It would that you should understand that the things that have happened to me have fallen out to the progress of the gospel." Paul is telling us and the church to which he is writing that something has happened to him that has been a help, something that has enabled him to further his conquest. What is it that has happened? Has he been accorded some new honor at the hands of the world? Has some crown his? Has some great university given him a degree? Has some elite club of Rome taken him into its membership? What is this that has happened to the apostle that has helped him?

I will tell you. It is a calamity, a disaster, a defeat. He has been taken prisoner by his foes. He was captured in Jerusalem long months ago. He has been given a bit of a mock trial. He has had to appeal to Caesar. And now he is a prisoner at home. To the great world out there he is unable to minister. He is getting old. Life is slipping away and he seems to be doing little. And yet he tells us that all these things have proven for the best. That his defeat has become his victory. As the Trojans were tugging their own defeat into the city when they brought in the great Greek horse, so Rome was was bringing its own conqueror into its very center. Paul was making capital out of his very calamities.

And this had come to be a fixed habit of the great preacher's life, thrown into jail on his arrival in Europe, his prison becomes his temple, and the jailor a worshiper of his God. Overtaken by a storm at sea, he makes the tempest crown him. He comes into a place of power through its ministry that could never have come to him otherwise. Bitten by a serpent on the little island, he makes that snake into a golden key with which he unlocks the hearts of the people to the message of his Lord. Hampered by a thorn in the flesh, he makes it his friend and the minister of his greater power. So much so that he comes to glory in this very weakness because it has brought him to know the larger power of God. At last when he has got far up the hill and very near the wide open gateway into the father's house he declares what life has taught him, and this is what he says: "All things work together for good to them that love God." All things, the joy things and the sorrow things, the laughing things and the tearful things, the sunshiney things and the things black with night, all things work together for good. There is no calamity but has become my capital.

Now, as a Christian soldier you, too, are going to meet reverses. There are going to be times when everything seems dead against you. There are going to be days in which for you there is no light. Battles when there seems to you no possibility of victory. You are going to have to face your calamities, there are going to be disappointments. There are going to be heartaches and heart breaks. There are going to be defeats that seem fatal and forever ruinous. What are you going to do with them? That is the question. You are not going to escape them. That is certain. You cannot. Then what are you going to do?

Some of you will surrender to them unconditionally. I knew a woman when I first went away to school. A great sorrow came to her life. She gave up, shut herself out from the world and was miserable defeated by it. You find men every day that if you ask them to become Christians they will answer you by telling you that they tried once and failed and that they never intend to try again. And yet if a baby did not exercise more sense than that he would never learn to walk. (Somethings going to get up.)

Or you may surrender another way. You may become a stoic. You may be embittered and calloused and hardened by your calamities. You may be wounded by them as by a maled fist out of all charm and beauty. You may merely sob out such a pitiful wail as "out of the night that covers me." But that only means the most miserable and hopeless defeat.

Or through the goodness of God you may capitalize you calamities. You may make your foes your friends. You may organize your enemies
into your allies. Paul did that. He did it by ever using a courage that was born of an unshaken faith in the goodness and love of God. In all things we are more than conquerors, not in our own weak human strength, but through Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. Here is a great company facing the land of their dreams. Spies are sent out. They bring in a majority and a minority report. The majority report says that the nationisms are too great, that there are giants. The minority report does not deny the giants at all. They saw them just as clearly as did the others. But they saw God also. And so they said that they are bread for us. So we, too, may let our foes be our conquerors or we may make them bread for us, that by which we shall be only the stronger for the next battle.

Now, while I am talking to you more especially about making your foes your friends, I want also to warn you that many of us not only fall short of that, but we even make our friends our foes. We see that happen every day. Here is a young fellow whose father pays all his bills. He has more time for study, more time for Christian work than does his fellow who is working his way through school. But instead of doing more, he does less. He allows his very friends to become his foes. Here is a girl. She has never known a single worry about the material side of life. Her only worry is how to get the old man to turn it loose. She has a greater advantage than the poorer girl. But how often does that advantage become her disadvantage? How often does it minister to her vanity and to her selfishness and meanness than to her growth in character, she may have beauty, and that is a gift. But more often than otherwise she is made unloring and unlavish by it. Absalom was immensely attractive, wonderously handsome, what a friend that is. But he allowed it to become his enemy. His lovin hair was that that swung him up to become a target for his foes, what a tragedy it is when we allow our friends to become our foes.

Education is a great asset. But it is not so for all who are educated. It may conserve to make you poorer and more worthless. Some of you will go home at the end of this year better than you were and some will go home for worse than you were.

Ability is splendid. But it seems quite as often as it blesses. Paul could never have been as blessed in the world, but for his vast ability. Byron would have been less a curse if he had been a blubbery idiot.

Even the Gospel of Christ may be your ruin rather than your salvation. Sometimes it is the savor of life unto life, but it is not always so. At other times it is the savor of death unto death. The sermon that breaks one man's heart and brings him to the cross, sends another away a little more bent on hell. You remember when Peter was in prison how that the angel of the Lord smote him. And you know what happened. He was made free by it. You recall in the same chapter that the angel also smote Herod and that the worms ate him up. So far as we know the same angel did the smiting, but his stroke made one man free and it made the other wormy. If you are persistently selfcentered and Christless God can make no circumstance really friendly to you, for to the ship bound for no port, no wind is favorable.

But it is possible to make even our foes our friends. I heard a man tell some years ago how that some scientist were trying to learn how to extract the gold out of the brine of the ocean, and truly that would be a wonderful discovery. But in Jesus Christ we learn a greater lesson than that. He teaches us how to extract the gold of manhood and victory out of the brine of human tears and human failure and defeat.

And Paul says we need to understand that the things that happened to us, those disastrous things, have been the means of my far greater conquest. How often life has taught us that, if some of our wretched cities could speak (Chicago) they would say that the things that happened to me have made me a greater city.
Years ago we had here in our Southland a civilization with much that was good and lovely. Put a bloody war swept over us, our country was wrecked, graves were dug on almost every hill and our romantic civilization was swept away forever. But I would have you know that the things which happened have turned to the birth and rebuilding of a far grander civilization. We have gathered the salvage of hope from the wreckage of failure and in the larger world that is to be, in the larger America that is yet in the bosom of the centuries we have a wonderful part to play that we could not have played but for the calamity that came to us.

How often is this true in individual life. A fine young preacher goes to the continent to be treated for weak eyes, Matheson. And light came to the himself and the wide world out of his darkness.

Punyan wants to preach. The authorities said you shant preach. He is shut up in the gloomy Bedford jail. For twelve long years he is there. And yet he was not there. He was out on the Delectable mountains. He was out in the land of Bah. He was out on a missionary journey, on an evangelistic mission to all the centuries. He so capitalized his calamity that he made the whole world rich.

Here is a freezing woman. Her baby is taken from her and she comes to life again. And you baby, your loved one was taken from you and your life has been made more tender and sweet as a result of it. For the sweetest lives are the wounded ones, Gwyn.

And our greatest failures are often our greatest successes.

It was so in the death of Christ.

So in Jesus we not only learn how to capitalize all the calamities that come to us here. But learn also how to capitalize life's supreme calamity, death. What a sordid ugly thing is death if we fail to look at it in the light of Christ. Paul, you may resist you foes now, but one day you are going to die. One day Nero is going to take you head. No, says Paul, I am going to depart and be with Christ which is very far better. For me to die is gain. Death is only the cold key with which I unlock the door into the father's house. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and death itself will be swallowed up in victory.

How glorious it is to be a Christian. How gladly should we enter into his purposes. Glad to suffer, glad to enjoy, realizing that what he is trying to do is not to make us success so much as to make us men. Realizing this we shall not whine, But we shall go forward saying, "Glad did I live and gladly die," Did you tackle etc.?
THE ETERNAL GAIN

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Philippians 1:21

Paul is writing from a prison cell. As you perhaps know, imprisonment was not a Roman mode of torture or punishment. The Roman prison was a place where the accused was detained until the day of his trial. When that day came the prisoner was either pronounced not guilty and set free, or pronounced guilty and punished. Therefore, Paul knows that one of two doors will soon open to him. This is not a remote possibility but an immediate certainty.

If Paul is pronounced not guilty, he knows that his prison door will open upon a sunny road. This road will lead to freedom. It will lead back to the task that is the joy of his heart, that of preaching the gospel. It will lead back to the church that he so dearly loved, his church at Phillipi. So as Paul writes this letter, he realizes that he may be soon set free and privileged to go about the work that he loves in the fellowship of friends that are very dear.

But there is another possibility. The door might open upon a road that is far shorter, and to human eyes, less sunny. It may open upon a road that leads to the block. He knows that there is a strong possibility that he may be called upon to pay the last full measure of devotion. Therefore, he is looking upon death as an immediate possibility. He is not doing it as we are now, as something that happens to others but is remote from ourselves. He is rather viewing it as a personal experience through which he must pass and through which he may pass very soon.

It is at once interesting and heartening to me to see how Paul faces his uncertain future, and above all, the immediate prospect of
death. How does Paul face up to the grim foe which he himself calls the last enemy?

1. He faces it without fear. Of course, to face death fearlessly is not positive proof that one is a man of faith. Many a hardened criminal has faced death fearlessly. But Paul's lack of fear is not born of hardness, nor indifference as to what lies beyond death. His fearlessness is the natural outcome of his faith.

Now, there are those who are morbidly afraid of death. Louis XIV did not allow death to be mentioned in his presence. He sought to get rid of death by merely ignoring it, by shutting his eyes to it. There are those in our day who have taken the same course. They claim that they have demonstrated over sin, sickness and death, that they have shown that these enemies do not exist. That would be a great achievement if it were true, but even those making such claims go on sinning, go on being sick, go on dying just like the rest of us.

Paul was wise to seek to get rid of the fact by ignoring it. Some time ago, getting up in a darkened room, I ignored a chair that was right in my path. But the fact did not prevent me barking my shins. You may ignore the law of gravity but if you do, it will break your bones. A certain fear of death is perfectly normal, but for you to _________. But to be morbidly afraid is unChristian. Paul faced this grim foe then, with open eyes and yet without fear.

2. If Paul was not afraid of death, no more was he afraid of life. There are those who claim not only to have no fear of death, but an eagerness for it. A friend of ours said to Mrs. Chappell this summer, "There is nothing that I would like to see come in my front door so much as my own casket." Now, it is my private opinion that this sister was not quite telling the truth, but if it so happens that she was telling the truth then her
plight is all the more pathetic. To be morbidly afraid of death is bad enough, but to be eager for death and thus morbidly afraid of life is worse still.

That type of piety, therefore, is always seeking for a good place to die is sickly, if not positively sinful. I have profound sympathy for the chap who declared that he would give any sum of money to know the exact spot where he was to die. When a friend asked for his reason he gave a good one. "I would like to know the exact spot where I am going to die," he replied, "so that I could avoid going there.

Years ago I heard a song that they do not sing any more, for which we may be devoutly thankful. It ran like this:

O lovely appearance of death
What sight on earth is so fair
In all the gay pageantry that

With so much delight I observe the corpse
when the spirit is fled
In ___ with the beautiful clay
And long to lie in its stead."

No man could write or sing that and be healthy minded. Such an attitude is sickly and utterly false to one who is normal. Believe me, the best way to get ready for the life to come is to love this life and live it as bravely and faithfully as we can.

3. How then did Paul face death? He faced it with calm confidence. He faced it with joyful expectation. This he did not because he thought it beautiful. At times he called it an enemy, the last enemy, but he believed that his mighty Saviour could make this foe into a friend. He believed that death was one of these awful things which God could make work for his good. Therefore, he was sure that death was not going to impoverish him but bring him great wealth. He was sure that even if he did die upon the block, that the experience would not bring him loss but gain.
What was to be the nature of this gain?

Paul did not look upon death as gain because it was his conviction that it would be a means of escape from a hard situation in which he found himself. Paul was not the type of man to seek an escape. We never hear a saint of the New Testament praying one time for mere escape. "I tarry here," writes this hero, because a great door and many adversaries. There is a magnificent fight coming up, Paul is saying. I want the thrill of having part in it.

Paul did not look upon death as gain because he thought it would give him anesthesia. He did not so regard it because he thought as a result, to use the language of Kipling, "he would lie down for an eon or two." The conviction that death puts us to sleep to wake on some far off resurrection morning is not the faith of the New Testament. It was not the faith of Jesus. He had seen the resurrection and the life. Not being the faith of Jesus, it was not the faith of Paul. It was his conviction that to be absent from the body was not to be asleep, but to be present with the Lord.

Just as Paul did not look upon death as gain because it was going to bring him rest in the grave, no more did he look upon it as gain because he thought it was going to bring him rest in terms of idleness in Heaven. It is my honest conviction that nothing has been taught concerning Heaven than has done more to ruin its reputation that that it is a place where we shall have nothing to do but loaf throughout eternity. "Every day will be Sunday by and by," is the plaintive song that the slaves used to sing. We can take it from them because life was hard and they welcomed Sunday as a kind of oasis in their grim desert of toil. But that Heaven is a place of complete idleness except for happy playing and palm waving is unthinkable.
This is the case in the first place because such a Heaven would be a peculiarly boring hell. Then it is unthinkable in the second place because the saints are supposed to do there what they would have lost their souls doing in the here and now. That was just the kind of Heaven in which Dives was living when he was having a banquet every day and forgetting the beggar that lay at his very door. We may be sure that we are not going to live through eternity in a fashion that would have caused us the loss of our souls had we lived here.

Paul believed that death would be gain because he would go on living there in a richer and fuller fashion, the same kind of life that he was living in the here and now. He would go on working and achieving as he was working and achieving in the here and now only with less weariness and with greater victory. He believed that he would there enjoy more richly the fellowship of the saints. He believed that there he would continue to grow in the fellowship of Jesus Christ. He would have said a glad tamen to/words of his brother apostle: "Behold, not are we the sons of God and it has not yet been made manifest what we shall be but we know that when we shall appear we shall be like him and we shall see him as he is.

III

This, I think, we are ready to confess is a beautiful faith. It is one that every man at his best would desire to possess. But there are those who tell us frankly while they would like to believe so richly, they cannot.

Yet I believe such faith is possible for you and me just as it was for Paul. Bear in mind that Paul was a great scholar and a great thinker. He did not come to his faith without a reason. What was the basis of this rich and roomy faith?
Paul did not believe in the life everlasting because it had been scientifically demonstrated. Science had not proved that life goes on in the days of Paul. It has not furnished any such proof in our day. In fact, the things that science can demonstrate beyond peradventure are things that do not eternally matter any way.

But if science has not proof that life goes on, if it cannot prove it no more can it disapprove it. The truth is that the little that science has to say on the subject indicated the life everlasting rather than the opposite. We know this. I do not depend upon my body. My body depends upon me. For instance, I can throw away this body on the installment plan and yet go on living. I have already worn out and tossed aside at least nine such bodies, yet here I am. But the instant I slip out of this body, it is dead.

Therefore, I do not depend on the body but the body depends on me. Why then, I repeat, did Paul believe in the life everlasting?

1. I think he believed in it because of the teaching of his Old Testament scripture. Now, I am perfectly aware that some writers of the Old Testament did not believe in the life everlasting. But because some did not so believe, to say that none did I think is to go vastly wrong. Here is a word from the Old Testament, for instance. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was and the spirit into God who gave it." That, it seems to me, has a decided New Testament flavor.

Here is a word tucked away over in the Book of Genesis: "Enoch walked with God and was not for God took him." Why would God take him? In this century surely the undertaker would do that. That sentence becomes little better than nonsense if the author did not believe in the life everlasting.

It was from the Old Testament that Jesus quoted when the Sadducee told him the humorous story of the woman who married seven brothers consecu-
tively. "In Heaven," they asked, "Whose wife is she going to be?" Of course, I do not think there is going to be any sharp contest for her. Had I been one of those unfortunate brothers I should have rather gone over Niagra Falls in a barrel as to have married her. But Jesus answered, "You know now the Scripture ______. God, he said, is a god of dead folks but of living folks. Since that is the case, these old _____ are still alive.

Here is another scene that has in it something of sunshine of the New Testament. The conviction has come to Elijah the Prophet that he is nearing the end of his earthly journey. His friend and associate pastor, Elisha, shares this conviction. Therefore, he clings close to his great strong friend, determined to be there at the home-going. "As they still went on and talked that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into Heaven." Paul believed in the life everlasting in part because it was the teaching of his Bible.

2. He believed in the life everlasting because he was sure of the resurrection of Jesus. To him the resurrection of our Lord was an unshakable certainty. For this supreme fact he had the testimony of eye witnesses. He tells us that the Risen Lord was seen by about five hundred, most of whom were living at that moment. There were hundreds of people who testified to the Risen Christ, both by their lips and by their lives.

3. But above all else, Paul believed in the life everlasting not only from his Bible and from the testimony of others, but because of his own experience. He had met this Risen Christ. For years he had lived in his fellowship. If you were to come to me all excited to tell me that you had found authentic evidence that such a man once lived back in Tennessee as my father, William B. Chappell, I would not thrill over it. I would say the "Certainly, I knew him, loved him, lived with him through glad years of my
boyhood." Paul was sure of Christ because he had met him and because he was living with him.

In fact, so intimate was he with his Lord that he declared that there was no question you could ask him about himself that he could not answer in terms of Jesus Christ. That is just what he is saying in our text. "Paul, How did you come to live?" "Christ", is the answer. "I never lived a life worthy of the name until I met him. It was through him that I was reborn. It was through meeting him that I became a new creation. Christ is the author of my life."

"Paul, how have you continued to live through these stormy years?" "Christ," he answers. "He is the sustainer of my life. He has kept me, he has undergirded me, he has enabled me. So constantly has this been my experience that I am convinced that I can do all things through him who gives me strength."

Paul is also affirming that Jesus Christ is the product of his life. "For me to live," he said, "is to reproduce Christ. This is the case because I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live and yet not I but Christ lives in me. Day by day I am, in my finite way, reproducing him. I am sharing in his nature. I am doing the work that he would do were he here in the flesh. For me to live is to reproduce Christ."

"For me to live is to become increasingly like him in the here and now. This was the word of his Master when Paul first met him, "Rise and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose to make thee a minister and both of these things which I have seen and of those things which I will appear unto thee." Becoming more and more like his Lord in the here and now, he believed he would go on doing that as he climbed
one height after another with him in eternity. The truth is faith in the life everlasting becomes inevitable once we are sure that we have a God such as Jesus Christ revealed. For a God infinite in goodness to allow a man who was becoming increasingly Christlike, who was growing in goodness day by day to be destroyed, would be for himself to become the end of goodness. That a good God should destroy a good man is unthinkable and impossible.

Not only so, but for a good God who loves us to allow one who possesses his nature and clings to his hand to fall at last into a ditch that men call the grave is unthinkable. If you had a choice one you loved, you would not hold his hand simply when the road was smooth and the day was bright; you would grip that hand all the tighter when the darkness came and the road was rough. Remember, God is a Father. He is a good Shepherd. He will not go on another journey and leave the lambs to fare for themselves. All that Paul was blessed sure that the Christ who held him today would go on holding him through the countless ages.

IV

Here, then, is the faith of the church. We with our faltering believe in the life everlasting. By the life everlasting we do not mean simply that life goes on. By the life everlasting we mean a quality of life. That quality of life that comes from faith in Jesus Christ and from fellowship with him. "This is the life eternal," or to use another word, this is the life everlasting, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. To live in the fellowship with our Lord in the here and now is to be possessed of a quality of life over which death has no power.

Of course, we have no evidence that death is going to be gain to those who do not share this faith. Sometimes we slip into the unspoken conviction that the mere act of dying will work within us a moral revolution. There is no evidence that this is true. You do not lie down at night a centered self and wake up in the morning Christ centered. If God
through Christ cannot give you everlasting life, there is no evidence that the undertaker can succeed where God failed. If the mere act of dying would make a bad man into a good man, it might also make a good man into a bad man.

This means that the life to come is of a piece with this life. If we walk with him here, we may be sure of walking with him through endless ages. It is in this faith that we live. It is in this faith that we lay to rest the dust of our sainted dead. We do not think of them as lying in widely scattered graves. We think of them rather as a part of the great family centered in the house of many mansions. Thus we can think of our comrades that during the past year have entered into intimate fellowship with their Lord and ours.

"I cannot say and I will not say, that they are dead,
They are just away.
With a cheery smile and a wave of the hand, they have wandered into an unknown land
And left us dreaming how very fair, it needs must be since they linger there.
And you, Oh, you, who the wildest yearn, for the old time step and the glad return
Think of them as faring on as dear, in the love of there as the love of here.
Think of them still as the same, I say
They are not dead, they are just away."

This we may count on as a radiant certainty for all who can say with Paul,

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."
"For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain". Philippians 1:21.

Here is a man writing from a prison cell. His prison was not a real mode of bea
dage - it was merely a place of detention where the accused man
was held for trial. When the trial came, he was either pronounced not
guilty and freed, or he was pronounced guilty and executed. So, as Paul
writes this letter, he is facing trial, not knowing, of course, whether he
will be found guilty or not guilty.

Therefore, two possible doors are opening before this great apostle.
If he is found not guilty, the door will open upon freedom. It will open
on a road that leads back to his loved task of preaching and to his dear
friends of whom he can never think without a burst of thanksgiving. But
if he is found guilty, he will walk a far darker road to the place of
execution. He may, therefore, be set free or he may go quickly to where the
bloody execution will put an end to his earthly life.

I

It is interesting to see how Paul faces the high probability of death.
Remember that he is not thinking of death as some far off experience. He
is not thinking of it as we think of it. He is not thinking of it in an
abstract fashion as we often do when we discuss it in the classroom as the
experience of somebody with whom we had nothing to do. He is facing it as
a personal matter. He is facing it as an inevitable certainty that may be
very near. How, may I repeat, does he face it?

1. He does not face it in utter terror. Of course, there is nothing
altogether remarkable about that. I have seen some very sweet saints who
were terribly afraid of death. I have known some who were far from saintly
who were not afraid at all. Some times the worst of criminals have died
without a tremor. The fact that Paul is not afraid saves him from torture,
but such absence of fear is not necessarily a mark of high character.
2. No more does Paul face the possibility of his immediate death with stolid indifference. That is a common attitude today. Our fathers were very serious about this matter of dying and about what lies beyond death. We often try to ignore the grim fact altogether. We have a way of saying, "One world at a time. It doesn't matter to me in the least whether there is an after life or not." In fact, a brilliant young professor of Harvard said while I was there, "Sometimes I think there may be an after life. I hope there is none. This life is all I want". I personally doubt whether he was telling the truth. If he was telling the truth, he was not quite normal. When we declare our indifference today we are either not thinking at all or we are thinking only of our selves.

We cannot be indifferent about the death of those we love. A few years ago I was preaching near the village where my mother was buried. The pastor for whom I was preaching drove me over and we stood together beside her grave that was growing green under the kiss of springtime. As we stood there, this minister, without any suggestion on my part, did a beautiful thing. He said, "Let us bow our heads and thank pray a prayer of thanksgiving for your mother. I confess that my heart was strangely warmed. But suppose, when the prayer was over, I had said to him, "You know it does not matter to me in the least whether my mother is now just a clod which the rude swain turns with his plow and treads upon or whether she is consciously alive and awaiting my coming in the life beyond."

Had I made such remark, my friend would have looked at me in amazed horror. So would you. Let us be honest. If you love, there will surely come a day when the biggest of all big questions will be just this: "If a man dies, shall he live again?" You can't get rid of the fact of death by merely shutting your eyes.

3. If Paul did not view death with indifference, no more did he view it with morbid eagerness. There is something wrong with the individual who is always looking for a comfortable place to die. I have sympathy with that gentleman who said he would give one thousand dollars to know the exact place where the end would come to him. When asked for the reason, he said, "So I could avoid that place." The man who is eager to die is afraid to live. It is not good to be afraid
of death but it is far better to be afraid of death than it is to be afraid of life. The best way to get ready for the life to come is to love this life and live it as bravely and fearlessly as we can.

4. How, then, I repeat, did Paul face death?

He faced it with calm confidence. He faced it with the absolute certainty that it could not stop him. He was perfectly sure that death was not a blind alley that leads nowhere. He believed with his Master that it was an exodus, a passing out of one room in God's house where we have lived and loved and wept sometimes into a larger and brighter room where we would go on living and loving and weep no more.

Since he was sure that death could not stop him, he was equally sure that it could not rob him of one single value. There was not a treasure that Paul possessed that death could wrench out of his hands. Being rich today, he was sure he would be rich forevermore.

Not only was he sure that death could not rob him of a single treasure, but he was certain that it would bring to him great and eternal gain. Here is his winsome confession of faith. "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain." With the coming of this experience then, he expected to enter upon a more joyous and richer inheritance than was his today.

II

What was the basis of this faith? Why did Paul believe that death could bring him nothing but gain?

He did not believe it because that a universal experience. Death does not bring gain to everybody. If we can believe the New Testament, the rich farmer of whom Jesus spoke had more wealth in one moment than he knew how to use the next yet his hands were as empty as the pockets of his shroud. "Whose shall these things be" Jesus asked, as if in bitter sarcasm. The material wealth to which we cling so tenaciously, whose will it be the minute after we are dead? Well, it won't be yours. That is a certainty.

When I was pastor at Oklahoma City, a wealthy gentleman died
in a neighboring town. I did not know him personally but I was told that he gave his life with peculiar ardor to the accumulation of money. When he was dead they gave him a great funeral. Among the songs they sang was this, "There is a Gold Mine in the Sky". Well, if there is perhaps he will feel at home, but if there isn't, he is likely to be homeless or poverty stricken.

There seems to be a common conviction among many that the mere act of death will change a bad man into a good man; that it will make a self-centered soul into one who is Christ-centered. Of course, such faith is sheer stupidity. If the mere act of dying could make a bad man good, it might make a good man bad. "As the tree falls, so shall it lie". Bear in mind that if Jesus Christ fails to change your life from evil to good, you cannot expect such a transformation at the hands of the undertaker and the gravedigger. Paul's certainty that death would bring gain was based on a personal experience in the here and now. If you and I have today what Paul had, then nothing in tomorrow can do other than enrich us.

