Let me urge you therefore to be a growing preacher. To do that you must work. Let your mornings be spent in your study unless some emergency arises. Make a habit of it. If you fail to prepare sermons in the early days of your ministry, you are likely to keep on failing. Or, if you prepare sermons till you accumulate a sufficient quantity to last you for an ordinary pastorate, then quit, you will surely pay a heavy penalty. One will be this, by ceasing to prepare new sermons you will lose your capacity to prepare.

This is a danger that threatens ministers of every denomination. It is peculiarly dangerous to those of our own. This is the case for two reasons. We find it easy to move. If they persecute us for our laziness in one city we can flee unto the next. Second, in our system we often maintain a minister when he will not or cannot maintain himself. Our greatest strength is that every church has a minister. It ought to be an equal source of strength that every minister has a church. But such is not the case unless that minister keeps himself fit to serve the church of which he is pastor.

That this may not be the case every minister ought to hang over his desk these words of Jesus, "Remember Lot's wife". Mrs. Lot did not expect to tarry long on the road from Sodom to safety. She was just going to pause for a little while, but pausing for a little while, she petrified and was not able ever to start again. So many a preacher has done. Failing to prepare new sermons, he has reached the place where he can no longer prepare them.

Now, in saying this, I am not urging that every sermon you preach be new. It is perfectly right and helpful to repeat sermons. Such a practice develops fluency. It also enables the preacher to make the old sermon into a better sermon. The only objection to preaching an old sermon is that it was not worth preaching the first time. If you have preached a really good sermon do not be afraid to
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repeat it. But, meantime, if you value your usefulness, keep preparing new ones. If you fail to do so you will become the victim of arrested development.

Paul was a growing preacher. We get a hint of the reason for it as we read a bit of one of his letters. He is writing to Timothy, his own son in the gospel. As he writes, a chilling breeze comes in and fans the thin hair about his temples. The old man shivers. A moment later a stronger breeze comes and he shivers yet more. Then I see him fumble behind him as if in search of something. He smiles then a whimsical smile and says, "How silly of me. My cloak, I remember now, I left it at Troas with Capus." Again he takes up his pen and continues his letter, "Dear Timothy: When you come I wish you would bring my cloak. Do your best to come before winter for my rheumatism is hurting me, and I am finding it quite uncomfortable."

Then, as we read between the lines we may guess that another thought crept into his mind. He is thinking that Timothy might be a bit overloaded. Therefore he adds this word, "If you find that you are so heavily loaded that you cannot bring the cloak and the books and the parchments, then leave the cloak, but be sure to bring my books and parchment. I can afford to be uncomfortable, but I simply cannot get on without my books." When Jesus died he refused medicated wine. He determined to meet his Father with faculties unblunted. So it would seem that Paul was determined to meet his Lord intellectually alert and alive. Death was so close when he wrote this letter that he could almost touch him with his hand, yet (determined to continue?) he sends for his books and his parchments. He is determined to go on growing to the very end.

Then, as the supreme and all inclusive necessity, keeping vital your religious experience.
KEEPING FIT

This undergirds all else. If we are vitally Christian, and have a zeal that is according to knowledge, we can readily understand how thoroughly right it is to care for our bodies. This body is not only the house in which I live, but it is also the temple of the Holy Spirit. Naturally, also, we can see the necessity of giving to God our best intellectually. We can see how wicked it would be for us to serve Him with only a fraction of our ability. Therefore, look well to the cultivation of your own spiritual life. No sadder words can be said than this, "They made me keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept".

We need this word also because the minister, in my opinion, is tempted beyond most others. I am aware that those who know little about us and our work think that the opposite is true. They believe that we can by-pass the Valley of Humiliation and even find an easy road through Gethsemane. But nothing is further from the truth. Others have their temptations, but none are more subtly tempted than we. Therefore that we may stand in the day of battle and having fought to the finish remain victors on the field, we need to take heed to the cultivation of our own spiritual lives.

1. In order to do this, reaffirm your vow of dedication day by day. Remind yourself that you did not choose your Lord, but that He chose you and ordained you and sent you forth to bear fruit, that your fruit might remain. It was by the door of dedication that you entered this ministry. You entered by that door because you entered through surrender, and so you need constantly to renew your vow in order to maintain a growing experience in the way to which you have been called.

That you may do this look well to your own private devotions. Personally, I find that nothing helps me to pray quite so much as the reading of the word of God. Sometimes, when I come to my hour for my own private devotions, I am utterly dead and listless. But,
"Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."  
I Corinthians 13:4-7

Last Sunday we spoke to you about love, affirming Paul's great assertion that love is the greatest thing in the world. It is the greatest thing we said for three reasons: First, because nothing arrives without it. All great gifts, however superlative, become cheap and paltry if they are not made worthful by love. Second, it is the greatest because the most paltry gift becomes priceless if it is motivated by love. The poorest field flower is transformed into a rare orchid if the light of love shines upon it. Third, it is the greatest thing in the world because it is supreme in its transforming power. It transforms its possessor. It changes an ugly duckling into a beautiful swan. Then it goes further toward changing the beloved than any other power in the world. Sometimes love fails. The love of Christ failed to re-make Judas. But even then it has more victories to its credit than any other power of the world.

Now what is this amazing something that is of such immeasurable worth? When we see it in action we realize that it is made up of those homely qualities that are most essential to our every day living. The greatest problem of our humanity is the problem of learning to live together. That is the problem of the home, of the church, of the community, and of the world. Our supremest tragedies have come from the inability to get on. But if we possess the characteristics that are native to love, then we have the best equipment possible for getting on with each other. That is a secret that is worth knowing. In fact, I daresay that about the sharpest test of our religion is just this—does it make us easy to live with? If we want to know how to get on with others, love is the answer. This is true for the following reasons.
Love is patient. I know that patience does not sound revolutionary. It is not spectacular. Its colors are not gaudy, but they wear well. Patience looks in two directions. First, it is the power to wait for a hoped-for good. It is the power to wait when that hoped-for good happens to be your husband and dinner is getting cold. It is power to wait when that hoped-for good is your wife and you are already in the car with the motor started, and the A-ticket gasoline is being burned up. It is power to wait when that hoped-for good is your troublesome boy or girl who is having a rather tormenting time climbing Fool's Hill. It is power to wait even when that hoped-for good is your stupid father or dull mother who has lost step and has fallen behind the procession. Love is patient.

When we first meet Jacob he is far from a lovable character. There is some genuine gold in his make up, but it is mingled with some very ugly clay. But there is one virtue that he possesses, and that is patience. When he fell in love with his Rachel he worked for her for seven years. Then when he thought he was marrying her, shrewd Laban by some kind of hocus-pocus wedded him to weak-eyed Leah. That was a tremendous blow—to think he was marrying Rachel and really marrying Leah. He is not the only one to whom that has happened! Then what? He did not lose patience and say, "I will have nothing more to do with Laban nor his daughter." Instead he worked seven years more. And the story says beautifully, "They seemed to him but seven days for the love that he had to her. Jacob was patient with regard to Rachel because he was a lover.

Then patience means not only power to wait but power to suffer and to endure. When we think of the superlative example of this type of patience, we usually refer to Job. That was the standard question in the old-fashioned Sunday School to which I went: "Who was the most patient man?" Answer—Job. Now Job had a certain amount of patience, but he was far from being perfect in patience. In fact, I am quite sure I have known sufferers far more patient than Job. Job did not fling away from God altogether, but he raged and stormed, and cursed the day he was born.
In fact, he made himself such an all-round nuisance that his wife advised him to curse God and die. She wanted to be rid of him.

Where then shall we look for patience at its highest and best? Naturally, we turn to Jesus Christ. He was perfect in patience. How He could wait! His father, Joseph, died early. Jesus was left with a large family of children on His hands. He had to wait for thirty years before beginning His ministry. Having entered upon His impossible task, how patient He was with His slow, plodding disciples. How patient with the outcasts! How patient with the slow progress of His Kingdom! Then how patient under suffering! He never grew fierce and hot and struck back.

"When He was reviled, He reviled not again." If we love, we shall be patient.

II

Love is kind. Kindness does not sound heroic; yet there is nothing for which this world hungers more. There is nothing that would do more to oil the friction-fretted machinery. When I see how much joy a bit of kindness can bring, when I realize the wounds it can heal, when I realize the lives that have been re-made by it, I wonder that I do not give more of my time to the business of being kind. This is an opportunity that comes to us every day. Most of us will never have the opportunity to wear any medal for distinguished military service. But hardly a day ever passes that we do not have an opportunity to be kind.

What was it that makes the name of Mary of Bethany immortal? One day when Jesus was nearing the end of His journey, when the Cross was casting its black shadow across His path, she did Him a kindness, and Jesus said He would never let the world forget it. "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." He even indicates that those that are to be turned away at the close of the day are to face that tragic ordeal because they were lacking in kindness. They did not feed the hungry, they did not clothe the naked, they did not visit the sick. He indicates that those who are to receive the Master's welcome are
to receive it more than all else simply because they were kind. "I was hungry and you fed me, naked and you clothed me." Then they answered in amazement—honest souls not even willing to take heaven on a misunderstanding—"Lord, we tried to be kind to a few nameless nobodies, but we never thought of being kind to you. We did not have the opportunity." But He answered, "Inasmuch as you were kind to one of the least of these brethren, you were kind to me."

"Tis something when the day draws to its close
To know that though I have borne a troubled mind,
Have tasted neither rapture nor repose,
Yet this remains—to all men, friends or foes,
I have been kind."

"Tis something when I shall hear death's awful tread
upon the stairs,
To know that his keen eye shall see upon my heart
Old wounds that oft did bleed for others,
But no heart I injured—
My life was kind."

Love is patient and kind.

III

Love is generous. "Love envieth not." What is envy? It is usually taken as a synonym for jealousy, but such, I am persuaded, is not the case. Jealousy may be a child of love. "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God." Jealousy is a perfectly normal emotion for love to feel when it is being cheated and defrauded. If the husband to whom you have given your all gives his affection to another, you have a right to be jealous. Jealousy becomes a wicked and horrible something when it is born of mere suspicion. Then it becomes the green-eyed monster that makes the meat it feeds upon. But sometimes the meat is made for it! One of the pangs that cheated love feels is that of jealousy. But envy is a child of hate. "Love envieth not." Envy has a long criminal record. A great artist has pictured it with a serpent for a tongue. That tongue stings others, but it inflicts its sorest wound upon itself. In the old Genesis story, the first murder ever committed was committed by envy. It was envy that sold Joseph into slavery.
It was envy that hunted David like a criminal and made Saul, the hunter, into a madman. It was envy that crucified Jesus. "Pilate knew that for envy they had delivered him up."

Were you ever envious? Envy is that something that makes my own success seem paltry because of the greater success of a rival. It makes me eager not to much to be as swift of foot as my brother, but to take him by the collar and push him behind me. It is that which makes me wonder what the Bishop saw in a brother minister to promote him above me. It is that which makes a young lady say, "John has gone off with Mary, but I might have kept him if I had been willing to be as cheap as she is." Envy was what kept the elder son from enjoying the feast when his prodigal brother came home. It is a child of hell and makes hell for its possessor, and goes as far as possible to making a hell for others. It has no kinship with love, for love envieth not.

IV

Love is humble. "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." Humility is a virtue without sparkle. Almost nobody grows enthusiastic over it. In spite of all the proof to the contrary, we still feel that it is a weak and sissy virtue if virtue at all. We see nothing brawny, nothing strong, nothing courageous in it. Yet the most courageous Man that ever lived said, "Learn of me because I am meek and lowly in heart." That is, "Learn of me because I am humble.

What is humility? It is not self-contempt. It is not thinking meanly of yourself. It is rather not thinking of yourself at all. When we begin to preen ourselves about our virtue, when we begin to swagger over the sacrifices that we are making for our homes, our church, our country, we proclaim our own selfishness. I knew a mother once who was constantly boasting of the tremendous sacrifices she made for her children. I have always regarded her as a deeply selfish mother. There are not many of that kind, thank God! but she was one. If she had been a real lover, she would not have looked upon her devotion to her children as a sacrifice at all but as a high privilege. Love does not swagger. "Love vaunteth
not itself, is not puffed up. Love is humble-hearted.

V

Love is courteous. That sounds a bit trivial, doesn't it? Yet here it stands in the text. "Love doth not behave itself unseemly." Love is never rude. It is thoughtful of others. Now and then a friend of mine will buy a copy of Emily Post to learn etiquette. Sometimes they only learn improved ways of making themselves ridiculous. By far the best book of etiquette I know is the Thirteenth Chapter of First Corinthians.

Of course, I do not mean by that that this chapter goes into detail. It does not tell us what fork to use. It does not tell us to dip our soup away from us lest somebody should think we really wanted it. It simply gives us the broad underlying principle. It makes us considerate of others. Sometime ago a handsome, well-dressed young chap sat down on the train beside a charred and wrinkled old woman. She had a telescope instead of a traveling bag. Long straps hung from it. It looked like Noah might have used it. Yet when the train stopped, this young chap helped this faded old backwoods woman off the train, carried her telescope across I don't know how many tracks, almost missed his train because he was such a gracious gentleman. Love is courteous. It is reluctant to hurt the feelings of the humblest.

VI

Love is unselfish. "Love seeketh not its own." Love does not always stand up for its rights. Now we all have our rights. That I am going to confess at once. Not only so, but we all have a right to maintain our rights. Yet having said this, there is no measuring the heartache that has come to the individual and to the group because of our insistence regardless of cost upon having our rights. There was a church sometime ago reduced to almost utter wreckage because two prominent members in it each insisted upon having his rights. I read not long ago of two farmers that spent thousands of dollars in lawsuits over one sheep
that was not worth over five dollars because each was bent on having his right.
As members of a family we have rights, but if we constantly insist on getting
those rights we usually lose more than we win.

"Here lies the body of Samuel J.,
He died maintaining his right-of-way;
He was perfectly right in driving along,
But he is just as dead as if he had been wrong."

Right is a term of the law court. It does not have any place in the home. It
is not the first consideration in a church. We have a right to our rights, of course.
But we also have a larger right—that is the right to give up for the sake of others.
Jesus had a perfect right to shun the cross. He had a right even to shun the Incarnation
but He exercised a higher right. To that privilege He calls you and me.

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of
God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation,
and took upon him the form of a servant......and became obedient unto death, even
the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him
a name which is above every name."

That is, Jesus won His supremacy by refusing to claim His rights. One of the
most outstanding generals on the Union side during the War Between the States was
as conspicuous as a Christian as he was as a soldier. He made one promotion after
another. When the war was over, he was the head of an army. But when the big
parade was to start in Washington, General Sherman ordered the officer whom this
man had superceded to ride at the head of the army. Quite naturally, the man who
had won his promotion felt aggrieved. He said, "I have a right. That command is
mine." But Sherman said, "It will make trouble. The other man will not agree,
but I think you will because you are a Christian." "If you put it on that grounds,"
came the answer, "I will." But when the parade started, this man who had given
up his place rode at the head of the procession with the commander-in-chief. Often
the best way to attain our rights is by refusing to claim them.
VII

Love is sweet-tempered. "Is not easily provoked" is the word here used. That is a mild translation. The better translation is this: "Love does not have a paroxysm." Love does not go into a rage. If you have a way of flying off the handle and snatching up the furniture and smashing other people's feelings, then I do not care how many religious papers you take, and how much you read the Bible, and how constant you are in your church attendance, there is something wrong with your religion. Bad temper is looked upon with mild condemnation, yet I think Drummond was right when he said that it caused about as much heartache as any other one thing in all the world.

Sometime ago I was playing golf with a gentleman not in this city. He dubbed a ball, then viciously threw his club away. Sometimes such players break their clubs into bits. Sometimes a tennis player will make a bad shot and then smash a fine racket, but it always looks silly to me and downright childish. But of course, even that is not as bad as smashing somebody's feelings and hurting somebody's heart. Going into a rage and letting yourself go is not only wicked but silly. It is not only silly but wicked. Love does not have a paroxysm.

A preacher of my acquaintance told me this story. There was a woman in his church unusually forceful and intelligent. She was a leader and the best worker he had. Her husband was the outstanding man of the village, but he was not a Christian. He and the minister were good friends, and the minister gave himself earnestly to winning his friend to Christ. One day he pressed him for an answer. And the friend in confidence told him his reason. "My wife belongs to your church. She is your best worker. She is an excellent woman in a thousand particulars, but now and then she goes into a rage down at home and the children have to take to their heels and I have to hide. That is not my idea of a Christian."

Now it so happened that this minister was a brave man. He went directly to this wife and told her frankly what was standing in the way of her husband. It
looked at first as if he were going to get a sample of what the husband was talking about. But by sheer determination, she held herself in check. Then she said sadly, "Yes, what my husband says is true. I am ashamed of it. How am I going to cure it?" And he quoted to her this bit out of God's Word: "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, gentleness, self-control." And they knelt together and she let the spirit of gentleness and self-control into her heart. A few days later the husband came into the hall-way of their home with a great bamboo rod upon his shoulder. He was preparing to go fishing. Now it so happened that they had just swung a brand new swinging lamp. He made a swipe at that lamp with the fishing-rod and it came down with a crash that sounded like a hardware store washing away in a thunder-storm. He stood there cringing, waiting for the next storm that he was sure was coming. Then he looked up and saw his wife smiling at him over the bannisters. You will not be surprised to know that he joined the church next Sunday.

VIII

Finally, love is brotherly. That is not the word in the text. "Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." That is, love is eager to believe the best. If an evil report gets out about you, the last one to believe it is the one that loves you the best. Then when love must believe the worst, it still goes on hoping. And even when hope is all but dead, it still bears. My oldest brother, Dr. E. B. Chappell, told me this bit out of his own experience:

"While I was pastor at First Church, Austin, I had in my congregation a woman of unusually fine character. This woman had been left a widow. She had a son who seemed utterly worthless. He got into one petty difficulty after another, but always the Official Board would come to the rescue. But at last he committed a positive crime. Then the Board met and resolved that they would let him take the consequences and they asked my brother to be their spokesman and tell his mother the decision."
"I went," he said, "with great reluctance. As tenderly as I could I told her of the Board's decision. I reminded her how we had helped him again and again, only to see him get into worse trouble. Now we have resolved to quit, and we think it would be wise if you would follow our example." Then, he said, the soul of the mother stood up in her eyes. "Doctor Chappell," she said, "I do not blame you a bit, and I don't blame the Board in the least. But his mother can't go back on him. I rocked him to sleep in these old arms when he was a little baby. I looked the love light into his eyes in his young and tender years. I can't give him up." Love believes the best, hopes against hope, then still endures. That is what makes it the greatest thing in the world.