III

What was Paul's treasure today? Here is his answer. "To me to live is Christ". He claims that there is not a question about himself that he cannot answer in terms of Jesus Christ. What does that mean?

1. He is saying "Christ is the author of my life. Before I met him I did not have a life that was worthy of the name. But one day, as I journeyed from Jerusalem to Damascus, there was a flash and a fall and I arose from my knees confessing that it is true, saying that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. I had been born from above, born anew. Because I am in possession of the life eternal in the here and now, I believe I shall be in possession of that life forevermore.

Bear in mind that when the New Testament speaks of life eternal, it never means merely a life of endless duration. Eternal life does not mean eternal existence, but eternal right existence. *All* will live forever. We are born with sin and mortality, always we shall exist, but to have life eternal is to live
ship

fomevermore in right relation with God. Paul believed he would live tomorrow because he lived today.

2. When Paul said, "For me to live is Christ," he meant that Christ is the sustainer of my life. There is a sense in which everybody is kept by the power of God, but there is a special keeping that God is able to give to his own. Paul believed that Christ who was keeping him now would keep him in the eternal tomorrow. In fact, I know of no argument today that is quite so convincing of the real life to come than just this. I would not willingly drop the hand of my child when he came to that ditch that men call the grave. God will not let go of my hand if I will only permit him to hold it.

3. Paul said "for me to live is to reproduce Christ." If I were to say the spirit of Tennyson lives in me, you would expect me to sing, somewhat as Tennyson sang. If I were to say the spirit of the artist Turner lives in me, you would expect me to steal the sheen from God's rivers and the fleece from God's clouds and flash them upon the canvas somewhat as he did. Paul said, "For me to live is Christ" continuing in "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. Yet not I but Christ liveth in me." Having said this, he went out to become the kind of man and to do the kinds of deeds that we would expect a man who dreamed of Christ to do.

4. For me to live is not only to reproduce Christ, but to become increasingly like him. That is, Christ is the goal of my life. "Rorgetting those things that are behind and reaching forward unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize." What is that prize? It is not the prize of knowing Jesus Christ. It is the prize of becoming more and more like him. Because Paul could say "For me to live is Christ", it was simply inevitable that he also said, "To die is gain".

IV

What are some of the gains that Paul expected death to bring?
The first he expected was the gain of a nearer and more intimate knowledge of his Lord. Here he declares, "We see Him but as through a glass darkly". Then he expected to see face to face. He could have entered into that familiar Hymn and I shall see him face to face.

2. Not only did Paul expect death to bring near the fact of his Lord, but he expected to find in that dear country to find his sweetest associations and his finest friends. Paul had a genius for friendship. His heart was a veritable house of many mansions. He received as guests the high and the low, the rich and the poor. Then beyond death he expected to enjoy the fellowship of the Christ with a richer fulness than had been possible here.

3. In the life to come Paul expected to find home. Home is a place. Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you." It is also an atmosphere. It is an atmosphere where we trust and are trusted; where we love and are loved. He was sure that he was going out to dwell in God's eternal abode. Holding fast to that faith, we may know it. But it is a faith that we must have if life is to be really worth living in the here and now.

V

How, then, ought we to face the fact of death on this Easter day and on every day? Let me bring this question especially to who have recently turned away from graves distressingly new - facing separations in various ways.

1. Some grow sour and rebellious. I had a friend in Washington who lost a lovely girl. "She had so much for which to live," said her mother, "yet God let her die." What a pagan way to face death! She still has much for which to live on life's other side. What can you do for those that you love in comparison with what he can do? He is able to do something far beyond your power to ask or think.

2. Then some lose interest. In the hospital in Winston-Salem the other day
I talked with a grandmother who had lost a favorite grandchild. Under the stress of that loss she had given up interest in her husband and her other grandchildren and life itself. She had become a kiljoy in her home and was dying largely of sheer selfishness. What a tragedy when we let a beautiful life lived in our very presence make us cowards instead of heroes.

In a parsonage some years ago the minister's wife was doing a slow fadeout from an uncurable disease. She realized how greatly she would be missed. She was eager as any great soul would be that the man she loved would carry on bravely when she had gone. Therefore, she marked a poem for him that he discovered in her Bible a few days after her passing. It ran like this:

"When day is done and in the golden west,
   My soul from yours sinks slowly out of sight.
When you alone enjoy the warmth and light;
   That once did seem of all God's gifts the best.

When roses bloom and I'm not there to name,
When thrushes sing and I'm not there to hear,
When rippled laughter floats upon your ear
   And friends come flocking as of old they came,

I pray, dear heart, for sweet remembrance's sake,
   You pluck the rose and hear the laughing jest
And greet familiar faces still awake
   For I, asleep within the eternal hush
   Would have you always at your golden best."

That was Paul's desire. "Choose, therefore", he said, "whatever my beloved ____________, that is since you do believe in life eternal, be steadfast, unmovable, always bound in the work of the Lord, for as long as you ____________
"For me to live is Christ and to die is gain."
—Philippians 1:21

Here is a man writing from a prison cell. His situation is harsh and forbidding. Yet he writes under the blue of Easter skies and his words thrill with the music of an eternal springtime. Prison as you know was not a Roman mode of punishment. A prison was only a place where the accused was held for trial. If the verdict was "Not guilty!" the prisoner was set free. If the verdict was "Guilty!" he was executed. Paul then as a prisoner knows that soon his prison door is going to open. When it opens he will walk one of two roads. One of them is a sunny road bordered with flowers, leading to a beautiful grave. That is the road that he will travel if the verdict is "Not guilty!". That road leads back to his dear friends and to his beloved church at Philippi. This church occupies a very warm place in his heart. He can never think of them without a song of praise. He has a pastor's heart. "I thank God," he says, "upon every remembrance of you." Every real pastor can sympathize with Paul's thanksgiving. I could say the same with regard to you.

Not only will this road to freedom lead back to Paul's dear friends, but it leads back to the task that he loves with passionate devotion. If he is pronounced "Not guilty!" he will be permitted to carry on the work of spreading the gospel of Christ once more. Again he will have the privilege of engaging in the work that grows more thrillingly joyous with the passing of the years, a work of which he can never think without amazed gladness.
"To me," he declares in awed wonder, "To me who am the last and the least of all saints is this grace given that I should preach the unspeakable riches of Christ."

But Paul is not sure he will be permitted to travel this sunny road. There is another road that seems quite likely. It was a road that he did travel only a few months later. That is a very short road. It is a road that to our eyes looks grim and horrible. It is the road to the executioner's block. It is the road to where the hangman's ax will put a bloody period to his life. Paul faces the possibility of walking the road that leads to a speedy death.

I

How now does Paul face up to this crisis? Understand he is not thinking of death in an academic fashion. He is not contemplating it amidst the safety of the cloister or the classroom. Death is no longer a vague abstraction to him. It is a grim reality. It is a possibility of the very near future. How does he face it?

As we should expect, he does not face it with fear. I think I have never met a man on the pages of history that had a more gallant heart than this ancient minister. Yet we must confess that: without Paul's faith many have also faced death unafraid. If a genuine Christian can face the unknown unafraid, sometimes those who have no faith at all can do the same.

But if Paul is not afraid, no more is he indifferent. He does not say with so many of our moderns, "One world at a time! It does not matter to me in the least whether there is any after life or not." But when we say this, we are either not thinking at all, or we are thinking solely of ourselves. Such a word would be impossible in the presence of the passing of one that we love. While I was in Starkville a few days ago, my friend, the minister,
drove me over to the town where my mother lies buried. As we stood by that grave, which was growing green under the miracle of spring, he led us in a prayer of thanksgiving that warmed my heart.

Now suppose when the prayer was over, I had said to my friend, "You know it does not matter to me in the least whether there is any after life or not. I do not care in the slightest degree whether my mother is only a handful of dust or is consciously alive in the Father's House. It does not matter to me the slightest whether I shall see her again or whether everything of her loves and hopes ends here." Had I said such a word as that, my friend would have turned from me in utter horror as would any of you. Believe me there come times in all our lives when the biggest of all big questions is just this: If a man die, shall he live again?

If Paul is not indifferent toward death, no more is he morbidly eager for his own passing. There are times when to depart and be with Christ seems very far better, but Paul was too brave a man to spend his time hunting a convenient place to die. The people who are eager for their own passing are not healthy-minded. All such, while not afraid of death, are tremendously afraid of life. I am persuaded that it is even better to be afraid of death than to be afraid of life. Believe me the best way to get ready for the life that is to come is to love this life and to live it as bravely as we can.

How then, I repeat, does Paul face this crisis—the possibility of life, the possibility of grim death. He faces it with calm confidence. He faces it with joyous expectation. He is sure that the future has something rich and worthful in store for him whether he continues to live here or whether he passes to "where beyond these voices there is peace". "I never lose heart," he shouts. "I am always confident. I am certain that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord."
But you may answer, "I have no such faith as this." Possibly not, but my own reply is "Don't you wish you had?" For whatever such a faith may do for tomorrow, it is a glorious possession today. Maybe Paul's high faith disappointed him. Maybe the Christ Who had walked at his side through his tempestuous years let go his hand when the hedgerow's ax fell. Maybe this great man long since has become "a brother to the clod which the rude swain turns with his share and treads upon." But even assuming that that bleak tragedy happened, as I am perfectly certain that it did not—but assuming that it did, Paul still lived far more richly than the man who did not share his faith. For such Godliness as Paul possessed, such a rich faith is profitable unto all things having the promise of the life that now is, even if it misses that which is to come. Paul's Easter faith, as ours, is something to help us to live today, not simply in some far off tomorrow.

II

"For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." But when is death gain? Paul does not claim that death is always gain. He was certain that there were circumstances that made death not gain but utter loss. Paul realized as we do that there were some things that death destroy while there are other values that it cannot. If your values are all material, if you can hold all your treasure in your hands, then certainly death is going to empty those hands. Death was not gain to the rich farmer. It robbed him of every treasure that he had. "Whose shall these things be which thou hast provided?" asks Jesus with a voice that has a sob in it. They were certainly not the dead farmer's. He had gone and all that he once possessed was left behind to be fingered by other hands.

Out in Oklahoma a wealthy oil man died in a neighboring town. The
indications are that he had lived almost solely for things. His wealth was all on the outside. By and by the summons came and he went away, leaving it all behind. There was an elaborate funeral. Among the funeral hymns that were sung was one that seems almost cynical. The name of this hymn is "There Is a Gold Mine in the Sky." Well, suppose there is not. This poor chap is likely to be bankrupt forever because about the only heaven that he could appreciate would be a heaven full of gold mines.

Jesus told the story of a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and had a banquet every day. He lived for pleasure, he lived for himself, and he lived for his appetite. By and by he passed to life's other side, but he left his treasure behind him. It was not of a kind that could pass legal tender in two worlds. Over there he was so poor that he could not buy a drop of water to cool his tongue. Paul says, "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." To those who have no wealth here, there is no promise of wealth by and by. Therefore, for such death cannot be gain.

How then can Paul say such a word? If death is not gain to everybody to whom is it gain? It is gain to every man to whom life means what it meant to Paul. Death is a small thing to one whose wealth is within his heart. This is the case because death cannot touch character. It cannot even touch a mathematical formula. Twice two I am sure will be four as long as God lives. Since death cannot touch character, it cannot change a self-centered evil man into a good man. Sometimes we seem to have the strange faith that even when Christ fails with us the grave-digger and the undertaker can succeed, but such a belief is futile. If the mere act of dying could make a bad man good, there mere act of dying might make a good man bad. Death does not change our characters any more than sleep. If you can say with Paul, "For me to live is Christ," then death cannot touch you. It cannot do anything for you except make you the richer.
III

But what is this life that Paul claims? What does he mean when he says, "For me to live is Christ." He meant that there was no question that you could ask him about himself that he could not answer in terms of Jesus Christ.

1. He is saying, "Christ is the source of my life." He did not reckon himself to have begun to live until he met Jesus. Before that meeting, he had been honest, clean, and religious, but one day journeying from Jerusalem to Damascus, there was a flash and a fall. The next moment, he was dusting the desert sands from off his knees as he said it is a true saying and worthy of universal acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. It was here that Paul was reborn. It was here that Paul began to live. It was here that he came to possess eternal life.

What is eternal life? Always throughout the New Testament eternal life is spoken of not simply as a life of endless existence, but of endless right existence. It is not a mere quantity of life; it is a quality of life. So all the saints declare. "He that hath the Son hath life. He that heareth these sayings of Mine and believeth on Him that sent Me hath eternal life." It is a treasure that we possess in the here and now. So spake Jesus. Jesus spoke to the same purpose when Martha came to Him from the new-made grave of her brother. Jesus said, "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha's answer is almost impatient. "I know he shall rise again at the Resurrection of the Last Day." But she feels that that is so far away. Jesus answers, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. I am not far away. I am in the here and now." This is life eternal—"to know the only true God, in Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent. For me to live is Christ. Christ is the source of my life. Christ has given me life eternal."  

2. Paul is saying, "Christ is the sustainer of my life."
More than a quarter of a century ago, I met Him. Through the years He has walked with me. Through the years He has undergirded me with His everlasting arm. I have been and am being kept by His power. He is the vine and I am the branch. I live in constant contact with Him. Because I so live, all the resources of His abundant life are available for me. The tides of His fullness are constantly flowing into my emptiness.

'Moment by moment I am kept in His love,
Moment by moment I have life from above.
Looking to Jesus, His glory doth shine,
Moment by moment, Oh Lord, I am Thine.'

Christ is the sustainer of my life.

3. For me to live is to reproduce Christ. What a tremendous claim that is! Yet it is true for all who are genuinely Christian. "I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me." Were I to say that Ole Bull the great violinist lived in me, you would expect me to wield the magic bow somewhat as he wielded it. If I should say that Tennyson lived in me, you would expect me to sing somewhat as he sang. When Paul said Christ lived in him, we expect him to live somewhat as Christ lived and to love somewhat as He loved. We are not disappointed.

A few years ago a missionary went into a backward village in China. He began to tell the people of Jesus, how He went about doing good, how He threw Himself into the raw wound of every man's sore. As he spoke their faces grew radiant with understanding. "We know him," they said. "He has been here. He used to live in our village." The missionary was puzzled. "He is buried here," they went on to say. Then they led him to a grave that was still beautiful under a covering of flowers that were brought every day. It was the grave of a Christian physician who had buried himself in that far off village and had reproduced Christ.

4. Finally, for me to live is to win Christ. Christ is the goal of my life. Isn't that what Paul says a little later in this same letter?
"But what things were gain to me, these I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for Whom I have suffered all things and do count them but refuse that I might win Christ." Paul by his personal surrender had become in a measure Christlike, but Christ was still the goal of his life. He was still pressing toward the mark. He was still seeking to become like Him. "Christ," he said, "is the goal of my life."

IV

Now to such a man, death simply cannot bring horror. To such a man death becomes only a servant. That grim monster can do nothing but open the door to a fuller life. What are some of the gains that Paul expects death to bring him?

1. He expects death to bring him the gain of a more intimate fellowship with his Master. He knows that to be present in the body is to be absent in some sense from the Lord. He is quite sure that death instead of separating him from the Master to Whom he has given his whole heart is going to bring him into a more intimate fellowship. He is certain as we may be that the Christ Whom he has seen as through a glass darkly he shall then see face to face.

"One day the silver cord will break,
And I no more as now shall sing,
But oh the joy that I shall know
When within the palace I shall sing
And I shall see Him face to face."

And seeing Him, we shall become like Him.

2. Paul is sure that death will bring him the gain of finer friendships and fellowships with the friends that he has taken into his roomy heart during this life and with those other saints who through the ages shall come to join
him in that Miracle Country. Paul had a genius for friendship. He expected death by opening the gate of a new life to bring him the sweetest of all his friendships. He was looking forward then to a more intimate fellowship with his Lord and to all through grace had become in a measure like Him.

3. Then Paul as his Master counted his death as a servant that would bring him the gain of a homelike atmosphere. Jesus taught us to think of that future life as a home. "In my Father's House are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you." Paul had been a homeless man. His feet had marked all Roman roads. One day he was going to reach a land where he would feel at home because those tender graces that make home—love, and friendship, and understanding—would all be there.

4. Finally, Paul looked on death as gain because he believed it would bring him into a land of unhampred opportunity of growing and of working. Beginning to be like Christ here, he was sure he would continue to grow in Christlikeness through the ages. Here he had great and thrilling work to do. I am quite sure he looked at the place of undiscovered land as a place of even larger tasks. But here he had worked under a handicap. He had had a thorn in the flesh. There he would "work for an age at a sitting, and never grow tired at all." No wonder that Paul could shout then in the presence of the worst that this deadly enemy could do. "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

What then can we say to you some of whose loved ones have passed into that Miracle Country? If you are wise, you will not grudge them their rest and their reward. I have a friend in Washington who lost an only daughter. She was as beautiful in mind as she was in body. But a terrible disease laid hold of that lovely body and despoiled it. When she was gone, the mother instead of looking upon death as a Christian became bitter even against God.
"She had so much for which to live," she said to me as I tried to console her. And in sheer resentment she cut herself off from the services of the church, turned her back on her Lord when she needed Him most.

How utterly blind such conduct is! I know that death can be very shocking. It is especially so when we see one go in life's green spring. Yet what a queer idea of God we have when we fancy that one who has much for which to live here will have nothing for which to live yonder! How blind we are when we have a fancy that the poor paltry nothings that we can give our loved ones are anything to compare to the measureless wealth that our Lord can give them yonder! If we have loved them and lost awhile, let us not grudge the gain that has come to those whose faces we see here no more? Not only must we not grudge and grow bitter, but we must not allow our losses to benumb us and make us lose interest in the life that now is and in this present world. I knew a mother sometime ago who had a dear child to slip out of her arms. At once she seemed to lose interest in all her other children and in her husband. She shut herself up within the walls of her home and allowed her heart to break. I am quite sure that those who have passed into the presence of our common Father would like us to carry on in a more brave fashion.

In a parsonage sometime ago the shadow of certain separation hung over the home. The wife was suffering from an incurable disease. All knew she would soon pass into the Land Unknown. The husband, being an excellent Christian, bore up bravely, but he was braver still when he found this lovely word that his wife had left just for him.
"When day is done and in the golden west
My soul from yours sinks slowly out of sight,
When roses bloom, and I not there to name,
When thrushes sing, and I not there to hear;
When rippling laughter falls upon your ear,
And friends come flocking as of old they came,
I pray dear heart for sweet remembrance sake
You pluck the rose and hear the songful thrush;
With laughter meet once more the merry jest
And greet familiar faces still awake
For I asleep within the Eternal House.
Would have you always at your golden best."

It is in this Easter faith that we are to live at our golden best.
"For me to live is Christ." Paul is here making a tremendous assertion. He is virtually declaring that there is no question that one can ask Paul about himself that he cannot answer in terms of Christ. For instance, "Paul, how did you begin to live?" "Christ," he answers. "I never really lived until I met Him." "How have you kept on living through all these storm years?" "Christ," is the answer. "What has been the motive of your life?" "Christ, the love of Christ constraineth me." "What is the product of your life?" "Christ," he answers still, "for me to live is to reproduce Christ." "What is the goal of your life?" "Christ," is the same answer. Blessed is the man who can explain his life in this high fashion.

Grant, O Lord, that I may so live this day that the beauty of my life can only be explained in terms of Jesus Christ." Amen.
LOVE'S LONGING

"To long .....

Phil 3:10

Here is a man letting us into the deepest secret of his life. He is telling us his supreme ambition. What does he desire above all else? What do you? This man made history on a large scale. His language has breathed upon all the continents like a gulf stream. He has changed deserts into gardens. The secret of his power grew out of his one ministering ambition: What was that ambition?

In a recent piece of fiction, the author has his leading character saying: "When I want a thing I take it. I cannot be bothered rejecting the things that I want." What is her supreme ambition? To do as she pleased. To have her own way. A few months ago an article appeared in the American Magazine, questioning the value of honesty. It was written by a young man who seemed to be speaking his sentiments with absolute frankness and sincerity. "Why should I be honest?" he asked. "I do not desire to be great. I only desire to be comfortable." Of course if that was his supreme ambition, as I dare say it was, then we have little argument. We can only tell him not to be too open in his dishonesty, or he might meet the discomfort of the Penitentiary. But if your supreme ambition is to be merely comfortable, you will not understand the ambition of this man, Paul. "What is that for which he longs? "I long," he says, to share in His sufferings." As he says it, he is looking back to one whose ministry was one long crucifixion. He was more homeless than the foxes, more destitute than the birds of the air. Some people loved Him. Others hated Him with a
Why is this the case? Let us face the fact at once, that Paul did not say this because he was indifferent to suffering. He was the most sensitive of men. He did not delight in being whipped and stoned and imprisoned any more than you or I. He had no fondness for being ridiculed. He had no love for being counted as the filth and off-pouring of all things. Scintillating intellect that he was, he was not eager to be called a madman and a fool. Few men have ever exposed a more sensitive soul to the world than did Paul. Therefore, when he longs to share in Christ’s sufferings, it is not because he is hard and stoical.

Paul desired to share in the sufferings of His Lord, I think, chiefly for three reasons. There were others, but these will give us some understanding of his inner heart. As we hear these reasons, I am hoping that some of us may be gripped with the same great longing that made Paul the mighty and useful man.
that he was. For this longing that possessed Paul is one that should possess you and me. In fact it is one that will possess us just in proportion to the genuineness of our Christlikeness. Why, then, did Paul long to share in the sufferings of Jesus?

1. He longed to share His sufferings because of his love for Him. If you have never loved anybody, of course this will be beyond your understanding. But if you are a lover, you cannot help but understand it. When the object of our love suffers, we do not count it a privilege that we do not have to share. We count ourselves robbed and cheated if we cannot share. When the mother stands by the cradle where her baby swings by a pendulum between life and death, there is nothing for which she longs so much as to share in his suffering and to take it upon herself.

Here is a man, a devoted husband, who is passing through deep worries. Business reverses have come. Along with them has come some secret physical malady. He suffers in body and he suffers in mind. But he does not wish to burden his wife with his tragedy. So, he locks it all up in his heart. By and by, perchance, he wins through. When he has come up out of the depth and has gained the summit, he tells her what a hard and lonely fight he has had. He tells her, also, that his one thought has been to spare her. But, does she appreciate being spared? That is the last thing she desires. She feels robbed and cheated that she has not been allowed to share.

One of the most musical of our American poets is certainly Sidney Lanier. But life for him was not all roses; it was a long battle with poverty and with disease. But if he were poor in treasures, and poor in health, he was rich in the love of his wife. She was a tower of strength to him through the years. He paid her one of the most tenderly beautiful tributes, I think, that a man ever paid a woman, in that lovely poem "MY SPRINGS."
"In the heart of the hills of life I know
Two springs that will unbroken flow,
Forever pour their lucid streams,
Into my soul's far latent dreams.

Not larger than two eyes they lie
Beneath the many changing sky,
And marry all ear life and time
Serene and dainty pantomime.

Oh love, oh wife, thine eyes are they
My springs from out whose shining gray,
Issue those sweet celestial streams,
That feed my soul's bright latent dreams.

Oh love, oh wife, they are rich in passion pure,
And clear and wise in honor sure,
Soft as the dying violet's breath,
Yet calmly unafraid of death.

And why, I wonder, do the eyes shine most brightly under bright skies, then under the seeming frown of God? They were shining with the fine joy of sharing the sufferings of one deeply loved. And because Paul was a lover, Paul longed to share in the suffering of the One that he loved.

2. Paul longed to share the sufferings of Christ, because he knew that only in proportion as he shared those sufferings would he share the glory that should follow. He knew that Jesus had come that we might have life, and that we might have it in abundance. But he knew, also, that that abundant life could only be ours in proportion as we died to self. Paul could say, "Christ liveth in me."

Why did Christ live in him? Because he had died to himself. The Christ-light and the self-light cannot live in their fulness in our heart at the same time. "I long to share His suffering." And then Paul gives this reason here in the text, "That I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." That does not mean simply that I might live again by and by, but that I might know in my heart in
You see, therefore, that Paul was remembering what we are so prone to forget, that there is no deep spiritual life except at the price of death to ourselves. "If any man will come after me," said Jesus, "let him say no to himself." There is no other way to life eternal. That is true in the very nature of things. Here is the same Anglo Saxon root. The man that is unwilling to bleed is unable to bless. "Without the shedding of blood," said the writer to the Hebrews, "there is no remission of sins." Without the shedding of blood there is no high and worthwhile achievement in any direction. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." And full of wheat may remain safe in the corner store of some building for centuries. But it is only as it dies that the field grows gold, and that hungry men and women are fed.

There is no shutting our eyes to the fact that Jesus Christ looked upon the cross as His crowning triumph. That is the reason He went to it so willingly, and with a majestic calm, He tells us that it was not forced upon Him. Life was not wrenched out of His hands. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down
by myself." Why? "Because I, if I be lifted up, will draw all
men unto Me." It is Christ crucified that is the supreme magnet
of the world.

And Paul knew, as we need to know, that it is only as
we die to self, somewhat as He died, that we come to our rich living,
and our highest usefulness. There is no other way. No wonder, therefore,
that this wise saint could say with deep and utter sincerity, even
as He stood under the shadow of the cross, "I long to share in His
sufferings." He longed after this fashion because he longed to live
abundantly. He longed because he wanted to bless, because he
wanted to share with Jesus in the remaking of a broken and shattered
world.

There is a story that tells how a Chinese king ordered
his minister to make a bell that would ring with a tone of flawless
sweetness. The minister went out and gathered together the choice
silver and gold of the empire. He put it in a great cauldron and
melted it and cast a bell. And the bell was swung in the lovely
tower. And the people gathered together to hear it ring. But when
they heard it, they were disappointed. Something was lacking.
"Nobody seemed to know just what. So, the king ordered it to be made
again. But still it was defective, and he ordered it to be cast a
third time. But this time he told his minister that if it did not
ring with flawless sweetness that his life should be to forfeit.

That night the minister went home with a heavy heart.
He knew not what to do. In despair he told the story to his wife.
But she knew no more than he. But it so happened that, unknown to
them, their only girl, a beautiful child of some sixteen springtimes,
heard the story. So, that night she slipped out of her father's
house down the street to where the wise man lived, and told him of the
pitiful plight of her father. And the wise man said: "The bell will never ring with flawless sweetness till with its metal, silver and gold, is mixed the blood of a devoted heart.

With that secret locked in her breast the beautiful girl went home. The next day, when the bell was to be recast and the burning metal was seething and hissing in the great cauldron, she flung herself into it before any hand could stay her. And with the burning metal, the silver and the gold, was mingled the blood of her devoted heart. Then, the bell was recast. And when they gathered together to hear it ring, tears wet every face, and every soul was stirred to its depths. And Paul knew that his life would never ring with unfailing sweetness till he, too, had died to self. Thus he entered into the fellowship of his Master's suffering. Ours is the gospel of a crucified Christ. It can never be lived or preached except by crucified men and women. Therefore, let us not shirk the cross. In so doing we shun life.

"Oh, cross, that liftest up my head, I dare not ask to fly from thee, I lay in dust life's glory dead, And from the ground there blossoms red, Life that shall endless be."
"I long ..... to share in His suffering." (Weymouth)

- Philippians 3: 10

Paul is leading us into the inner sanctuary of his heart. He is
telling us the master passion in his life. What was Paul's supreme ambition?
It is well worth knowing for this man made history on a big scale. He has
breathed upon all of the continents life as a beneficence gulf stream. Under
his influence countless millions have bloomed into newness of life. What was the
motive power that enabled him to do this?

In a popular piece of fiction of nearly a decade ago, the author has
his principal character make this assertion. "Whatever I want, I take. I can't
be bothered resisting the things that I desire." It is easy to tell her supreme
passion -- it is self-pleasing. She is out to live her own life. It is
equally easy to prophesy her returns in terms of happiness and usefulness. She
misses both absolutely. That is true, not in one instance, but in every instance.

About a year ago, a bright young chap wrote an article in the
American Magazine on the value of honesty. He was considering seriously whether
there was any real value in being honest. He was bent on being shown. To make
the case of those willing to show him the more difficult, he shut out all moral
and spiritual values. This he did by saying, "I do not desire to be great, I
only wish to be comfortable." His is a supreme ambition of quite a few. Those
who cherish such an ambition and that only may find a species of comfort while
ignoring the moral laws, but they must not ignore them too flagrantly or they will
find their way to the penitentiary.
"Paul's Longing"

I.

But Paul pitched life on a high plain. What was his ambition? What was his highest dream, his biggest hope, his deepest longing? Listen! "I long to share in His suffering." How strange that sounds — how different from most of our ambitions, yet these are the words of one of the finest minds of all the centuries and of one of the biggest men.

II.

What did such a longing involve? Paul realized the answer to this question. He was thoroughly alive to the sufferings of Jesus. He was not very far away from that amazing and beautiful life that has since remade the world.

1. He was mindful of how Jesus had thrown himself into the raw wounds of every man's sores. How he put himself under every man's burden. He knew that Jesus was wounded by their transgressions and bruised by their iniquities. In all their afflictions, he was afflicted.

2. He knew something of the bitter disappointment of Jesus, of His persecution, his rejection, and betrayal. He knew how life was one long toiling up Calvary, -- one desperate crucifixion.

3. He realized that it involved dying. Not only so, but dying in the most shameful and painful way possible. Yet looking back at it all, he declares with passionate sincerity, "I long to share in His suffering."

III.

Why did Paul say this? It was not because he was lacking in sanity,
it is he who said, "God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but of power and love and a sound mind." Paul was pre-eminently a man with a healthy mind.

No more was he saying this because he was insensitive to pain. I daresay few more sensitive souls ever lived than this man. He was a scholar, an aristocrat by birth, and intellectual. But he was stoned, he was acquainted with the whipping post. He spent most of his time associating with slaves and mere nobodys, yet he declares, "I am not ashamed." For that, he would have been but for the great motive that impelled it. Why, then, did he long to share in Christ's suffering?

1. He longed to share in the suffering of Jesus because of his passion for life. He wanted to live richly, deeply, fully. Wanting thus to live, he knew that such life was impossible except it was lived in the same sacrificial spirit that characterized Jesus. He gives us this reason in the passage of which our text is a part, he"longs to share His suffering that he might know the power of His resurrection.

Now by this Paul does not mean that he is deciding merely to know the power of the resurrection of Jesus and the life to come. Eternal life to him was not a quantity of life but rather a quality. He wanted to experience eternal life in the here and now and he knew life could only come at the cost of death.

"I live," we hear him shout in his letter to the Galatians, and when we come to know him, we know that what he says is magnificently true. There is a man who is tremendously alive. How does he account for that life? In these words, "Christ liveth in me." And how does he account for the indwelling Christ, in these words, "I am crucified with Christ." Hear the whole statement, "I am
crucified with Christ and yet I live; and yet not I but Christ liveth in me."

Jesus lived grandly because he lived sacrificially. Paul knew that if he lived thus richly he must be dominated by the same spirit.

2. Paul was possessed by this passion because he knew that it was the basis of the real power. He knew there could be no high and abiding usefulness without it. The words "to bless" and "to bleed" come from the same Anglo-Saxon root. The man who is afraid "to bleed" is unable "to bless." Except a corn of wheat fall to the ground and die, it abideth alone. But if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." "Without the shedding of blood," says the writer to the Hebrews, "there is no remission. In fact, there is no high attainment in any respect." "Gethsemane," as others have said, "is always the rose garden of God."

Paul's passion to share the sufferings of Jesus grew out of his longing to share Christ's power to bless and help heal.

3. Finally, Paul longed to share in the sufferings of Christ because he loved him. Years ago, Paul had met Christ personally and his heart had been taken -- utterly captured by him. When we see him in later days, for instance at the whipping post, or with face blooded, or with his whole body battered by ship-wreck, we ask him why he undergoes such hardships, braves such dangers, endures such sufferings, and the answer is "The love of Christ constrains me. He loved me and gave himself up for me."

Paul's longing, therefore, is perfectly natural. Every lover can understand that. If you have ever loved and the object of your love has had to pass through deep suffering, you have not counted it a privilege to escape, but you have counted it a privilege to share. In one of Burwer Lytton's stories, he has his heroine saying of a lover who is passing through deep waters. "Tell
him I never nursed a thought that wasn't his, that day and night long his wandering way was a woman's tears. Tell him that even now I would rather work for him, beg with him, live on the light of one kind smile from him than wear the crown that Bourbon lost."

One of the most beautiful musical poets of America surely was Sidney Lanier. He had skylarks in his heart and his songs will live as long as men have a sky above their heads. But life was not a song always for him, it was a long battle of poverty and disease. But if he missed much in worldly treasures, he was conspicuously enriched by the love of a strong and gracious wife. He paid tribute to her in one of the most beautifully tender poems that I know called, "My Springs"

In the heart of the Hills of Life, I know Two springs that with unbroken flow Forever pour their lucent streams Into my souls far Lake of Dreams.

No larger than two eyes, they lie Beneath the many-changing sky And mirror all of life and time, -- Serene and dainty pantomine,

Oval and large and passion-pure And gray and wise and honor-sure; Soft as a dying violet-breath Yet calmly unafraid of death;

Thonged like two dove-cotes of gray doves, With wife's and mother's and poor-folk's love, And loves for all that God and man In art and nature make or plan. And loves for God and God's bare truth, And loves for Magdalen and Ruth,

Dear eyes, dear eyes and rare complete Being heavenly-sweet and earthly-sweet, --I marvel that God made you mine, For when He frowns, 'tis then ye shine! 
A few years ago, a man was pacing the deck on board of a large steamer. On his arm hung a frail and little slip of a woman. As they passed along the deck, a certain other woman lounging in a chair said in a loud whisper, "What a pity it is to see a strong man like that the slave of a little weak invalid woman." The gentleman overheard and so when he had taken the invalid to her room, he came back and asked permission to sit beside the one who had been pitying him.

"I heard what you said a moment ago," he began, "you said that it was a pity to see a strong man like me a slave of a little invalid woman. I just came to tell you that you used the right word - I am her slave. A few years ago, I lost every dollar I had through the rascality of my partner. He made his dishonest work look like mine and everybody thought I was a scoundrel -- that is, everybody but one and that was my wife. She stood by me, fought with me, enabled me to get on my feet, but the strain on her was too much. Today I am well and strong and once more rich, but she will never be well again. She gave her life for mine and I am her slave. And my best wish for you is that you will one day be able to command so willing a slave."

Paul was a bond slave of Jesus Christ, therefore, he was speaking the language of sobriety when he said, "I long to share in His suffering." May that longing possess your heart and mind!
THE ART OF FORGETTING
Philippians 3:7-14

"Forgetting those things which are behind." If we are to make any real progress this new year, we must learn with Paul to forget the things that are behind. Naturally this does not mean that we are to forget all that belonged to yesterday. We ought to remember our unpaid bills, our unfulfilled vows to God and man. We ought to remember the kindness of our fellows and the unfailing mercies of our God. But all our grudges, our hates, our failures, even our sins we ought to leave to the mercy of God and forget. Only by thus forgetting can we win.

Help us, Lord, so to look to Thee and to Thy rich promises today that the ugliness of yesterday will be forgotten. Amen.
THE WORRY DEVIL

"In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:6-7

This is my favorite passage of scripture. I have turned to it in times of sunshine and found that it made the sunshine a little brighter. I have come to it when clouds were in the sky, and it had a way of pushing back the clouds and giving me a glimpse of the blue. I have come to it when I was in slippery places and found it a strong staff on which to lean. I have come to it when I could no longer walk and found it a comforting pillow on which to rest my head. More than any scripture in the Bible I think it contains my philosophy of life.

I.

What does Paul mean by this word?

1. Let me speak of what he does not mean. He is not warning us against earnestness. He is not urging upon us a flippant and happy-go-lucky attitude toward life. It is doubtful if a hotter heart ever beat in a human bosom than that of Saint Paul. No one knew better than he how impossible it is for a half-hearted saint to walk with a whole-hearted Christ. Therefore in saying, "In nothing be anxious," he is not trying to drench with cold water the hot fires of our enthusiasm.

No more is Paul warning us against the thought of life. There are those
who read the words of Jesus, "Take no thought for tomorrow," and interpreted them to mean that we are not to look ahead. Jesus never thought anything so stupid. He always reckoned with tomorrow. He told about a certain man who set out to build a tower, but he refused to look ahead. He did not suit his plant to his high—best. Therefore instead of building a poem he built a monstrosity.

It was Paul himself who said, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." We have generally used this as a cudgel with which to pound the sinners over the head. But it is more than a cudgel, it is a rich and precious promise. It tells us that it is our privilege to determine the harvest that we are going to reap today, tomorrow, and through eternity. It tells us that we are living in an ordered world where reaping follows sowing. Some might prefer a world of chance. (I remember reading of such a man in one of McGuffey's Readers.) But however that may be, you and I live in an ordered world, and if we are intelligent we will not fail to reckon with tomorrow. Boy, Hamilton who's got telephone part.

What then does Paul mean? He is warning us against one of the most common—worry—dues that decks us. He is telling us not to worry about anything. By this he does not mean to forbid our being deeply interested. He forbids our taking an attitude of fear instead of an attitude of faith.

II.

Why do we need such a word today?

1. We need it because worry is so common. All sorts of people worry. Young people worry and old people worry. Perhaps the most worried group of all are those that are in middle life. Dull people worry and intelligent people worry. But the intelligent worry as a rule far more than the dull. Ignorant people worry and educated people worry. Poor folks worry and rich folks worry. Ir-
We worry about things that actually happen, but we worry far more about things that never happen. Most of the losses that we feared we have never had to sustain. A gentleman went some years ago for his first visit to Colorado. He spent the night in a village hotel. The next morning he saw the mountains far and shining. They looked like they were not more than a mile away. In reality they were fifteen miles. "I believe I will walk to the mountains before breakfast," he said to his host. "Well, all right, if you think you can make it," came the answer from the host. "Oh yes, I am used to walking, I'll make it all right." So he walked and walked and the mountains seemed to get no closer. At last a farmer came upon him as he was sitting on the bank of an irrigation ditch removing his shoes. "What are you going to do?" asked the farmer. "I am going to swim this river," came the reply. "But why don't you step across?" came the amazed answer. But the mountain climber was indignant and said, "You folks are not going to fool me any more."

We worry about all sorts of things. We worry about things that are important and things that are not important at all. We worry about our bodies and we worry about our souls. We worry as to how to get money, we worry about how to get rid of it. We worry about our employer and we worry about our employees. We worry because we are too thin and we worry because we are not too thin. There is nothing too big and nothing too little to worry us.

Then we worry at the most unfortunate times. A good worrier is always more or less worried all the time. But he does his best worrying when the load is heavy and the going hard and the battle rough. Therefore as another has pointed out, the very time he needs most of his energies, skill, and strength he squanders these by worrying.

2. Worry is useless. All of us have done useless things, but we never do
anything as absolutely useless as worry. It has been well said that there are
two classes of things about which nobody ought to worry. First, we ought never
to worry about the things that we cannot help. What you cannot change you must
adjust yourself to. Paul did not like being in jail, but he did not fret over
it. He said, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am in, therewith to be con-
tent."

It is well for us to accept ourselves. Many folks are worried because they
are forever trying to do something for which they are not fitted. There is no-
thing more silly than for any man to say, "I can do anything that anyone else
can do." That is not true at all. I met a small boy on the train who was a
good artist. Having gotten into his confidence he asked me to draw a mule. I
should have been a mule specialist. I was raised with them and I have preached
to them. But when I showed him the mule that I had drawn he burst into tears it
so offended his artistic soul. Accept yourself. Otherwise you are liable to
be a misfit, and a misfit is about the cheapest thing in the world.

Then you are to accept your age. It is a terrible strain to try to be
young when you are old. There are some folks who would not tell their age for
the world. They keep it all a dark secret. They grow old with sour resentment.
But there are others that grow old so sweetly that they move about the sun-down
of life like a rich and rare perfume.

I saw a man fall off of a horse sometime ago. He was so deliciously drunk
that he hit the ground like a wet towel. The fall did not hurt him in the least.
Had I so fallen I should have gone down with muscles astrut and probably broken
several of my bones. This old horse called the "Almanac" is going to throw every-
one of us if we live long enough. We can take it relaxed or we can take it tense.

Let me grow lovely growing old,

So many fine things do-

Silks and ivory and gold
These need not be new.

There is grandeur in old trees,
Old streets a glamour hold.
Why not may I as these,
Grow lovely growing old."

Second, nobody ought to worry about the things he cannot help. Instead of worrying about them we ought to do something to help them. That in itself will take our mind off of worry. Did you ever wake up about three-fourths cold and know there was a blanket not six feet away, but instead of giving up and getting the blanket you spent the rest of the night worrying?

3. Then we need this warning because worry is so hurtful. It hurts us physically. It brings on many diseases. Then there is not a disease in the world that is not aggravated by it. It takes a lot of work to kill us, but it doesn't take worry long to turn our feet toward the lilies. During my five years, here I have buried only five babies. But how many men I have buried who have killed themselves with worry! Of course they thought it was work. It reminds me of a farmer back in Tennessee who had a very game little coon dog. One night the dog got in a fight with a big coon that was too much for him. The farmer decided to intervene in behalf of his dog. Therefore he siezed his hammer and waited for his chance and then came down with a bang. But he missed the coon and hit the dog on the head and killed him instantly. And the sad part of the story is the dog always though the coon killed him. So the worrier thinks work killed him when he died of his fears.

Sometime ago on a rainy day I lost the hub-cap off one of the front wheels of my car. I discovered immediately that the machine would run just as well without it. But the man at the garage would not allow me to drive my car without replacing the missing part. He said that I might get some grit and sand in the
bearings and cut them to pieces within a few hours, whereas otherwise they would last for years. And worry is the sand and grit that surely hasten the wrecking of our human machinery.

Not only does worry hurt us physically, but it destroys our happiness. It makes us irritable and hard to live with. It makes us a burden to those that love us. It makes us a disappointment to our Lord. We need then to guard against worry because it is so common, it is so useless, and because it is so harmful.

III.

How are we going to guard against it? What are we going to do about it? There are three common methods that certainly will not work. Let me warn you against them at the beginning.

First, you are not going to get rid of worry by getting into an ideal situation. This is the case for at least two reasons. First, there is not any ideal situation. Second, if there were an ideal situation when it fell to your lot to get into it it would cease to be ideal. You would spoil it as soon as you got there. So a change of imperfect circumstances for a set that are perfect is out. You will never cure worry in that fashion.

Second, no more will you cure worry by sheer force of will. The man who clinches his fists and says "Go to now I am not going to worry any more," will find that he is only aggravating his disease. There are some goals we reach the quicker by the indirect route. Take going to sleep for instance. Did you ever get in a hurry to go to sleep? The greater the hurry the longer it will take you to go to sleep. (Sleeping with fat man.) So we do not cure worry by mere force of will. What then is the remedy? I offer four suggestions.

1. Remember that worry is not a necessity. Worry had no part in our primitive inheritance. The psychologists tell us that the cave men did not
worry. Had the cave-men worried he would have been exterminated. Here for instance is one with his hairy face, in his hairy hands. He is thinking of the mistakes of yesterday and the probable failures of tomorrow. He is wondering where his next fur coat is to come from. He does not see where he will ever get another meal of berries. Sadder still he has a depressing feeling that the meal he has just eaten is going to form gas on his stomach. He is so worried that he is totally unaware of his surroundings. Meanwhile a sabre-toothed tiger comes along who is not worried, he is only interested. And the curtain drops on the worrier.

2. If we are going to stop worrying we have got to control our thinking. Silent thought, all unpleasant thinking, line the face with care. When we put those thoughts into words we often burst into tears. We must therefore not only refuse to think solely of what is unpleasant, we are to refuse to give these things a prominent place in our conversation. How are we to do this? Not by force of will. Paul speaks of forgetting the things that are behind. How did he do it? By fixing his attention on things that are before. How shall I cease to think about things that are not pleasant? By giving attention to those that are pleasant. That is Paul's fine theory. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

3. Keep peace with your conscience. As long as you refuse to walk in the path of duty, as long as you do the things that you cannot in your heart approve you are going to be worried. A guilty conscience leads a civil war in the soul. If you are going to conquer worry you must get rid of your sense of guilt.

4. Finally, if you are going to get rid of worry you must learn to pray.
A child who is frightened finds security in his mother's arms. So we are to find security in the everlasting arms. Therefore, "In nothing be anxious, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."
The Worry Devil

"In nothing be anxious."
—Philippians 4:6

This sounds like a big order in a world like ours. There are so many things that can hurt us. There are so many things that can wound us through those that we love. When one, therefore, says, "In nothing be anxious," we feel like answering, "Don't be absurd. Come down to earth." But it may be well to remember that the man who uttered these words was not exactly a freshman in the school of life. He was not a raw recruit boasting of battles he had never won. He was not a sailor whose more dangerous voyage had been on a mill-pond. He had been on the high seas. He had been battered by rude tempests. He had been so scarred in life’s battles that, if he had gone up to heaven backwards, they would have recognized him by his scars. He was in prison when he wrote the letter of which these words are a part. Death was so close that he could even then feel its chilling breath on his face. Yet he wrote, "In nothing be anxious."

I

What did Paul mean by this amazing word?

Let me mention one or two things he did not mean. He was not urging us to assume a happy-go-lucky attitude toward life. He was not urging us to shrug our shoulders and go flippantly on our way as if nothing mattered. Paul was a deeply earnest man. A hotter heart scarcely ever beat in a human bosom than that of this great saint. He was desperately in earnest himself. He urged the same earnestness upon others. Nobody knew better than he how impossible it is for a half-hearted saint to walk with a whole-hearted Christ. Naturally, therefore, Paul was not urging us to be flippant and half-hearted.

No more was he warning against the thought-out life. He was not forbidding us to look ahead. It was Paul who said, "Be not deceived. God is not mocked,
for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." This is a great text that we have used chiefly as a cudgel with which to pound sinners over the head. A heavy cudgel it is too, but it is far more. It is one of the most radiant promises in the Bible. It tells us that ours is an ordered world. It tells us that we have the privilege of deciding in the hours of morning just the quality of harvest we are going to reap at the close of that day and of every day. It is a great privilege to have a dependable universe. A dependable universe means a dependable God; therefore, instead of its being wrong to look ahead it is at once wrong and foolish to refuse to do so.

What then, I repeat, does the apostle mean by saying, "In nothing be anxious." He is warning against worry. What he is forbidding is our assuming an attitude of feverishness and fear instead of an attitude of faith. "Do not worry," he said, "about anything, but on the contrary in everything by prayer and supplication and thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God, and so shall the peace of God which passeth all understanding keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

II

Why do we need a warning like this?

1. We need it because worry is so common. All sorts of people worry. Old folks worry. Certainly! They are so close to the sunset and the evening star! Young folks worry. Surely! Life is ahead of them—life in a higher and uncertain world like ours where civilization is constantly threatening to fall to pieces. Ignorant folks worry. They see but dimly. Educated folks worry even more, for they see more clearly. Poor folks worry. Some of them do not know how they are going to keep the wolf from the door. Rich folks worry even more. Irreligious folks worry. That is quite natural, but I am sorry to say that often religious folks worry almost as much.

Then we worry about all sorts of things. We worry about ourselves and we
worry about others. We worry about our bodies, and we worry about our souls. We worry about our own business, and we worry about the business of others. We worry about how we are going to get married, and we worry about how we have got married. We worry because we are too thin, and we worry because we are not too thin. There is nothing too big and nothing too little for us to worry about. We worry about things that actually happen, and we worry most of all about things that never do happen.

Not only do all sorts of people worry, not only do we worry about all sorts of things, but we worry at the worst possible times. Of course a first-class worrier usually makes at least a twelve-hour-a-day job of it, but the days become even longer when things grow tense. In other words we do our best worrying when the going gets hard, when the voyage gets stormy, and when we are most greatly in need of being at our best. Just when our difficulties demand the best possible bodies and the clearest possible heads, we get ourselves little better than nervous wrecks by worrying.

2. Then we need this warning in the second place because worry is so useless. All of us have done some useless things in our time, but nobody ever did anything more useless than just to worry. Worry never lifted a single load. It never dried a single tear. It never solved a single problem. It never erased a single wrinkle, but it has written in billions of them. It has been well-said that there are two classes of things about which nobody ought to worry.

In the first place, nobody ought to worry about the things he cannot help. There are some things that we may not like, but we simply have to accept them, and adjust ourselves to them in some fashion whether we like it or not. I am quite sure that Paul did not like being in jail. He had a high-souled eagerness to be out in the midst of the battle. There was the great world waiting to be won to Christianity. He was sure that God had put much of the responsibility upon him, but here he was shut up in this stenchful jail. Yet he is not worried. He adjusted
himself to his uncomfortable situation, declaring, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content." Take the matter of getting old, for instance. I have been amazed at times at how much some people dread the passing of the years. I have never felt that way about it. I do not think life necessarily moves on to an anti-climax. I cannot but believe God has as real a purpose for December as He has for January—that winter-time is really as much a part of the year as is spring. Yet there are those who would not tell their ages for the world. They might as well. Their friends are guessing them older than they are. They might save themselves a few years. There are those who grow old so beautifully that they move about the eventide of life like a sweet perfume. There are others who move about so sourly that, when we get back from the cemetery after burying them, we dust our hands and say, "That's that!"

Sometime ago I saw a man fall off a horse. He was so deliciously and limberly and relaxedly drunk that he hit the ground like a wet towel. It did not seem to hurt him in the least. Of course I did not want him to get killed, but I would not have minded if it had given him something to remember it by; but he escaped without a scratch. If I had been falling like that, I should have gone down with muscles all astrut, and it would likely have broken my arm or maybe my neck. This old horse called the almanac is going to throw us one of these days if we live long enough. We can hit the ground relaxed or in such fashion as to break not our bones but our hearts. What we know is coming, we ought to adjust ourselves to and not fret over it.

"Let me grow lovely growing old—
So many fine things do;
Silks and ivory and gold—
These things need not be new.
There is grandeur in old trees,
Old streets a glamor hold—
Why not may I as these
Grow lovely growing old?"

A second group of things nobody ought to worry about is the things that we can help. Instead of worrying about them, we ought to forget our worries in an
Then finally those who worry are a disappointment to their Lord. Jesus lived most of His life in the very heart of a storm, but never once do we find Him worried. He never looked out on life with eyes haunted by fear. When His disciples lost their nerve and became feverish and fretful and worried, He turned to them with pained disappointment and said, "Oh men, how little you trust Me! You ought to remember," He said, "that God even cares for sparrows. Not one of them falls but that He takes time to go to its funeral. Surely since you are His child, He will never leave you nor forsake you."

III

But you say, "That is all right so far. I know worry is wrong. I know that it hurts me, and I know that it hurts those with whom I have to be, but how am I to be rid of it?" That is a practical question. If I have no answer, then I have no right to preach this sermon.

Let me begin by telling you one or two ways that won't work. Some who are worried now promise themselves that they will quit worrying when their circumstances are better—as soon as they have paid the last installment on their house or car. In other words as soon as they get in the perfect situation, they will stop worrying, but the trouble with such is that if those are the conditions they will never stop. There are no perfect situations in the first place. In the second place if there were such, they would cease to be perfect as soon as we got into them. We need to remember that worry is not a child of circumstance. It is an inside job.