Then this final word. How are we to get possession of this treasure? Paul said, "Covet it." We shall not covet it unless we believe in it, believe in its real worth. Practice what love you have. Above all else let the Christ of love into your heart. When Paul and Silas were thrust into prison, I daresay the jailer did not even see their scarred backs. He hardly noticed how the blood was trickling from their heels. But when a little later he heard the Gospel story and let Christ into his heart all that was changed. He took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. Love is the greatest thing in the world, but it expresses itself in the commonplaces of kindness and patience and humility such as make us easy to live with and gives us a winsomeness that can come to us in no other way.
EASY TO LIVE WITH

Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Barest all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth.

I Corinthians 13:4-8

How much of our own happiness and usefulness depends upon our ability to get on with others! Being easy to live with is, therefore, a matter of vast importance. It means much in our social relationships. It means even more in those intimate relations of the home. Perhaps the sharpest test of the genuineness of our Christianity is just this:-Are we easy to live with? However earnest and prayerful we may be, if we are hard to live with, there is something wrong with our religion.

Now, in our search for those qualities that enable us to get on with others, we can find no better guide than the familiar words of our text. Suppose you and I were to take this thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians seriously, what would it do for us? Suppose we were to permit this spiritual springtime called love to come into our hearts, what difference would it make? Suppose this heavenly gardener were allowed rightaway in the garden of our hearts, what are some of the fruits and flowers that it would cause to grow? Of course you have looked at these priceless blossoms before, but I ask you to join me in looking at them again.
If we let love into our lives we shall be patient. "Love suffereth long."

Now patience is not an outstanding characteristic of our Western life. Patience has two meanings. It means, first, the power to wait for a hoped-for good. It means that I can wait for a hoped-for good when that good happens to be my wife, when I am already in the car with the motor running. It means that she can wait for a hoped-for good when that good is her husband, and dinner is on the table and getting cold. It means that we can wait as fathers and mothers when that hoped-for good is our troublesome and silly young people. It means that we as young people can wait for a hoped-for good, when that good is our prosaic parents who have forgotten the score and fallen behind the procession.

In his early days, Jacob was anything but an admirable character. But he had at least this fine characteristic; he could love with a love that made him patient. After working seven long years for his Rachel, Laban, by some slight of hand performance, worked weak-eyed Leah off on him. It was terribly upsetting. But Jacob refused to accept defeat. He worked for seven years more, and listen to this beautiful testimony:—"They seemed but as seven days for the love that he had to her." Such a love as that enriches both him that gives and her that takes.

Then patience can suffer and endure. Job, with his tortured body, is usually looked upon as the classical example of this kind of patience. But I have an idea that I have seen quite a few humble saints face suffering with far more patience than he. Of course, he did not fling away from God altogether, but he did rave and curse the day he was born. He did make himself so hard to live with that his wife got completely fed up and hoped he would curse God and die. Job had a certain bit of patience, but I doubt if that was his outstanding characteristic.
When we wish to find patience at its best, we turn naturally, to Jesus. How he could wait. Being the son of a widowed mother with a large family, he waited for thirty years before he began his ministry. Then how patient he was with his slow plodding disciples! How they disappointed him! At last, one betrayed him, while another swore that he had never met him. All forsook him and fled. Yet, he never lost patience with them. How he suffered from his enemies! At last, even God himself seemed to have let him down. But he went to the Cross without the slightest tinge of bitterness or impatience. He was perfect in patience because he was perfect in love.

II.

Love is kind. Kindness does not sound like a heroic virtue. However, few things would go further toward straightening out the kinks of our troubled world. Then kindness is so accessible. Most of us will never get to render a conspicuous service. I never intend to wear a Carnegie medal. But there is never a day that the least of us does not have an opportunity to be kind. Kindness is within the reach of all of us, whether rich or poor, sick or well. Since, therefore, kindness is so accessible, since it is so greatly needed, I wonder that I am not more kind. I wonder that deeds of week-day holiness do not fall from my hands as noiselessly as the snow. Why do not I avail myself of the homely opportunities of kindness which certainly do make up the better part of a good man's life?

"'Tis something when the day draws to its close, To know that though I've borne a troubled mind, Have tasted neither rapture nor repose, Yet, this remains, to all men, friends and foes, I have been kind."
'Tis something when I shall hear
Death's awful tread upon the staff,
To know that His keen eye shall see upon my heart,
Old wounds that oft did bleed for others,
But not heart I injured. My life was kind."

III.

Love is generous. "Love envieth not." Did you ever envy anybody? Alexander Whyte, the great Scottish preacher, said that he had had every sin confessed to him except one, the sin of envy. Did you ever appreciate your success till you found that a competitor had made a little greater success? Did you ever appreciate your popularity till you discovered that your friend was a bit more popular? When your boy friend forsook you for another, did you ever toss your head and say "I could have had him if I had been a mind to do what She does." Did you ever hear a singer, and listen for the flaws instead of for the beauty?

What is envy? We usually think of envy and jealousy as being the same. But this is not the case. A certain English writer calls attention to the fact that while jealousy is a child of love, envy is a child of hate. Jealousy is, of course, a dangerous something. So often it becomes "the green-eyed monster that makes the meat that it feeds upon." But there are times when that meat is made for it. When this is the case, jealousy is perfectly normal and natural. When love is cheated it has a right to be jealous. But envy is never right. Being a child of hate, it works evil and evil only.

Few, I think realize what a deadly thing envy is. According to the old Genesis story, envy committed the first murder. From then on its record has been entirely black and ugly. Envy tortured Saul into madness. Envy made the elder son a skeleton at the feast. Envy drove the spikes into the hands
of Jesus. But while envy is a murderer, it inflicts the sorest wounds upon its possessor. A great artist has pictured envy with its feet in raging flames. Its tongue is a serpent that sometimes fixes its fangs in others, but it is constantly biting itself. If you want a short cut to hell, give way to envy. If you want to be free, learn to love, for love envieth not.

IV.

Love is humble. "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." What is humility? It is furtherest possible from self-comtempt. There are those who tell us how humble they are. They are so humble that they can never do any work in the church, or anywhere else. They are so humble that they are constantly talking themselves down. But this is not humility. It is a miserable caricature of humility. Humility is not thinking meanly of yourself, it is rather not thinking of yourself at all. It is self-forgetfulness. Love is humble. Therefore, it never swaggers, it never boasts.

I knew a mother once who was selfish. There are not many selfish mothers, thank God! But I had to believe that this one was truely selfish. I reached this conclusion because she was persistently telling of the sacrifices she was making on behalf of her husband and her children. Had she been a real lover, she would not have looked upon these daily services as sacrifices at all. She would have looked upon them as high and holy privileges.

I knew of a minister sometime ago to visit a brother minister. At the Sunday service, this pastor called on his visitor to lead in prayer. At the close of the service the visitor told his friend what a poor speaking voice he had. He brought in the further encouraging news that his own voice was so nearly perfect that numbers of people had come at the close of the service to congratulate him. Naturally, this minister was not as popular as Santa Claus.
He was so thoroughly conceited, so completely in love with himself that he almost has a monopoly on the business. Swaggering, and blustering, and bragging are deformed children of conceit. Love does not boast, never puts on airs.

V.

Then love is courteous.

You can always count on love doing the gracious and courteous thing. That does not mean, of course, that it will always observe all the conventions of society. That does not mean that it is constantly reading Emily Post. I have known folks to read etiquette only to discover new ways of making themselves awkward and ridiculous. Love may, at times, eat with its knife. It may even dip its soup toward it, and thus acknowledge that it really desires it instead of pretending that it is pushing it away in utter contempt. But in fine consideration for others, love never goes wrong.

I read of a splendid Southern senator who was entertaining some of his friends from the Upper and Lower houses of Congress. Every man present was a member of Congress except one. This man was a neighbor, a farmer, that the senator had invited to meet his distinguished guests. The dinner went off well till they came to the finger bowls. When these were brought in, this farmer seeing a piece of lemon floating in the water, thought that lemonade was being served. Therefore, having remarked to his host how fond he was of lemonade, he proceeded to drain his finger bowl to the last drop. How did his host meet this embarrassing situation? He did not smirk. Declaring that he, too, was very fond of lemonade, he drank with his friend with zest. As a result the farmer went home feeling that he had carried the dinner off well, whereas he might have gone feeling miserable and full of shame.
Love is unselfish. "Love seeketh not her own." Love does not even insist on having its rights. Of course, every man has certain rights. Every man has a right to his rights. But how much needless trouble we cause to ourselves and others by insisting upon our rights. Rights, is a term of the law court. It has little place among friends, and far less place in the intimacies of the home. I have known people to wreck both themselves and others just by insisting upon their rights.

"Here lies the body of Samuel Jay,
He died maintaining his right-of-way.
He was perfectly right when driving along
But, he is just as dead as if he'd been wrong."

While love recognizes its right to have its rights, it claims even a higher privilege than that, that is the right to give up its rights. This story is told of a certain Union general who was highly successful during the war between the States. When the war was over there was a great parade in Washington. The general whom this successful officer had superseded insisted on riding at the head of his old command. Naturally, the general who had justly won his promotion objected. He took his complaint to Sherman who was in full charge. He insisted that he had won the right to lead. To this Sherman agreed. Then he advised him to give up his rights. When the general still objected, Sherman answered:—"Yes, but you are a Christian." "Well," came the answer, "if you put it that way, I will do it." General Sherman then asked him to ride with himself at the head of the entire army.

All the greatest victories have been won by those who refused to insist on having their rights. This is true of the supreme victory of the Cross. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought equality with God was not a thing to be clung to. But emptied himself and became obedient unto death, even the death on the Cross." Thus Jesus gave
up his rights. Thus also He won His crown, "Therefore God hath highly exalted him, and hath given him a name that is above every name."

VIII.

Love is sweet-tempered. "Is not easily provoked." Love does not fly off the handle and go into a rage. I am aware that bad temper is not regarded as very bad. Yet, I think, Drummond was right when he declared that more tears and heartaches come from the plain, every-day anger than from any other cause.

One trouble with anger is that it makes us temporarily insane. That is the reason that we speak correctly when we say that we got mad. I used to know a mill owner in my neighborhood. He was an intelligent and prosperous man. But he had a violent temper. Now and then, when something would go wrong with the engine, he would set out to fix it. In this effort he would often lose his temper, smash some delicate bit of machinery and throw his monkey-wrench into the mill pond. Of course, he went broke. What a fool, you say! But he is not so big a fool as the man who through loss of temper breaks somebody's heart, and his own as well. To wreck an engine is bad enough, but to wreck a life is still worse.

Love is sweet-tempered. If you go into a rage when things go wrong, if those who have to live with you have to be on their P's and Q's constantly to keep from offending you, I do not care how religious you claim to be, those who know you best do not believe in you. Anger poisons your very blood. It poisons your soul. It makes everybody about you wretched. Therefore, if you love enough to count, you will keep your temper.

Close akin to sweet-temperedness is that quality that Paul describes as thinking no evil. Love does not look for slights. You may think that the reason you puff up and pout when somebody fails to remember your birthday is because you are such a tender lover. But it is really because you are so selfish and egotistical. You may think as a wife that the reason you burst into tears
the first time your husband forgot your wedding anniversary is because you are so devoted to him. But that is not the reason at all. There is a thing that passes for love that seeks for slights, but that is not love at all. If you are hunting for somebody to hurt your feelings, it is, because you love. You may become so sensitive that if someone laughs twenty-five yards away, you will conclude that they are laughing at you. What needless agony such cause themselves. Believe me, if you want to insult me, you will have to explain yourself. I am not expecting to be insulted. Therefore, a slight is likely altogether to pass over my head without my recognizing it.

Not only does love refuse to look for slights, but having been forced to see them, it refuses to grow resentful. Why should you allow anybody to clutter up your life and spoil things for you by making you nurse a grudge? Why not say with another, "I refuse to allow any man to narrow or embitter my life by making me hate him?" Hate is like envy in this, that while it might hurt its object, it is deadly to its possessor. Love is sweet-tempered, free from resentment.

VIII.

Finally, love is brotherly. This is not the word that Paul uses. "Love," he says, "believes the best, is slow to expose, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Suppose an evil report of you gets abroad, who is the last to believe it? Answer: The one that loves you best. Suppose the evidence is so convincing as to compel belief, who is the last to expose? The answer is the same, the one who loves you. Who keeps hoping for you when all others have given up hope? The answer is still the same, the one who loves you. When even hope seems dead, who still bears with you and clings to you? The answer is the same. Therefore, love is about the most saving and God-like something that this world knows.

I think too you will agree with me that these homely virtues are just what
we need for the every-day business of living. They are what we need for the saving of ourselves and of our world. How shall they become ours? I give two practical suggestions. First—Begin here and now to practice the love that you do have. Second—Let God into your life. To possess Him and to be possessed by Him is to be a lover, for "God is love."
EASY TO LIVE WITH

"Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not, love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked. . . beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. (I Corinthians 13:4-7)

My subject this evening is "Easy to Live With." It might be stated in another form, "How to Get on with Folks." This you can see at once is not a trifling subject. It is one of fundamental importance. It has always been important for folks to know how to live together. That was true in the days of the cave man, when both wits and weapons were dull. It is far more true in our day, when wits and weapons are sharp and the world has become so small as to bring us together with the nearness of a family.

To know how to get on with others is of course vastly important in our national and international relationship. We have by no means learned that art yet but it does not take a wise man to see that unless we learn it our civilization is doomed. But if this is important for the nations, it is equally important for the individual. Few things will determine your victory or defeat, your happiness or wretchedness more than this. Your being easy to live with or your ability to get on with other folks. Without this ability many a home that is meant for a heaven may easily become a hell. Without this your friendships will be a failure. Without this you will certainly not win your best in your chosen vocation.

Some time ago a questionnaire was sent to several thousand engineers. This questionnaire ran somewhat as follows: What qualities do you think
most essential for success in your profession. First, technical skill. Second, ability to get on with others. Third, character. These men whose profession makes them in an especial sense realists but ability to get on with others at the top and next to the top of the list they put character. Technical skill had the lowest rating of all.

Now it is the conviction of Paul that this something called love is vastly important because it makes it possible for its possessor to get on with others. It goes further than any other quality that I know toward making us easy to live with. Go into the home and out into the world with an invincible good will and that good will will win good will from others. Life is a bit like an echo. As we speak to others they speak back to us. Give hate and you will receive hate. Give indifference and you will receive indifference. Give interest and you will receive interest.

A few years ago a man died in an airplane accident by the name of Will Rogers. I think his death was the most universally lamented than any man in all history. This was the case because his interest in others was so genuine. He declared that he never saw a man that he did not like. His persistent gum-chewing was born of the days when he used to carry gum to give to chorus girls to prevent their smoking cigarettes. This is not to say of course that good will will always win. I am not forgetting that the greatest lover that ever lived died on a cross. But this will go further in helping us get on with others than any other one something in the world.

Now assuming that we have that good will, how does it express itself?

I

First, love is patient. What is patience? It is power to endure. It is the ability to wait for a hoped-for good. When Jacob first comes upon the scene, he is anything but lovable. His breezy brother is far more attractive, but Jacob had this fine capacity, that he could fall in love and
stay in love over a long space of years. When he had courted his Rachel for seven years and when at last as he thought he had married her, he found that his father-in-law, Laban, had by some hocus-pocus wished off on him her weak-eyed sister, Leah. Then what? He did not give up. He worked seven years more and they seemed, says the author, but as seven days with the love that he had for her.

Patience is that power to wait for a hoped-for good, when that hoped-for good is your wife and you are in the car and the engine is running and she has not yet got her hat on. It is the power to wait for that hoped-for good when that hoped-for good is your husband when dinner is on the table and getting cold and he insists on being late. It is that power to wait for a hoped-for good in your teen age boy who is having an unusually hard time to climb Fool's Hill. It is the power to wait for a hoped-for good in your small daughter who loves too much make-up, who likes to dress in overalls and roll one trouser leg higher than the other. Patient folks are easy to live with, impatient folks are hard. But love is patient.

II

Then love is kind. Kindness does not sound heroic. And yet it is vastly important. There is nothing that would do more to oil the friction-threaded machinery of life than just plain every day garden variety of kindness. Kindness is twice blessed. It blesses him that gives and him that takes. It is something so beautiful that Jesus indicates that there is no getting into heaven without it. In his picture of the last judgment certain ones were turned away, not because they had been vicious but because they had lacked the milk of human kindness. They refused to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. Others were welcome to their own surprises not because they had rendered any conspicuous service but because they had been kind. Kindness will change hell into heaven and make a heaven
Now this virtue that is so winsome is within reach of everyone of us. Few of us will ever render conspicuous service. I have given up all hope of ever winning any sort of medal for heroism. But there is never a day that I do not have the opportunity to be kind and when I remember that that which makes up the best part of every good man's life is his "unremembered acts of kindness and of love." When I remember this I wonder that deeds of week-day kindness do not fall from my hands as noiselessly as the snow.

"'Tis something when the day draws to its close
To know that though I have borne a troubled mind
Have tasted neither rapture nor repose
Yet this remains to all men, friends or foes,
I have been kind.

'Tis something when I shall hear
Death's awful tread upon the stair,
To know that his keen eyes shall see upon my heart
Old wounds that oft did bleed for others.
But no heart I injured.
My life was kind."

Some of you are easy to live with because you are kind.

III

Love is generous. "Love envieth not." What is envy? I agree with a certain English scholar that it is not to be confused with jealousy. Jealousy may be at times a perfectly right emotion. "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." Jealousy is one of the pangs that love suffers when it is cheated of its due. When a husband forsakes his wife for another, the wife has a right to be jealous. Jealousy only becomes a horrible and ugly thing when it is born of suspicion. At such times it becomes as Shakespeare described it, "the green-eyed monster that makes the meat it feeds upon." But even good people may be jealous when the meat is made by another.

Now while jealousy is a child of love, envy is a child of selfishness, and of hate. "Love envieth not." Mothers do not as a rule envy their
children when they succeed. If you have a real friend you rejoice at every victory that he wins. But if you are envious his getting on brings you a pang. Envy is that something that makes me want to lay hold of my brother who is about to pass me and pull him back and push him behind me.

Were you ever envious? Alexander Whyte, the great Scottish preacher, said he had had every sin confessed to him except the sin of envy. But most of us have been guilty. Here is a minister who has been promoted above me. What did the bishop see in him, I ask. And when your beau went off with another girl you shrugged and said, "I could have kept him if I had been as cheap as she is."

Envy is a deadly and damning thing. It has a long criminal record. In the old Genesis story Cain and Able could not live together because Cain was envious. Envy was born with a murderous club in its hand and it has been wielding that club ever since. Saul and David were both able and gifted men. Once they were friends but their friendship was torn to shreds through envy. One day as they were coming back from the battle some girls sang this song. "Saul has slain his thousands, but David has slain his tens of thousands." David could not live with Saul any more. It was harder for all of us to live with him. For a while envy seeks to torture its victims. It works greater torture for its possessor. It is a serpent that stings others but it forces its fangs most painfully in its own heart. Hate and selfishness are envious but love is generous. If you wish to get on with others, be generous.

IV

Love is modest. "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." It is hard to get on with folks that swagger. It is hard to love a rooster that thinks the sun rises every morning just to hear him crow. It is hard to live with anybody that so admires himself that he falls in love with the
one that he admires the most. The man who loves himself best usually has no rival.

Some years ago an associate pastor was in the congregation of a great church where another associate pastor was preaching. The local pastor called on the visitor to lead in prayer. At the close of the service this visitor came down to tell the pastor how impressive was his pulpit presence and what a poor voice he had. 'Now,' he said, 'it would surprise you to know how many people came to me at the close of the service to tell me how they appreciated my voice.' You may think by such a speech that he grappled his fellow minister to him with hoops of steel but if so you are wrong.

2. Love, being modest, is also courteous. "Love," says Paul, "is never rude." Why be rude to folks? Often our rudeness is born of the fact that they are so small and we are so large that it does not matter very much how we treat them. To be courteous and gracious to others is a way of expressing our appreciation for them. It is amazing how far plain everyday courtesy will go toward helping us get on with others. Now in being courteous it does not mean that we have to keep Emily Post by our bed and put ourselves to sleep reading her wisdom every night. We can still be beautifully courteous and gracious without knowing some of the niceties of society. One of the most gracious men I ever knew ate with his knife. I have seen some very courteous people dip their soup toward them as if they really wanted it instead of pushing it away as if they had a contempt for it and were only eating it to spare the feelings of their hostess.

Courtesy will often make a friend of a potential enemy. "A soft answer turneth away wrath but grievous words stir up anger." I read an amusing story the other day of a collision on one of our highways. After this collision which was not disastrous the lady who was driving one of the cars said to the gentleman who was driving the other: "It was all my fault. I was on the wrong side of the road. It was inexcusable of me."
"Oh, no," said the gentleman. "It was my fault. I had been seeing you coming for a half a mile. I could have turned down a side road. Please forgive me." And the collision that might have made them enemies made them friends.

On one occasion I found courtesy profitable beyond all expectations. I was arrested for speeding in the city of Memphis. When I took my stand before the judge the arresting officers were asked to state the occasion. "Driving sixty miles an hour in a thirty-mile zone," was the answer. Then the judge turned to me and said, "What have you to say?" "Nothing," I replied, except that I am willing to take the word of the officers. All I know is that I was showing considerable speeding." Then I added, "I was introduced to you as a minister. Don't let that interfere with your sentence. I have just learned that by your rigid enforcement of the law you have made Memphis the safest city in the world in which to drive. I congratulate you."

At that the judge's stern mask simply slipped off from his face. He beamed upon me for a moment and then said: "Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll leave the decision to you boys," speaking to the arresting officers. At this he rose and went back to his chambers and the fine that was due to be fifty dollars came down to five. Not because I was deliberately trying to ease myself out of a difficulty but simply because I knew I was guilty and that the officers were doing nothing more than what they ought to do. To get on with others we must be courteous.

3. Then if we are modest we shall be conciliatory. "Love seeketh not its own." The new translation is "seeketh not its own way." There are few people that are harder to live with than those who are always right. How many homes are wrecked because the husband or the wife or both are always right in every position that they take. I have seen churches torn into shreds because of one individual who was always right while his fellows were
always wrong. If you must have your way about everything then it is going to be next to impossible for anybody to live with you.

V

Love is sweet-tempered. "Is not easily provoked," is the authorized version. Literally translated, "Love does not have a paroxysm. Love can control its temper. Love does not unsheathe the sword of its tongue and stab all and sundry simply because it has lost self-control.

Now this does not mean that a high temper is an evil in itself. Jesus was capable of the hottest anger. So are most other people who have any driving force. But we ought to keep our anger under control. If we do not when we lose our tempers we do not call it in every day language, getting angry. We call it getting mad. That is a good word. We become less than sane.

Did you ever see folks do insane things because they were mad? Did you ever see a man take a fine golf club and break it because he had made a bad shot. Did you ever see one wreck a tennis racket for the same reason? I used to know a successful saw mill man in our community. Now and then something would go wrong with his engine. He was good with his machinery. But maybe his wrench would slip, that he would skin his hand. Then he would smash some delicate bit of the machinery and throw his wrench away into the mill bond. Then the mill would have to be shut down until he would send off from that backwoods country to get repairs. By and by he went broke because he insisted on losing his temper.

A minister told me this story. There was a prominent woman in his church who was a born leader. Her husband was the leader of the whole community but was not a Christian. Often this minister talked to the husband but without making any progress. Then one day he pressed him for the reason. "Well," he said, "my wife belongs to your church. In many ways she
"Easy to Live With"

is a most excellent woman, but every so often she goes on a rampage and the children and I have to run for our lives. That is not my idea of Christianity.

This preacher was a brave man. He went to see the woman and told her what was wrong. Instead of losing her temper and claiming she was always right she confessed her sin. Then a few days later the husband came home preparing to go fishing. He had a bamboo rod upon his shoulder. In turning about in the room he touched a new swinging lamp that came down with a crash. He stood there a moment waiting for the next storm. He looked up to see Mary smiling at him and it impressed him so that he joined the church the next Sunday.

VI

Finally love is brotherly. "Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Who believes in us most? Generally speaking the one who loves us most. Who still hopes when nobody else can hope? The one who loves us best. Then when hope seems dead, who is it that still clings and still waits and still endures? The answer is still the same.

Years ago in First Church, Austin, Texas, there was a young chap who was seemingly utterly worthless. His mother, a widow was one of the best women in the church. When this young fellow began to get into petty trouble the official board would rally around and get him out. At last he committed a crime that made such rallying impossible. The board met and decided they could not follow him any further. They decided to impart this decision to his mother.

The pastor of the church at that time was my brother. He was appointed to tell the mother of the Board's decision. This he did with great reluctance and with great tenderness. He said, "We have decided that no
more can be done. You, too, had better reach the same decision." Then it was that the soul of the mother stood up in her eyes. "Dr. Chappell," she said, "I don't blame you and the Board a bit, but his mother can't go back on him. I rocked him to sleep in these old arms when he was a baby. I looked the love light in his eyes in his young and tender years. I can't give him up." Love is like that. Therefore, as I said to you this morning, it has more victories to its credit than any other power in the world. Here then is a practical help toward living. If we in the fear of God and by his help seek day by day to be patient and kind and generous, humble-hearted, courteous, sweet-tempered, brotherly, we should find that what we give to others will go back to us. We shall find human relationships that are full of friction and strain and become things of beauty and of joy.
"WHO ARE WE?"

"Let everything be done with a view to building."  I. Cor. 14: 26 (Weymouth)

I.

We meet here this morning as members of the church of Jesus Christ. I am wondering just what we think of this organization of which we are a part. What is our attitude toward it? How large a place does it occupy in our thinking? How large does it loom in our plans and purposes, our hopes and our dreams? What is your estimate of the worth of the church. What think ye of the church of the living God?

1. There are some who do not think of the church at all. They live their lives, they plan their business, they build their homes, they pursue their pleasures as totally oblivious of the church as if such an organization did not exist. So far as their consciousness of the fact goes, the church makes no contribution to their lives. It furnishes no enrichment, it holds out no hope. It gives no strong staff upon which they may lean as they accomplish life's journey. For them, the church does not exist.

2. Then there are those who think of the church, but think of it only to oppose it. They look upon the church as a foe of human progress. It is a dispenser of opiates, it causes people to bear the ills they have and postpone any better day to a future life. To their mind, the church lies like a huge stone across the mouth of the sepulchre where enlightened and public-spirited men and women are trying to raise a shattered civilization from the dead.

That this is true is borne out by the fact that whole nations in our day have repudiated the church. In Russia, for instance, with its vast millions, the church is primarily extinct. And what is sadder still is that the tragedy is not simply that the Russian church ceased to live, the tragedy of it is that it ceased to be fit to live. It did stand in the way of human progress and deserved the fate that came to it.

The same is in a measure true of the church in Spain. What lies back of the
civil strife in that war-torn country? The people voted in a democracy, but the church and the army staged a rebellion, the mass of the people were no longer friendly to the church. This was the case, not because they are naturally lacking in religion, they are no longer friendly to the church because the church ceased to be friendly to them. Mexico is another that has put the ban on the church. A friend of mine, who toured Mexico this summer could not enter that country as a minister, he had to enter it as a teacher. What is the matter? Osuna, one of the most cultivated gentlemen in Mexico said that the church held sway there for three centuries and at the close of that long period, illiteracy was more than ninety-nine percent. Naturally, there are many who oppose the church.

3. Then there are those who think of the church only to ignore it. They are indifferent to its purposes and programs. These are probably the most disquieting foes that the church has. It is not necessarily an evil thing for the church to be a fault. Times of conflict have often been times of growth. Again and again the ashes of the martyrs again and again the blood of the martyrs have been the seed of the church. But for the church to become so listless as not to be worth fighting for, that is a calamity indeed.

Now those who thus ignore the church fall into two groups.

First, there are those who do not belong to the church, who have never belonged, who know nothing about it from personal contact. Vast multitudes among us today get all their information regarding the church second-hand. Most of those who write critical articles in our magazines have no first-hand information of what the church is or what it is about. If you will notice, the criticisms these offer are usually from twenty-five to fifty years behind the times. Their attitude is, of course, hurtful. But it is less so than the attitude of the second group.

This second group who ignore the church is made up of those whose names are on its rolls. They once stood at its altars and took its solemn vows upon themselves. But
for some reason, either through the fault of the church or themselves, they have quit. They no longer attend, they no longer contribute. They stand in the attitude of those who have been on the inside, who have tested the values of the church and who having tested them rate those values at naked nothing. They have spied out the land and reported back by their attitude of total indifference that the church is worth just nothing at all. These are perhaps the most deadly foes of the church that we have today.

4. Then, there is another group. This group is made up of men and women like yourselves. They believe in the church. They belong to it. I like that word "belong." They look upon the church as theirs. They look upon themselves as belonging to the church, that is, the church has some claim upon them. They were not forced into the church. They joined the church, gave themselves to it as a matter of choice. In the church they have found help and hope, they have found an outlet for their idealism. These can sing with fervor, "I love Thy Church, O God! Her walls before Thee stand, Dear as the apple of Thine eye, And graven on Thy hand. For her my tears shall fall, For her my prayers ascend, To her my cares and toils be given, Till toils and cares shall end."

II.

Now, do we who thus belong to and love the church have any ground upon which to stand? Can we give a reason for the hope that is within us? I think we can. Who are we as members of a Christian church? How are we described upon the pages of the New Testament? What does our Master and those who were closest to Him have to say about us?

1. We are disciples. That is, we are learners in the School of Christ. In Him we feel that we have been brought face to face with the greatest of all teachers. Of our own free will, therefore, we have enrolled ourselves in His school. In doing this, we recognize the fact that we have not arrived. Why do our youth go to school? Not because they already know, but because they do not. That is the reason we enroll in the
School of Christ.

When, therefore, it is pointed out that we are far from perfect, we are neither surprised nor depressed. We are keenly conscious of that fact. The church is not a body of people who have arrived. The church is made up of those who are on the way. When one suggests, therefore, his willingness to join a perfect church, we are not in the least impressed. We know that a perfect church would shut its doors in all our faces, that it would have to do so in the nature of things. Our entrance would change its perfection into imperfection. We admit that there is much that our Lord has to teach us that we do not know, infinite heights we have not reached. All we claim for ourselves is that we are learners. Having met the Highest, we are trying to sit at His feet as pupils in His school.

2. We are witnesses. That is, having entered the school of the Master, we give our testimony to our children, to our friends, to our world, as to what we have learned. We are witnessing every day. We witness through what we say and through what we do. What your child thinks of the church depends almost wholly on what that child has heard you say in your daily conversation and what that child has seen you do day by day and Sunday by Sunday.

Then, we not only witness by what we say and do, but we witness more still by what we are, by the atmosphere that we carry with us. "We cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard." Why is the rose so red? It is not blushing for our entertainment, it is the nature of the rose. Why does Niagara thunder? It is not putting on a show for the tourists, it cannot help thundering. Why does the mountain climb so far toward the dawn behind the stars? It is not tiptoeing, it is built that way. Why do some of you carry with you an atmosphere and a radiance of those that have been with Jesus? You do it spontaneously because of what you are. We are witnesses.

3. We are salt. Salt is more than a luxury, salt is a necessity. Nobody can keep house without salt. As members of the Church of Jesus Christ, we too may
recognize ourselves as a necessity. This is the case because the world simply cannot get on without Christ-like characters. We could, if necessary, get on without cars, without electricity, without Sunday shows, without cocktails, but we cannot get on without salt.

What is the good of salt? Salt gives a tang to the feast of life. Almost every dish would be insipid without it. One of the best definitions of salt was given by a little girl. Her prize essay read, "Salt is that stuff that makes food taste bad if you don't put it in it." All life, sooner or later, loses its tang without the saving salt of Christ-like character.

Then salt is a preventive. It is the foe of rottenness. It stands in the pathway of everything that would destroy and defile and says, "They shall not pass!" It is the foe of impurity. It is the foe of the liquor traffic that would seek to win taxes for the selling of boyhood and girlhood. It is the foe of every form of gambling. We have a great passion today to seek to pension our old people and to do our work of brotherhood by the worship of the god of chance. The greatest safeguard for individual and social life is the salt of Christ-like character. If we would spend as much in the prevention of wrong as we are forced to spend in cure, we would soon usher in a new day.

4. We are light. What a beautiful word that is. Light is a source of comfort and cheer. It is life-giving. Without light, science tells us that death would reign everywhere, it would be universal. Then light guides. It enables us to put our feet on the right road, it makes it possible for us to find our way to the heart's true home.

One of the finest compliments that could be paid to any church was paid by a young chap the other day. "Some time ago," he said as he told his experience privately, "I got in the dark. I was depressed, defeated, frustrated. I did not know which way to go. I turned to the church in search of help. I went to a number of churches without
finding what I wanted. One day, I said to an official after the service which I had attended was over, 'Do you know where a man who wants help can really find it. Do you know where a man who is in the dark can really come into the light of Christ?' The man said, 'Yes, I do. Just go to that church at a certain corner.' And I went and I found your light."

5. We are a brotherhood. "Love the brotherhood," wrote the Apostle years ago. "A new commandment," said Jesus, "I give unto you, that you love one another." "By this shall all men know you are my disciples if you have love, one toward another." There is no doubt that this brotherliness was one of the chief charms of the early church. The pagan world looked on with bewildered eyes and said, "How these Christians love each other." And because they desired to love and be loved, they were drawn into these societies of heaven. We are a brotherhood still, not a perfect one, oh no. Yet, we are the nearest approach that I know. Every other organization that approaches brotherliness has received its inspiration from us. We do in some measure "rejoice with those who do rejoice, and weep with those who weep." I like the friendliness of this church. I like the way you come forward to shake hands at the close of the service. I love the way you stand around and talk to each other when the service is over. When you see a church empty the first three minutes after a service is over, it is likely that church is not as brotherly as it ought to be.

Of course, with us there is much room for improvement. There is nothing better that we could do for our church than to help make it more brotherly. There is nothing better we could do for our city and for our world than to build right here a brotherly church. What chance is there to build a universal brotherhood if we cannot build one within the narrow compass of our own church. Give us here an atmosphere fragrant with the breath of love and goodwill and folks will come as naturally as bees gather about the clover blossoms in the springtime. We are a brotherhood.
6. Finally, we are the body of Christ. What does this mean? This body that you see this morning is not really myself, it is only the house in which I live. These eyes are the windows out of which I look. These lips are the instruments with which I speak. We are the body of Christ. He must walk upon our feet, He must speak through our lips, He must minister through our hands.

That means simply that we are His representatives. As He went about doing good in the long ago, so He is today, but He is doing that today through His Church and that is His body. Remember that whatever is done for the building of better homes, whatever is done for the building of better characters, whatever is done for the building of a better society, Christ must do through you and me. He has no way of influencing the world except through His body - the Church. He is a part of that body and out on no lesser task than the building of the Kingdom of God.

III.

Now, since we as a church are disciples of Jesus, since we are His witnesses, since we are salt and light, and since we are a brotherhood, since we are the very body of Christ, not in perfection of course, but since we are all this in our ideals, we are people of unmeasured worth. Therefore, we have a right to an ennobling self-respect. We ought to think grandly of the church of which we are a part. It has a fine high idealism that is possessed by no other institution in the world. It is out on a quest that is bigger and higher than that of any other institution.

It is significant that many of the choicest souls of human history have thought so grandly of the church. Take Jesus, for instance, it was His central passion. When He summed up the highest meaning and mission, He did it in these words, "I will build my church..." When we find Paul, as another has said, at his lowest, it is when he is remembering that once he persecuted the church. When we find him thrilled with unspeakable joy, when we find him shouting with sheer gladness, it is because he is thinking of
himself as a member of the church of Jesus Christ. He is exulting in the fact that to him has been given the privilege of being a builder of this church. "Let everything," he said, "be done with a view to building."

IV.

How then are we to build the church?

We are not to do so by merely letting it alone. Out riding the other day, I passed by a ruin. There were half-finished walls, a few pieces of timber, and what might have been a poem was only a wreck. What was the matter? The building had not been bombed, nobody had planted dynamite under its foundation. This was the matter - somebody had started to build but his money had given out, or he had lost interest. He just ceased to work at the job. And what might have been a thing of beauty was only an ugly ruin.

All that is necessary to wreck any building is to do nothing about it.