Another wrong road is determination. Now and then we hear a sermon on this order and we clinch our fists and square our jaws and say, "Now go to! I am never going to worry again." But those who try to force themselves not to worry only worry the more. There are some worthwhile goals that we reach more quickly by the indirect route. Take going to sleep for instance. Did you ever get in a desperate hurry to go to sleep? I do not mean in church. If you have, you realize that the harder you tried to go to sleep, the wider awake you became. The same is
effort to help. But did you ever wake up a winter's night and be about two-thirds cold, and know there was a blanket not six feet away, but instead of getting up and getting the blanket you lay there and worried the rest of the night? In spite of all your worries you did not get warm. I had a guest sometime ago who enjoyed bad health. She seemed to enjoy it greatly. Her favorite indoor sport was to eat something she was quite sure was going to disagree with her, and then to spend the rest of the day wondering if it had disagreed with her. Worry is useless. Do not worry about the things you can't help; adjust yourself to them with the grace of God. Do not worry about the things you can help; help them.

3. Then we need this warning because worry is so hurtful. Worry is a sickness of the mind that often leads to sickness of the body. I doubt that there is a disease known to medicine that worry will not aggravate. It takes a lot of work to kill us, but it does not take worry long to turn our steps toward the cemetery.

Sometimes ago as I was turning into my driveway a car dashed by and took the hub-cap off one of my wheels. I got out and looked at the damage; so the cap did not go back. I could even look in and see the bearings. I was in a bit of a hurry so I drove down by the garage where I had my work done, and said, "My friend, do you see there? A man knocked my hub-cap off just now. As soon as I get time, I am going to let you put a new one on." "Stop now," he said, "and let me put it on. Those bearings in there will last fifteen or twenty years if you will protect them, but on a rainy day like this, you might get grit and sand in there and grind them out in a few months." Worry is the grit and sand that gets into the bearings of life that soon grinds them out.

Then worry makes us hard to live with. It is terrible to have to live with some man or woman who is everlastingly on edge, fretful, and feverish from worry. It is hard to have to work with such a man. It is harder still to have to work for him. There ought to be a special pest-house to put folks in who worry. They are a menace to themselves; they are, if possible, a greater menace to their fellows.
true of worry. This is an evil that cannot be conquered negatively; it must be conquered positively.

I, therefore, am going to offer four practical suggestions. If they are not sound psychology, and sound sense, and sound religion, then treat them as you do the other sermons that you have heard—merely listen and forget them.

1. Bear in mind that worry is not essential. It is not a natural emotion; it is one that we have to acquire. The psychologists tell us that primitive men did not worry. Had he worried, he would not have survived. Here, for instance, is a poor chap sitting upon a fallen tree. He is worried. He has just eaten a dinner of berries, but he does not know whether they will form gas on his stomach or not. In case they do not, he is at a loss to know where he is going to get another dinner of berries to form gas on his stomach. Then his fur coat is getting considerably worn. Perhaps it will come up a cold rain before he can get back to his cave. Hence, he puts his hairy face in his hairy hands and worries. Meantime a savory-toothed tiger glides through the forest. He is not worried. He is just concerned, and the worries of the caveman are over.

2. If you are going to avoid worry, you must keep peace with your conscience. H. G. Wells has a certain character that he said was not so much a personality as a civil war. As long as there is a road that you know you ought to walk and you refuse to walk it, as long as there is a questionable practice in your life, you are going to be worried. This Old Book says, "There is no peace, saith My God, to the wicked." That would be just as true in an almanac or a book of modern psychology as it is in the Bible. It is a fact of experience you will never conquer worry until you learn to keep peace with your conscience which is another way of saying that you must keep peace with your God.

3. If we are to conquer worry some of us will have to redirect our thinking. Listen to this apostle who is also the sanest of psychologists. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever
things are of good report, if there be any virtue in anything deemed worthy of praise, think on these things." But this apostle does not mean to urge that we thrust our heads in the sand as a frightened ostrich is supposed to do. He is urging that instead of constantly gazing on what is worrying us that we sometimes take at least a glance at what is good or better or best. Instead of fixing our whole attention on what we do not have, let us look now and then at what is really ours. Instead of devoting all our thought to what is ugly, let us at least devote some of it to what is lovely and of good report.

4. Last of all, and most important of all, learn to pray. It is wonderful how our worries vanish as mists before the sunrise when we bring them into the secret place of the Most High; so Paul had learned out of his own experience. I was reading sometime ago of an aviator who was making a flight around the world. He spent the night in an Air Dome in Arabia. The next morning, some two hours after he had taken off, he heard a noise somewhere in his vessel that he recognized as the gnawing of a rat. It filled with utter panic. He realized that while his vessel was grounded a rat had got in, and he did not know what bit of the delicate machine those sharp teeth might be cutting. At any moment he feared he might wreck, but he was two hours away from the landing-field he had left, and more than two hours from the one where he could stop. Therefore, he was filled with terror.

Then he remembered that the rat was a rodent—that it was made to live on the earth and under the earth; it was not a creature of heights. Therefore, he began to climb. He went up a thousand feet and then another thousand and another until some twenty thousand feet in the air. To his relief the gnawing ceased. When he came down in safety some hours later, he found the dead rat in the pit of his vessel. Worry is also a rodent. It cannot live in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Therefore, the soundest sanity is this: "In everything by prayer and supplication and thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God. So shall the peace of God that passeth all understanding keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
This is my favorite passage of Scripture Phil. 4:4-9

I've had some dark days and some sunny, but thank God, most of my
days have been sunny, and this Psalm has made the sun shine a little
in gloomy days
brighter and I've come to it when clouds were in the sky and found that
it brought out the blue through the clouds. I've come to it when I
walked in slippery places and found it a strong staff on which to lean,
and then I have come to it when I couldn't walk at all and found it a
soft pillow on which to rest the tired and aching head. It's a tender
text, as tender as the sheltering arms of a mother to a tired and fright-
ened child. It is a strong text. It is stronger than the hills. It
is as strong as the Everlasting Arms.

"Rejoice in the Lord alway and again I say, rejoice. Let your forbearance
be made known unto all men for the Lord is at hand. In nothing be
anxious but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving,
let your requests be made known unto God and so shall the peace of God
which passeth all understanding; keep your hearts and minds through
Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever
thing is honorable, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are
just, whatsoever things are lovely, if there be any virtue or if there
be anything worthy of praise, think on these things and you'll find
my text in this: "In nothing be anxious." Now that sounds like a big
order. Oh, I know it does. There are so many things that can hurt us
and while every tomorrow is a kind of jungle on the highway of life
of tragedy
from which some wild beasts may spring us, to tear our hearts, and to
tear the hearts of somebody who is dearer to us than ourselves.

Speaking, back from the congregation, not speaking as from the pulpit,
for I have always felt more at home in the pew than I have in the pulpit.
like never felt like a minister and you know, nobody ever did take me
for a preacher until they heard me and then some of them backed out.
Now the man who wrote this text might have said, "With all the strains and sorrows that ye have known," and I hear some of you say, "Oh yes, it is easy for you to stand up as a minister and say, "In nothing be anxious," but if you knew the stark tragedy that stalks my steps, if you knew how there has been the setting of a great hope in my life, like the setting of the sun, you wouldn't talk like that. Well, maybe not, but I love to remember that the man who wrote this text was no a freshman in the school of life. He was not a raw recruit boasting of battles he had never fought. He was not a sailor whose sailing had been on a sheltered mill pond. He had been on the high seas. He had known life in all its tragedies and its triumphs, and he was so scarred in battle that if he had gone to heaven backward, they would have recognized him by his scars. He was in jail when he wrote this letter, and death was so close that he could almost reach out and put his hand on its cold forehead and yet not thinking of himself, but thinking of his absent friends, he says, "Now don't be anxious about anything." What did he mean? Well, I'll tell you I think he did not mean. He did not mean to encourage a happy-go-lucky attitude towards life that some of us sometimes assume. You know there are some folks who haven't even pride enough in their souls to go a beaten way. Paul wasn't like that. He was a desperately earnest man and nobody understood better than the author of this text, how impossible it is for a half-hearted saint to walk with a whole-hearted Christ. And so he was not urging us to a happy-go-lucky existence. And the second thing, he wasn't doing. He wasn't making us think, warning us against looking ahead. You know, I don't think that Jesus ever said anything that was more grossly misunderstood, than those words when He said, "Take no thought for tomorrow." Well, what did Jesus mean by that? He certainly was not forbidding us to look ahead, because if ever a man looked ahead in this world, it was Jesus, "Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame." and He
went gallantly to the Cross in the consciousness of the fact that if He only were lifted up, not then but in the great tomorrow, He would draw all men unto Him. And the man who wrote this text "Be not deceived. God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Now that is used chiefly as a cudgel to pound sinners over the head and it is a terrific cudgel. It tells the sinner that nobody ever gets away with anything. But along with that, is one of the most gracious and winsome promises in all the Word of God. It says to young life, and older life for that matter, 'You will be reaping your harvest by and by. It is not a matter of chance, but a matter of choice. Nobody needs to guess what he is going to reap tomorrow night and the next night and way on to the end of eternity, for every man reaps according to his sowing. Sometimes we don't like that. When I was pastor in Huston, Texas, a woman in my church gave her son a second hand Ford and that youngster loved to go curves around town at high speed. He loved to hear the car sweep. Rubber was a little more plentiful then than it is now and one day he went sweeping around a curve and a telephone pole met him. He went out through the wind-shield and hit that telephone pole and had hit him on the back of the head, it might have killed him. They took him to the hospital and sent for his pastor and I hurried around. I'm not making fun of it, I'm just telling you what happened, and when I got around to the hospital, his mother came running to me and taking my hand in both of hers, she said "Oh, what have I done that this should happen to me?" jarred Well, it some of me for a moment and finally I said "It did not happen to you, it happened to him". And you know I thought she was headed toward this, that she was going to get mad at the Lord for letting her son run into a telephone pole, while he was driving recklessly.
And I said, "Hold on, that will never do. If the Lord reached out and snatched the telephone pole out from in front of every reckless driver, he might put one in front of me sometime when I was driving carefully." "All I'm arguing for," I said, "is for every man's meeting his own telephone pole." Well, now, that is the kind of world we live in, whether we like it or not, every man hits his own telephone pole; every nation hits its own telephone pole. We had a chance over a quarter of a century ago of helping the world make peace. We turned away from that chance and the nations of the world have been meeting their telephone poles and breaking their hearts and smashing themselves to pieces because whether we like it or not, we are part of this old wicked, sinning world. We may not like to be a part of Germany or of Japan or a part of the nations abroad, but we are a part of them, getting closer and closer and closer together with every passing hour. We may kick about it all we like, but what hurts them, hurts us. I was on a fishing trip some time ago and I got some poison ivy on this left ankle of mine. Poison ivy has a very great fondness for me and I just want to say to you, if you are a bit bored and the preacher is tiring you out a bit, just get you a little poison ivy. It will keep you awake during the dullest sermon you ever heard in this world. And so I got this poison ivy and I remembered how I used to treat it when I was a boy. I doctored it with carbolic acid and so I hurried off to the drug store and got some carbolic acid but I forgot one thing about the treatment. I used to dilute the acid before I put it on. The first time I just took it straight and I tell you, I put it on and rubbed it in and then I began to get action. And when it had eaten down close to the bone, you know my whole body had an insurrection, and every single member of it was in agitation. This arm said, "Oh, I have nothing to do with it. I'm separated from it as though by three thousand miles." My head said, "Well, I have with nothing to do with it for I wasn't consulted when it was put on."
Not one organ of my body was going to have anything to do with that bad ankle, but believe it or not, when we went to bed, that night, we all stayed awake together.

It is not only sound Christianity, but it is the soundest common sense in the world. As long as there is a bad man in the world, I am in danger. Common sense as well as Christianity and my own personal safety makes me say "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us."

We are sinners and we live in a sinful world. I remember years ago I read a story in McGuffey's reader. All educated people read McGuffey, I take it. If you have not read McGuffey, you may be a doctor of philosophy, but you have lost out. How the marvel about McGuffey, the sweetest thing I know about him was that he always wrote stories with a moral. I know how silly that is, because all the smart boys today like stores that have an - immoral, but McGuffey didn't know any better than to write stories with a moral, so he wrote one about a chap who got tired of the grim realities of life and God's natural laws and so one day, He said, "Oh, I'm so tired of this sordid world. I wish I could live in a world of chance!" He lay down and went to sleep. When he waked up, he was in a world of chance. He found he had a toothache. Now he remembered what he used to do when he had a toothache, and that was he made himself some hot coffee and held it in his mouth and found some relief. And so he went to make his coffee and when it was ready and he had poured it out and started to drink it, instead of being hot, he found it full of ice and spat it out. He said in indigation to his friend, "What does this mean?" "Oh", said his friend, this doesn't mean anything. It's all done on a chance. Sometimes it boils sometimes it freezes. This is the kind of world you asked for. Then he saw the sunshine was so beautiful that it almost made him forget his toothache. But it hadn't more than got up good when it set again. And again he turned to his friend and said
What does this mean?" "Oh", he said. "It doesn't mean anything. Sometimes it stays up a minute, sometimes five minutes, sometimes five hours, sometimes five weeks." But he said, "that's your kind of world. When he got up the next morning, instead of hitting the floor, he hit the ceiling. Now some of you have done that in an ordinary world.

Now what did Paul mean when he said "Now, don't you worry about any thing. Don't you worry about any thing." Why did Paul say that? In the first place, because so many folks are worrying. Educated folks worry because they know so much to be worried about. Ignorant folks are worried because they do not know any better. Irreligious folks are worried, they have no faith, and I am sorry to say, that a good many religious folks worry. I know it is a mark of lack of faith — a terrible lack of faith but I lot of religious folks worry. And then we worry about all sorts of things. Nothing is too big nor too little for us to worry about. We worry about our money. We worry about how we get it and how we get rid of it and how we are going to get some more, and we worry about how we are going to get married and we worry about not getting married, and we worry about how we are going to get unmarried. We worry because we are too thin. Then we worry because we are not too thin. We worry about our bodies and we worry about our souls. We worry about things that actually happen but we worry far more about the things that never do happen. Now if it so happens that you don't belong to the union and put in more than an eight hour day of worrying as some of you probably do, if you will count it up, you will find that at least three fourths of all the worrying that you have ever done in your life, has been done about things that never did happen. Just think it over. I had a friend who went out to spend his first summer in Colorado and he spend his first night in a village hotel and when he got up the next morning, you know in that very clear atmosphere, things far away look very close at hand and he looked over at the mountains yonder far and shining. He was nearly 15 miles away
but he felt like he could walk down to the end of the street and find them.

He said to his host, "I believe I'll break over to the mountains before breakfast." His host, knowing he was a tenderfoot said "Why, do you think you can make it?" "Sure thing, I can take a little walk like that." So he set out and he walked and he walked and he walked and the mountains did not get any closer but he was a stubborn fellow and by and by an old farmer found him, sitting on the bank of an irrigation ditch remaking his shoes and he said "What are you going to do?" And he said "I'm going to swim this river." He said "Why don't you step across it?" He said "You are not going to fool me anymore." And so we worry about how we are going to get across the river when there is no river there.

And in the second place, Worry is a useless thing. We have all done a good many useless things in our day, but I can tell you this, you never did anything in all your life that was quite as useless as to worry. It never lifted a single burden. It never dried a single tear. It never rubbed out a wrinkle, but it has rubbed in billions of them. It is the most useless thing in the world. It has been well said that there are two classes of things about which nobody ought to worry. The first is made up of those things which you cannot help. There are some things in the world which if we are just intelligent we just accept. You know, you may not like the law of gravitation, but there is no use in arguing with the law of gravitation. The truth of the matter is that the law of gravitation will not argue with you, it will just make you nuts. So if you are intelligent, you will just accept it. And another -- I think of it more than I used to, and I tell you honestly, I think of it without the least bit of fear and regret and that is the matter of getting old.

You know, there are some folks who are just desperately afraid of the almanac than they are of sin. I daresay that in this congregation there are folks that would not tell their ages for anything.
I might judge you a lot older than you are. You can't duck it and you can't dodge it. The first time that came home to me, I went to call on George R. Stewart, who used to come herein other years. He was a good friend of mine and he has taken a great interest in me. I was just getting into 40 and he was 69 and I was calling on him. I admired him no end. In the course of the conversation, he turned to me with the desperation of a cornered animal and he said "Oh, it's awful, it's awful to have lived life in the thick of things as I have and then to get old and get where he can't do any more." Well, you know, I felt he had let me down. And when I got out all by myself, I had the first conversation with myself on the subject of getting old that I had ever had. I had never thought of it. I said to myself, "Now look here, that is coming to you one of these days and when it comes, I want you to meet it with a grain of gallantry. I said "You haven't done much but you have done far more than anybody ever thought you'd do. Oh, man! even including yourself." "Now!" I said "When you do have to strike out, don't go down the back and go muttering back to the dugout as if the umpire hadn't treated you right. After all the blessings He has heaped upon your life upon your unworthy head and heart, don't do that." I don't know if I'll be able or not, but I'm planning it this way, that when I do have to strike out, I'm going to say to the oncoming batter "I haven't made as many homeruns as I wish I had but thank God, I've had the privilege of playing the game! And it's your bat now, and God bless you." I saw a man fall off a horse the other day and he was so drunk that it did not hurt him a bit. He just hit the ground like a wet rag. Now I sort of hoped that it would give him something to remember it by, but it did not. He said "What's the matter? I've got relaxed. I've fallen off that horse. If my muscles were taut, I might have broken my neck."
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You can hit it so relaxedly that about the even time of life, you can look like a rich perfume, or you can be so sore and sour and crabby about it, that when your friends and your neighbors get back from the funeral, the first thing they will do is just this — "Let me grow lovely, growing old.

"Let me grow lovely, growing old
So many fine things age
Silks and ivories and gold
These things need not be new

There is a grandeur in old trees
Old streets are grander old,
the
Why not may I be lovelier.
Growing old?

There are some things, which if you are a Christian, you will accept.
There are some things that you can help. And these you ought to stop worrying about and try to help them. Then you'd be so busy you would not have time to worry. Suppose you wake up at night and find yourself about two-thirds cold and know that there is a blanket not six feet away, and then instead of getting up and getting the blanket, you just lay there and worry about it therest of the night. Of course, it did not get your warm but you had a fine time worrying. We need this warning last of all because worry is so awful. It is one of the most killing things in all the world. Oh, it takes a lot of work to kill us. I have a few sons who hasn't found that out yet, but it takes a world of work to kill us but it doesn't take very long to turn your head toward the cemetery.

I was pastor of St. Luke's Church in Oklahoma City for five years, I'm not a native of Oklahoma. I could have been born in Oklahoma if I'd wanted to, I was pastor of a church in Oklahoma of about forty-five or six hundred members and believe it or not, I buried forty babies, and one
This because our modern science has learned to look after the mother and the child, but I buried enough adults to almost have filled the cemetery, and a great many of them went to heaven - yes I know they want to Heaven, thank God but I don't want to take the reception committee by surprise'. I don't. And those folks went up to heaven thinking they had worked themselves to death when really they had worried themselves to death.

An old farmer was trying to raise chickens but the coons were giving him a lot of trouble and finally he got him a coon dog, a very tame little dog and one night an extra big coon came up and that same little dog jumped at him and rolled over and over until finally the old farmer was beginning to make his mind that the coon was going to get the if he did not help the dog better of him, so he got his hammer - the only weapon at hand and he stood over the pheasant until the coons head came up and he came down by with a mighty blow, but that time the dog's head was up and he hit the dog and killed him instantly and the dog always thought the coon had killed him! And so we worry ourselves to death and thinking that work killed us. Worry, hurts you and what is worse still - it hurts the folks who have to live with you. I know why some men leave home. What a tragedy it is to go off and work hard all day and then go home at night and have somebody meet you at the door looking like a dead egg. I know why some women get old long before their time. Their husband will go off and be optimistic and cheerful all day and then come home and spill out all his worries at the dinner table and ruin everybody's appetite except his own. You are hard to live with. There ought to be a special kind of pest house that we could put these worriers in and just let them worry until they have worried it out a.

And last of all, and worst of all, you are a sore disappointment to your Lord.
You are a desperate disappointment to Him. As Moffitt translates it
over and over again—He turned to those careful friends of His and
trust said "Oh men, Oh men, how little you trust me." We love to be
trusted and there is nothing that braves us like confidence. I married
immensely well, thank God and if you were to go down among the Genesee hills
and meet the woman I married. She is fifty-six now and white-haired and
beautiful—she always has been beautiful—and say to her "I saw your
husband doing a certain thing—a dishonorable thing," would be wasting
your time. I've been undergirded through the years by the confidence of
one who believed in me more than I believed in myself. God loves to be
believed in. "Oh men, how little ye trust Me?" Yes, I know that worry
is bad, that it is really wicked. It is the great American sin, but what
are you going to do about it? Well, if I did not have something positive
suggest to you, I wouldn't have any right to preach about it at all. There is
something, my brethren, that I have quit doing. I've quit denouncing any-
thing in the world unless I have something better to put in its place.
It's no use. What are you going to do about it? Well, now, I'll tell you
one or two remedies that will cause you not to worry. Some of you worried
tonight but you are going to quit worrying until this thing happens or
that thing happens. In other words, Just as soon as you get into an ideal
situation, you are going to quit worrying. But the trouble of it is that
there isn't any ideal situation—and the second trouble is if there were
an ideal situation, the chances are that you and I would not get into
it. And the third trouble is that if there were an ideal situation and
first you and I happened to get into it, the first thing we'd do with this ideal
situation would be to mess it up. You're just like that chaps that comes
up and says "Show me a perfect church and I'll join it." "Well, you'd
do nothing of the kind. They wouldn't have you." There are just two
reasons fundamentally why I am in the church. The church is imperfect and
therefore they let me in—Second, the church is imperfect and therefore
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It needs me. I can do something for it and therefore I am in the church. So you are not going to cure your worry by getting into an ideal situation. The second way you are not going to kill it is by simply grinding your jaws and clinching your hands and saying "I'm never going to worry again as long as I live." I've seen folks do that and you know, they began to worry about worry. And when you get to worrying about worry, it is just the square root of worry. You know, the quickest way to reach certain goals is by the indirect road. I think you have noticed that. For example, take going to sleep. Did you ever get in a hurry to go to sleep. I don't mean in church- I went some time ago to a western town to speak at a very important conference and I did not have but one chance to speak. You know if you have two or three and you fail one time, maybe by the help of the Lord you'll do better next time. I only had one time and I'm not one of those Napoleons who can get along ahead of without sleep. So I went up in time to get a good night's sleep at the hotel. The host, Kassimkassimx conference was being held, shook me warmly by the hand and said "Where is your grip?" I said "Down to the hotel" "I'm staying down at the hotel". He said "Oh that won't do, that won't do at all. Don't you know the best family in my church has asked for you? You know when the best family gets at you, you haven't got a chance. So he went up and got my grips and took me to the best family. It was a lovely home and when I got in I found I had a lovely room and not only that, but I had a lovely room mate and not only that but I had a lovely bedfellow and not only that, but he weighed about 270 lbs and we sat up until midnight and talked and then we went to bed and he slept in the valley and I watched on the hills and the clock struck one and I said "I've got to go to sleep." And the clock struck two and I said "I must go to sleep." And the clock struck three and I said "I'll be ruined if I don't go to sleep."
The clock struck four and I said, "I don't care if I never go to sleep" and then I just rolled down against the hillside and went to sleep! Now what are you going to do about worry? I'm going to offer you four practical suggestions. It is not sound sense, and it is not sound psychology and it is not sound Christianity. You do with them what you did with the other sermon that you heard yesterday. Amen, we know! You know where you filed it away.

First, worry is an acquirement. It is something you have to learn. Nobody was ever born worried. You worried somebody soon after you got here, but nobody was ever born worried and if you are addicted to worry, I am not joking with you now - if you are a good worrier, a consistent worrier, it is because you have practiced and practiced and practiced and practiced. Now it is a law of the mind that we cannot deny, to which we dare not shut our eyes that anything that can be learned, can be unlearned. If you are going to cure your worry, you've got to keep peace with your conscience. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." That comes out of an old, old book, yet the most up-to-date, the most progressive, the most learned, the most learned, could not add one single bit to that. No human on earth can deny its truth. It is not true because God is angry at you. It is true in the nature of things. You can no more be at peace when you are fighting with God in your conscience than you can be dead and alive at the same time. If God is going in one direction and you in another, you will never have peace. If God is saying to you when you reach forth your hand for some little pleasure that everybody else does, and that is where Christians most often have the hardest battles. If I were to tell you the thing that caused me the most spiritual agony in my life, the sin over which I've had the hardest battle there would not be one in ten thousand who would know that thing at all. It is not what it is to you. It is what it is to me in the light of God.
And believe me, my brethren, we'll never find peace until we learn to
dress our lives by the mirror God holds up to our faces instead of the

tiny mirror our neighbors hold up to us. If you are going to have
peace, you have got to stop quarreling with God and quarreling with
yourself. You know H.G. Wells said in one of his passages—that he
wasn't so much a personality as he was a civil war. And we find these
civil wars all around us. Sometimes they are in our homes and some-
times in our own lives.

That pastor of souls summed it all up and said "Finally— that means that
Paul was really going to quit. You know an optimist has been defined as
a man who reaches for his hat when the preacher says "finally". "Finally
whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever
things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely.
Do you find anything lovable in those grand boys of yours there are
climbing the hill and finding it very hard because you are so lacking in
understanding. Is there anything beautiful in your situation—Look at
it. It will help you and it will express your appreciation. I said
to a congregation the other day—They were talking about the difference
between the north and the south. I'm not going to still discuss that
but one difference there is. In my congregations in the South, at least,
they are not appreciative than they are here, but they so so more.
Any worshipper who will come to church Sunday after Sunday and Sunday after Sunday and be helped by some faithful minister and then get up and stalk out every single service like the house was on fire, and never say a word of appreciation, ought to have the jumping toothache. Why? Because you just want to tickle the preacher's vanity? No- The preacher is a physician of souls and when the doctor gives you a prescription and comes to see you. He says "How are you today?" And I get up and preach file and preach and if my congregation were to get up and walk out, I wouldn't know if I had done any good or not. I want them to say so. I've heard preachers say, "Oh, I don't want anybody to say they've enjoyed my sermon." Well, the difference between me and him is that I am telling the truth. OK, if you tell me that you enjoyed mine, I shall just eat up the words, be sure. If I had to preach to a bunch of icebergs like that, well I'd have to get the second blessing, that's all there is to that.