But building is costly. To build any organization means effort. How do we build our civic clubs - through effort. How do we build our fraternities - through effort. It costs time, it costs personal contact, it costs money. How do we build a church - in the same fashion. We build by attending its services. We build by seeking to make its dreams and its fine idealisms realities. We build through our gifts - the gifts of our money and the gifts of ourselves. "Don't join that church," one friend advised another, "they will soak you over there." Thus advised, the young fellow came to see the pastor. "Your friend was right," he said, "if you join this church we will soak you. You will be expected to carry a part of the load." And that was the church the young man joined because it our best, we do not wish to be drones, we want to be useful, and we can only be useful as we get under the load.

Here then is the greatest institution in the world, the oldest and the best. Here is the institution without which civilization rots down. Here is the institution
that is to bring in the Kingdom of God, if that kingdom is ever to be a reality. It is an institution to which you have given yourself of your own choice. It is the institution in which you propose to invest your time, your talents, and your means. You could do nothing better. This is true because it is the highest and the best and because those who invest here will never lose.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren," wrote a churchman of the long ago, "be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know your labor is not in vain in the Lord." How much of our labor goes for nothing? I waked up to the fact a few years ago that I did not know how to invest. I tried two banks but both of them broke. Some of you have seen the earnings of a lifetime slip through your hands, but here is an investment that is sure. Those that build themselves in human personalities through the church have an investment that will outlast the ages. "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
"Then He appeared unto James". First Corinthians, 15:7

Paul begins this great passage by affirming that he is handing on to us certain facts. He is dealing here with absolute certainties. He is not speaking of "true facts," just facts. I remember a debater of my boyhood, quite a keen one at that, who had a way of saying "my opponent makes this assertion, but, honorable judges, I deny that fact." Of course such an argument was futile. No denial is explosive enough to wreck a fact. Paul is here then dealing with certain facts.

Among these facts he asserts that Jesus made a certain appearance to three different individuals. He appeared unto Cephas, we can understand something of the reason for that. Cephas had denied Him. Cephas, in a moment of weakness and cowardice, had sworn that he had never met this Master whom he so deeply loved. Of course it was a tragic downfall and failure. It was necessary for Jesus to send him a special word, "go tell my disciples and Peter." Even that was not enough. He made a personal appearance to Peter. What was said in that interview we do not know, but Peter came back and became a leader among the twelve.

Then Paul affirms that Jesus had appeared to him. That was the central fact of his experience. It is recorded three times in the brief book of Acts. Without that appearance, the Paul that we know would never have existed. (He appeared unto Paul. Not that the appearance in itself remade Paul. He might have gone from the brightness of this vision into a deeper darkness than he had ever known before. The fact that saved him was that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.) But Christ appeared to him, though
James, the Lord's Brother

They learn'd to see eye to eye, they were of different temperaments, the developed a difference between them. James was by nature a Conservative and literalist. He was a born Pharisee. He was a man who clung tenaciously and with desperate earnestness to the letter of the law. Jesus was of the opposite type. He was inclined to be what some would call a liberal. He looked behind the mere externals to the heart of things. He early saw that the sabbath, for instance, was not made for the sabbath, but the sabbath was made for man. And He soon began to tell James stories that showed this liberal and progressive view.

Now James couldn't take it. It grieved him deeply, and he tried hard to set his brother right. But, while his brother was always sweet tempered, and patient, he never could get Him to change, till by and by I imagine they were a little less intimate than they had been. Though living in the same house, they were in their younger years. They took fewer walks together, and began to lead the older sister to grow they were growing somewhat apart.

Then there came an event that should have brought them together, but I think perhaps it put them further apart. Father Joseph died. James, of course, grieved over his death. One part of his grief was that Jesus would now be the head of the family. It was his younger brother and he was with the older ones, doubtless afraid of the effect that the teaching of this liberal older brother of his might have upon that family. That was a part of his burden, that he was afraid that Jesus might mislead the family. Other days passed and this brother began to talk about going on a mission. He was going to play a Rabbi when he hadn't had the fact that his received any of the training that James was sure that a Rabbi ought to have. And he tried to discourage him in that.

But, one day he tumbled the responsibility of the family and of the little shop on to the sturdy shoulders of James and took set...
out on His mad mission, to the horror of James far more than to his admiration. Nor was this mission of Jesus an entire flop, as James feared it would be. Wherever He went, He attracted attention. He attracted even more attention than James was willing for Him to attract. The rumors that blew in, while they had some things to James at least, though that were encouraging, were mainly discouraging, because this strange young Rabbi was teaching in a way that James could not approve.

Then there came His return to His native village and His appearance in His home Church. I do not know that James and his family knew that Jesus was going to be the preacher of the day. But the family was there, and when Jesus stood up to read I see James clench his fist and most callous palms become sweaty with tense anxiety. He is saying to himself, "There is absolutely no telling what this strange brother of mine is going to say." But it started better than James could have dreamed. Jesus took one of the great texts of the Old Testament, brushed the dust of the centuries off it, in your very listening this text took Emma's breath, and said "today is the scripture fulfilled in your ears." And the congregation responded with eagerness, and James relaxed, brushed his damp palms dry, and said "bless the Lord, oh my soul, and let thy works praise the Lord, oh my soul." But hardly had he relaxed and begun to take pride in his brother when that brother got off on, of all things, the race question. In so doing He did not say that the Jewish people were not the chosen of the Lord. Indeed He had no definite word to say against any member of the congregation or any member of the Jewish race. He did remind them that when God wanted a boarding place for His hunted prophet, Elisha, He had to find that place among the pagans, even in the land of Jezebel. He also said, that though Elisha was gifted
of God with the power to cure leprosy, the only man that God cured
was a stranger named Naaman. When they heard that, the worshipping
congregation exploded into an active volcano, and all that kept Jesus
from being murdered was that He made a miraculous escape.

How strange that is, and yet how human! There is one thing
about us and that is our human nature doesn't change. These people
were deeply religious, but a great deal of their joy in religion
was not simply in the fact that they were right, but also in the
fact that outsiders were wrong. When the Lord called Jonah to go
to the city of Nineveh and cry against it, he flatly refused to go.

Why? Because he thought the Ninevites had no capacity for religion,
that a sermon would be wasted on them? Not a bit of it. He
refused to go, not because he was sure they would not repent, but
because he was afraid they would, and if they would repent then God
would love them as well as He loved the Jews, and that would never
do. Hence he tore to his heels

On the streets of a town that I know quite well, a gentleman
said to me one morning, "Brother X told his congregation yesterday
that they were not the only ones that were going to be saved." I
replied, "yes", but the was astonished to hear it. I said, "Did he say that?". He said,

"well", I said, "he will not be here another month." He was not there another week. What was the matter? Did he tell
his people that they were pagans? No. Did he tell them that they
were in darkness? No. He did not tell them that they were not
walking in the light. He only told them that they did not have a
corner on the light, and that was enough to lose him his position.

What a travesty on Christianity! And so this congregation broke
up into a mob, and heartbroken James went home, confessing to himself
James, the Lord's Brother

that "I would have joined the mob, but for my peculiar relationship with the preacher".

In after days things did not go from bad to worse exactly. At least the utter blackness, had on it a touch of gray, for it came to James the Lord's Brother, and the home folks that Jesus was not eating His meals. That disturbed Him. He was raised from a late Shabbat, said to His Mother quite a bit, and then there came that further rumor that Jesus was crazy, as we would say today, that He was off His rocker, then, too, that He was no longer quite sane. This gave James, in spite of his bitterness, a chance to do a gallant, and as he thought, a very liberal thing. He decided to go after that brother of Him - and bring Him home. So a little later they set out, Mary and James, and his brothers. They had no trouble finding where Jesus was stopping, but the house in which He was so crowded that they couldn't get in. Therefore they sent, in word, and said "Tell Him that His Mother and brothers are waiting outside to see Him." And they waited, and at last by and by the messenger returned, and they said where is He. And they said: "He is in there teaching." "Isn't He coming out?", and they said "No." "Well", what did He say?" "He said that His Mother and brothers were those that did the will of God", and James' face flamed, and then he dusted this bejeweled brother off his hands, saying and said "I'll have nothing more to do with Him". And he took the family and went home, forbidding them to have any further relationship with this bejeweled brother. James held to his resolve, and made the other members of his family do the same, except Mother Mary. When the storm clouds began to gather, and when there came a vague shadow of the cross on a skull-shaped hill, she couldn't stay away. But it is a very
significant fact that when Jesus died, so far as the record goes, in so far as His family was concerned, He was utterly alone except for the presence of His Mother, and she was not there at the last scene to the extent that the beloved apostle had taken her to his own home. Truly He did come unto His own, and His own received Him not. And thus James let the curtain fall. He had so much and made so little out of it. on a tragedy that he refused to share.

PART II

Then came those black days immediately after the crucifixion. Nobody knows. We only know that He was not by the Cross, Where was James when Jesus died? We don't know. Perhaps he was close enough to share in the night that settled down at the death of Jesus. But the outer night was brighter than the day in comparison with the blackness of his own heart. When James knew that He was dead, a thousand memories of glad yesterdays flooded his cold and barren heart, and he remembered the relationship that he had had with this brother. How tender He had been. How strong He had been. How patient He had been. How loving He had been. And he had never appreciated it. And now he was so desperately sorry.

Not only was he sorry for the neglect in the Nazareth home, but he was sorry that he had stood by and allowed his brother to be done to death without ever lifting a hand to help or to share. The most dangerous of all sins is the danger of just doing nothing at all. He knew that he had helped to drive the nails home into the palms of Jesus. He knew that he had been a party to that crowning Him with a crown of thorns. This he had done, not by acting aggressively, he had done it by simply in blank unbelief and resentment doing nothing at all.
James, the Lord's Brother

I suppose that there was not a sadder man in the wide world than James at this time. And he said "Oh, if I had another chance. If I had another chance I'd accept Him, I'd love Him, I'd serve Him. And Jesus said if any man is willing to do His will, He shall know. And James came to know. How Jesus appeared to him, we are not told, but He made James certain. And in that presence, what James said we are not told. I can imagine, as Thomas who had also failed Him, he fell at His feet and said "My Lord, and my God."

PART III

What was the outcome? James became a Christian. He became a disciple. And when we see the friends of Jesus gathering in the Upper Room a little later, the Mother, is not alone, all the family is with her once more. Because when James came, the others came of He had helped to cause them to stray, He also helped to bring them back as well, for he was the leader and head of the family. Not only did James become a Christian, but he became an Apostle. This was due in part, I dare say, to his relationship to Jesus. The fact that he was the brother of the Lord helped. I think Simon Peter to regard him with an almost always had a kind of a superstitious reverence for him because of that relationship. One of the shabby scenes in Simon's life is when he turned away from the Gentiles because a certain message from James came. (He was a man of ability and a man of influence.) But he became an Apostle, not simply because he was the Lord's brother, but because, as I said, he was able. He was capable. He was a born leader. He became the president of the Church at Jerusalem. He became an Apostle.

We may be sure of that from what Paul said when he went up to Jerusalem three years after his conversion with Peter. He said he saw no other of the Apostles than Peter except the Apostle James. James had already then been accepted as an Apostle. Not only that,
Then I happened in his house, and found him dead. He had faced the sentence of death with the same calm. What was said? Nobody knows. It can never be known. At the moment Jesus fell at his feet saying, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This we may be sure the country heard of. He fell man burst into affright, and in Jerusalem commotion. They laid his heavy burden free from his bowed shoulders, and he was free. Having become willing to do his will, he had at last leisure to know.
James. the Lord's Brother

but he became the president of the Church. And though he was by nature narrow-minded, though he was the most Jewish of Jews, though he remained loyal to the law, to the end of the chapter, when there came a debate on the question of whether Christianity should be good another Jewish sect or another world religion, it was James who, made perhaps the decisive speech, and it was James who presided over the meeting and gave his vote in favor of the liberal view.

What kind of man did he become? Tradition gives him certain names that indicate his character. He was never the passionate and devoted lover of men that Paul was. He never put his arms around the world as Paul did. (However I think he would have agreed in saying with Paul that he would be willing to be accursed for the sake of his brethren.) His ministry was confined to Jerusalem. They called him James, the Just. He was a fair-minded man. He was ruggedly honest. Now justice is not the most beautiful of the virtues, but is one of surpassed worth. It is not one that always makes the man loveable. "Scarcely for a just man," said Paul, "would one die, but for a good man one would even dare to die." James was just, though; that is not enough, for the greatest of the poets is scriptural in saying in the course of justice none of us should see salvation. But it is a great attainment.

James is also called a bulwark of the people. That is, James was a sturdy man, a staunch man. In the Old Testament we read that God sought for one to stand in the gap for the land and could find none. James was a man that could fill a gap. He was a salty soul who could take a position that required sturdy courage and manliness and hold it. He was a man of strength. Then

Then a final name he's given to is Samson. He was a man given to

Finally he was called 'Came Knees'
to prayer that his knees became calloused like those of a camel. He wrote the Epistle to James, he tells us that one reason that our lives are empty, that our hearts are sometimes without any power, is because we do not pray. "You have not because you ask not." Or you have not because you do not pray. He tells us further that the prayer of a good man is a mighty force. James had discovered that in his own life.

He never became one of the lovely radiant saints, I repeat, such as Paul. He was a bit like Lockland Camel in that old Scotch classic. You remember how this earnest, serious man lost his daughter blotted her name out of the family Bible, but when she came home his heart broke. His own daughter wrote her name back in the Bible and added this "he fell on her neck and kissed her" and he had never kissed her before, even in her infancy and in her girlhood.

This Lockland Camel James, this hard man, this upright man, this just man, came to Jesus and it was Jesus who ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And though James perhaps had erased His name, the name of his oldest brother from the family Bible, it was Jesus, who in love wrote the name of James into the Lamb's book of life. "Any man will come to him, will be received by him that cometh unto me. I will in no wise cast out." Then He appeared to James. He will appear unto any man who will open his heart to Him. May God help us to do that today.
JAMES, THE LORD'S BROTHER

"Then He appeared unto James." First Corinthians, 15:7

According to the New English Bible, Paul begins this great passage by affirming that he is handing on to us certain facts. He is telling here with absolute certainty. He is not speaking of "true facts", but just facts. I remember a debater of my boyhood, quite a keen one at that, who had a way of saying "My opponent makes this assertion, but I deny that fact". Of course such an argument was futile. No denial is explosive enough to wreck a fact. Paul then is here dealing with facts.

Among these facts he asserts that Jesus made separate appearances to three different individuals. He appeared unto Cephas. We can understand something of the reason for that. Cephas had denied him. In a moment of cowardly weakness he had sworn that he had never met this Master he deeply loved. So tragic was this downfall that Cephas had ceased to count himself among the Master's friends. It was, therefore, necessary for Jesus to send this special word, "Go tell my disciples and Peter". Even that was not enough. He appeared unto Cephas personally.

Then Paul affirms that Jesus had appeared to him. That was the central fact of Paul's experience. The story of this appearance is told three times in the brief Book of Acts. Without that appearance the "Paul" we know would never have existed. But Christ did appear to this bitter enemy and win him to Himself.
James, The Lord's Brother

he had been a bitter enemy, and through this appearance Paul was remade.

Then He appeared unto James. Why to James? It seems that James would have been less in need of such an appearance, than anyone. Of all the people who knew Jesus in the flesh, James, I think, knew Him most intimately. I do not thing Mother Mary had had as much fellowship with Jesus Christ in the flesh as did this man James. For thirty years he had known Him. They had played together as boys, they had eaten together, they had slept together, they had gone to the Synagogue together, they had been taught by their pious parents together, they had rambled the hills about Nazareth together, they had been most intimate. There are three periods in the life of James to which I wish to call your attention.

PART I

First, James had such a big opportunity to know Jesus Christ in the flesh. (He had, as I repeat, the best of anybody.) When James was born, Jesus was a toddler. Very soon it became a part of the duty and privilege of this elder brother to look after his baby brother. They were both bright, they were both well taught, they were both deeply and earnestly religious, and it was not long before this older brother began to cultivate his skill and genius for story telling that came to a climax in his later years, and that we have the privilege of knowing something in the Gospel. James had listened with wide eyed wonder, as Jesus had told the stories of the heroes of yesterdays of His people.

But they had hardly got into their teens, I dare say, before
James, The Lord's Brother

PART I

Look first at James' relationship with Jesus before Calvary. When he was born, Jesus was in all probability a toddler. Very soon it became a part of the duty and privilege of Jesus to look after this baby brother. They were both bright, well trained, deeply and earnestly religious. It was not long, we may be sure, before this older brother began on behalf of James to cultivate his genius for story telling. Some of the stories were original. But most of them had to do with their own people. James had listened with wide eyed wonder as Jesus had told of Israel's cowardly and heroic yesterdays.

But they had hardly reached their teens, I dare say, before they ceased to see eye to eye. They were of different temperaments. James was by nature a conservative and literalist. He was a born Pharisee. He clung with desperate tenacity to the letter of the law. Jesus was of the opposite type. He was inclined to be what some would today call a liberal. He looked behind the mere externals to the heart of things. For instance, He early saw that man was not made for the sabbath, but the sabbath was made for man. He soon began to tell James stories that showed this liberal and progressive view.

Now James could not take it. This progressive brother of his grieved him deeply. Doubtless he tried hard to set him right. But, though Jesus was always sweet tempered, and patient, he flatly refused to change. By and by I imagine they were less free and frank than they had been in their boyhood years. Though working in the same shop, they began little by little to grow apart.

Then came an event that should have brought them closer
James, the Lord's Brother

together, but, I dare say, pulled them further apart. Father
Joseph died. James, of course, grieved over his death. Per-
haps a large part of his grief was that Jesus, now being the
head of the family, might taint his younger brothers and sisters
with his too liberal views. That was a part of his burden.

Soon there was a second shock; Jesus began to talk of going
on a mission. He seemed bent on playing rabbi, in spite of the
fact that he lacked the training that James was sure that a
rabbi ought to have. Naturally James sought to persuade him
against such an adventure, but in vain.

Then one day Jesus turned the responsibility of the little
shop and of the family on to the sturdy shoulders of James and
set out on His mad mission. Nor was this mission an entire flop,
as James expected it to be. Wherever Jesus went, he won atten-
tion. He attracted even more attention than James was willing
for him to attract. The rumors that blew in, while in some
respects were encouraging, were to James at least, discouraging.
Though this strange brother of his seemed to be on the way to
success, James could not fully approve.

Then came His return to His native village and His appearance
in His home Church. I do not know that James and his family
knew that Jesus was going to be the preacher of the day. But the
family was there. When Jesus stands up to read I see James
clench his fists. His calloused palms become wet with anxiety.
He is saying to himself, "there is absolutely no telling what
this strange brother of mine is going to say." However he
began better than James could have dreamed. Jesus took one of
the great texts of the Old Testament, brushed the dust of the
centuries off it, and said, "today in your very hearing this text has come true". And as the congregation listened with eagerness James relaxed, wiped his damp palms, and whispered "bless the Lord O my soul".

But hardly had he relaxed and begun to take pride in his brother before that brother got off on the race question. In so doing He did not say that Jewish people were not really the chosen of the Lord. Indeed He had no definite word to say against any member of the congregation or any member of the Jewish race. He did remind them that when God wanted a boarding place for His hunted prophet, Elijah, He had to find that place among pagans, even in the land of Jezebel. He also said, that though Elijah was gifted of God with the power to cure leprosy, the only man that got cured was an outsider named Naaman. But that was too much. At once the congregation exploded into an active volcano. All that kept Jesus from being mobbed was that in hot haste He made an all but miraculous escape.

How strange and yet how human and up to date! These people were deeply religious. But a great deal of their joy in religion was not the conviction that they were right, but rather the certainty that all outsiders were wrong. When the Lord called Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and cry against it, he flatly refused to go. Why? Because he thought the Ninevites had no capacity for repentance? Not a bit of it. He refused to go, not because he was sure they would not repent, but because he was afraid they would. If that should happen, then God would love them as well as He loved the Jews. That would never do. Hence he took to his heels.
On the streets of a certain town, a gentleman said to me one morning, "Brother X told his congregation yesterday that they were not the only ones that were going to be saved." In astonishment I answered, "Did he really say that?" "Yes," was the reply. "Well", I prophesied, "he will not be here another month." He was not there another week. What was the matter? Did he tell his people that they were pagans? No. Did he tell them that they were walking in darkness and were therefore strangers to the light? No. He only told them that they did not have a corner on the light. That was enough to lose him his position. It was even so in ancient Nazareth. Heartbroken James went home that day confessing to himself "I would have joined the mob, but for my peculiar relationship with the preacher".

In after days, the utter blackness of the situation took on for James at least a touch of gray. Rumors were blowing about that Jesus was not quite sane. Indeed some affirmed that he was mad. This was disturbing, but a lack of sanity was less offensive to James than a lack of orthodoxy. Then, too, this gave James a chance to do a gallant, and as he thought, a very liberal thing. He decided to go after his mad brother and bring Him home.

So with Mary and his brothers he set out. These had no trouble finding the house where Jesus was stopping. But that house was so crowded that they could not get in. Therefore they sent this word to Jesus "Your Mother and brothers are waiting outside to see you". Then they waited until at last the
The messenger returned alone. "Isn't He coming out?" questioned James. "No", was the staggering reply. "Well, what did He say?" "He said that His Mother and brothers were those that did the will of God". At that James' face flamed with anger. Then, he dusted this benighted brother off his hands, vowing "I'll have nothing more to do with Him". To that vow he remained true to the bloody end.

Not only did James hold to his resolve, but it would seem that he made the other members of his family do the same, with the exception of Mother Mary. When the storm clouds began to gather, and when there came the shadow of a cross, she could not hold aloof. But it is a very significant fact that when Jesus died, so far as his family was concerned, he was utterly alone except for the presence of His Mother. It is doubtful if even she was there to the ugly end. Her new son, the Beloved Apostle, had already taken her to his own home. James let the curtain fall on a tragedy that he refused to share.

PART II

Where was James when Jesus died? Nobody knows. We only know that he was not by the cross. How did he react to this grim tragedy? Again we are not told. But wherever he was, I am sure he did not react in this fashion. He did not boast that he had held out firmly against this mistrusted brother to the bitter end. He was not affirming with devilish glee "I never when about that skull shaped hill. Not only so, but I saw to it that not one of my younger brothers and sisters was there. I am glad to say that I did my best to see to it that
He died alone." James was a hard man, but he was not that hard.

I feel sure that the grim night that settled over Calvary was brighter than the noonday sun in comparison with the blackness that made hell for James. Now that Jesus was gone, a thousand memories of glad yesterdays flooded his cold and broken heart. He remembered the tender relationship that he had known with this strange brother in youth's bright morning. How tender He had always been. How strong and patient and loving. The realization of his stupid blindness tortured him as the very fires of hell.

Not only was James sorry for the neglect in the Nazareth home, but he was more sorry still that he had been too blind and stubborn to share the heavy burdens of Jesus. He felt that he could never forgive himself for allowing him to tread the wine press alone. He felt that his own hands had pressed the thorn crown on that innocent brow. That he had driven the spikes into those hands that were always lifted in blessing. This he had done by standing aloof in his resentment and doing nothing at all.

Then it happened. This crushed and desperate man stood face to face with the risen Lord. What was said? Nobody knows. I can imagine that as Thomas, James fell at his feet sobbing "My Lord and my God". Of this we may be sure, the wintry heart of this hard man burst into spring. As in Bunyan's immortal story, his too heavy burden fell from his bowed shoulders and he was free. Having become willing to do His will he had at last come to know.
What was the outcome? James became a disciple. When we see the friends of Jesus gathering in the Upper Room, Mother Mary is there. But she is not alone. All the family is with her once more. When James came, his brothers came. If he had helped them to stray, he also helped to bring them back, for he was the leader and head of the family.

Not only did James become a Christian, but he became an Apostle. This was due in part to his leadership and ability, I dare-say. But it was due even more to his relationship to Jesus. The fact that he was the brother of the Lord seems to have caused Simon Peter to regard him with an almost superstitious reverence. One of the shabby scenes in Simon's life is when he turned away from the Gentiles because of certain messages that had come from James. He was a man of ability and a man of influence. But he became an Apostle, not simply because he was the Lord's brother, but because he was capable and able for that high office. Not only did James become an Apostle, but he became the president of the Church. Later, though he was by nature most conservative, though he was the most Jewish of Jews, remaining loyal to the law to the end of the chapter, when there came a debate on the question of whether Christianity should remain a Jewish sect or a world religion, it was James who made perhaps the decisive speech, and who gave his vote in favor of the liberal view.

What kind of man was he? Tradition gives him certain names that indicate his character. He was never the passionate and devoted lover of men that Paul was. He never put his arms
around the world as did the Apostle to the Gentiles. His ministry
was confined to Jerusalem. They called him James, the Just.
Now justice is not the most beautiful of the virtues. It is
not one that always makes its possessor loveable. "Scarcely
for a just man", said Paul, "would one die, but for a good man
one would even dare to die." He became James, the Just.

James is also called a bulwark of the people. That is,
James was a sturdy man, a staunch man. In the Old Testament we
read that God sought for one to stand in the gap for the land,
but could find none. James was a man that could fill a gap.
He was a salty soul who could take a position that required
sturdy courage and hold it. He was a man of strength.

Finally he was called "Camel Knees". He was a man so given
to prayer that his knees became calloused like those of a camel.
In his Epistle, he tells us that one reason that our lives are
empty, that our hearts are sometimes without any power, is
because we do not pray. "You have not because you ask not."
He tells us further that the prayer of a good man is a mighty
force. James had discovered that in his own life.

He never became one of the lovely radiant saints, I repeat,
such as Paul. He was a bit like Lochland Campbell in that old
Scotch classic. You remember how this earnest, serious, hard
man lost his daughter, blotted her name out of the family Bible,
but failed to blot it out of his heart. His own daughter wrote
her name back in the Bible and added this, "He fell on her
neck and kissed her". He had never kissed her before, even in
her infancy and in her girlhood.
James, The Lord's Brother

This Lochland Campbell James, this hard man, this upright man, this just man, came to Jesus and it was Jesus who ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And though James had perhaps erased the name of his oldest brother from the family Bible, it was Jesus, who in love wrote the name of James in the Lamb's book of life. "Then He appeared to James." He will appear unto any man who will open his heart to Him. "If any man is willing to do his will, he shall know."

"Then he appeared unto James." So what? He may be perfect, because such a kindred heart as Paul's, bright and in the light, he was born as Paul, not that he was in this he was born as Paul. But that he was in this he was born as Paul, that ye might have faith in Jesus, he saw the Saviour, he saw the Saviour that ye were to believe in the Saviour and were not disobedient to the Saviour that was enough. That heavenly visions, that was enough, that made the least possible change, if made the best possible change, you know them they are worse, not make you love them better than worse, make you love your hero, He will remake you into your best possible hero.
Whatever fault there may be in my sermon, there is really no genuine fault to be found with my text. I have a truly magnificent text. It has in it the strength of the rugged hills. It has the wide sweep of the far-flung seas. It has the multitudinous perfume of the flowers of springtime. It has the songfulness of God's choir in feathers. To the right listener it is as musical as dream bells sounding upon the sloping hills of sleep.

But while my text is all this to some, it is very opposite to others. To some it will not prove joyous, but grievous. Some of you will hear no music in it, but only clashing discord. It will come to you laden with no rich perfume. It will rather be stenchful and offensive. While a source of gladness to some, it will be to others of an annoying and horrifying nightmare.

The truth of the matter is that my text will divide this audience into two parts. It will set up in the here and now a kind of great white throne before which we will all be judged. We will give it welcome or shut our doors in its face according to what we are. We can know our true selves by the hospitality that we give to this text. If we resent it we will know ourselves to belong to one class. If we receive it with joy we will know ourselves to belong to another and opposite class. The way we treat this text will show us, if we are honest, what we really are.

The apostle John spent much of his life in a penal colony of the Isle of Patmos. The wide, monotonous sea stretched about him. This sea shut him in to a fellowship that was unpleasant. Many of those with whom he had to associate were criminals. Not only did it shut him in with the disagreeable. It shut him off from his friends whom he loved best. He looked across the wide waters toward those who loved him and whom he loved and from whom he was separated. And when he thought of Heaven he could not bring himself to think of it as a place where seas should still divide friend from friend. And so he put this wonderful touch in his description of his future home: "There was no more sea." To him the sea was a thing of horror. The sight of it filled him with sorrow and dread.

But you recall how a company of Greeks were marching home one day after a long and toilsome and perilous campaign. They were weary and hungry for the sight of loved faces. They came suddenly upon a height and there stretching away before them is the shimmering sea. And with wild joy the cry burst from every throat: "The sea! The sea!" To them the sea was the roadway home. It indicated the nearness of those from whom they had been long separated and for whose fellowship their hearts were so hungry. So the same sea that was full of horror for one was full of gladness for another.

So it is with my text. If when I announce it you find yourself resenting it, you ought straightway to ask if you have ever been born again. If it annoys you, frets you, jars you, makes you wish you hadn't come, then what you ought to do immediately is to smite upon your breast and say: "God, be merciful unto me, a sinner." And I make bold to say that whosoever resents and resists this text has not yet felt the touch of the risen Christ upon his life. I feel confident that such a one is yet in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.

If, on the other hand, you find your heart singing within you at the announcement of this text, then you have a right to lift up your voice and sing: "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine." If you find your soul rising with
eager and nimble feet to fling open the door to this text, then it is perfectly in order for you to sing with the psalmist: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. . . . I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. . . . . Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name."

You will find this testing and dividint text in I Corinthians 16:1. "Now concerning the collection." Was I not right? This audience is already divided into two parts. And some of you are saying? "Oh my, oh my! He preached on money last Sunday and I thought today we would have a gospel sermon." And so, by the help of the good Lord, you shall have, for this is the gospel, at the very heart of it. But how painful it is. Collection. Was ever a word so prosaic? Is there another word in the language that carries such a knotty cudgel in its hand? How it pounds us and bruises us and makes us cry "Oh wretched man that I am!" Collection. Every vowel in it is a thorn. Every consonant is a spike tipped with poison and the preacher stands with cruel heart to weave them into a crown and to press them upon our heads. The collection.

Truly it is a word with which to torture. Indeed it is a modern rack. Here we behold again something of the pain and anguish of the Inquisition. If you could press a button at this instant and be out upon the sunny street, would you not do it? Do you not sympathize with the Jew and the Scotchman who went to Church, expecting to get there after the collection was taken? But they had no sooner taken their seats than the preacher called for the collection. And what could they do? There was only one way out. The Jew fainted and the Scotchman carried him in his strong arms to the door. "Now concerning the collection." "Good Tubal thou stickest a dagger in me."

But we rejoice that all do not feel this way. The collection. What a winsome word it is to some. And to what a height of privilege it leads us. The collection. To the seeing eye and the believing heart it is not a drab thing of prose, but it is a thrill with sweetest poetry. "Now concerning the collection." And that word so ugly to some is transformed into an angel of light. This angel stands in this Church today as your representative and mine. It is giving the bread of life to the hungry and the water of life to the thirsty. It is ministering to our own children. It is ministering to the strangers that have come from far distant places to find shelter within our gates. It is ministering to lonely young men and women, giving them strength and comfort amidst the temptations of a strange city.

"Now concerning the collection." Our souls sing as they hear the word. Every vowel and consonant becomes a messenger of light. These messengers are going where we can not go. Our own duties may keep us within the narrow precincts of home. But through the collection we go to the needy homes of our own land. Through the collection we fly on wings fleeter than doves' wings into Japan and China and Korea and to the islands of the sea. Thank God for the collection. It enables us to send out the vital and vitalizing seeds of our Lord as far as the curse of sin is found.

"Now concerning the collection." The Bible deals with this big subject because it is a vital part of the gospel. Of course it is something that a few people resist and resent, but others of us like to hear about it. There are some to whom such a material subject comes with a shock. And if there was ever such a place, that place is surely here. This word about the collection is right at the end of one of the most sublime sermons ever preached. Paul has just been enumerating the fundamental doctrines of our religion. He has been displaying before our view the choicest jewels that go to make up the riches of grace in Christ Jesus our Lord.
The climax

Just listen: "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. . . . Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed. . . . O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. Now concerning the collection."

What a drop, you say. What a terrible anti-climax. What a passing from glorious morning into black midnight. What a descent from those sublime heights where the apostle has bathed his wings in the very thunder's home, to a grovelling in the dust. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Now concerning the collection."

What did the apostle mean by being guilty of such a crude anti-climax? How did he dare shock our sense of the fitness of things by dashing us at once from the brightness of summer skies and the perfume of summer flowers into the blackness and darkness of a tunnel? Was not this apostle a scholar? He was. Did he not know how to use good language? He did. Would he not have recognized an anti-climax had he met one? He would. And yet we hear him shouting: "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory. Now concerning the collection."

He does that because he knows that the collection is not an anti-climax. It is a climax. Here he says: "I have been leading you among the Beulah-lands of our faith. I have taken you to stroll with me among the high hills of hope, among the shimmering mountain peaks of religious certainty. Now concerning the collection. If you have a mountain you may expect it to be the mother of rivers and the nurse of tall pine trees. And if you have great mountains of faith and certainty you may expect from them to flow rivers of benevolence." Therefore it is but sane and natural that the apostle should speak in this connection concerning the collection.

A few weeks ago a friend of mine took me to that great power house on the Canadian side of Niagara Falls. He showed me there a number of the largest dynamos I think I have ever seen anywhere. Now after he had pointed out to me these great engines of power, what question would I naturally ask? Would I say "I suppose all this machinery is here for the pleasure of a few electricians"? No. I said: "Now, how about the power?" And he answered me in terms of swift moving trolleys connecting city with city, and village with village. And he also spoke to me in terms of night changed to day in thousands of homes. Havine pointed out the dynamos he said, "Now concerning the power." That was altogether natural.

Here behind me is a pipe organ. Suppose you had never seen one. You come one day and the organist shows you over it, describes to you the mechanism of it, indicates to you its attractiveness as an ornament, its usefulness in filling up a certain space. Then she says: "Now concerning the music." And she takes her place and lets her hands steal over the fingerboard till flutes and violins are heard and till the instrument seems to be possessed with a soul. The organ can only express itself in terms of music.

A friend of mine from Mars calls on me one day and asks to know about the wonderful world on which I live. I say to him: "We have four seasons: springtime, summer, autumn and winter." And then he proceeds to ask: "What about spring? When does it come and how?" And I give him dates. And I tell
him we move into a warmer atmosphere and the sun seems a wee bit brighter, and the winter chilled world takes on new warmth. But he is not satisfied with that. He says: "What is the effect of it all? You have a greater heat. How about the outcome?" And I point it out to him in the greenness of the grass and the verdure of the trees. I make him hear it in the song of the bird.

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

Thus Paul speaks. He says that "the Sun of righteousness has risen upon us with healing in his beams. Spiritual springtime has come. Now concerning the collection. Now for the outcome of it all." Notice then, first, the mountain of motive that Paul points out. He enumerates for us the fundamental certainties of our religion. He declares that we have a divine Christ. This Christ he knows to be divine for many reasons, but for the supreme reason as here stated: "That He is risen from the dead." If Christ is not risen, then there is not a promise in this Book that is worth the paper on which it is written. But if Christ has risen then we have a gospel. Without it Paul says our gospel is vain. That is, it is empty. There is nothing in it. But since Christ has risen we have a gospel.

What is its content? First, Christ is God. He it is who has laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of his fingers. He it is of whom it is written "In the beginning was the word, and the word was God. And the word was with God All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made."

Since Christ is God we belong to Christ by right of creation. We also belong to him by right of redemption. Then we belong to him as his saints because we are personally surrendered to him. Since we are His, all that we have is His. We are but the stewards of our abilities. We are the stewards of our money. We are to spend every dollar of it as in our great taskmaster's eye.

Since Christ is our risen and divine Lord we have a present personal Savior. "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory." We have a right to claim victory over our yesterdays, emancipation from our evil past. We have a right to claim victory for today. It is our privilege to set our foot upon the neck of our foe and abound with joy and gladness.

Then, since Christ, our divine Lord, is risen we have a right to expect victory over death. Death is not a blind alley that leads nowhere. It is the open roadway into the Father's house. Those who have fallen asleep in Jesus have not perished. There is something more of my father than a handful of dust. There is something more of my mother than a spadeful of clay. Their corruption has put on incorruption and their mortality has been clothed in immortality.