Look at your assets, rather than at your liabilities and last of all—biggest of all and all increasing, make a habit of prayer. "In everything" said Paul, turning his face away from death as he looked death in the face from all his foes- and looking at the Mighty God, It is a tragedy whenever preacher preaches a discouraging sermon. That is one sin— I've got many of which to repent, but I've never gotten up and tried to take away what little courage people had.

Learn to pray. Before we got into the war, It is said that one of our aviators was making a flight around the world and the next morning when he had taken off from his airport for some two hours and was more than two hours from his next landing base, he heard a noise in his plane which he recognized as the gnawing of a rat. He realized that while his plane was grounded, this rat had gotten in there and now with sharp teeth, he was cutting at some part of his machine. He did not know what part.
He said it would precipitate a crash and he would lose his life. It made his blood run cold. At first he did not know what to do. Two hours to get back to where he had started and more than two hours to get to the next landing base. Then he remembered that the rat was a rodent—that it was meant to live on the ground and under the ground. That it was not made for the heights and so he went to climbing. He went up a thousand feet and then he went up another thousand feet and then another thousand feet and another till he was 20,000 feet in the air. And the noise ceased. When he came down more than two hours later at his next landing base, there was a dead rat in the pit of his plane. And worry is a rodent—It can't live in the secret place of the Most High.

"Therefore, in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." "So shall the peace of God, that passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus our Lord." 

(Prayer)
THE WORRY DEVIL

This is my favorite passage of Scripture Phil.4:4-8

I've had some dark days and some sunny, but thank God, most of my
song
days have been sunny, and this has made the sun shine a little
in gloomy days
brighter and I've come to it when clouds were in the sky and found that
it brought out the blue through the clouds. I've come to it when I
walked in slippery places and found it a strong staff on which to lean,
and then I have come to it when I couldn't walk at all and found it a
soft pillow on which to rest the tired and aching head. It's a tender
text, as tender as the sheltering arms of a mother to a tired and fright-
ened child. It is a strong text. It is stronger than the hills. It
is as strong as the Everlasting Arms.

"Rejoice in the Lord alway and again I say rejoice. Let your forbearance
be made known unto all men for the Lord is at hand. In nothing be
anxious but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving,
let your requests made known unto God and so shall the peace of God
which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through
Christ Jesus. Finally Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever
thing are honorable, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are
just, whatsoever things are lovely, if there be any virtue or if there
be anything worthy of praise, think on these things" and you'll find
my test in this: "In nothing be anxious." Now that sounds like a big
order. Oh, I know it does. There are so many things that can hurt us
and while every tomorrow is a kind of jungle on the highway of life
of tragedy
from which some wild beasts may spring us, to tear our hearts, and to
tear the hearts of somebody who is dearer to us than ourselves.

Speaking back from the congregation, not speaking as from the pulpit,
for I have always felt more at home in the pew than I have in the pulpit.
I've never felt like a minister and you know, nobody ever did take me
for a preacher until they heard me and then some of them backed out.
Now the man who wrote this text might have said "With all the strains and sorrows that ye have known," and I hear some of you say "Oh yes, it is easy for you to stand up as a minister and say "In nothing be anxious", but if you knew the stark tragedy that stalks my steps, if you knew how there has been the setting of a great hope in my life, like the setting of the sun, you wouldn't talk like that. Well, maybe not, but I love to remember that the man who wrote this text was no a freshman in the school of life. He was not a raw recruit boasting of battles he had never fought. He was not a sailor whose sailing had been on a sheltered mill pond. He had been on the high seas. He had known life in all its tragedies and its triumphs, and he was so scarred in battle that if he had gone to heaven backward, they would have recognized him by his scars. He was in jail when he wrote this letter and death was so close that he could almost reach out and put his hand on its cold forehead and yet not thinking of himself, but thinking of his absent friends, he says "Now don't be anxious about anything." What did he mean? Well, I'll tell you I think he did not mean. He did not mean to encourage a happy-go-lucky attitude towards life that some of us sometimes assume. You know there are some folks who haven't even pride enough in their souls to go a beaten way. Paul wasn't like that. He was a desperately earnest man and nobody understood better than the author of this text, how impossible it is for a half-hearted saint to walk with a whole-hearted Christ. And so he was not urging us to a happy-go-lucky existence. And the second thing, he wasn't doing. He wasn't warning us against looking ahead. You know, I don't think that Jesus ever said anything that was more grossly misunderstood than those words when He said "Take no thought for tomorrow." Well, what did Jesus mean by that? He certainly was not forbidding us to look ahead, because if ever a man looked ahead in this world, it was Jesus, "Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame" and He
went gallantly to the Cross in the consciousness of the fact that if He only were lifted up, not then but in the great tomorrow, He would draw all men unto Him. And the man who wrote this text "Be not deceived. God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Now that is used chiefly as a cudgel to pound sinners over the head and it is a terrific cudgel. It tells the sinner that nobody ever gets away with anything. But along with that, is one of the most gracious and winsome promises in all the Word of God. It says to young life, and older life for that matter, 'You will be reaping your harvest by and by. It is not a matter of chance, but a matter of choice. Nobody needs to guess what he is going to reap tomorrow night and the next night and way on to the end of eternity, for every man reaps according to his sowing. Sometimes we don't like that. When I was pastor in Huston, Texas, a woman in my church gave her son a second hand Ford and that youngster loved to go curves around town at high speed. He loved to hear the car sweep. Rubber was a little more plentiful then than it is now and one day he went sweeping around a curve and a telephone pole met him. He went out through the wind-shield and hit that telephone pole and had hit him on the back of the head, it might have killed him. They took him to the hospital and sent for his pastor and I hurried around. I'm not making fun of it, I'm just telling you what happened, and when I got around to the hospital, his mother came running to me and taking my hand in both of hers she said "Oh, what have I done that this should happen to me?" Well, it jarred me for a moment and finally I said "It did not happen to you, it happened to him". And you know I thought she was headed toward this, that she was going to get mad at the Lord for letting her son run into a telephone pole, while he was driving recklessly.
And I said "Hold on, that will never do. If the Lord reached out and snatched the telephone pole out from in front of every reckless driver, he might put one in front of me sometime when I was driving carefully". "All I'm arguing for" I said is for every man's meeting his own telephone pole. Well now, that is the kind of world we live in, whether we like it or not, every man hits his own telephone pole; every nation hits its own telephone pole. We had a chance over a quarter of a century ago of helping the world make peace. We turned away from that chance and the nations of the world have been meeting their telephone poles and breaking their hearts and smashing themselves to pieces because whether we like it or not, we are part of this old wicked, sinning world. We may not like to be a part of Germany or of Japan or a part of the nations abroad, but we are a part of them, getting closer and closer and closer together with every passing hour. We may kick about it all we like, but what hurts them, hurts us.

I was on a fishing trip some time ago and I got some poison ivy on this left ankle of mine. Poison ivy has a very great fondness for me and I just want to say to you, if you are a bit bored and the preacher is tiring you out a bit, just get you a little poison ivy. It will keep you awake during the dullest sermon you ever heard in this world. And so I got this poison ivy and I remembered how I used to treat it when I was a boy. I doctored it with carbolic acid and so I hurried off to the drug store and got some carbolic acid but I forgot one thing about the treatment. I used to dilute the acid before I put it on. The first time I just took it straight and I tell you. I put it on and rubbed it in and then I began to get action. And when it had eaten down close to the bone, you know my whole body had an insurrection, and every single member of it was in agitation. This arm said "Oh I have nothing to do with it. I'm separated from it as though by three thousand miles. My head said "Well, I have nothing to do with it for I wasn't consulted when it was put on.
Not one organ of my body was going to have anything to do with that bad ankle, but believe it or not, when we went to bed, that night, we all stayed awake together.

It is not only sound Christianity, but it is the soundest common sense in the world. As long as there is a bad man in the world, I am in danger. Common sense as well as Christianity and my own personal safety makes me say "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us."

We are sinners and we live in a sinful world. I remember years ago I read a story in McGuffey's reader. All educated people read McGuffey, I take it. If you have not read McGuffey, you may be a doctor of philosophy, but you have lost out. Now the marvel about McGuffey, the sweetest thing I know about him was that he always wrote stories with a moral. I know how silly that is, because all the smart boys today like stories that have an - immoral, but McGuffey didn't know any better than to write stories with a moral, so he wrote one about a chap who got tired of the grim realities of life and God's natural laws and so one day, He said, "Oh, I'm so tired of this sordid world. I wish I could live in a world of chance!" He lay down and went to sleep. When he waked up, he was in a world of chance. He found he had a toothache. Now he remembered what he used to do when he had a toothache, and that was he made himself some hot coffee and held it in his mouth and found some relief. And so he went to make his coffee and when it was ready and he had poured it out and started to drink it, instead of being hot, he found it full of ice and spat it out. He said in indignation to his friend, "What does this mean?" "Oh", said his friend, this doesn't mean anything. It's all done on a chance. Sometimes it boils sometimes it freezes. This is the kind of world you asked for. Then he saw the sunshine was so beautiful that it almost made him forget his toothache. But it hand't more than got up good when it set again. And again he turned to his friend and said
"What does this mean?" "Oh", he said "It doesn't mean anything. Sometimes it stays up a minute, sometimes five minutes, sometimes five hours, sometimes five weeks." "But" he said, "that's your kind of world. When he got up the next morning, instead of hitting the floor, he hit the ceiling. Now some of you have done that in an ordinary world.

Now what did Paul mean when he said "Now, don't you worry about anything. Don't you worry about anything." Why did Paul say that? In the first place, because so many folks are worrying. Educated folks worry because they know so much to be worried about. Ignorant folks are worried because they do not know any better. Irreligious folks are worried, they have no faith. and I am sorry to say, that a good many religious folks worry. I know it is a mark of lack of faith – a terrible lack of faith but I lot of religious folks worry. And then we worry about all sorts of things. Nothing is too big nor too little for us to worry about. We worry about our money. We worry about how we get it and how we get rid of it and how we are going to get some more, and we worry about how we are going to get married and we worry about not getting married, and we worry about how we are going to get unmarried. We worry because we are too thin. Then we worry because we are not too thin. We worry about our bodies and we worry about our souls. We worry about things that actually happen but we worry far more about the things that never do happen. Now if it so happens that you don't belong to the union and put in more than an eight hour day of worrying as some of you probably do, if you will count it up, you will find that at least three fourths of all the worrying that you have ever done in your life, has been done about things that never did happen. Just think it over! I had a friend who went out to spend his first summer in Colorado and he spent his first night in a village hotel and when he got up the next morning, you know in that very clear atmosphere, things far away look very close at hand and he looked over at the mountains yonder far and shining. He was nearly 15 miles away
but he felt like he could walk down to the end of the street and find them. He said to his host, "I believe I'II ______ over to the mountains before breakfast." His host, knowing he was a tenderfoot said "Why, do you think you can make it?" "Sure thing, I can take a little walk like that." So he set out and he walked and he walked and he walked and the mountains did not get any closer but he was a stubborn fellow, and by and by an old farmer found him, sitting on the bank of an irrigation ditch removing his shoes and he said "What are you going to do?" And he said "I'm going to swim this river." He said "Why don't you step across it?" He said "You are not going to fool me anymore." And so we worry about how we are going to get across the river when there is no river there.

And in the second place, Worry is a useless thing. We have all done a good many useless things in our day, but I can tell you this, you never did anything in all your life that was quite as useless as to worry. It never lifted a single burden. It never dried a single tear. It never rubbed out a wrinkle, but it has rubbed in billions of them—It is the most useless thing in the world. It has been well said that there are two classes of things about which nobody ought to worry. The first is made up of those things which you cannot help. There are some things in the world which if we are just intelligent we just accept. You know, you may not like the law of gravitation, but there is no use in arguing with the law of gravitation. The truth of the matter is that the law of gravitation will not argue with you, it will just make you nuts. So if you are intelligent, you will just accept it. And another— I think of it more than I used to, and I tell you honestly, I think of it without the least bit of fear and regret and that is the matter of getting old. You know, there are some folks who are ______ desperately afraid of the almanac than they are of sin. I daresay that in this congregation there are folks that would not tell their ages for anything.
I might judge you a lot older than you are. You can't duck it and you can't dodge it. The first time that came home to me, I went to call on George R. Stewart, who used to come herein other years. He was a good friend of mine and he has taken a great interest in me. I was just getting into 40 and he was 69 and I was calling on him. I admired him no end. In the course of the conversation, he turned to me with the desperation of a cornered animal and he said "Oh, it's awful, it's awful to have lived life in the thick of things as I have and then to get old and get where he can't do any more." Well, you know, I felt he had let me down. And when I got out all by myself, I had the first conversation with myself on the subject of getting old that I had ever had. I had never thought of it. I said to myself, "Now look here, that is coming to you one of these days and when it comes, I want you to meet it with a grain of gallantry. I said "You haven't done much but you have done far more than anybody ever thought you'd do. Oh, man! even including yourself. " "Now," I said "When you do have to strike out, don't go down the back and go muttering back to the dugout as if the umpire hadn't treated you right. After all the blessings He has heaped upon your life upon your unworthy head and heart, don't do that." I don't know if I'll be able or not, but I'm planning it this way, that when I do have to strike out, I'm going to say to the oncoming batter " I haven't made as many homeruns as I wish I had but thank God, I've had the privilege of playing the game! And it's your bat now, and God bless you." I saw a man fall off a horse the other day and he was so drunk that it did not hurt him a bit. He just hit the ground like a wet rag. Now I sort of hoped that it would give him something to remember it by, but it did not. He said "What's the matter? I've got relaxed. I've fallen off that horse. If my muscles were taut, I might have broken my neck."
Dr. Clovis G. Chappell

You can hit it so relaxedly that about the even tide of life, you can be

like a rich perfume or you can be so sore and sour and crabbid about it, that when your friends and your neighbors get back from the funeral, the first thing they will do is just this - "Let me grow lovely, growing old."
"let me grow lovely, growing old
So many fine things age
Silks and ivories and gold
These things need not be new
There is a grandeur in old trees
Old streets are grander old,
Why not may I be lovelier
Growing old?"

There are some things, which if you are a Christian, you will accept.
There are some things that you can help. And these you ought to stop worrying about and try to help them. Then you'd be so busy you would not have time to worry. Suppose you wake up at night and find yourself about two-thirds cold and know that there is a blanket not six feet away, and then instead of getting up and getting the blanket, you just lay there and worry about it therest of the night. Of course, it did not get your warm but you had a fine time worrying. We need this warning last of all because worry is so awful. It is one of the most killing things in all the world. Oh, it takes a lot of work to kill us. I have a few sons who haven't found that out yet, but it takes a world of work to kill us but it doesn't take very long to turn your head toward the cemetery.

I was pastor of St. Luke's Church in Oklahoma City for five years. I'm not a native of Oklahoma. I could have been born in Oklahoma if I'd wanted to, I was pastor of a church in Oklahoma of about forty five or six hundred members and believe it or not, I buried babies,
This because our modern science has learned to look after the mother and the child, but I buried enough adults to almost have filled the cemetery. And a great many of them went to heaven - yes I know they went to Heaven, thank God but I don't want to take the reception committee by surprise. I don't. And those folks went up to heaven thinking they had worked themselves to death when really they had worried themselves to death.

An old farmer was trying to raise chickens but the coons were giving him a lot of trouble and finally he got him a coon dog, a very tame little dog and one night an extra big coon came up and that game little dog jumped at him and rolled over and over until finally the old farmer was beginning to make up his mind that the coon was going to get the better of him, so he got his hammer - the only weapon at hand and he stood over the pheasant until the coons head came up and he came down by with a mighty blow, but that time the dog's head was up and he hit the dog and killed him instantly and the dog always thought the coon had killed him. And so we worry ourselves to death and thinking that work killed us. Worry hurts you and what is worse still - it hurts the folks who have to live with you. I know why some men leave home.

What a tragedy it is to go off and work hard all day and then go home at night and have somebody meet you at the door looking like a dead egg. I know why some women get old long before their time. Their husband will go off and be optimistic and cheerful all day and then come home and spill out all his worries at the dinner table and ruin everybody's appetite except his own. You are hard to live with. There ought to be a special kind of pest house that we could put these worriers in and just let them worry until they have worried it out.

And last of all, and worst of all, you are a sore disappointment to your Lord.
You are a desperate disappointment to Him. As Moffitt translates it over and over again – He turned to those careful friends of His and said "Oh men, Oh men, how little you trust me." We love to be trusted and there is nothing that braces us like confidence. I married immensely well, thank God and if you were to go down among the Genesee hills and meet the woman I married. She is fifty six now and white haired and beautiful– she always has been beautiful– and say to her "I saw your husband doing a certain thing – a dishonorable thing", you'd be wasting your time. I've been undergirded through the years by the confidence of one who believed in me more than I believed in myself. God loves to be believed in. "Oh men, how little ye trust Me!" Yes, I know that worry is bad, that it is really wicked. It is the great American sin but what are you going to do about it? Well, if I did not have something positive I wouldn't have any right to preach about it at all. There is one thing, my brethren, that I have quit doing. I've quit denouncing anything in the world unless I have something better to put in its place. It's no use. What are you going to do about it? Well now, I'll tell you one or two remedies that will cause you not to worry. Some of you worried tonight but you are going to quit worrying until this thing happens or that thing happens. In other words. Just as soon as you get into an ideal situation, you are going to quit worrying. But the trouble of it is that there isn't any ideal situation – and the second trouble is if there were an ideal situation, the chances are that you and I would not get into it. And the third trouble is that if there were an ideal situation and you and I happened to get into it, the third thing we'd do with this ideal situation would be to mess it up. You're just like that chaps that comes up and says "Show me a perfect church and I'll join it". "Well, you'd do nothing of the kind. They wouldn't have you.". There are just two reasons fundamentally why I am in the church. The church is imperfect and therefore they let me in– Second, the church is imperfect and therefore
it needs me. I can do something for it and therefore I am in the church. So you are not going to cure your worry by getting into an ideal situation. The second way you are not going to kill it is by simply grinding your jaws and clinching your hands and saying "I'm never going to worry again as long as I live." I've seen folks do that and you know, they began to worry about worry. And when you get to worrying about worry, it is just the square root of worry. You know, the quickest way to reach certain goals is by the indirect road. I think you have noticed that. For example, take going to sleep. Did you ever get in a hurry to go to sleep. I don't mean in church- I went some time ago to a western town to speak at a very important conference and I did not have but one chance to speak. You know if you have two or three and you fail one time, maybe by the help of the Lord you'll do better next time. I only had one time and I'm not one of those Napoleons who can get along ahead of without sleep. So I went up in time to get a good night's sleep at the hotel. The host, knowing the conference was being held, shook me warmly by the hand and said "Where is your grip?" I said "Down to the hotel" "I'm staying down at the hotel". He said "Oh that won't do, that won't do at all. Don't you know the best family in my church has asked for you? You know when the best family gets at you, you haven't got a chance. So he went up and got my grips and took me to the best family- It was a lovely home and when I got in I found I had a lovely room and not only that, but I had a lovely room mate- and not only that but I had a lovely bedfellow and not only that, but he weighed about 270 lbs and we sat up until midnight and talked and then we went to bed and he slept in the valley and I watched on the hills and the clock struck one and I said "I've got to go to sleep." And the clock struck two and I said "I must go to sleep." And the clock struck three and I said "I'll be ruined if I don't go to sleep."
The clock struck four and I said "I don't care if I never go to sleep" and then I just rolled down against the hillside and went to sleep! Now what are you going to do about worry? I'm going to offer you four practical suggestions. It is not sound sense, and it is not sound psychology and it is not sound Christianity. You do with them what you did with the other sermon that you heard yesterday. Amen, we know! You know where you filed it away.

First worry is an acquirement. It is something you have to learn. Nobody was ever born worried. You worried somebody soon after you got here but nobody was ever born worried and if you are addicted to worry. I am not joking with you now - if you are a good worrier, a consistent worrier, it is because you have practiced and practiced and practiced and practiced. Now it is a law of the mind that we cannot deny, to which we dare not shut our eyes that anything that can be learned, can be unlearned. If you are going to cure your worry, you've got to keep peace with your conscience. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." That comes out of an old, old book, yet the most up-to-date, the most progressive the most learned phycologist of the day couldn't add one single bit to that. No human on earth can deny its truth. It is not true because God is angry is at you. It is true in the nature of things. You can no more be at peace when you are fighting with God in your conscience than you can be dead and alive at the same time. If God is going in one direction and you in another, you will never have peace. If God is saying to you when you reach forth your hand for some little pleasure that everybody else does, and that is where Christians most often have the hardest battles. If I were to tell you the thing that caused me the most spiritual agony in my life, the sin over which I've had the hardest battle there would not be one in ten thousand who would know that thing at all. It is not what it is to you. It is what it is to me in the light of God
And believe me, my brethren, we'll never find peace until we learn to
dress our lives by the mirror God holds up to our faces instead of the
mirror our neighbors hold up to us. If you are going to have peace, you have got to stop quarreling with God and quarreling with
yourself. You know H.G. Wells said in one of his passages— that he
wasn't so much a personality as he was a civil war. And we find these
civil wars all around us. Sometimes they are in our homes and some-
times in our own lives.

That pastor of souls summed it all up and said "Finally— that means that
Paul was really going to quit. You know an optimist has been defined as
a man who reaches for his hat when the preacher says "finally". "Finally
whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever
things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely.
Do you find anything lovable in those grand boys of yours there are
climbing the hill and finding it very hard because you are so lacking in
understanding. Is there anything beautiful in your situation— Look at
it. It will help you and it will express your appreciation. I said
to a congregation the other day— They were talking about the difference
between the north and the south. I'm not going to did discuss that
but one difference there is. In my congregations in the South, at least,
they are not appreciative than they are here, but they so so more.
Any worshipper who will come to church Sunday after Sunday and Sunday after Sunday and be helped by some faithful minister and then get up and stalk out every single service like the house was on fire, and never say a word of appreciation, ought to have the jumping toothache. Why? Because you just want to tickle the preacher's vanity? No—The preacher is a physician of souls and when the doctor gives you a prescription and comes to see you. He says "How are you today?" And I get up and preach and preach and if my congregation were to get up and exit out, I wouldn't know if I had done any good or not. I want them to say so. I've heard preachers say "Oh, I don't want anybody to say they've enjoyed my sermon." Well, the difference between me and him is that I am telling the truth. Oh, if you tell me that you enjoyed mine, I shall just eat up the words, be sure. If I had to preach to a bunch of icebergs like that, well I'd have to get the second blessing, that's all there is to that.

Look at your assets, rather than at your liabilities and last of all—biggest of all and all increasing, make a habit of prayer. "In everything" said Paul, turning his face away from death as he looked death in the face from all his foes— and looking at the Mighty God, —It is a tragedy whenever a preacher preaches a discouraging sermon. That is one sin— I've got many of which to repent, but I've never gotten up and tried to take away what little courage people had. Learn to pray. Before we got into the war, it is said that one of our aviators was making a flight around the world and the next morning when he had taken off from his airport for some two hours and was more than two hours from his next landing base, he heard a noise in his plane which he recognized as the gnawing of a rat. He realized that while his plane was grounded, this rate had gotten in there and now with sharp teeth, he was cutting at some part of his machine. He did not know what part.
He said it would precipitate a crash and he would lose his life. It made his blood run cold. At first he did not know what to do. Two hours to get back to where he had started and more than two hours to get to the next landing base. Then he remembered that the rat was a rodent—that it was meant to live on the ground and under the ground. That it was not made for the heights and so he went to climbing. He went up a thousand feet and then he went up another thousand feet and then another thousand feet and another till he was 20,000 feet in the air. And the noise ceased. When he came down more than two hours later at his next landing base, there was a dead rat in the pit of his plane. And worry is a rodent—It can't live in the secret place of the Most High. "Therefore, in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God" "So shall the peace of God, that passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus our Lord."

(Prayer)
A GREAT SECRET

"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

—Philippians 4:11

The text has a beautiful background. It is a part of a thank-you letter that Paul wrote to his friends at Philippi. These friends had just sent him a much-needed gift. Their thoughtfulness has flooded his soul with sunshine. He is hastening to express his appreciation. "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again." Then gracious gentleman that he is, he fears that they will think that he has felt slighted because this is the first gift that he has received for a long time. Therefore, he hastens to add, "Wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. I did not doubt your love because I failed to hear from you. I believe in your friendship and devotion enough to trust you in the silence. I knew that you were loving me all the time whether I heard from you or not."

That was beautifully generous. Too often we feel that if our friends do not pay us constant attention they have ceased to be friends. They must keep reminding us of their devotion or we cease to believe in that devotion. When we are sick and the pastor fails to call, sometimes we blame him even though he has never heard of our illness. But often we excuse him in Paul's beautiful fashion—"I know you would have come but you lacked opportunity." Paul, as all great lovers, was glad to believe the best about those whom he loved.

Not only did Paul rejoice in this gift because it was an expression of the love of his friends, he rejoiced in it yet more because of the blessing that he was sure such giving would bring to the givers themselves. "I desire fruit that may abound to your account." He knew that it is more blessed to give than to
receive. Therefore, his supreme joy in this gift was due to his certainty that it would bring enrichment to all that had a part in it. And how right Paul was! This gift was enriching because it enabled his friends to share in the great work that he was doing. It was further enriching because it brought to them this lovely letter. This was a benediction not to themselves alone but to the whole world. All of us would be the poorer without this letter.