This is our faith. What is to be the result of it? It is to make us stedfast. What a rock-ribbed word is that. How staunch it is. How like a strong mountain it uplifts itself. "Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor in not in vain in the Lord." One of the works in which we are to abound is the blessed work of giving.
Then Paul passes on to specific directions for giving. "Let every one of you lay by him in store, on the first day of the week, as the Lord hath prospered him." That is, first of all, giving is to be individual. Everybody is to have a part in it. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." God does not wish to rob anybody of the best. Therefore He expects everybody to give. How greatly enriched would be the spiritual life of the Church if every individual would relate himself to the giving program of the Church.

"Let every one of you." Let that word grip you - everyone. Not every one who likes the preacher. The preacher may be a very unlovely personage. But it is not his right to shut the door of usefulness in your face. It is not "Let every one who approves of the official board." Not "Let every one who sanctions the administration." There is no qualification. "Let every one of you give."

Now I suppose in every Church there are some who do not give. They assign various good reasons. They are not sure of the way the money is handled. About such I want to make just this observation. First, be exceedingly careful of any so-called conscientious scruples on your part that minister to your increasing selfishness and to your growing stinginess. Whenever for conscientious reasons you are doing the thing that you want to do and that particular thing is becoming more of a leech and a parasite, then I am afraid your convictions are of the power of darkness instead of born of the light. Whatever causes you to shut your greedy fist with a tighter grip on your money is mighty apt to be of the devil.

"Let every one of you lay by him in store, on the first day of the week." That is, give systematically. I have mentioned that before, but it needs to be mentioned again. The one who arrives at the best physical health, other things being equal, is the one most regular in his habits. It is possible to get on very well with an hour's good physical exercise every day. But I do not think it conducive to the highest good health to dance for sixty-eight hours at a stretch. And let me say, by way of parenthesis, that of all the contemptible monomaniacs that ever have left their brains at home to waltz out alone, those entering the marathon dance contest are certainly the biggest. And our papers write about them on the front pages and give them more prominent mention than they would somebody who had been influential in bringing about a spiritual pentecost. May the Lord have mercy on our idiocy.

Give systematically. Give proportionately. I mentioned that last Sunday but I must mention it again. I heard that some of you blushed last Sunday when we mentioned the fact that Government workers on a hundred dollar salary were giving more than some of you on a salary of thousands. We have no thought of turning you out of the Church. We have no thought of calling your names. We know you. But one of these days you are going to face that very proposition before God. And if you have not been faithful in the
handling of unrighteous mammon, who shall commit to your trust the true riches? Give in proportion to your ability. You have no right to call yourself a Christian and at the same time be a conscious spiritual dead-beat.

And to be a dead-beat doesn't mean that you give nothing. It means to refuse to give proportionately. Is there anything more contemptible than to hear a man with the ability to give large sums say, "I'll give my mite." What is it to give your mite? What did it mean to the one who gave her mite centuries ago? It meant giving all that she had, her entire living. You have no right to the use of the word when you are giving such a meager fraction of your income that it would make the face of an orthodox Jew scarlet with shame.

Then give confidently. I do not propose to guarantee to you that every penny that you give will be put to the highest possible use. But I can guarantee beyond the slightest shadow of a doubt that no penny that you give for Christ's sake will ever be finally squandered. "Ye know", says the apostle, "that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." You may have given to one who was unworthy of your gifts. You may have helped a beggar who was a fraud. But if you did it as unto the Lord it passed right through his fraudulent fingers and never stopped till it got into the very hands of God.

No penny that we ever give for His sake is ever lost. No labor that we do in His name is ever in vain. He puts our petty treasure out for us at compound interest in eternity. Such giving will make us multi-millionaires in the House not made with hands. In fact, we will only keep what we give away. Therefore I close with His great words: "Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Give. Give systematically, proportionately, confidently, knowing that "your labor is not in vain in the Lord."
The Anti Climax.

I Corinthians, 16: 1.

You will find the text in I Corinthians, 16th chapter and 1st verse: "Now concerning the collection, brethren." It is easy to see that I have already made a bad impression. However well I may finish this sermon, I have made a most hideous beginning. "Now concerning the collection" - collection, is there a word in all the language that is so fraught with heartache as is this word? Did ever a company of vowels and consonants get the consent of their minds to arrange themselves into another word so discordant? Collection - it repels us. It makes us shut out hands tight. It forces us to turn our eyes toward the door and wonder if there is any way of escape.

"Now concerning the collection" - did you hear that? You whisper mentally to your neighbor, "Did you hear what the preacher is saying, collection?" It is just about as I expected. I am sorry I came. I never get out to church but what I am greeted by that horrid word. I never put my head inside the door but that it is pounded with that rough cudgel, collection. I have heard it till I am threadbare. I have heard it till I have almost resolved that I will never come to church again. I will just go to the movies where they don't mention it."

I had a little girl come to my Sunday School down in Dallas. She had been attending Sunday School at another church, but she came over to Highland Park. The first Sunday she got there the teacher told her a story about Jesus. And this little girl broke in fretfully and said, "Jesus, Jesus, that's all I heard while I was down at that other Sunday School, and now that I have come up here the thing has started up again. It's just Jesus, Jesus all the time." I suppose she was right. It is hard to teach a Sunday School class without mentioning that name. And it is also impossible to preach the Gospel without preaching about the collection.

"Now concerning the collection" - even more amazing than the fact that the collection is mentioned is the place in which it is mentioned. The word seems at first sight entirely out of place. Paul has been uttering great kingly words. And these princely words have scarcely marred off the stage till there comes into view this prosaic word - collection. We did not expect to find it in such company at all. We feel that it is a thorough peasant. We never associated it in our minds with the highest royalty. But Paul is not afraid of the association. He seems to think that this word collection is quite as kingly as any of the great words he has just been using.

What has Paul been talking about? Listen: he has been proclaiming the fundamental doctrines of our holy religion. He has been preaching one of the most marvelous sermons on the resurrection that was ever delivered. "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. Behold I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump: For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory? Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

Great words these. Few greater have ever been uttered. But what comes next? "Now concerning the collection, brethren." And you say, "What a drop! What a hideous anti-climax! It is like passing from the fragrance of blossoming spring into the chill and death of winter. It is
like going at once from the warmth of the tropics into the bleakness of the poles. "Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory? Now concerning the collection." It lets us down from the very height of the heavens on to this dusty world in one single drop.

How did Paul come to be guilty of such a rude anti-climax as this? He was a man of ability. He was capable of producing great literature. How are we to account, I say, for this anti-climax? We are to account for it by this fact, that it is not an anti-climax at all. This great doctrine of the resurrection is intimately related to this other great doctrine of the collection. They stand related as cause and effect.

In this matchless sermon on the resurrection Paul has been showing us the marvelous mountain of motive. Now, if you have the mountain it is going in some way to account for itself. If you have a great mountain then you may expect that mountain to become the mother of rivers. You may expect it to become the nurse of the tall pine trees. So Paul having shown us this great mountain of Christian doctrine, declares that it also is to account for itself. He is saying that down from these sublime mountain heights must flow streams of benevolence. He is saying that our faith in Christ and His resurrection is to give expression to itself in our sacrificial giving.

You remember how Phaethon learned in the old Latin story that his father was the sun god Appollyn. Armed with this information he went to visit the palace of the sun. At the palace he was privileged to look this fire god in the eye to eye. So Paul has had us face to face with a great truth that shines like the sun, and having shown us this sun, he also shows us something of the beneficent light that is to come from it. He shows us how it banishes the night and brings in the daylight. He shows us how it changes wintertime into spring. And part of the warmth that comes from this sun is the genial warmth of the collection.

In this great passage Paul has led us up to the very source of the eternal springs. He has shown us the Lake Itasca of our religion. He also shows us something of the life giving streams that are to flow from this spring. And one of the streams that is to flow is the collection.

"This corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality." This is Paul's faith. This is Paul's sure hope. This is the firm conviction that has put the warmth of everlasting spring within his heart. But how is that springtime going to express itself? Springtime is going to be in the heart of this old world in a few days. Will the world keep it a secret? It could not if it wanted to. It will tell the story in a thousand forms of life and color. It can not hide itself.

"Every clod feels a stir of might,
An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And groping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in the grass and the flowers."

And as springtime in the heart of the world expresses itself in colorful life, so springtime in the heart of Paul and to those to whom Paul wrote was to express itself in that colorful flower, the collection.

So you see what Paul is here doing. He is telling first our faith and then what is to be the outcome of that faith. He is showing us the tree. Then he tells us something of the fruit that that tree is to bear.
The anti climax

He points out first the cause, then he proceeds to tell us the glorious effect that that cause is to bring about. And mark me, it is hard to get Paul's effect without Paul's cause. But if we really lay hold on Paul's cause then the effect will follow as naturally as night follows the day.

What is the motive then that lies back of the collection? What is the soil in which this sacrificial flower is to take root and grow? The first great fact that Paul asserts is this: "Now is Christ risen from the dead." The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the best proven fact of all history. It is proven to us because the risen Lord was seen by many credible witnesses. This Epistle here is older than any of the Gospels. It was written about a quarter of a century after the crucifixion. Many of those who had actually seen Jesus after His crucifixion were alive when Paul wrote it. Paul himself was of that number.

It would take a very credulous individual indeed to believe the clumsy lie that was told by the soldiers of the guard, and later by the Jews. They said His disciples came and stole the body away. That proves at least this if no more, that the body of Jesus was not in the tomb on Easter morning. If the body or Jesus was not there it was taken away in one of three ways, either by the enemies of Jesus or by the friends of Jesus or by resurrection. It was not taken away by the enemies of Jesus. Had it been so they would have produced the body and given the lie to the claim of the resurrection as soon as that doctrine began to be preached.

For instance, suppose a man were to come to Washington today and declare himself to be Theodore Roosevelt, what answer could be made to him? This answer at least, that you could take him to the grave of Roosevelt and show him the body. The body of Jesus in the hands of His enemies would have been evidence enough that He had not risen from the dead.

In the second place, His friends did not steal Him away. Had they done so they would have known that He did not rise from the dead. But all agree now that the disciples did actually believe in the resurrection of Jesus. Their conduct could not be accounted for in any other way. When Christ was here with them in the flesh they were none too strong. They certainly could not have set the world on fire preaching what they knew to be an utter lie. The fact that one day they were weak and cowed and discouraged, and the next a united company who went forth eager to give their lives and their all for the spreading of their gospel - this fact shows that they believed that Christ was risen from the dead.

But they could not have believed that Christ was risen from the dead if they had stolen the body themselves. They did believe it, therefore they did not steal the body. Therefore if this tomb was empty and was not emptied by either the enemies of Jesus or by the friends of Jesus, we must conclude that it was emptied, as the Bible story says it was emptied, by the resurrection. And mark me, it is far harder to believe in the marvelous change wrought in the early church apart from the resurrection than it is to believe in the resurrection itself.

"Now is Christ risen from the dead." That is Paul's confident assertion. And because that is true all the sublime and glorious truths of our Gospel are made sure. For "if Christ be not risen from the dead", says Paul, "our preaching is vain." The word "vain" here means empty. Our preaching is empty. In other words, if Christ is not risen from the
dead we have no gospel, and we are yet in our sins.

But "now is Christ risen"; therefore we have a gospel and our preaching is not empty. It is full of a glorious and gushing hope. Because Christ is risen we may claim pardon upon the merit of the shed blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord. But mark you, that it is the blood of a risen Christ that saves from sin. If Christ be not risen He can make no atonement. If He be not risen He needs one to make atonement for Himself. Without the resurrection Christ ceases to be a savior and becomes the most pathetic and helpless of martyrs.

If Christ is risen from the dead, then we may claim a present savior. We may look to Him in the glad expectation that He will not only loose us from our sins in His own blood, but also that He will gird us with strength and make us more than conquerors.

But a dead Christ is of no present help to the world. A dead Christ can not give that heartening promise "Go ye" and "Lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world." But now is Christ risen from the dead; therefore it is our privilege to have Him with us in all times and in all climes. Since He is risen He may be with each individual in the world in every circumstance of their lonely and needy lives.

The third blessed fact upon which we may depend because of the resurrection of Jesus is the fact of our own resurrection. Because He lives we shall live also. Because He conquered death, so too you and I may conquer. Because He rose, we may be absolutely confident that one day "this corruptible is going to put on incorruption and this mortal is going to put on immortality." We may shout over the glorious prospect that one day He is going to fashion anew these bodies of our humiliation that they may be like His own glorious body.

Now is Christ risen from the dead, and because He is risen He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him. And because He is risen He is able to be with me always even to the end. And because He is risen He is one day going to come and to receive me unto Himself, that where He is there I may be also. Paul believed all this with absolute conviction. This sublime faith he shared with the saints of his day.

And what was the result? He was gripped with a mighty passion for giving. He knew that his labor was not in vain in the Lord. He knew that Jesus Christ once dead, but alive forever more, would not allow his efforts to fail to the ground. He knew that this same Lord would take account of his fidelity. And these mighty faiths were in his heart as fire in the fire box of an engine. They made for power. They made him mighty to give.

Now, if you and I share in Paul's faith we are going to also snare in Paul's eagerness to give. If Christ for us is a risen and living Christ, then that faith of ours is going to express itself in some way. And one way in which it is going to express itself is in our glad and eager part in the collection.

I confess to you that I do not have very much hope for the collection without the faith. I do not look for much of a stream apart from the fountain. I do not expect much light without the sun. Men will sometimes give without these great motives that dominated Paul, but no continuous stream of benevolence has come from that source. A mighty
effect demands a mighty cause.

Now, while I do not expect the giving without the faith, where there is this faith there will certainly be giving. You can not have a gushing river on the height of a cliff without a Niagara as the result. You can not have a great light within this electric light bulb without its giving expression to itself. And if you really believe your beliefs, if your gospel is the supreme fact to you, then you are going to give expression to your faith by what you do. If we say amen while the preacher preaches on the doctrine of the resurrection and then yawn when he gets to the part about the collection, then I am not convinced that you really believed the first part of the sermon.

Not only does the Apostle tell us that great faith will mean great giving, but he lays down certain principles upon which we are to give that are altogether sane and helpful. Listen to him: "Let every one of you lay by him in store on the first day of the week, as the Lord has prospered him."

First he said give individually. Let every one of you. Paul did not exempt one single individual when he uttered this sentence. He expected that every single soul in the church be a giver. Let every one of you.

They were to give regardless of whether they were rich or poor. They were to give whether they occupied a position of prominence or a position of obscurity. They were to give whether they were young or old. Mark you, he did not say that they could all give in such a way as to attract attention or to win applause. He simply said that every one was to have some part in the collection.

Is not that altogether sane and sensible and reasonable? One great trouble with the church today is that so often the burdens are borne by the few. Many of us try to ride in on a pass. Many of us want to put our responsibilities on other shoulders. But this we can not do. And the fact that some of us have tried to do that is the secret of why we are weak and joyless and useless at this present moment.

Everybody is to have part in the collection because it is a privilege that Christ does not want any of us to lose. Remember it was the Master Himself who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Now, it is blessed to receive. No one will deny that. The fact that we are saved at all is due to the fact that we had the privilege of receiving. But as wonderful as it is to receive, it is even more blessed to give. It is more blessed because more Christlike. What is the task that He works from eternity to eternity? Just the task of giving. And the more we give the more we become like Him.

Therefore unless I am to rob myself I must give. I must give individually. No man can give for me. No man can do my receiving. No man can do my believing. And no man can do my giving. I must give individually. You must give individually.

The second suggestion Paul offers is that we give systematically. That, too, is profoundly sensible. So often we give in a haphazard fashion. We give according as our emotions are stirred. We give in case we like the one who asked us to give. If the preacher who takes up the collection appeals to us we give. But we have too little systematic giving that comes from principle.
Now, if I am to get along well physically I must live systematically. It is not good for me to sit up six nights and then sleep three days together. It is not good for me to fast a week and then eat enough for twenty-one meals at once. If I am to have the best physical health I must be systematic. If I am to make the best possible progress as a student I must be systematic in my study. If I am to make the best possible progress as a violinist I must be systematic in my practice. If I am to make the best possible progress as a Christian I must be systematic in my giving.

Therefore I urge upon every one of you that you put aside out of every week's pay or out of every month's pay a definite sum for the work of the Kingdom. And remember that the first fruits of the Lord are the Lord's. There was a time when every church used to wait till the end of the year to pay up. It is unscriptural and irreligious. Pay systematically and the work of the Kingdom will not lag and the cause of Christ will not be belittled by lack of adequate finances.

The last principle Paul lays down is this: give proportionately. Let a man lay by as the Lord hath prospered him. How much must I give? I must give according to my ability. That is to be the test of our service in every direction. Paul says, "As much as in me is I am ready."

Now, whatever your income may be, there is not a soul alive who cannot give according to his ability. That is within everybody's reach. That is within reach of the rich. It is also within reach of the poorest of the poor. And do not forget that God is just as interested in the gifts of the poorest of the poor as He is in the richest of the rich.

Now and then one comes to me and says, "I have never brought my membership here because I feel that the little church down at home needs the small amount that I give. It would not count here." Now, if you really give it down there I have nothing to say, but this I do say, that there is never a donation too small to make to the church if it represents your ability. There is never one too small to make to this church or to any other.

I would like to say this also, that this church is kept up by the free will offerings of its membership. And that means by the free will offerings of the poor. There is not one single moneyed man in this church. The work of the church is made possible by the fact that there are so many who belong to it who give as they are able.

It is required of a steward, Christ says, that he be found faithful. That is the one test that the Master lays down for our admission into His kingdom by and by. Those whom He welcomed He welcomed with this word, "You have been faithful." Could He say that to you? Have you been faithful in the use of your money? Have you been fair with God or have you, as the man with one talent, hidden behind your own littleness and said that it is so small it doesn't count?

Remember this, that it is not the amount you give that counts. It is the fidelity that is back of the giving. If the poor widow had been judged by the amount of her contribution that day she would have been laughed out of countenance. But she did her best. She gave what she could, and that giving immortalized her name here and made her a multimillionaire to all eternity.

"Now is Christ risen from the dead." That is something to shout
over. "Now concerning the collection" - that is one of the blessed results of His resurrection. Let us see that we shout over that also.

CGC:BR
THE CLIMAX

I

If the first step toward the preaching of a good sermon is the selection of a great text, then I should be on my way. The text of the morning has some very conspicuous advantages.

1. It compels attention. There are some texts that knock so softly at the door of our minds that we hardly hear them. Their whisper is so gentle that they fail to arouse our attention. But no so with this text! It literally compels a hearing. Some may hear with disapproval; others will surely hear with warm approval. But whether we approve or disapprove, all hear. This is a great text because it simply demands attention.

This fact is of course a real advantage. The best texts will prove fruitless if nobody gives ear to it. The best of sermons is a sheer futility if nobody is listening. Though what I say this morning might be as fundamental as the Decalogue and as true as the Sermon on the Mount, if nobody is giving attention then I might as well be making mud-pies. I am not only failing to do good. I am doing positive harm. I am wasting both my own time and yours as well. Such waste is nothing less than sin unless I am doing my best. But I fear no such sin armed with the text of the morning.

2. Not only will this text command attention, but it will compel some kind of reaction. It will hold the mirror up before every face. It will reveal every listener to himself. We cannot hear it without standing before some kind of judgment bar. If we find that this text irritates us, if we find ourselves wishing we had not come, if we say to ourselves, "I wish our pastor would leave
off preaching such prosaic matters and preach us the old time gospel then the chances are there is something wrong with you. However bold may be your profession of faith, I greatly fear that you have not become a partaker of the divine nature.

On the other hand if you find your heart warming to this text, if this great word comes like showers to dry ground, if it breaks up the drouth of the heart and sets the field of the soul to flowering, I have great hope for you. If you rejoice in this text, I am persuaded that however humble may be your opinion of your own moral and spiritual achievements, you have come in some fashion to share the mind of Christ. If you can thrill to this text, it shows that you have some kinship with Him who loved us and gave Himself up for us. This text then reveals us to ourselves.

It is wonderful how a word will be joy to one and sorrow to another. It is amazing how the same word may make one man sing while it makes another man sob. When John, the author of the book of Revelation, was sent to prison on Patmos, he passed doubtless through dreary days. He was shut in with some of the broken human crockery of the Roman Empire. He was shut in with people who were most uncongenial. He was shut away from those that he loved the best. He was shut away from the worship of the sanctuary and from the privilege of preaching to a devoted congregation. But his prison walls were not made of stone. They were of the waves of the sea. For this reason John came to hate the sea. Therefore, when he looked forward to the Golden Age that was ahead, when he foresaw that "new heaven and new earth" there were to be no more prisons such as his. Therefore, he sang, "And there was no more sea." To him the sea was a prison.

But such is not the case to everybody. Once a company of Greeks trudged for long days through perils and hardships of the desert. They faced many dangers and many privations. At last they came upon a promontory that gave a look-out over an enchanting stretch of sea. The sight did not repel them as it might have repelled John. Instead with the cry, "The sea! the sea!" upon their lips they
Pushed forward in great joy. The sea to them was not a prison wall. It was a roadway home. It was this sea that had given them a pathway back to dearly loved scenes and dearly loved faces.

So it is with our text. With some it will prove a bit of a prison. But they will feel "cabin'd, cribbed and confined". To others it will be a roadway along which their willing and nimble feet will walk to gager service. Where is this amazing text? It is found in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, the sixteenth chapter, the first verse: "Now concerning the collection." There! I told you. Some of you are already wishing you had not come. You are thinking of those two Scotchmen who went to church, intending to get there after the offering was taken. But they had no sooner been seated on the front pew than the pastor announced the offering. There was nothing they could do about it—except the smaller one fainted and the larger one carried him out to fresh air. But all of us will not feel that way about it. Some will rejoice in it because you believe that Jesus was speaking sober truth when He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

II

The background of this text is tremendously interesting. It comes as a part of one of the greatest passages in the New Testament. Paul has just been leading us among the mountain peaks of our holy faith. Listen to him: "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures......that he rose again according to the scriptures.... If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain..... Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.... O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory......Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. Now concerning the collection."
What an anti-climax! "The victory is ours, thank God! Now concerning the collection." What a drop! What a passing at one step from the abundant life of the tropics to the barren waste of the frozen north! What a passing from the heights where we have mounted upon wings as eagles to a weary trudging of a dusty road! How quickly at a single step we have passed from a lovely garden, sweet with the perfume of flowers and with the murmur of running brooks to burning sands of the desert. "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory. Now concerning the collection." Why was Paul guilty of such an anti-climax? Did he know nothing of the writer's art or have nothing of the speaker's skill? If so, why this blunder? For the simple reason that Paul did not look on it as a blunder at all. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Now concerning the collection." Paul did not look on that as an anti-climax but as a climax. Here, I repeat, are the mountain peaks of our faith. Where there are lofty mountains there are always streams flowing from those mountains carrying life and fertility to far flung valleys below. Paul here has been rambling about the mountain-peaks. The collection is one of the streams of beneficence that flow naturally and spontaneously from those lofty heights.

Glance at them a moment in detail. "I delivered unto you that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins." Whatever may be your theory of the atonement, it is a central fact of our religion. Our faith is a faith that has a Cross at the center of it. It is a religion of one who gave Himself. It is a religion that requires self-giving on our part. If Christ laid down His life for us, we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren.

"Must Jesus bear the Cross alone
And all the world go free?
No, there's a Cross for every one,
And there's a Cross for me."

Ours is a religion that was given to us at the price of life laid down. That is a central fact of our religion.

2. This Christ who died also rose again. The Resurrection is the supreme
miracle of the New Testament. It is that miracle without which all other miracles come to naught. All the claims of Jesus depend upon this fundamental fact. What is the use of His claim to deity if death at last claimed Him and gripped Him fast forever. "If Christ be not risen from the dead, then our gospel is vain," said Paul. That is, it is empty. It is futile. But if Christ did rise, then we have a full gospel. Our wildest hopes and dreams may be realized.

The fact that Paul believed in the resurrection may not be convincing, but it is at least impressive. Remember that he had an intelligent and questioning mind even as you and I. Remember that he was quite as thoughtful as ourselves. The fact that he believed in the resurrection indicates that he had a reason for so doing. What was that reason? He was influenced in some measure by his Old Testament scriptures. He was influenced by the testimony of others. The intimate friends of Jesus claimed that they had seen Him personally. They had talked to Him. Two of them had walked along the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. But his faith rested supremely on his own experience. He tells how Jesus had appeared unto more than five hundred at once. But at last he said, "He appeared unto me." When he vindicated his claim to the apostleship, it was in these words, "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" He was sure of the resurrection because Christ was a reality in his own life. He was his daily companion. Always he was closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet. "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me.....Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me."

It was because of Paul's certainty of the risen Christ that he was certain that he had a gospel, a gospel that was full, that was adequate. He called it "my gospel" because he had laid hold on its offered wealth for himself. Knowing Christ personally, he had a present victory over sin. Knowing Christ personally, he had a present victory over fear and guilt and a divided personality. Knowing Jesus Christ personally, he had a present victory over death. He could say in
the here and now, "The victory is ours, thank God. For me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

Possessing such a faith as this, it was natural and inevitable that that faith should express itself in terms of human helpfulness. One of the streams that flowed from this faith was a stream of giving. It was the collection. Giving is related to our faith as effect is related to cause. When I was preaching in Canada a few years ago, a friend drove me over to the Niagara Falls that I might see that great cataract touched by the wizardry of winter. I had seen it in summer, but to see it in winter is far more wonderful. It is as sunrise to starlight. To see it in winter is to see more glittering jewels and diamonds than all the kings of all the nations have ever possessed. But my friend had little eye for it all. He was machinery-minded. Therefore, he led me to the power-house to show me the great dynamoes that this thundering waterfall turned.

Now it so happened that I am not machinery minded. I shall never forget how bored I was when a government expert took what seemed like hours to show me through the intricate machinery connected with the Panama Canal. I would have been ashamed to let him know at once how dull and how bored I was. But as this friend at Niagara showed me the great dynamoes I did have interest enough to say, "What is the good of them? What do they turn?" And he answered all enthusiasm in terms of streetcars and interurbans. He answered in terms of well-cooked meals. He answered in terms of daylight carried into ten thousand homes. The dynamoes—that was the doctrine. Light and power—that was the collection.

If I were showing some visitor over our lovely church, I might point out our organ to him. If I were wise enough in such matters, I should tell him how many pipes there are, how many manuals, how many stops. I should perhaps tell him that the organ is arranged not only as musical interest but as an ornament—that it takes up a certain space behind the pulpit and adds to the beauty and charm of the sanctuary. Then suppose he were to break in on me and say,
"But how about the music?" "Don't be so practical," I should answer. But it requires the music to explain the organ. That is what it is for. The pipes, the manuals, the dynamo—all these have but one supreme purpose, and that is to express themselves in terms of music. The machinery that you see is the doctrine. The notes of flute and violin and trumpet that flow from the organ—that is the collection.

If a visitor from Mars were to have asked me this summer as I was fishing on the Buffalo River, "What is the most beautiful season of the year?" I might have to pass by winter with all its beauty, the noontide hush of midsummer with its warmth and fullness of life. I might have to pass by gorgeous autumn and say, "The loveliest time of the year among these hills is springtime." If he were to ask me why, I should answer, "Because that is the time, between March 21 and June 21, that the sun comes a little closer and the earth is caressed by a new warmth."

But that would not be an adequate answer. That would only be the doctrine of spring. He would want to know what are the practical results. March 21 to June 21—that is the theory. But what is the collection? Oh, here is the collection—the call of the bob-white to its mate, the song of the catbird among the apple blossoms, the serenade of the mocking-bird as he sings all the songs in the bird's hymn book from the choir loft down in the thicket. Here is the collection—

"Every clod feels a stir of might
And an instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And proping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in the grass and the flowers."

The coming closer of the sun—that is the doctrine. The green of the grass, the song of the bird—that is the collection. Wisely, therefore, Paul leads us among the mountain heights of our holy religion to bring us to this thrilling climax—

"Now concerning the collection."
Then with fine sanity and commonsense he gives a few practical directions for our giving. The method recommended by Paul is not the only one. I will say this however—that it will not be easy to improve upon it. Of course, if you have a better plan, than the one he recommends, use it by all means. But if it so happens that you do not have any plan at all, and that is the case with many, or if it so happens that you do not have a better plan, suppose you give earnest attention to his. If it commends itself to your intelligence, suppose you begin here and now to use it. Here are his directions.

1. "Let everyone of you lay by him in store...." Paul looked on giving as a natural outcome of faith. He looked upon it as an act of worship. Since it is an act of worship, it is to be shared by everybody. Since it is more blessed to give than to receive, nobody is to be robbed of the privilege. Here is an opportunity open to the old and young, to the rich and the poor. Paul believed that even the poverty-stricken ought to have the privilege of giving. Paul believed that everybody ought to have the privilege of giving.

Were there then no poor people in Paul's congregation? Plenty of them. In fact, they were all poor. It was to this very group that Paul said, "Not many wise, not many noble, not many mighty are called." It is not poverty that keeps us from giving. It is far more often our pride that we cannot give as much as somebody else. Often because we cannot give largely, we do not give at all. Yet the mother that cannot feed and clothe her children as well as her wealthy neighbor does not refuse to feed or clothe them at all.

Giving is a high privilege, I repeat, that is open to everybody. This was Paul's faith. He doubtless remembered that the greatest gift ever made was made by a certain poor widow who gave only a fraction of a cent. What she would have missed that day had she said to herself, "I have so little to give that I am going to give nothing!" She dared because she was not proud and because she cared to give what she had. And Jesus was all enthusiasm about it. And that
gift has brought in its train countless millions since that day. "Let every one," said Paul. That means the rich and the poor. That means the old and the young. The father ought not to give for the whole family. Every child ought to be privileged to contribute. It is those who give in childhood who are going to give in their maturer years. Giving is to be participated in by everybody.

2. "Let every one of you lay by him in store on the first day of the week." That is, have some system in your giving. Now it is not greatly important whether you give weekly or monthly. However, I think the weekly plan is better. But that can be handled in accordance with the way you are paid. My experience is that the man who gives annually does not give half enough. You cannot worship enough in one service to last you for a whole year. Nor can you give enough. We ought to have system in our giving. Systematic exercise is the most profitable kind. Many a man who tries to take enough exercise to last him a month does not help himself. Oftentimes he kills himself. Systematic eating is conducive to physical health. Systematic giving is also conducive to spiritual health. There is nothing that protestanism needs more than an intelligent religious technique. A vastly important part of that technique is systematic giving.

3. "Let every one of you lay by him in store on the first day of the week as God hath prospered him." This means that every one of us is to give according to our ability. I have read some good literature first and last. I have read some that was depressing. I have read some that lifts the heart and sets the soul to dreaming. But did you ever read a group of pledges? If you have, you have found much of the effects of literature. Some depress you to the point of sickness. Some thrill you with an enthusiasm akin to that that Jesus felt for the gift of the poor widow. We are to give according to our ability. Giving never reaches its best until it becomes sacrificial.

4. Finally, we are to give in the full assurance that we are making the best possible and the most permanent investment. Some of us perchance have not
been wise in our investments. A few years ago I was returning from a meeting in Florida. My train stopped in a certain town. I was half asleep, but I glanced out the window and saw the name of the town. I smiled to myself. "These people, "I said, "do not know that I own this town." I made an investment in a citrus grove years ago. I think it is considerable distance out in the sea, but it is still mine. Truly, I did not realize on my investment.

But here is an investment that is sure. I was preaching sometime ago in that magnificent church in Tulsa. It is one of the most beautiful on the continent. A fine Christian gentleman who had been reduced from wealth to poverty by the depression pointed it out to me with a gleam of real joy in his eyes. He said, "I have lost everything I had except what I invested in this church. I put seventy thousand dollars in this church. I saved every penny of that. It will be doing business here, it will be helping to transform personality when I have been gone long years. Yes, to invest in personality is to make an investment that is as sure as God. That is what Paul means when he said, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." There is nothing, therefore, that has in it more of the gospel than this word—"Now concerning the collection."
THE CLIMAX

If the first step in preparing a good sermon is the selecting of a good text, then I can assure you that I am on the way. The foundation for what I am going to say has such a feeling of solidity that I proceed with confidence and joy. To find a text like this is like the discovery of gold. It is a roomy text, giving ample opportunity to walk in the great open spaces. It is a lofty text, higher than the hills or the mountains. It is a thrilling text. There is a bit of the clash of battle in it, and yet to him who has ears to hear it is sweet as dream bells sounding on sloping hills of sleep.

But I am aware that my text, as winsome as it is, will not meet with universal appreciation. How different we are! What appeals to one does not appeal to the other. The right sort of hearer is as important as the right kind of sermon. There is more in the seeing eye than in the object. Peter Bell could see just as clearly at Wordsworth, yet, "A primrose by a river's brim, a yellow primrose was to him, and it was nothing more." But to Wordsworth "the meanest flower that blows could give thought that do often lie too deep for tears." This text is going to draw a line right through the middle of this audience, dividing us into two groups. To one it will be an object of beauty. To the other an object of utter ugliness.

John, the beloved apostle, spent a good part of his life in a penal colony on the Isle of Patmos. In this colony he was forced to mix with some of the human wreckage of the Roman world. Such company must have grated deeply upon his pure and sensitive soul. But the sea shut him in so that there was no escape. Not only did this sea shut him in to a companionship that was unpleasant, but also separated him from those friends that he loved the best.
Therefore he came to loathe the sea. When he thought of heaven, when he dreamed of that miracle country into which he was soon to enter, one of the most appealing things he could say about it was, "There shall be no more sea."

But here is a group upon which the sea made an entirely different impression. They were that handful of Greeks that, after a long campaign in Asia, trying to make its way back home. At last, after many dangers braved and many hardships suffered, they came upon a promontory that gave a lookout over the sea. At once a wild gladness thrilled their hearts and they rushed forward, shouting at the top of their voices, "The sea! The Sea!" To John the sea was only a barrier. To these Greeks it was a roadway home. It was a pathway back to all that they loved and lost.

So it is with my text. Some of us will find it only a barrier, only a bit of hot acid for our wounded souls. Others will find in it a roadway for the nimble feet of love to hurry upon errands of service.

You will find this amazing text in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, in the sixteenth chapter and the first verse. It reads as follows: "Now concerning the collection." Ah! Didn't I tell you so! Some of you expected it and others are saying in your hearts, "O wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me." And you are devoutly wishing that you could escape right now, out into the peace of the street. That being impossible you are promising yourself that you will not be caught in such an embarrassing situation next Sunday.

They tell a story of a certain Jew and Scotchman who resolved one Sunday that they would go to church. Really, I think it does both of them an injustice. But the story says, having made
up their minds to go, they got their heads together and decided that they would be a little bit late, so that the collection would be over before their arrival. So they came late. Every seat was taken except the one down front. The usher showed them to this and they seated themselves with the feeling that they had escaped, just as the preacher said, "We will receive the morning offering." There was nothing left but for the Jes to faint and the Scotchman to take him in his arms and carry him out.

I

It is exceedingly arresting to notice the background of our text. It is a part of one of the greatest deliverances that ever came from the lips of this great saint and thinker, Paul. He has been reviewing some of the fundamentals of his gospel which also is ours. "Now is Christ risen from the dead.......We shall not all sleep. "We shall all be changed.......O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" And he closes by saying, "Now concerning the collection."

What a shocking anticlimax, we are ready to exclaim. Did not Paul know anything of the writer's or of the speaker's art? Indeed he did! He was a master of both. Why, then, this anticlimax? Why this dropping from the heights at one single swoop? "Death is swallowed up in victory," he cries in one breath, and in the next, "Now concerning the collection." It is like passing out of the sunshine into a dark tunnel. It is like dashing out of the fragrance and buoyant life of the tropics into the deadness of the frozen north. Why, then, this anticlimax? For the simply reason that Paul did not regard it as an anticlimax at all. He looked upon it as a climax. The great fundamentals of faith, the mountain heights of conviction that he has just been pointing out, are to serve as reservoirs for a great stream of beneficence.
Glance for a moment at these mountain peaks of faith.

1. He proclaims a risen Lord. The very center and heart of Paul's gospel was the resurrection of Jesus. He believed it because of the testimony of hundreds of living men and women to that effect. He believed it because there was other evidence that could not be refuted. He believed it above all else because the risen Christ was a fact of his own experience. One day, while he was journeying from Jerusalem to Damascus, he had met this risen Lord. Since then His companionship had been the supreme fact of his life.

2. Paul declares that we have a full gospel. "If Christ be not risen," he says, "then is our gospel vain and empty, but since He has risen, then it is a full gospel, full of power, full of hope, full of love, full of impelling motives. It is a gospel that leaves absolutely nothing to be desired.