Not only did Paul rejoice in this gift because it was an expression of the love of his friends, not only did he rejoice in it because he knew that it would bring enrichment to the givers themselves, but he rejoiced in it because the gift had helped to meet his material needs. Thanks to the thoughtfulness of his friends he could now enjoy comforts that without them would have been impossible. But in order to be sincere, he feels that he must tell them that this was the least part of his joy. "I was glad to have your gift," he seems to say. "It has made my lot far easier. But while it was a lovely luxury, it was not an absolute necessity. If it had not come, I should not have grown restless and wretched and morose and bitter. I could have got on without it. This is the case because I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content."

This claim to contentment on the part of Paul will take many of us by surprise. This is the case for at least two reasons.

1. We are surprised because of what we know of Paul himself. Paul was not the kind of man with whom we usually associate contentment. We think of this virtue, if virtue it is, as the possession of passive and sluggish natures. Paul, as we know, was the very opposite of this. He was a man of fire. He had dynamite in his soul. He had thunder and lightning in his make-up. One of the first views we get of him is as a blazing persecutor of the Church. He is "breathing out threatenings and slaughter." As we watch him, we are sure that his outward rage is due to the fact that he is raging within. But here this hot-hearted man is
likely to be very hard to live with. I have known a few ministers who were doomed to this tragedy. I have also known a few ministers' wives who had to face the same hard fate. Paul was a great saint, but he was not a self-satisfied saint. He was satisfied with the road that he was traveling, but he was not satisfied with the goal he had attained. That was his salvation.

Finally in declaring that he had learned to be content, Paul did not mean that he had merely become resigned to his fate. There are those that look upon resignation as one of the supreme virtues. But if resignation is a virtue at all, it is a very imperfect one. It is not active, but passive. It carries the idea that one has set out to achieve something worthwhile and has decided to quit, to be satisfied with nothing at all or with a poor second-best. The fox that saw the delicious grapes but was too cowardly to brave the danger of falling in order to win them became resigned. Not daring to tell himself the truth about himself, he lied about the grapes. That was the folly of the Ten Spies. They saw that the Promised Land was a good land, but they were afraid of the blood-letting that would be necessary in order to possess it. Therefore, they said, "The land is no good." Thus they became resigned. Such resignation is a deadly tragedy. It means not only that we have missed the prize, but that we have persuaded ourselves to be satisfied with our failure.

What then, I repeat, did Paul mean? He meant that he had learned to vote approval to every experience of circumstance of his life. When the Speaker of the House of Lords puts a question, instead of saying, "All in favor of the motion, let it be known by saying, 'Aye!'", he says, "All that favor, let it be known by saying, 'Content!'". Contentment, therefore, is not a passive but an active virtue. Paul had learned to vote approval to every experience of his life. This does not mean that he was claiming that everything had come to him right side up. He has had every sort of experience. He has ranged from the lowest valleys to the highest mountain-tops. He had lived in the tropics and at the poles.
when he had come down somewhat in the same fashion, his wife who was as ambitious as himself made this confession: "In the days when we were going from one promotion to another, from a smaller church to a larger, we were never the least contented with the church that we had. We never enjoyed it. We were always feverishly eager to get another church that we thought a little better and a little more prominent." They did not know how to be contented in the midst of success.

2. Not only had Paul learned how to prosper, but he had learned how to live humbly. As Goodspeed translates it, he had learned the secret "of going without." This may not be quite so difficult as learning how to prosper, but it is still a great achievement. For Paul is not claiming that he has learned in a stoical fashion to go without, but that he has learned to go without gladly. The one outstanding character in Gone with the Wind is Scarlet O'Hara. She had a certain kind of grit in her heart that commands our respect. But in spite of this, she is more detestable than lovable. She has had to go without, to be actually hungry. But she bore her lot with bitterness. When the worst was over, she declared that she would never go hungry again, not if she had to steal—not even if she had to kill. She never learned how to live humbly.

Dean Swift was one of the most brilliant writers of prose that ever lived. But he missed most of the prizes upon which he set his heart. He never learned to go without. In the language of Thackeray, "He went on gathering learning, swallowing scorn, and submitting with stealthy rage to his fortune........I am glad for one," he continues, "that fate wrested the prey out of his claws, and cut his wings and chained him. One can gaze, not without awe and pity, at the lonely eagle chained behind the bars........He was always alone—alone and gnashing in the darkness, except when Stella's sweet smile came and shone upon him. When that went, silence and utter night closed over him........An immense genius, an awful downfall and ruin. So great a man he seems to me that thinking of him is like thinking of an empire falling." Thackeray claims that he was the most miserable man in England. He was miserable because he never learned to go without.
Paul had not only learned the secret of going without things, but he had learned to go without more priceless treasures. He had learned to go without youth. He was content to be Paul the Aged. I have known some very fine people who were constantly at war with the almanac. Paul had also learned to go without health. He had a mysterious malady that he called a thorn. But he learned to rejoice both in spite of it and because of it. That was a great achievement. Years ago I boarded in the home of a physician. That physician was suddenly laid low by a lingering and incurable disease. He became unspeakably bitter. He would rage against his sickness. He would storm at the physicians and nurses who tried to help him. Thus he became a torture both to himself and to his loved ones. It was not good to visit him. One came away from such a visit, not with pleasant memories but with a shudder of horror. He never learned how to go without his health.

Here is another man who for nearly ten years was my associate. He was stricken by an unusually virulent type of tuberculosis. The doctor gave him but a few months to live. But this man said, "Since I am going to have to spend the next few months in bed, since I must be sick, I am going to give myself the luxury of it. This will give me some much needed rest. It will give me also some much-needed leisure. There are many books that I have wanted to read but could not. This will give me my chance." So he learned how to be an invalid, not grimly but joyfully. To visit him was a benediction. It was like turning aside into the Upper Room. Not only so, but incidentally, he surprised his doctor by getting well.

Paul had even learned how to go without the approval and plaudits of the crowd. Of course he loved appreciation as every one does who is really human. He himself was a great lover and, therefore, longed to be loved. When those who heard him approved, of course he was glad. But such approval was not necessary. Once one occasion Paul found himself so popular that the people regarded him as a god and were eager to offer sacrifices in his honor. Then from those heights he dropped so low that he barely escaped being stoned to death. But their change
of attitude did not stop Paul. He learned to carry on in the midst of approval and disapproval, whether his ministry met with love or with freezing indifference. "I am ready," he writes, "to spend and to be spent for you though the more I love the less I be loved."

Paul even learned to do without his freedom. Of course he was eager to carry on his work in the great outer world. He was a great traveler. He was constantly looking to the regions beyond. He was eager to preach the Gospel throughout the whole world. But this eager and adventurous man perhaps knew the inside of more prisons than any other man in the Roman Empire. Though he longed to go and come as he pleased, yet he could get on without such freedom. He knew both how to be abased and how to abound. He knew how to prosper and how to go without.

Now whether we have attained such heights or not, we must confess that they are worth attaining. Contentment is a worthwhile virtue because there is no real happiness without it. However bountiful the treasures that life dumps into our laps, if contentment is not among them, we shall have no real happiness. On the other hand, however limited our treasure, we shall still be rich if we have contentment. Then contentment is a virtue because it adds to our usefulness. It helps to make us easy to live with. In addition, it helps to free us from ourselves, the better to serve others. How much more smoothly the friction-fretted machinery of life would run if it were oiled more freely with the fine lubricant called contentment! He had learned to conquer his circumstances instead of being conquered by them. Thus he found both joy and power.

IV

How did Paul learn to be contented?

He certainly did not learn it by seeking contentment as an end. It is no more possible to find contentment by going in quest of it than it is to find sleep. Did you ever get in a hurry to go to sleep? If so, you discovered that however
swift your pursuit, sleep was swifter still. It is no more possible to find contentment by seeking it than it is to find real happiness. Who are the really joyous people? They are certainly not those who say to themselves, "Go to now, I am going to have a good time." The most restless and wretched folks in the world are those who are giving their days and nights to constantly seeking to have a good time. Contentment is the result of a cause. It is a by-product. We come on it by the seeking of higher values.

What are these values? Naturally, there are many factors that enter into our finding contentment. To be contented we need interests outside ourselves. Before we find contentment we must get rid of certain vicious foes of contentment such as selfishness, hate, envy, jealousy. But the supreme secret of contentment includes all this. That secret is very simple. What is it?

1. Paul found contentment because he found religious certainty. He could say, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." However good-natured and unspoiled a baby may be, he is restless and discontented if he is hungry. Whatever prizes may come to you and me, we are restless and discontented without God. He is the Bread of Life. He is the Water of Life. "As the hart panteth after the water brook, so panteth my soul after thee, 0 God." Every man is possessed of gnawing hungers and burning thirsts that cannot be satisfied except by God alone. The fountain source then of all real contentment is a solid faith in God.

Not only had Paul found God, but through his own experience he had come to be sure of the adequacy of God for all the needs of his life. He affirms with assurance, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Believing this, he could be content even in prison. This was the case not because he no longer cared to preach. It was the case not because freedom was no longer precious to him. It was the case because he was sure that God could use every experience of his life both for his own enrichment as well as for the enrich-
ment of others. God could use both his freedom and his imprisonment. He could sing with Milton:

"Who best bear his mild yoke, they serve him best....

Thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

Why, therefore, should he pace his cell like a caged animal? Why should he flutter against his prison-bars like a bird caught from the wild? Believing that God could change every tragedy into triumph, he was contented and at peace.

A few weeks ago it was my pleasure and profit to hear an address by that brilliant foreign correspondent, Miss Helen Heit. The part of this address that impressed me most was this story. As Miss Heit was making her way out of France after the debacle of 1940 she met a young Frenchman, a good friend of other days. To her amazement she saw a radiance on the face of this friend that was in sharp contrast to the bitter gloom that was on the faces of his fellow countrymen. She could but ask an explanation. "What does it mean?" she asked. "How do you manage?" "The world is being wrecked," he answer. "But I am going to have the privilege of building it back." Instead of answering, "The world is out of joint," I cursed quite that I was ever born to set it right." this man rather shielded himself with the bracing conviction that he had come to the Kingdom for such a time as this. He had learned to share in some measure Paul's secret. Thus he was able to face his ugly hell with a high-hearted content. May such worthful equipment be ours as we face the difficulties and privileges of our desperate day!
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The text has a beautiful background. It is a part of a thank-you letter that Paul wrote to his friends at Philippi. These friends had just sent him a much-needed gift. Their thoughtfulness has flooded his soul with sunshine. He is hastening to express his appreciation. "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again." Then gracious gentleman that he is, he fears that they will think that he has felt slighted because this is the first gift that he has received for a long time. Therefore, he hastens to add, "Wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. I did not doubt your love because I failed to hear from you. I believe in your friendship and devotion enough to trust you in the silence. I knew that you were loving me all the time whether I heard from you or not."

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I

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1. We are surprised because of what we know of Paul himself. Paul was not the kind of man with whom we usually associate contentment. We think of this virtue, if virtue it is, as the possession of passive and sluggish natures. Paul, as we know, was the very opposite of this. He was a man of fire. He had dynamite in his soul. He had thunder and lightning in his make-up. One of the first views we get of him is as a blazing persecutor of the Church. He is "breathing out threatenings and slaughter." As we watch him, we are sure that his outward rage is due to the fact that he is raging within. But here this hot-hearted man is
claiming that he has learned to be content. That takes us by surprise.

2. We are surprised because of our low estimate of contentment. In learning to be content, Paul seems to think that he has found a worthwhile prize. But generally speaking, we do not look upon contentment as a very high achievement. "Would it not be wiser," we are ready to ask, "to learn to be discontented?" We feel that if contentment is a virtue at all it is a questionable virtue. We feel that if it is a jewel at all it is likely to have in it more of alloy than of real gold. Naturally, therefore, we are a bit astonished to hear Paul claiming the achievement of contentment as a prize when we regard such an achievement as more of a liability than of an asset. But before we are ready to say whether Paul was right or wrong, we must know what he meant by contentment.

II

What then had Paul learned?

To begin negatively, he did not mean that he had found a counterfeit contentment. He had not learned, for instance, not to care. He did not mean that he had reached the place where he greeted all the experiences of life with yawns. He had not become a sitting Buddha with hands folded in his lap and with eyes looking listlessly upon a needy world. He knew that indifference is not a virtue but a vice. Though Paul had learned to be content, he had not ceased to be desperately in earnest. "I catch myself wishing," he declares, "that I might be accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

No more did Paul claim that in finding contentment he had become satisfied with himself. He had attained much. He had climbed far up the hill. He had reached the place where he could say, "For me to live is Christ." He had learned to suffer gladly for his faith. He was on the way to becoming a martyr. Soon he was to pay "the last full measure of devotion." But we are glad to say that he never found out that he was a martyr. Conscious martyrs tend to become self-satisfied. They are likely to be victims of arrested development. They are
likely to be very hard to live with. I have known a few ministers who were
doomed to this tragedy. I have also known a few ministers' wives who had to face
the same hard fate. Paul was a great saint, but he was not a self-satisfied saint.
He was satisfied with the road he was traveling, but he was not satisfied with the
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that he was claiming that everything had come to him right side up. He has had
every sort of experience. He has ranged from the lowest valleys to the highest
mountain-tops. He had lived in the tropics and at the poles. But he declares,
"These circumstances have not controlled me; I have learned to control them. I have learned to live from within instead of from without. I have learned to meet with triumph and disaster and treat those two imposters just the same."

III

Then Paul tells us how this achievement had worked out in his own life. He said, "I have been initiated into the secret for all sorts and conditions of life, for plenty and for hunger, for prosperity and for privations." (Moffat.)

1. Let us look at the more difficult of these first. "I know how to live in prosperity." That is a great achievement. Generally speaking, the more we prosper the more discontented we become. I am thinking now of two boys. One of them had very little done for his amusement. His toys were exceedingly few. These few, generally speaking, he had to make for himself. The other was booed at and cooed at from infancy. By the time he was ten, he had enough toys to supply a Woolworth Store. In addition a husky Negro lad was employed to keep him entertained from the time he awoke in the morning until he went to sleep at night. Which of these two was the more contented? The former could find more contentment in a goose-quill whistle than the other could in enough toys to have smothered him.

What is true of small children is, generally speaking, true of grown-up children. We sometimes think with pity of our pioneer ancestors. How few conveniences they had! How meager their amusements! About the biggest thrill of the year was when some ignorant circuit rider came to preach in the little log church. But we, their children, have a thousand conveniences. We have the radio, the movies, high-powered cars (that we cannot use now). If things would make for contentment, ours would have been the most contented generation the world has ever known. But instead we have been one of the most restless.

Paul knew how to be contented when making a success. Success for many people is a powerful narcotic. I am thinking now of one who was a brilliant and highly successful young minister. In fact, he went up like a sky-rocket. But by and by
when he had come down somewhat in the same fashion, his wife who was as ambitious as himself made this confession: "In the days when we were going from one promotion to another, from a smaller church to a larger, we were never the least contented with the church that we had. We never enjoyed it. We were always feverishly eager to get another church that we thought a little better and a little more prominent." They did not know how to be contented in the midst of success.

2. Not only had Paul learned how to prosper, but he had learned how to live humbly. As Goodspeed translates it, he had learned the secret "of going without". This may not be quite so difficult as learning how to prosper, but it is still a great achievement. For Paul is not claiming that he has learned in a stoical fashion to go without, but that he has learned to go without gladly. The one outstanding character in Gone with the Wind is Scarlet O'Hara. She has a certain kind of grit in her heart that commands our respect. But in spite of this, she is more detestable than lovable. She has had to go without, to be actually hungry. But she bore her lot with bitterness. When the worst was over she declared that she would never go hungry again, not if she had to steal—not even if she had to kill. She never learned how to live humbly.

Dean Swift was one of the most brilliant writers of prose that ever lived. But he missed most of the prizes upon which he set his heart. He never learned to go without. In the language of Thackeray, "He went on gathering knowledge, swallowing his scorn, and submitting with stealthy rage to his fortune......I am glad for one," he continues, "that fate wrested the prey from his clasped wings and chained him and clipped his wings. But one gazed, not without awe and pity at the lonely eagle, chained behind the bars.......He was always alone, alone and gnashing, except when Stella's sweet smile came and shone upon him. When that went, silence and utter night closed over him.......An immense genius, an awful downfall and ruin. So great a man he seems to me that thinking of him is like thinking of an empire falling." Thackeray claims that he was the most miserable man in England. He was miserable because he never learned to go without.
Paul had not only learned to do without things, but he had learned to do without health. He had a thorn but he rejoiced both in spite of it and because of it. It was a great achievement.

Years ago I boarded in the home of a physician. That physician was laid low by a lingering and incurable disease. He became unspeakably bitter. He would rage against his sickness. He would storm at the physicians and nurses who tried to help him. He became a torture to his loved ones. It was not good to visit him. His friends came away from such a visit, not with pleasant memories but with a shudder of horror. He never learned how to go without his health.

Here is another man who for nearly ten years was my associate. He was stricken by an unusually virulent type of tuberculosis. The doctor gave him but a few months to live. But this man said, 'Since I am going to have to spend the next few months in bed, since I must be sick, I am going to give myself the luxury of it. This will give me some much needed rest. It will give me also some much-needed leisure. There are many books that I have wanted to read but could not. This will give me my chance.' So he learned how to be an invalid, not grimly but joyfully. To visit him was a benediction. It was like turning aside into the Upper Room. Not only so, but incidentally, he surprised his doctor by getting well.

Paul had even learned how to do without his freedom and the appreciation and plaudits of the crowd. In one city he had been so popular that he found it difficult to keep the crowd from worshiping him as a god. Then from those heights he dropped so low that he barely escaped being stoned to death. He loved freedom. He loved cajoling on his work in the great outer world. But he learned to get on without them when it was necessary. He knew both how to be abased and how to abound. He knew how to prosper and how to go without.

Now whether we have attained such heights or not, we must confess that they are worth attaining. Contentment is a worthwhile virtue because there is no real happiness without it. However bountiful the treasures that life dumps into our laps, if contentment is not among them, we shall have no real happiness. On the
other hand, however limited our treasure, we shall still be rich if we have contentment. Then contentment is a virtue because it adds to our usefulness. It helps to make us easy to live with. In addition, it sets us free from ourselves, the better to serve others. How much more smoothly the friction-fretted machinery of life would run if it were oiled more freely with the fine lubricant called contentment! He had learned to conquer his circumstances instead of being conquered by them. Thus he found both joy and power.

IV

How did Paul find contentment? Certainly not by seeking it as an end. It is no more an end than it is a means. Of course, we need an interest outside ourselves. Also we must get rid of those vicious foes of contentment—selfishness, hate, envy, jealousy. But the supreme secret of contentment is very simple. What is it?

1. Paul found contentment because he found religious certainty. He could say, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." However good-natured and unspoiled a baby may be, he is restless and discontented if he is hungry. Whatever prizes may come to you and me, we are restless and discontented without God. He is the Bread of Life. He is the Water of Life. "As the hart panteth after the water brook, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." Every man is possessed of yearning hunger and burning thirsts that cannot be satisfied except by God alone. The fountain source then of all real contentment is a solid faith in God.

Not only had Paul found God, but through his own experience he had come to be sure of the adequacy of God for all the needs of his life. He affirms with assurance, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Believing this, he could be content even in prison. This was the case not because he no longer cared to preach. It was the case not because freedom was no longer precious to him. It was the case rather because he was sure that God could use
every experience of his life both for his own enrichment as well as for the enrich-
ment of others. God could use both his freedom and his imprisonment. Why, there-
fore, should he pace his cell like a caged animal? Why should he flutter against
his prison-bars like a bird caught from the wild? Believing that God could change
every tragedy into triumph, he was contented and at peace.

It was my pleasure a few weeks ago to hear an address by that brilliant
foreign correspondent, Miss Helen Heit. The part of her address that impressed
me most was this: As she was making her way out of France after the debacle of
June, 1940, she met a friend of hers, a young Frenchman. To her amazement, she
saw a radiance in his face that was in sharp contrast to the gloom on the faces
of his fellow countrymen. She could not but ask for an explanation. "What does
it mean?" she questioned. "How do you manage?" "The world is being wrecked," he
answered, "but I am going to have the privilege of helping to build it back." He
was sharing in some measure Paul's secret. Blessed is the man, therefore, that
can say, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

Therefore instead of feeling with others, "The world
is out of joint," I choose rather to feel that I was born
in a right, the right relationship with the Conscience. That he had learned to face
literally for the first time at this, that he had learned
to work as one and face his very best with it.
"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."
—Philippians 4:11

The text has a beautiful background. It is a part of a thank-you letter that Paul wrote to his friends at Philippi. These friends had just sent him a much-needed gift. Their thoughtfulness has flooded his soul with sunshine. He is hastening to express his appreciation. "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again." Then gracious gentleman that he is, he fears that they will think that he has felt slighted because this is the first gift that he has received for a long time. Therefore, he hastens to add, "Wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity." I did not doubt your love because I failed to hear from you. I believe in your friendship and devotion enough to trust you in the silence. I knew that you were loving me all the time whether I heard from you or not.

That was beautifully generous. Too often we feel that if our friends do not pay us constant attention they have ceased to be friends. They must keep reminding us of their devotion or we cease to believe in that devotion. When we are sick and the pastor fails to call, sometimes we blame him even though he has never heard of our illness. But often we excuse him in Paul's beautiful fashion—"I know you would have come but you lacked opportunity." Paul, as all great lovers, is glad to believe the best about those whom he loves.

Not only did Paul rejoice in this gift because it was an expression of the love of his friends, he rejoiced in it yet more because of the blessing that he was sure such giving would bring to the givers themselves. He knew that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Therefore, his supreme joy in this gift
due to his certainty that it would bring enrichment to all that had a part in it. And how right Paul was! This gift was enriching because it enabled his friends to share in the great work that he was doing. It was further enriching because it brought to them this lovely letter. This was a benediction not to themselves alone but to the whole world. All of us would be the poorer without this letter.

Not only did Paul rejoice in this gift because it was an expression of the love of his friends, not only did he rejoice in it because he knew that it would bring enrichment to the givers themselves, but he rejoiced in it because the gift had helped to meet his material needs. Thanks to the thoughtfulness of his friends he could now enjoy comforts that without them would have been impossible. But in order to be sincere, he feels that he must tell them that this was the least part of his joy. "I was glad to have your gift," he seems to say. "It has made my lot far easier. But while it was a lovely luxury, it was not an absolute necessity. If it had not come, I should not have grown restless and wretched and morose and bitter. I could have got on without it. This is the case because I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content."

This claim to contentment on the part of Paul will take many of us by surprise. This is the case for at least two reasons.

1. We are surprised because of what we know of Paul himself. Paul was not the kind of man with whom we usually associate contentment. We think of this virtue, if virtue it is, as the possession of passive and sluggish natures. Paul as we know was the very opposite of this. He was a man of fire. He had dynamite in his soul. He had thunder and lightning in his make-up. One of the first views we get of him is as a blazing persecutor of the Church. He is "breathing out threatenings and slaughter." As we watch him, we are sure that his outward rage is due to the fact that he is raging within. But here this hot-hearted man is claiming that he has learned to be content. That takes us by surprise.
2. We are surprised because of our low estimate of contentment. In learning to be content, Paul seems to think that he has found a worthwhile prize. But generally speaking, we do not look upon contentment as a very high achievement. "Would it not be wiser, we are ready to ask, to learn to be discontented? We feel that if contentment is a virtue at all it is a questionable virtue. We feel that if it is a jewel at all it is likely to have in it more of alloy than of real gold. Naturally, therefore, we are a bit astonished to hear Paul claiming the achievement of contentment as a prize when we regard such an achievement as more of a liability than of an asset. But before we are ready to say whether Paul was right or wrong, we must know what he meant by contentment.

II

What then had Paul learned? Of course, there is a counterfeit contentment that is anything but a virtue. It is a positive vice. What, therefore, did Paul mean when he claimed to have learned how to be contented? He had not found a counterfeit contentment. For instance, to begin negatively, he did not mean that he had learned not to care. He did not mean that he had reached the place where he greeted all the experiences of life with yawns. He had not become a sitting Buddha with hands folded in his lap and with eyes looking listlessly upon a needy world. Paul knew that the loss of desire is not a mark of life but of death. He knew that indifference was not a virtue but a vice. Though Paul had learned to be content, he had not ceased to be desperately in earnest about his fellows. "I catch myself wishing," he declares, "that I might be accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

No more did Paul claim that in finding contentment he had become satisfied with himself and satisfied with his achievements. He had attained much. He had climbed far up the hill. He had reached the place where he could say, "For me to live is Christ." "There is not a question you can ask me about myself," he is affirming, "that I cannot answer in terms of Jesus Christ. If you ask how I began
to live, I answer—'Christ. I never knew life that is life indeed until I met Him.' If you ask how I have continued to live through these stormy years, again I answer—'Christ. He has been the sustainer of my life.' If you ask me what has been my goal, I answer 'Christ. I am seeking to become like Him. But I have not attained yet. Therefore, forgetting the things that are behind and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark of the prize.'

Nobody knew better than Paul that self-satisfaction is not a blessing but a curse. Paul had learned to suffer gladly for his faith. He was on the way to becoming a martyr. Soon he was to pay the last full measure of devotion. But we are glad to say that he never found out he was a martyr. Conscious martyrs are likely to be self-satisfied. They are likely to be victims of arrested development. They are likely to be very hard to live with. I have known a few ministers who were doomed to live with martyrs. I have known a few ministers' wives who had to face this tragedy. Paul was a great saint, but he was not a self-satisfied saint. He was satisfied with the road he was traveling, but he was not satisfied with the goal he had attained. That was his salvation.

When we think of one of the most detestable characters that we meet on the pages of the New Testament, we think of the Pharisee that went up to the Temple to pray. Yet he was not a vicious man. He was honest and upright. He was a pillar in church and state. Why then does he repel us so? Because he is so sure of himself. He has arrived. He has reached the summit. He has not come in reality to pray. He has come to congratulate God upon having such a perfect man as his servant. Naturally when he left off his boasting and started for home, no sin-sick soul pressed to his side to ask how he might be like him. Nobody wanted to be like him. He was altogether ugly.