   It is the claim of this full gospel to give to the one who accepts it the mind of Christ. It claims to set that man to the task of realizing the same great dream that Jesus dreamed. He is to be a builder of brotherhood. He is to set his face against every wrong thing, every unjust thing. He is to battle to the end of the journey for the establishment of the kingdom of heaven in the here and now, so that the will of God may be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

   It is a full gospel because it means the here and now. We are to live abundantly here and now. We are to have the life of God in our souls. It was because Paul found his gospel adequate for this present world that he believed in its adequacy for all worlds. It was because that he experienced the present salvation that he counted with such firm conviction on a future salvation. Living with Christ here he did not believe for a moment that Christ
would let go his hand when he came to the grade. Therefore he shouted, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

**II**

But what is the good of such a faith? The first question we ask about every creature or thing is what is it for. Nothing exists simply and solely for itself. Every individual, every institution, every organization, must give an account of itself in terms of service. The Church is no exception to that rule. The Church will live only so long as it meets that test. When it ceases to serve it will be mere savorless salt, good for nothing but to be thrown away.

Some years ago I was preaching over in Canada. A friend of mine drove me one day to see the Niagara Falls. Of course I was interested in the amazing wizardry of beauty that winter always works with this marvelous cataract. But this man was interested in machinery. He took me to see the great dynamos that this cataract turned, and not being machinery minded I was not greatly thrilled by looking at these huge dynamos. But there was one question that interested me. I said, "What do they do? It is a bit interesting to see them work but what is the outcome?" He answered not by saying that they were turning for our own amusement, or even for the amusement of a few electricians. He said that they were furnishing the power for the interurbans and the street railways of a score of villages and cities. He said that they were driving out the night from a million homes. He said "Here are the dynamos. Now concerning the light and power." And so said Paul, "Here are the dynamos of our faith. Now concerning the collection."

Suppose I were showing you over our beautiful church and I should begin with the organ. I should tell you how many pipes
there are. I should tell you that it is a four-manual organ; that there is also a beautiful echo organ, that it is run by two dynamos, that it fills up a certain space behind the pulpit and makes an ornament where otherwise there might be emptiness. Then suppose you should break in and say, "How about the music." I might shrug my shoulders and say, "Don't be so practical." But the organ has no meaning apart from its music. This great doctrine of deliverance of Paul's is the organ. Now concerning the collection, that is the music.

Up among the hills of Tennessee where I was raised, summer did not spend the winter as it has a tendency to do down here. And if you paid me a visit and said, "What is the most wonderful time of the year here?" I should possibly have to pass by autumn in spite of the fact that at that time God takes the magic wand of the frost and touches the hills and they become heaps of gold. I would be forced to tell you that spring among these hills is the most wonderful season of the year. And if you should press me for a reason I should merely answer. "Why, that is the time between March twenty-first and June twenty-first. It is the time when the sun comes a little closer and days get a little warmer." But nobody would be satisfied with such an answer as that. "You say you delight in the spring most of all. Why?" I delight in it because it is the time when life is renewed. It is the time when all nature takes on a new gladness. You can feel the springtime in the warm caress on your face and in the quicker beating of your own heart. You can hear it in the call of the bobwhite to its mate, and in the song of the catbird among the apple blossoms. The whole earth whispers it to you in a riotous chorus of colors.

"Every clod feels a stir of might
An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And groping blindly above it for light
Climbs to a soul in the grass and the flowers."
You cannot express spring in terms of the almanac. That is the doctrine of spring. The song of the bird, the green of the grass and the bloom of the flower, that is the collection.

Here then, we come to recite our creed. Here we come to take fresh grip of this dynamic gospel of ours. But what is to be the practical effect upon our lives? Is the world to be none the richer? Are we to hug this priceless faith to our hearts in a grasping, selfish fashion. Such a thing is impossible. To refuse to share is to lose. These mountain peaks of faith are meaningless unless they give birth to rivers of human helpfulness. Because we believe in a risen Christ, because we have a gospel that is adequate to the needs of the whole world, it is this roomy faith that is to issue in rich and enriching giving. We are to be always abounding in the work of the Lord, and one way of abounding in this work is to have a part in the collection.

III

Then Paul gives some specific directions for giving. They are not my directions. They are directions that I take it were given under the inspiration of the spirit. They are as pertinent today, and as timely, as when they were first given. Let us give them a candid hearing, remembering that they have more than the sanction of your pastor. They bear the sanction of a spirit-filled personality and the sanction of sanity and common sense. First, Paul urges that everybody share in the collection.—"Let every one of you ..." Were there then no poor folks in the church at Corinth? Plenty of them. I dare say there was not one single rich man in the church. This was the group to which Paul was writing when he said, "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called."
Was not the widow that immortalized herself by the giving of her whole living poor? She was possessed of only a fourth cent, yet she gave it and when she gave it Jesus did not spring up half angrily and thrust it back into her hand, seeing that she was not able to give it. He rather greeted her gift with the wildest enthusiasm. Poverty may prevent you from giving what you would like, but not even poverty to the point of having to live on charity can keep you from giving something. Even those who live on the bounty of others can give as much as this widow.

Now I am well aware that poverty will prevent some of us from giving largely, but after a good many years as a minister I have reached this conclusion, that pride prevents the poor from giving far more often than poverty. Where love is we forget our pride. You cannot give your children what mothers in better circumstances give theirs. The children of your neighbor are better clothed and perhaps have better food than yours, but the fact that you cannot give them as much as a mother in better circumstances does not prevent you from giving them anything at all. In spite of your poverty you do your best. That is what those do who truly love the church. The fact that they cannot give greatly is not allowed to prevent them from giving at all.

Paul is eager that the collection shall be shared by all, even the most poverty stricken, not because he is greedy. He wants everybody to give because he knows from his own experience that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Receiving is a blessing. Not one of us would be here this morning but for the fact that we have been great receivers. We have received life and training. We have received prayers and sympathy. Treasures beyond our powers to estimate have been poured into our hands and hearts. It is a privilege to receive, but that which gives receiving its fullest
meaning is that it enables us to give. If our giving does not in some measure correspond with our receiving, then our receiving becomes a curse rather than a blessing.

There are two seas in the Orient. One of them receives a river into its arms, but this river is too good to keep. Therefore it passes it on down the valley and that sea forever remains fresh and beautiful. Another sea receives that same river but it gives not a drop of it away. Therefore the laws of nature, which are the laws of God, are constantly saying of that sea, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." We know it today as the Dead Sea. The thing that killed is was getting without giving.

2. You are to give proportionately. "Let every one of you lay by him in store, as the Lord has prospered him." We cannot all give equally, but every one is to do his or her best. How reasonable that it. I am not required to give a certain amount. I am only required to give in proportion to what I have. If I do that I have done as much as the most liberal giver in all the world. For "he that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much."

3. We are to give systematically on the first day of the week. The best kind of exercise is systematic exercise. The best sort of eating is systematic eating. The best sort of study is systematic study. The best sort of giving is systematic giving. We are trying to get our giving on a weekly basis. That is Scriptural. Giving is an act of worship. You cannot worship enough in one minute to last you for the year. This act of worship called giving should be repeated, so far as possible, Sunday by Sunday.

4. We are to give confidently, knowing that "our labor is not in vain in the Lord. Some of us have made some bad investments.
The bank in which you put your money went broke. The oil well you helped to dig was a dry hole. But the man who invests in the church never loses. That does not mean that church funds are never mismanaged, though I do say that the funds of this church are managed with the same genuine and painstaking accuracy as that of any business institution in Houston. But even where mistakes are made, no gift that we make for love's sake is ever lost. "Therefore, be always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

We are passing through a bit of a crisis, but I am not the least uneasy as to the final outcome. The Church of Jesus Christ is not going to fail. I believe it is going to come out of this ordeal stronger than ever before if we measure up to our opportunities. Some will fail. Some will have to face our Lord, saying, "Jesus Master, I stood by till things got a bit tense, but when the shadow of the cross began to fall athwart my religious life I threw the enterprise over and got where things were easier." But others will say, "I drew the closer to Thy side and found life infinitely enriched." May that be the experience of every one of us. Let us not fling back from this great text, "Now concerning the collection."
If the first step towards preaching a good sermon is the selecting of a good text, then I should be on my way.

1. This is true in the first place because I have a text that commands attention. That is vastly important. There are some texts that knock so softly at the door of the mind that we scarcely take time to rise and open. Now and then when you have come home from church someone asks, "What was the Minister's text?", and you will answer, "It is quite familiar, wait a minute." But that wait on the text does not show up. This was partly your fault. Maybe it was also the fault of the text; maybe it was the fault of the Minister.

The first step certainly in helping anybody through teaching or preaching is to get their attention. There are few graver sins of which the teacher and the preacher are guilty, that do more harm, than struggling right on through a lesson or sermon when no one is paying attention. What I say this morning might be as fundamental as the 10 Commandments and as true as the Sermon on the Mount, but if nobody will listen, I might as well be making mud pies. I am wasting your time and mine too.

It is good therefore to have a text that fairly commands attention. Such is the case with the one that I have chosen. I defy you to forget it; I defy you to grow drowsy and listless. To some it will provide sheer music and sing sweetly as dream bells "sounding on the sloping hills of sleep." To others, it may be as instruments played out of tune. But he in gladness or in sorrow will listen.

2. Then this text is good because it is practical. Text is written for just such folks as we are. It is not addressed to the man in the moon or someone living in a castle in the air.
It is addressed to the folks of Charlotte, to First Methodist Church, to you and me. It is everybody's text. There are some texts that fit one, but has nothing to say to another. This speaks home to everyone.

3. Finally, this is a good text because it not only holds attention and is practical, but it compels us to see ourselves. I can never thrill very greatly over Bobby Burn's desire to "see ourselves as others see us." I am not at all sure that my view of you or your view of me would be more accurate than the view we have of ourselves, but to see ourselves as we really are—that might be an advantage. That is what this text will do for us.

For instance, if you find yourself resenting this text, if you find yourself saying impatiently, "I came out this morning to hear a gospel sermon. Now I am going to be compelled to listen to this tirade."; if you grow resentful and wish that you had not come, then however fine you may be, and however many times you have attended church and read your Bible, the chances are that there is still something wrong with you. You need a fresh baptism.

On the other hand, if you find your heart warming to this text, if you are thankful for the door of opportunity that opens to you, if you feel it flooding the morning hills of your heart with gladness, then take courage, for the chances are that you are one of the sons of light.

John, the author of Revelation spent considerable time in a penal colony on the island of Patmos in the Mediterranean Sea. Here he was shut in with some of the riffraff, some of the broken earthenware of the Roman Empire. Not only was he shut in with those he liked the least, but he was shut away from those that he loved the best. His prison walls were not
made of granite; they were made of the beautiful waves of the Mediterranean. Yet because they fenced him in with those he loved the least and away from those he loved the best, he came to hate the sea. Therefore, when he looked forward to that golden age of dreams, he saw there a land that would not be marred by the thundering sea. Therefore he wrote, "And there was no more sea."

Then Xenophon tells of a company of Greeks that had won their way through the plains and deserts for long days and weeks. They had faced danger; they had faced hardship; they had been scorched by the sun and burned by their thirst. At last one great day they came to a promontory that looked out on a wide sweep of sea.

Thus the same sea that struck terror into the heart of John because it was his prison, became to these others a thing of joy because they saw in it a roadway home. Over this they would travel back to the ones they loved the most. So it is with this text. To some it will be little better than a ball and chain. On hearing it they will feel cribbed, cabined, and confined. To others it will be a roadway on which their nimble feet will walk in gladness on missions of service.

This amazing text is found in 1st Corinthians, 16: first verse. "Now concerning the collection." There you have it. I see you are all awake so far. I am happy to believe that most of you are here to receive with open hearts what God has to say to you through this text that is just as timely today as it was when it was uttered.

II

Look at the background of these words found at the
close of the greatest utterances that fall from the lips of Paul. There is hardly a finer passage in the New Testament. Listen to a bit of it. "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O, grave, where is thy victory?

Now concerning the collection. What an anti-climax, you are ready to exclaim. What a passing from the heights of poetry to the drab level of prose! What a step from the lush life of the tropics into the deadness of the frozen North; from a fruitful garden to a parched desert! "O, death, where is thy sting? Now concerning the collection. Did not Paul know better than that? Did he know nothing of the speakers' and writers' art? Indeed he did. Therefore he did not look upon the collection as an anti-climax, but as a climax. After showing us the majestic mountain peaks of our holy faith, knowing that mountains give birth and carry fertilizer to the plains, he points out one of the rivers that flow from this mountain range. That river is the collection. Look at some of these peaks more closely.

1. "I delivered unto you that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures."
5. Here is the gospel of the cross. It is a sacrificial gospel. It has a cross red with blood at the very center of it. If the cross was a necessity for Jesus, it is no less for you and me. There is simply no living worth the name without it. "Must Jesus bear the cross alone and all the world go free? No, there is a cross for everyone, and there is a cross for me." There is the gospel of sacrificial living.

2. "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept." Paul believed in the resurrection. He believe in it not because he was credulous. His faith was backed by the testimony of friends. The risen Christ had been seen by more than 200 at once. It was backed by the Old Testament. Best of all it was backed by his own experience. One day while he was on the way from Jerusalem to Damascus, there was a flash and a fog. He then and there accepted a commission from the King of Kings. This was the testimony. "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" Through the years this Christ had been a constant companion.

3. Because he knew the crucified and risen Christ, he had a gospel. Of course if Christ be not risen, there is no gospel. Paul recognized that fact. If Christ be not risen from the dead, then is our preaching empty; but since Christ is risen, he had yet a fuller gospel—the gospel that he felt that he must share both by his living and by his giving. Therefore he said, "Now concerning the collection." That is, the collection was related to his believing as effect is related to cause.

Some years ago I was preaching in Canada. On Saturday a friend of mine drove me to Niagara Falls to see that great cataract touched by the wizardry of winter. I had seen it
a number of times before, but always in the summer. I was ready for something gorgeous, but nothing so breath-taking as this. All the jewels of all the kings of the earth would be so many gewgaws in comparison with those shimmering gems. But my friend was not very much interested in beauty. He was machinery minded. Therefore, he hurried me off to the power house.

Now it so happened that I am not machinery minded. I cannot understand the simplest machine. Therefore when he showed me those tremendous dynamoes, I had little to say. I did, however, manage one simple question, "What do they do?" And he spoke with enthusiasm of street cars, of lighted streets and homes with well-cooked meals. These dynamoes were the doctrines, light and power. These were the collection.

Were you showing me this lovely church, you would certainly include the organ. You would tell me of the company that made it, of how many pipes and how many manuals it had, of the echo organ, of the dynamoes that run it. Then I might break in and say, "How about the music?" You would say, "Don't be so practical and prosaic." If the machinery is the doctrine, the music is the collection.

Had you come to me as I was fishing on the Buffalo River this summer and asked me what is the most beautiful season of the year among these hills, I would have found it hard to answer. But I would have had to say that even over the invitation of summer and the golden glory of autumn, the springtime. Had you questioned me further as to why I selected spring, I would have said because it is the time between March 21 and June 21. It is the time when the sun comes a bit nearer and a little more perpendicular.
But that is only the doctrine of Spring.

To understand spring you must feel the warm caress of the wind on your face; you must hear it in the lowing of the cattle and the crowing of the cock in the field, in the call of the Bobwhite to its mate, in the cry of the Catbird among the apple blossoms. I have found it in the song of the Mocking bird, that Shakespeare in feathers, that Mozart of the thicket. It is the time when "Every clod feels the star of night, and instinct within it that reaches and towers and groping blindly above it—

The calendar March 21 to June 21—that is the doctrine of spring. The green of the grass and the song of the bird—that is the collection.

III.

Then Paul proceeds to give us a practical direction for giving. He has a plan to suggest. Of course, it is not the only plan. If you have a better one then use it by all means. But since Paul was a very wise man, it might be wise to give his plan a hearing. Here is his word, "Let everyone of you lay by him in store on the first day of the week as the Lord has prospered him."

1. He urges everybody to give. This is sensible because everyone can give. The poorest of us would make the richest of Paul's congregation seem poor. Yet he believed that everyone could give. He realized that the most telling demonstration ever made was made by a widow that gave only a fraction of a cent.

Since everybody can give, everybody ought to give. It is a solemn obligation that rests upon every human soul. This is true whether you are in the church or out of it,
whether you are young or old, rich or poor. Nobody can do another's giving any more than they can do another's eating or sleeping.

And everybody ought to give because it is a great privilege. Jesus speaking out of his own experience said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Now it is blessed to receive. We all know that. We have been great receivers. Everything we have has been given to us. It is gracious to receive, but to give is even better still. Giving puts meaning into the getting. Without giving, our getting not only ceases to be a blessing, but it becomes a curse.

There are two seas in the Orient. One of them looked out and said, "A river is coming to me today." And when that river came, the sea said, "It is too good to keep." So it passed it on down the valley. That sea is alive and beautiful to this day. But another sea looked out and saw that same river coming. And when it received it, the sea said, "It is mine, all mine. I will not let a single drop of it go for the moistening of a baby's lips or the watering of flowers." And that very day, the laws of nature, which are the laws of God, said over that sea, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." We know that sea as the "Dead Sea," and the thing that killed it was getting without giving.

2. Give systematically. "Let everybody lay by him on the first day of the week." Now it is not necessary to give weekly. How you give depends in some measure on how your pay comes. But what Paul urges is that we give systematically. We eat better, sleep better, work better, play better when we do these things systematically. We need a
plan of giving just as we do for all other worthwhile undertakings. Give systematically. You cannot eat enough in one meal to last you a week. Giving is an act of worship. It should therefore be done systematically.

3. Give proportionally. "Let everybody......as the Lord has prospered." The man of one talent is not expected to give as much as the man with 5. He is asked to do what every man could do, give in proportion to his ability. I have read some thrilling literature in my day and some that was depressing. Some of the most depressing literature I have found has been in pledge cards, and also some of the most thrilling. Some pledges were so small in proportion to ability as to make one ashamed. Others were so sacrificial as to make you proud to belong to the same church.

4. Finally, give in confidence. "Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Some of you have made bad investments. You have trusted the wrong bank. But here is an investment that will never let you down. I was preaching in Tulsa, Oklahoma, some time ago, and came to know a man who had once been quite wealthy, but had lost his money during the days of the depression. But he said to me with a real light in his face, "I put $70,000 into this church. That is all I have saved, but I have saved that."