When we think of the most repellant church that we meet on the pages of the New Testament, we think of the church at Laodicea. What was wrong with this church? If we were moving to Laodicea and were going to place our membership in
some church in that city, why would we pick this one last? Why would an intelligent minister feel being sent to such church was facing one of the most trying experiences of his life? Answer—because this church had arrived. They had passed the following resolution: "Whereas we are rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing, be it resolved that we offer congratulations to the Lord for having such a marvelous church." But the church was not marvelous at all. It was wretched and miserable, poor and blind and naked. In the eyes of God and of man, it was disgusting. In saying therefore that he had learned to be content, Paul did not mean that he had reached that detestable state of self-satisfaction.

Finally in declaring that he had learned to be content, Paul did not mean that he had become resigned to his fate. There are those that look upon resignation as one of the supreme virtues. But if resignation is a virtue at all, it is a very imperfect one. It is not active but passive. It carries the idea that one has set out to achieve something worthwhile and has decided to quit, to be satisfied with nothing at all or with a poor second-best. The fox that saw the delicious grapes but was too cowardly to brave the danger of falling in order to win them, grapes became resigned. Instead of facing the fact that he had not the gallantry and the grit to win the grapes, he decided to slander the grapes themselves. Not daring to tell himself the truth, he lied about the grapes.)

That was the folly of the ten spies. They saw that the Promised Land was a good land. It was flowing with milk and honey. But in order to attain it, there must be some blood-letting. They were afraid of blood-letting. Therefore, they said, "The land is no good. It eats up the inhabitants thereof." They became resigned. Such resignation is a deadly tragedy. It means that we have not only missed the prize, but we have persuaded ourselves in some measure to be satisfied with our failure.

When I was a boy there lived in a gloomy cabin among the hills a man by the name of Zan Pig. Zan had many of the characteristics of his namesake. He was as greedy as his four-footed brother and made a bit of a sty of his cabin. Zan could
not read and write. This was not the case because he made up his mind in his youth that he would never indulge in such useless practices. He boasted of the fact that he tried once. He said he went to school for three days but after this heavy trial he had quit because, to put it in his own language, "I could not get the blank stuff in my head." Zen had resigned. The supreme difference between the Prodigal and the swine of the far country was this—the swine were satisfied to be what they were. They were resigned while the Prodigal was not.

It was this imperfect virtue of resignation that came very nearly destroying the greatest character of the Old Testament. Moses went out one morning to visit his people. He found a Hebrew being imposed upon by an Egyptian. He struck the Egyptian dead. But he learned a little later that his own people did not appreciate his efforts. This blow struck in the heat of passion caused him to have to flee the country. He made his way to the Midian desert, married, settled down into unexciting life of a shepherd. Once he had burned with hot indignation against the slavery of his people. "I tried to save them," he told himself, "but they didn't desire to be saved. It is no fault of mine." Moses had become in some measure resigned. But for the experience of the burning bush he might have in large measure thrown his life away. Paul is not claiming that he has found the imperfect virtue of resignation. That usually spells either partial or complete failure. What then did Paul mean? It meant that he had learned to vote approval to every experience and circumstance of his life. When the Speaker of the House of Lords puts the question, instead of saying, "All in favor, let it be known by saying, 'Aye,' he says "All that favor the motion let it be known by saying 'Content.'" Contentment, therefore, is not a passive but an active virtue. Paul had learned every 7 his life. This not mean that he was to vote approval even to harsh experience like his thorn. He voted discontent at first but he learned to say "Content." In thus learning to vote approval to the circumstances of his life, Paul is not saying that everything had come to him right side up. He had had every sort of experience. He had ranged from the lowest valleys to the highest mountain-tops.
He had lived in the tropics and at the poles. But he declares, "These circumstances have not controlled me; I have learned to control them. I have learned to live from within instead of from without. I have learned to meet with triumph and disaster and treat these two imposters just the same."

III

Then Paul tells us how this achievement had worked out in his own life. He said, "I have been initiated into the secret for all sorts and conditions of life, for plenty and for hunger, for prosperity and for privations." (unprinted)

1. Let us look at the more difficult of these first. "I know how to live in prosperity." That is a great achievement. Generally speaking, the more we prosper the more discontented we become. If thinking now of two boys. One of them had very little done for his amusement. His toys were exceedingly few. These few, generally speaking, were made by himself. The other was boosed at and cooed at from infancy. By the time he was ten, he had enough toys to supply Woolworth's. In addition a husky Negro lad was employed to keep him entertained from the time he awoke in the morning until he went to sleep. Which of these was the more contented? The former could find more contentment in a goose-quill whistle than the other could in enough toys to have smothered him.

What is true of small children is, generally speaking, true of big children. We sometimes think with pity of our pioneer ancestors. How few conveniences they had! How meager their amusements! About the biggest thrill of the year was when some ignorant circuit rider came to preach in the little local church. But we, their children, have a thousand conveniences. We have the radio, the movies, high-powered cars (that we cannot use now). If things would make for contentment, ours would have been the most contented generation the world has ever known. But instead we have been one of the most restless.

Paul knew how to prosper, to make a success. That is a great achievement. Success for many people is a powerful narcotic. I am thinking now of a brilliant
and highly successful young minister. He went from one promotion to another.
In fact, he went up, like a sky-rocket. But by and by when he had come down some-
what in the same fashion as a sky-rocket after it has run its course, his wife who
was as ambitious as himself made this confession: "In the days when we were going
from one promotion to another, from a smaller church to a larger church, we were
never the least bit contented with the church that we had. We never enjoyed it.
We were always feverishly eager to get another church that we thought a little
better and a little more prominent." They did not know how to be contented in
the midst of success.

2. Not only had Paul learned how to prosper, but he had learned how to
live humbly. As Weymouth translates it, "He had learned how to do without." This
may not be quite so difficult as knowing how to prosper, but it is still a
great achievement. Of course, there are a great many prizes that you and I might
desire that we will have to do without, but Paul is not here talking about doing
fashionably without them-stealthily, but doing without them gladly. The one outstanding charac-
ter in "Gone with the Wind" is Scarlet O'Hara. She has a certain kind of grit in
her heart that commands our respect. But in spite of this, she is more detestable
than lovable. She had to learn to do without, to be actually hungry. She accepted
her lot with bitterness. Later she declared that she would never go hungry again,
not if she had to steal—not even if she had to kill. She never learned how to
live humbly.

Dean Swift was one of the most brilliant writers of prose that ever lived.
But he missed most of the prizes upon which he set his heart. He never learned
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is like thinking of an empire fallen. This man that Thackeray describes as the
most miserable man in England, was miserable because he never learned to do without.

Paul had not only learned to do without things, but he had learned to do with-
out health. He had a thorn but he rejoiced both in spite of it and because of it.
Years ago I boarded in the home of a physician. That physician was laid low by
a lingering and incurable disease. He became unspeakably bitter. He would rage
against his sickness. He would storm at the physicians and nurses who tried to
help him. He became a torture to his loved ones. It was not good to visit him.

He had not only learned to do without things, but he had learned to do without
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Here is another man who was for nearly ten years an associate of mine in the
ministry. He was stricken by an unusually virulent type of tuberculosis. The

doctor gave him but a few months to live. But this man said, "I am going to spend the
next few months in bed. Since I must be sick, I am going to give myself the luxury of it. It will give me some much-needed rest. It will give me some much-needed leisure. There are many books that I have wanted to read, but I will get to read now. So he learned how to be an invalid, not grimly but joy-
fully. To visit him was a benediction. It was like turning aside into the upper
room. Incidentally, he took the doctor by surprise by getting well, and he
is joyfully carrying on his work today.

Paul had even learned how to do without his freedom and the appreciation and
plaudits of the crowd. In one city he was so popular that he found it difficult
to keep them from worshiping him as a god. From those heights he dropped so low
in the opinion of his admirers that they tried to stone him to death. He loved
freedom. He loved carrying on his work in the great outer world. He loved the
appreciation of his friends, but he learned to get on without them when it was necessary. He knew both how to be abased and how to abound. He knew how to prosper and how to do without.

Now whether we have attained such heights or not, we must confess that they are worth attaining. Contentment is a worthwhile virtue because there is no real happiness without it. However bountiful the treasures that life dumps into your lap if contentment is not among them you will have no real happiness. On the other hand, however limited your treasure you will still be rich if you have contentment.

You have heard of the king that was restless and wretched in spite of all his treasure. A wise man told him that he would never find contentment until he wore the shirt of a contented man. Searchers were sent over the kingdom and at last they found a contented man and brought him to the court. When they told him to remove his coat so as to give the king his shirt, they discovered that he had no shirt.

Then contentment is a virtue because it adds to our usefulness. It helps to make us easy to live with. In addition, it sets us free from ourselves, the better to serve others. Paul was the better servant of mankind because he had learned to be content. How much more smoothly the friction-fretted machinery of life would run if we too would learn Paul's secret. He had learned to conquer his circumstances instead of being conquered by them. And thus he found joy and power.

IV

This is a worthwhile secret that is open to you and me. We cannot be as able as Paul—we cannot be as brilliant. Yet we can share in his contentment. But how? How is that possible? There are many factors that enter into this. Of course, to be contented we need an interest outside ourselves. To be contented we must get rid of those vicious foes of contentment—selfishness, hate, envy, jealousy. But the supreme secret of contentment is very simple. What is it?

1. First, Paul found contentment because he found religious certainty. Paul H
could say, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." However good natured and unspoiled a baby may be he is restless and discontented if he is hungry. Whatever prizes may come to you and me we are restless and discontented without God. He is the Bread of Life. He is the Water of Life. "As the hart panteth after the water brook, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." Every man is possessed with gnawing hungers and burning thirsts that cannot be satisfied except by God alone. The fountain source then of all real content is a solid faith in God.

Not only had Paul found God, but through his own experience he had come to be sure of the adequacy of God for meeting all the needs of his life. He affirms with assurance, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Believing this, he could be content even in prison. This was the case not because he no longer cared to preach. It was the case not because freedom was no longer precious to him. It was the case rather because he was sure that God could use every experience of His life both for his own enrichment as well as for the enrichment of others. God could use his freedom; he could use also his imprisonment. Therefore, why should he pace his cell like a caged animal? Why should he flutter against his prison-bars like a bird caught from the wild? Believing that God could change every tragedy into triumph, he was contented and at peace.

The measure of our joy and usefulness and contentment as we face the coming days will depend in large measure upon the fullness with which we share Paul's bracing faith. There are trying times ahead. It is going to be very easy to whine. It is going to be easy to play the coward. It is going to be easy to whimper with Hamlet, "The world is out of joint. O cursed spite, that ever I was born to set it right!" But in spite of difficulties we can face our future with quiet hearts, believing that we have come to the Kingdom for such a time as this.

It was my pleasure a few weeks ago to hear along with many of you an address by Miss Helen Heit. Her address was brilliant and informing. But the story that impressed me most was this: As she was making her way out of France after the
debacle of June, 1940, she met a friend of hers, a young Frenchman. To her amazement, she saw a radiance in his face and a light in his eyes in sharp contrast to the gloom of other faces. "What does it mean?" she asked. "How did you manage?" "The world is being wrecked," he said, "but I am going to have the privilege of helping to build it back." He was sharing in some measure Paul's secret. Blessed is the man, therefore, that can say, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."
1. A Good Sportsman
2. Contentment
3. Youthful Commandments
4. Keeping up Courage
5. The Conquered
6. The Desert
7. The Prince
8. What Is Life?
9. How to Stay Young
10. A Good Medicine
11. Security
12. Respect to Preacher
13. Respect to Preachers
14. Dry Bones to Preachers
15. My Church
16. Power of Calamity to Preachers
17. Vassar
18. How to Get Anger
19. Ruth
"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."
—Philippians 4:11

The text has an interesting background. It is a part of a thank-you letter that Paul sent to his friends at Philippi. These friends had just sent him a much-needed gift. Paul is hastening to express his deep appreciation. Their thoughtfulness has flooded his soul with sunshine. "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again." Then, gracious gentleman that he is, he fears that they will think that he has felt slighted because this is the first gift that he has received for a long time. Therefore, he adds, "Wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity."

What he is saying is this: "I did not doubt your love because I failed to hear from you or to receive a gift from you. I believe in your friendship and devotion enough to trust you in the silence. I knew you were loving me all the time whether I heard from you or not." That was beautifully generous. We often feel that if our friends do not pay constant attention they have ceased to be friends. When we are sick, and the pastor fails to call, sometimes we excuse him in Paul's beautiful fashion—"I knew he would have come, but he lacked opportunity." But sometimes we give a less charitable explanation. Paul was glad to believe the best.

Not only did Paul rejoice in this gift because it was an expression of the love of his friends, he rejoiced yet more because of the blessing that he was sure such giving would bring to the givers themselves. He knew it was more blessed to give than to receive. His supreme joy, therefore, in this gift was his certainty that it would bring riches to the givers. It would give them a share in the great work that he himself was doing. And how right Paul was! Without their gift, this letter
I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content."

Paul then rejoiced in the gift because it was an expression of their love. He knew that he learned living better through the gift because it meant enrichment to the givers. There was joy because the gift helped to meet his material needs. In full sincerity he feels that he must tell them that this was the least part of his joy. He seems to say, "I was glad to have your gift. It made my lot a bit easier. But while it was a lovely luxury, it was not a necessity. I could have got along without it. This is the case because I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content."

Claim to Contentment

This declaration on the part of Paul will take many of us by surprise. This was the case for two reasons.

1. We are surprised because of what we know of Paul himself. Paul was not the kind of man with whom we usually associate the word contentment. We think of contentment as the possession of passive and sluggish natures. Paul, as we know, was the very opposite of this. Paul was a man of fire. He had dynamite in his soul. He had thunder and lightning in his make-up. One of our first views of him is as a blazing persecutor of the Church, breathing out threatenings and slayings. His outward rage is partly due to the fact that he is raging within. But this fiery, hot-hearted man has learned to be content. That takes us by surprise.

2. We are surprised because of our low estimate of contentment as a very high achievement. "I have learned," said Paul, "in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content." But we are ready to ask, "is that a worthwhile achievement? Would it not be wiser to learn to be discontented?" Many of us look askance at contentment. We feel that, if it is a virtue at all, it is a lesser one in a practical sense. It is hard to have a questionable virtue. It is one that is likely to have in it almost as much of weakness as it has strength.
Therefore, when Paul claims to have found contentment, we are in doubt as to whether he has found something that is an asset or a liability.

What then had Paul learned? Of course, there is a counterfeit content that is anything but a virtue. It is a positive vice. It would be well, therefore, for us to see what Paul did not mean when he claimed to have found content as well as what he actually did mean.

First, when Paul said "I have learned to be content," he did not mean that he had learned not to care. He had not reached a state of indifference. He had not become a sitting Buddha with his hands folded in his lap and with eyes looking out listlessly upon a needy world. The loss of desire is not a blessing; it is a curse. Indifference is not a virtue but a vice. Our Lord pronounces a blessing upon the hungry.

There is even a blessing in physical hunger. Nobody looks upon the loss of appetite as a blessing except someone who is trying to reduce. To have no desire to eat means sickness. It may even mean death. Some years ago I officiated at the funeral of a Chinaman. When the services were over, as a part of the last rites a friend of the deceased went forward and deposited a bottle of water and a bit of bread in the casket just before it was closed. But the deceased showed not the slightest interest. He did not seize the bread and water with eager hands. He had no desire at all. But I did not envy him on that account. His lack of desire was a mark of death.

If there is a blessing for those who hunger physically, there is yet a greater blessing for the hungry of the mind and the hungry of the soul. Blessed is the man who is intellectually curious, who longs to know. Blessed above all else is the man who is hungry for God and is aware of the One for whom he hungers. Blessed is the man who covets for his brother what he longs for for himself. "Blessed,"
said Jesus, "is the man who hungers and thirsts after goodness, who longs for
goodness to prevail in his own life and longs for it to prevail throughout the
world." When, therefore, Paul said, "I have learned to be content," he did not
mean, "I have learned not to care." Such knowledge would not be a roadway to
heaven but to hell.

Second, no more did Paul mean that he had learned to be satisfied with himself,
with his achievement, and with his world. Paul had not reached the heights that
left nothing more to be achieved. Bernard Shaw declares that one of the great
tragedies of life is for a man to obtain his heart's desire. That is the case
for at least two reasons. The man who attains all his heart's desire has desired
too little. Not only so, but having attained it he is not satisfied. Alexander
the Great wanted to conquer the world, but when he got all that he desired he no
longer desired it.

The Pharisee that went up into the Temple to pray seemed quite well contented
with himself. He had arrived! He can look down upon his failing fellows with
huge satisfaction with himself. Therefore, he prayed, "God, I thank thee that I
am not has other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers. They are still in the
thick of the fight, but I have won. They are still trying to climb, but I am
on the top." But no battle-scarred soul slipped to his side to ask him how he
won. His self-satisfaction was not a prize; it was an opiate.

John, the author of Revelation, knew a church that was satisfied with itself.
Of course, this is not a disease that afflicts the pew only. Sometimes it lays
its destroying hand upon the pulpit. I have known ministers who never thought of
congratulating themselves on their privileges of serving a congregation. Their
constant thought was to congratulate the church upon the privileges of enjoying
their ministry. But here was a church who had arrived. "It was rich and increased
in goods and had need of nothing." They would have told you that the greatest
blessing that could come to a minister was to be their pastor. They would look
upon any man who would deliberately leave them as little less than sane. But the church was not the richer for its self-satisfaction but infinitely the poorer. Paul did not mean that he was satisfied with himself or with his attainment.

Third, Paul did not mean to say that he had merely become resigned. Resignation is a passive virtue if it is a virtue at all. We associate it with those who set out to do something worthwhile and found that they had not the grit and the grace to attain, then persuaded themselves to accept a poor second best or nothing at all. The fox made up his mind that he was going to have that lovely bunch of grapes. But when he faced the dangers of climbing he became resigned to get on without it. When the ten spies found that there might be some blood-letting before they could possess the land of promise they made up their minds to be contented to let it go. I asked a chap sometime ago, "Are you a Christian?" He said, "I tried once but decided it was too big for me." Hence, he was trying to be content without it.

Paul had set out to spread his Gospel throughout the world. He set out to give himself to the curing of human ills. When, therefore, he said, "I have learned to be content," he was the furthest possible from meaning, "I have given up. I have decided that those ills cannot be cured. What cannot be cured ought to be endured. Therefore, I have decided to let the world go to the devil in its own way." The supreme difficulty between the Prodigal Son and the hogs that rooted and grunted about him was just this—that the hogs were contented to remain what they were and where they were, and the Prodigal Son was not. Paul's contentment was not resignation.

What then, I repeat, had Paul learned? He had learned to vote approval to all circumstances of his life. When a vote is taken in the house of the Lord's, the chair puts the question, "All in favor of the motion let it be known by saying, 'Content.'" Contentment therefore is something that is positive. When Paul was first tormented by his thorn in the flesh, it filled him with huge
discontent. But he learned to vote approval even of that. He learned to say most gladly, therefore, "Will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Since Paul learned to vote approval to all the circumstances of his life, he had learned to master his circumstances. He had learned to conquer them instead of being conquered by them. He had learned to depend upon the resources that were within him rather than on any resources that were without. He was able to stand any sort of a siege because the fortress of his soul had access to inexhaustible supplies. "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I have learned to find joy and peace and abundant living, whatever may be my outward circumstances."

"I have learned," he added, "how to abound." That is, "I have learned how to have plenty—plenty of things, plenty of appreciation, plenty of success—without letting that plenty rob me of my content." Such an achievement is not easy. The more things we get, usually speaking, the less contented we are. The average child with one toy is usually more contented than the one who has half of Woolworth's store. The man with a little money is far more contented than the man with millions.

"I have learned to be contented," said Paul, "when I am successful." That is not easy. Success is for many a narcotic. The drunkard never gets enough liquor. I heard of a wife who brought her husband home sometime ago after he had had far too much. When she got him inside the house, she shook him rudely and said, "George, why do you constantly drink to drunkenness? Why don't you call for sasparillo or something?" He said, "When I get all the liquor I want I can't say sasparillo."

I am thinking now of a brilliant young minister I knew years ago. He was as ambitious as he was brilliant. His wife, if possible, was more ambitious than himself. For the first few years he went up like a sky-rocket. When he exploded
in some fashion like a skyrocket. When both had been chastened by failure and heartache, the wife made this confession, "In those days of quick and brilliant success, we were never greatly interested in the church we had. We were never in any sense contented with it. We were feverishly grasping at the next promotion." The trouble was that they did not know how to abound. Generally speaking, to abound is more difficult than to do without, but I put it first because more of us have to do the latter.

Then Paul knew how to do without. Of course, many of us have to learn that lesson. But Paul means that he was able to be contented, to be at peace, to be really joyous while doing without. That for me is not easy. The one outstanding character in Gone with the Wind is Scarlet O'Hara. She has a stubborn grit that demands our admiration, but on the whole she is detestable. She has had to do without, but she has done so in bitterness. So bitter has she been about it that she called God to witness that she is never going to be hungry again, not if she has to lie, not even if she has to kill. She was so bitter that she had rather steal or murder than to do without.

Brilliant Dean Swift missed the prizes upon which he set his heart. He learned how to write exquisite English, but he never learned how to do without. "He went on," says Thackeray, "gathering knowledge, swallowing his scorn, and submitting with stealthy rage to his fortune—he was always alone, alone and smashing except when Stella’s sweet smile came and shone upon him. When that went, darkness and utter night closed over him." He was a bitter and discontented man. He never learned to do without.

I went to see a mother sometime ago who had lost a son. She blamed God for taking him. She was left in a very hell of discontent. I had a friend who suddenly lost his health and became a great sufferer. Shut out from doing the work that he loved, he rebelled. At times he went into ugly fits of anger that left him the more miserable and discontented and made living with him a kind of horror.
to those who loved him best. He never learned how to get on without help. He raged to the bitter end.

Paul had learned to do without things and be joyful while doing without. He learned to do without health and to thank God even for his thorn. I have another friend who was stricken with tuberculosis. The Doctor gave him only a few months to live. He had been a very busy man. Forced to take his bed, he said, "I have been wanting to read certain books for a long time. This is my chance. Since I must be sick, I am going to make a success of it. I am going to abandon myself to the luxury of being sick, give myself wholly to it." He read his books. He found joy and contentment even in his suffering. What is more, he surprised the Doctor by getting well. He is carrying on to this day in a vigorous way.

Paul knew how to be popular. In one town he was so popular that he found it difficult to keep the enthusiastic people from offering sacrifices to him. They considered him a god. A little later he was so unpopular that they were trying to stone him to death. He rejoiced in being loved. The appreciation of those to whom he preached warmed his heart. I dare say like other human beings he enjoyed being complimented. But when compliments changed to criticism, when those to whom he tried to minister threw mud at him instead of bouquets, when even he landed in jail, he neither went into a sulk nor did he walk his cell like a caged animal. He had learned how to rejoice in freedom. He had learned also how to rejoice in imprisonment.

You can see readily that Paul had really learned a great secret when he learned the secret of contentment. There is no real joy without it. However abundant our wealth, however high our position, however thunderous the applause that sounds in our ears, if we miss contentment we miss real happiness. On the other hand if we miss most of the prizes after which the world is grasping and find contentment we are still rich. This I say is an absolute essential if we are to live joyfully.
Not only is it essential for our highest happiness, but for our highest usefulness as well. Paul was a better worker because he was a contented worker. He had leisure from himself. He did not have to squander his energies in needless anxieties and fears. How much more smoothly the friction-fretted machinery of life would run for all of us if it were oiled a little more frequently by this fine lubricant called contentment. Therefore, instead of pitying Paul when he said, "I have learned in whatsoever state, I am, therewith to be content," I congratulate him and am eager to sit at his feet.

III

Taking my place at his feet, I ask this question—"Paul, how did you get that way? I know that your hot and restless heart was once even further from contentment than mine. Yet now even though in prison you are contented. This I know is not the case because you have as much business at one end of the city as at the other. This is not the case because you have given up the great enterprise of spreading the Gospel. This is not the case because you prefer prison to the great outer world. But in spite of all life has done to you, you are contented. Why?"

1. Paul's contentment was due in part to the fact that he was at leisure from himself. No man can be contented who is self-centered. If you are the center of your world, you are restless and will continue to be so as long as your eye is fixed on yourself. Paul had great and worthwhile interests himself. So must we if we are going to learn the secret of contentment.

2. Paul was contented because he was engaged in a great enterprise. One of the greatest aids to contentment is work. No deliberate idler can ever be contented. In fact, about the most difficult lesson one has to learn is to endure enforced idleness. Paul had reached the place where he could believe that God still could use him even though he could not carry on any more in his usual ways. Sometimes God can use our sickness as well as our activities. But part of Paul's contentment
was due to the fact that whether sick or well he was seeking to be useful.

3. Finally, Paul was contented because he had found religious certainty. He could say, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Every man is hungry for God. I think of that oft-quoted saying of Saint Augustine, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and we never find rest until we rest in Thee."

4. Finally, finding God, he had little by little come to a faith that made Him absolutely independent of all external happenings. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." He was sure that God could make his freedom, his opportunities, his friendships, his health, work both for his good and for the good of others. He was sure also that God could make his losses, his imprisonments, his sufferings, his failing health work also for his own good and for the good of others. Everything was treasure that came into his hands whether it looked like gold or dross. Therefore, contentment grew in his heart as naturally as trees spread their green banners in the coming of spring.

Here then is a lesson that we need to learn. We are going to be called upon the coming year to face tragedies that we would fain escape. There will also be experiences that will be glad. Can we learn with Paul to meet with triumph and disaster and treat those two imposters just the same? Can we face up to the hard tasks of today and tomorrow not with the bitter whine of Hamlet upon our lips, "The world is out of joint. O cursed spite, that I was ever born to set it right."

May we rather face it with some of the gallantry of the Frenchman of whom Helen Heit tells. She said that as she was fleeing France after the debacle of 1940 she came upon a young Frenchman whose face was still sunny and who looked upon the tragic happenings with quiet eyes. "How do you manage," she asked. "The world has gone to pieces," he said, "and I am going to have the privilege of helping build it back." He knew something of the experience of Paul. Blessed is the man who can say with Paul, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."
THRILLING PROGRESS

This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

These words of St. Paul are autobiographical. He here tells us something of the secret of his joyous and abundant living. He is telling how it came about that he seems constantly living in a morning sky, and how he brushed the dewy flowers of spring to the very end of his journey. He gives us a glimpse of his secret with these words: "This one thing I do". For the answer is this: Paul was a man of one purpose. That is of tremendous importance. It matters not how gifted one may be, if that one never makes up his mind what he is going to do with his gifts, he will likely squander them for a poor second best. However excellent his car, and however abundant his supply of power, if he does not decide upon his goal he will likely wear out his car and burn up his power without reaching any worthy destination.

On the other hand, however meager his gifts, if he allows the Lord Jesus so to unify his personality that he can say, "This one thing I do", then he can become and can accomplish what would forever otherwise be impossible.

Not only was Paul a man of one purpose, but his was a worthwhile purpose. There are so many who are selling life far too cheaply.

I bargained with life for a penny, and life would give no more; however I begged at evening when I counted my scanty store, for life is a just employer. She gives us what we ask. But once we have set the wages, then we must bear the task. I worked for a menial's hire, only to learn dismayed that whatever I had asked of life, life would have gladly said.
A few years ago a group of youths standing on the banks of the Tennessee River when it was at flood, saw a rabbit swim and take refuge on a lumber stack some three hundred yards from the bank. One of the boys, knowing that the rabbit is not a good swimmer, said to his companion, "I'm going out and catch that rabbit", assuming that the rabbit would be less afraid of himself than he was of the raging river.

He was correct. He caught the rabbit with his bare hands, knocked his head against the lumber stack and put him in the pocket of his overalls. He then got into his canoe and started back for the bank. But not being skillful in the handling of a canoe, when he struck a cross current, the boat capsized and the poor chap was drowned. Three days later when they found his body, one of his companions pulled that dead rabbit out of his pocket and said, "That's what he gave his life for". He paid so much for so little.

In a book of a generation ago, entitled "Santa Claus' Partner", the hero of the story was a brilliant young business man, who starting from scratch, was rapidly becoming rich. A fine old friend asked this brilliant young man, "What is your ambition?" "I want to be worth a million dollars", he replied. "Well," said his friend, "that's a big ambition. Why do you want to be worth a million dollars?" "So I can tell the other fellow to go to hell," was the disappointing answer.

Now that reply is not as brutal as it sounds. What this young man was seeking to say was: "I want to be worth a million dollars so I can be absolutely independent, so that I won't have to depend in the least on any other human soul." But, of course, he was speaking out of the abundance of his youthful ignorance.
No amount of money can make one independent. If I owned a grocery store in this town with ten customers, I would be more or less dependent on ten people. But if I owned a chain of stores stretching from New York to San Francisco, I would be dependent on millions of people. Nobody is ever independent. In fact, the greater our possessions, the greater the number of people on whom we have to depend.

What was Paul's ambition? He was out to capture the greatest prize in all the universe. There are many great prizes that we should like to win that are beyond our reach. It is silly to say, "I can do anything that anybody else can do". Of course that is not true at all. But you can still do the greatest thing that is possible for any human soul. You can do the will of God. That is what Paul was after. He declared that he was seeking to lay hold of that for which he had been laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

That is, he was sure that he had been created and redeemed for a purpose, and he knew that the highest of all possible wisdom was for him to enter into that purpose. Of course he was right. If we flout the will of God, nothing can bring final victory. If we enter into the will of God, nothing can bring ultimate defeat. Paul demanded the best. It is simply to move one's feet to chiefly.

Not only was Paul out after the best of all prizes, but he went about his quest in the sanest possible fashion. He resolved to keep the things that would help and to throw away whatever would hinder. Now for sheer sanity no one could beat that. He put it this way, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and..."
reaching forth unto those that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize." 

Now when Paul said that he forgot the things that are behind, he did not mean, of course, that he forgot everything of the past. That would be at once impossible and immoral. For instance, if in looking through the desk of life, Paul found any unpaid bills, he didn't throw them away. I knew a man some time ago who took the bankrupt law and paid off his creditors twenty-five cents on the dollar. Later he became rich. He still owed seventy-five cents. We can't cover up dishonesty with legal verbage and make God call it honest.

PART III

What did he keep and what did he throw away? Well, he kept certain treasures that we ought to keep. First of all he kept his unfilled obligations. So must we. He kept his vows to the Church. He kept his marriage vows. He realized that a promise made is a debt unpaid, and therefore when he went through the desk of life he didn't throw away the obligations that he had made to man and God.

2. Second, he kept a sense of appreciation for the kindnesses that had been shown him. Now and then somebody will say, "Nobody ever showed me a favor." Well, when I hear that, I know two facts about him. First of all he is not telling the truth, and second he is a bit of a grouch. All of us have had favors. I have had so many, preserved favors from people whom I had never seen before and from whom I had no right to expect anything. There are many times when I think of them...
alone and I am ashamed that I have shown any more favors.

(Paul kept a record in his mind of those people who had been kind to him. "The Lord give mercy unto the household of Onesiphorus", he writes, "for he oft refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains". He thus called over the names of social nobodies and made them immortal.

Then Paul kept afresh his memory of the mercy of God. Paul had been mightily saved and he had a great yesterday in which to stroll around now and then. And over and over he is going back to the gracious mercies of God that belonged to his past. Blessed is the man that has a servant yesterday in which to stroll around in now and then. It will help. And Paul did not forget the mercies of God. He remembered the psalmist, "and forget not all His benefits". But there were some things that he did throw away, and that you must throw away, if you are going to make progress. What are some of these?

1. Throw away your failures, unless they help you to succeed next time. I know folks who started out to do a worthy task, but something happened that it didn't go through well, and they threw it all down and have been afraid ever to start again. Everybody fails at times. The difference between the finally defeated and the finally victorious, is not that one sometimes failed and the other never did. It was that one lay and wallowed in his selfpity, while the other had the grit and the grace to rise up and start again. Throw away your failures.

2. Throw away the petty slights and insults, or the big ones for that matter, that come to you along the way. It is well enough to be a stamp collector, or a collector of old coins, but for heaven's sake, don't be a collector of grudges. May make
yourself miserable by being a collector of insults?

As a pastor I used to get a good many anonymous letters. Some were tender and gracious as a caress, but by far the majority were the opposite. I think the worst that I ever received was so scorching as to make me wonder how it got through the Post Office without setting it on fire. Naturally having read that horrible letter I hurried down to my bank, put it in my safe deposit box, so that I could read it over every morning and keep myself digest. "No", you say, "nobody would be that foolish". Wrong! Millions are just that foolish. Pet a canary, if you like, but why pet a vulture?

When I read said letter I didn't take that position as well as I remember, I smiled to myself and said, "This chap is trying to get under my skin. It so happens that I am already there. I am not going to move over and give him a place". I then threw that poisonous letter in the wastebasket. Today I can not remember a single word that was in that bitter letter. Throw your petty slights and insults. If you cling to them they may not hurt the other fellow, but they will certainly make hell for you; and that not in some far off tomorrow, but in the here and now.

3. If you are going to make progress, throw away your sins after you have repented of them. You know it is a promise of God: "I will forgive their inequities and their sin will I remember no more". I know of nothing in all the Bible that is more encouraging, more believable and exciting than that - that whatever you have done, if you bring that sullied page out of a faltering and failing life, and lay it down at the foot of the Cross and ask forgiveness, I will not only forgive, but God in His mercy will forget that sin.
have ever sinned. You could not ask for more. Now, since God has forgotten your sin, you have a right to forget it. We are not honoring God when we are constantly turning back to some soiled page in our imperfect yesterday. Forget your sins. Throw them away.

But how am I to forget?

I can tell you how you cannot. You will not win by making a frontal attack on forgetfulness. The harder we thus try to forget, the better we remember. It is a bit like getting in a hurry to go to sleep. Did you ever get in a hurry to go to sleep? But when we pursue sleep we usually find that it is far more fleet footed than we. (For the best way to forget is to think of something else.) Since you can not make your mind a vacuum, the best way to forget one something is by remembering something else.

Now and then I go to bed at night thinking of a sermon, and I find that that sermon is going to do for me what it might not do for the congregation, that is keep me awake. What do I do? Say "So to, now I am going to forget it." Not a bit of it. I start, instead, thinking of something else. I begin to quote the Scripture. Maybe starting in with the Book of Psalms, or with the Book of Acts, or John's Gospel. And as I quote these words, my own words slip out of my mind and soon I have fallen asleep. Not because I have made my mind a blank, but because I have thought of something else.

Now this Paul did. He forgot the past by looking toward the future. "Yes," you say, "But I am old." No matter. If you are a Christian, the best is yet to be. That is true whether you are six, sixteen, or sixty; whether you are nine, nineteen, or ninety.
Thrilling Progress

Browning was not simply writing poetry, but he was stating a sober fact, when he said,

Grow old along with me,
       The best is yet to be."

That is true of every Christian. Whatever you may have run past, the best is yet ahead.

PART IV

Let me name a few values that, if we are His, are ahead for every one of us. If we are His

1. Jesus Christ our Lord is ahead. We have not run past Him. We have run past many an opportunity, many a chance to serve. We have run past some bitter sorrows and bright joys. But we have not run past Him. A certain essayist tells of how the old geographers, long before the discovery of America, used to make a map of the known world and then out in the unknown make insertions like this - "here be dragons", and "here be demons", and "here be dragons that devour men". But there was a certain psalmist of that dark day who had a sunnier reading of things. He said that even out there in the unknown was our loving Lord. "Whether shall I go from Thy spirit, or whether shall I flee from Thy presence. If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Thy hand shall lead me and Thy right hand shall hold me". Our God is still ahead.

2. Eternity is ahead. If you feel that you do not have much longer to live, don't get feverish. You have as long as God has. "He has set eternity in our hearts." When our Lord said to that dying highwayman, "Today thou shalt be with me", he was affirming
that life goes on, not only so but that it goes on in His fellowship, if you are in His fellowship now; that it goes on in a place, that it goes on now, not simply in some far off tomorrow.

3. Because God is ahead, and because eternity is ahead, Christlikeness is ahead. We are not too impressive as saints this morning. The beauty of the Lord does not rest upon us as it might if we were more dedicated to Him. But if we keep on in His direction we are going to be impressive one of these days. As that Scot saint used to say, "One day the very angels of God will look at you and say, 'how like Jesus Christ he is, how like Jesus Christ she is'." Beloved, now are we the sons of God and it has not yet been made manifest what we shall be. But we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

4. God is ahead. Eternity is ahead. Christlikeness is ahead. 

Then surely home is ahead. Certainly I can leave you with no finer word upon which to live day by day than this "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize".
This is the first Sunday of the New Year. I know of no finer text in all the Word of God with which to prepare our hearts for the future than is this found in Philippians, 3d chapter, 13th and 14th verses. "This one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind and reaching forth unto the things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize."

(You can see that) Paul is giving you in this text, the secret of victory. He is telling you how he won. He is a man discouragingly great. He stands head and shoulders above other men, and on his brow is the breath of the eternal morning. How has he become so wonderfully strong and winsome? How has he achieved so mightily? Upon what strange meat has this great saint fed that he has grown so strong when we learn the story from his own lips we find that he is not what he is because he has never been tempted. He has had to fight with temptations even as you and I. Not only has he fought but he has been conquered by them. It is he who says, "The good that I would do, I do not, and the evil that I would not that I do." It is he whose cry rings with the sobs of the defeated of all the centuries, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?"

Yes, Paul had fought with temptation and Paul had been defeated. His past was not a clean past. No man was more keenly conscious of that than himself. He was not uttering a mere pious hyperbole when he said, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, or whom I am chief." He was uttering a sober fact. When Paul dared look back upon his past he saw a past that was blood stained. It was stained by the very blood of the martyrs.

What then is Paul's secret? Listen again to the text: "This one thing I do forgetting the things that are behind and reaching forth unto the things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize." First, Paul was a man of one purpose. He was a man of mighty energies. He was a man of the very finest intellectual furnishings. He was a man of tremendous native ability. But all these combined were not sufficient to account for Paul. He was a man all whose powers had been centralized. The light of his wonderful genius had been focused upon one central point. The mighty Niagaras of his personality had been turned into one single channel. He was a man who could say, "This one thing I do."

And mark you my friend, that is the secret of the highest success everywhere. The reason so many men fail is not for lack of ability - it is for lack of one definite and unified purpose. Some years ago there appeared in a sportsman's magazine an advertisement that read after this fashion: "Send us one dollar and we will give you a sure recipe to prevent any gun from scattering shot." Now, a certain farmer who had a gun that would put shot in every plank on the side of his barn answered that advertisement inclosing the required dollar. And the desired information came and it read like this: "Put one shot in your gun."
The man with his back to the past #2

It is altogether possible that this man felt himself cheated. I should not wonder if he believed that he had been thoroughly hum-bugged, but in reality he had not. If he had only had the wisdom to use that information wisely it would have been worth to him many thousand times the price that he paid for it. For to load life with one purpose it is a secret of success in whatever vocation you may choose.

Not only is that the secret but it is about the only one. Ability to the point of genius is no sure guarantee. Take the realm of literature, for instance. Thomas de Quincy was a man of wonderful ability, but he left almost nothing but an opiate dream. Thomas Chatterton could write a work of a master at the age of seventeen, but "he haunted old castles like a bat and clung about old ruins like ivy" and he died a suicide having produced almost nothing. Coleridge had a genius equal almost to that of Shakespeare. The list of the books that he dreamed of writing would almost fill up the columns in a newspaper, but he left only a few glittering fragments.

It is the man of one purpose who wins everywhere. The secret of the power of the Roman armies was the phalanx. They could mass their soldiers so as to crush any given point. One great secret of the success of Napoleon, Hugo tells us, was that he held his artillery in his hand like a revolver and could bring it to bear on one single position of the enemy. Those of you who remember the old days of foot ball will recall that mass play once known as "the Yale V." It was a play made up of seven men with one man at the apex. And when these delivered themselves at one point no human power could stand against them. It was the power of centralization.

"This one thing I do," said Paul. He was a man of one purpose, therefore a man of irresistible power. Did you ever see anyone take a little instrument and focus the sunlight upon a piece of cotton and burn it up? Science tells us that there is enough head in 50 acres of sunshine to melt the rocks and burn up the mountains if it were only centralized. Paul by the grace of God centralized all the rays of his personality upon one single purpose and he set the world on fire.

And not only was Paul a man of one purpose, but the purpose that he chose for himself was one that was worthy of him. There are not a few men today who are men of one purpose, but the great tragedy is that the purpose is often one that is mean and unworthy. Paul, I say, chose a worthy purpose. What was that purpose? He says it was to "lay hold on that for which he had been laid hold of by Christ Jesus." His purpose was to grasp that for which he had been grasped. In other words, Paul's purpose was to make actual and real God's purpose in him. To that end Paul made everything else bend.

"That I may grasp that for which I was grasped" - Paul is here thinking of the day of his conversion. He is going back again in memory to that time when Jesus Christ gripped him on the way to Damascus. He is thinking again of that blessed hour when He unladen the weapon of persecution from his hand, when He blasted as with lightning the commission from the high priest, and through the riches of His grace begot a new purpose in his soul.

Why had Jesus Christ laid hold on Paul? First He had gripped him for salvation. His purpose in appearing to him was to save him. He was seeking to make him a new creation in Christ Jesus. And Paul made it his purpose to claim that salvation, to grasp that forgiveness that God had purposed and provided for him.
Jesus had not only laid hold of him in order to save him, He had laid hold of him in order to make him a saint. He had apprehended him in order that he might become a sharer in the divine holiness. He had gripped him for perfection. And Paul had made this purpose of Christ his own. He was a struggler after perfection. He tells us that he has not achieved, that he has not attained, but that he is struggling toward that goal.

In the third place, Jesus had laid hold on Paul in order to make him a preacher, a missionary, a minister. Hear Him as He speaks to him as he lies in the desert dust, "Rise and stand upon thy feet. I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister, a witness both of the things which thou hast seen and of those things in which I will appear unto thee." And not a day had passed since that voice had spoken to him that Paul had not made it his own ambition to be a good minister of Jesus Christ. It was to that end he studied. It was to that end he prayed. It was to that end he faced the beasts. It was to that end that he lived day by day the life of a martyr.

Paul's one purpose in life then was, as I have said, to make actual God's purpose in him, God's purpose for him. And mark you, that is to be your purpose and mine. This does not mean that we must all preach or be missionaries. It does mean that we shall all make everything bend to the one purpose of finding the will of God for ourselves and doing it. This is altogether practical and altogether possible by the grace of God.

When a man makes the accumulation of money his one ambition it does not mean that he is to spend all his time at his bank or at his store - it means that in whatever he does he has the making of money in view. If he entertains he entertains those who will help his business. If he gives to charity he will give to charity in a way that heancies will help his business. If he joins the church he will join a church where he believes it will be most profitable to him.

Michael Angelo was an artist but he gave twelve years of his life to the study of anatomy. He did not do this in order that he might practise medicine. Anatomy was not a side line with him, it was a part of his art. His reason for the study of anatomy was that he might portray the human body with fidelity. The artist Turner took a sea voyage and when a storm came he had himself bound upon the deck where he could look the tempest eye to eye. He was not doing this as a mere recreation, he was doing it for his art's sake. And because he did it his canvas quivers with thunder and flashes with lightning to this day.

Now, as the seeker after money makes everything bend to that one end, as the artist makes everything to contribute to his art, so we as Christians ought to make everything bend to that high purpose, whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, we are do to to the glory of God. It is to that end we are to pray and it is to that end we are to fight, and it is to that end we are to laugh, and it is that high end also that is to determine the places we go and the amusements in which we take part.

What question did Paul ask constantly as he had to decide what he would do and what he would not do? It was this question: Will the doing of this thing help me in the achieving of my purpose? My one purpose is the realization of God's plan in my life, will this help me to the attaining of it or will it hinder me? Will it speed my progress or will it retard it? Will it bring me nearer the goal or will it
lead me only the further away? And the things that Paul believed would hinder he turned his back upon, and he laid hold only on those things that he believed would help.

And not only did Paul have one purpose and that a worthy purpose, but he used real wisdom in the achieving of that purpose. How did Paul expect to win? He did not expect to do so by simply wishing to win. He did not expect to achieve by merely dreaming about achieving. He did not expect to stumble upon victory by accident. He did not expect to arrive at the goal post in his 'sleep.' How did he expect to arrive? He said, "I press, I stretch forth."

Of course the picture that Paul has in mind is the runner at the Pythian games. That runner has been in training for long months for this one race, and now that the final day of testing has come, he is putting every ounce of his energy into the contest. And so Paul says he is doing. He is delivering himself whole heartedly. He is making a masculine, strenuous effort. And mark me, the Christian life is never spoken of in any other terms either by Jesus Christ or His apostles than that of earnest and virile effort. Paul was seeking to win then, first of all, by earnestly trying to win.

And not only did he run his best, but he ran unhampered. He would not allow himself to be hindered by anything in his past. He forgot the things that were behind.

Now, this does not mean that Paul never thought of the past. It is well for a man to think of his past sins. He must do so in order to confess and repent of them. It is well for a man to remember his past victories and mercies that he may thank God for them. But what Paul does mean is that he would not allow himself to so think of his past as to be hampered by it in the race.

"Forgetting the things that are behind" - why is it necessary to do this? Because to have our eyes fixed upon the past is to miss the present and the future. Nobody ever runs toward the goal when he has his back to the future. Nobody ever lays hold on the prize who keeps his face toward the past. If the devil can only get a man absorbed in his yesterday, if he can only get him entangled in his past sins, - he knows he will be able to wreck him utterly.

There were sins in Paul's past; there were mistakes and failures; there were defeats and successes. There were sacrifices and victories, but from all these Paul resolutely turned away. And when the enemy suggested the absurdity of one whose hands were stained with the blood of the martyrs being an apostle Paul refuses to listen to him. When he spoke of the great sacrifices he had made and asked him if it had not been a mistake he refused to look at the things he had given up. He refuses to stand with face turned wistfully back to the Sodom he had left till he himself was turned into a pillar of salt.

And now as you are entering upon a new year, what are you going to do with the failures and defeats and the sins of last year? You cannot go back and correct them. You can not live over your dead years. The year 1920 is as far beyond your reach as the year 1. You cannot get back into the past. Hammer at the door with bruised fist if you will, tamper at its lock with bleeding thumb and finger if you will, but it is closed against you forever. Not even God can open that door to you.
The man with his back to the past  

What will you do about it? Sit down and mope and say, "I have failed so many times there is no use in trying any more"? Paul says, "Forget about it." Christ says, "Turn your back on it. Rise up, let us be going." That is what He said to the immortal rag that the Pharisees threw into His presence, "Go and sin no more." And so He says to you, "Turn your back upon the follies and failures and sins of yesterday and start anew in His fellowship." Your sins, however black, forget them in response to God's promise, for if you trust in Him He has forgotten that you ever sinned.

Not only must we forget our sins and our failures but we must also forget our victories. A sense of having already won is as killing as a sense of utter failure. Both alike kill effort and the death of effort means the death of progress. I remember an excellent woman who had an unsaved husband. She gave herself in all devotion to the work of Christ till her husband was saved. And that accomplished, she settled down into self satisfied sluggishness. The result of it was that she herself backslid and her husband has entirely forsaken the church.

Paul's way is the way of wisdom. How shall I treat my past? What shall be my attitude toward 1920? I will turn my back upon it. I will dare to forget it, both its victories and its defeats, or at least to think of them only as they minister to my growth in grace.

But you say, "That all sounds very well to preach, but how can a man forget? Must I say to myself, 'Go to now, I am going to sit down and forget all the paralyzing failures and blunders of last year? Everybody get quiet, I am going to forget?'" No, that is not the way. How did Paul expect you to forget? Will you listen: "Looking unto the things that are before." We are to forget the past by remembering the future.

That is simple enough, is it not? You remember that first love affair of yours? I doubt if you can remember back that far. You thought it was going to be fatal, but you and she were separated and you forgot it. How did it come about? Not by your taking yourself in hand one day and forming a strong resolution that you were going to forget. I expect it rather came about in this way: You began to remember somebody else. You found some other that absorbed your attention.

How did Ulysses forget the siren's song? It was by listening to the song of Orpheus. How did Silas Marner forget his gold? By remembering Eppie. How are you to forget your stained past? By looking unto the things that are before. Fix your eyes on the goal, the achievement of Christ's purpose in your life. That is before you. Fix your eyes on the prize, the crown of life that He is going to give you by and by. That too is before you.

Oh heart, remember that all the best things are before us and not behind us. If you will dare go forward in the fellowship of Jesus Christ your most joyous days are yet a head of you. Your finest growth in grace is yet ahead. Your richest achievement in Christlike character is yet ahead. If you will go with Him Heaven is before you. The gates of the City Eternal are opening before you. The meeting of those that you have loved and lost is before you. Your crowning day is before you. The assembling with the universal Knighthood of God about the Round Table of the King is before you. Let us press toward the mark for the prize.

Cultivate the forward look. Then no failure for you will be a
The man with his back to the past

final failure. Did I ever tell you the story of the boy who bought a one-stringed fiddle and purposed to learn to play it? He failed. He sold the fiddle to his brother and he learned to play it. And then his father bought the fiddle back from the brother for a new violin and he became an expert. Later on he who had failed was called into the ministry. He made his first effort to preach and could say never a word. He resolved he would never try again. But the thought of the fiddle upon which he had failed to learn came to him. He tried again and became one of the most effective preachers living today.

Look to the things that are before and you will find the secret of immortal youth. Paul was an old man when he wrote this text, but he was young in heart. His sun still hung in a morning sky. He was walking amidst the dew-pearled flowers of life's springtime. And his face was toward the dawn of a gladder day. In his heart was the zest of the mountain climber to whose wondering vision were opening farther and farther visions and panoramas more and more wonderful. And then one day he ran right past death and up the steep hill and into the gate of Heaven.

And there forgetting the things that are behind and reaching forth unto the things that are before, he is still pressing toward the mark for the prize.

CGC:BR

The things that are before—What are they? 1. The goal is yet before, what is the goal? It is the realization of Christ's plan for you, sanctify, perseverance, perfection. 2. The prize is before—Heaven, Rome, and friends, Christ. Progress. Results:—The best here—eternal youth. 3. Victory at last.
THE JOY RIDER
Philippians 3:13

"This one thing I do."

Miss the mark. There is only one way hit it. Here is the question. "Life, how shall I use it? Opportunity, what shall I do with it?"

God has equipped you with your machine. Where are you going to use it only my message would have a very limited range. While interested in him I am yet more interested in his philosophy of life. There are many joy riders in spirit who are not so in reality. Now to have the joy rider's attitude toward life is to become a peril to yourself and to others as well.

My second objection to the joy rider is his indifference to direction. The first objection we offer to the joy rider is this: He is indifferent to his goal. He does not think out some definite spot on the map and say, "Here will I invest my life because it is that spot that is important." He does not choose the direction in which you are to travel, the most worth-while way I can invest." His chief concern is a high-

ine that is more important still. That are you become him. The sensation is the main power car with plenty of gas and the breath of winds in his face.

But what is the good of the best of machines if you are not going anywhere. What is the good of an unlimited supply of gas if you have no place to go, no object? Yet the man who has nothing to do is the man who has no goal. To the ship that is bound for no harbor no wind is favorable. To the man who is living for no worth-while purpose no amount of ability is worth so much as a pittance spent in an idle hour.

The prophet's words looked a year or so in the face of life and but all he left was a few brilliant fragments. He could never drive burst into homes. Naturally this young gentlemen was much astonished and straight to a goal.

You asked him why no man revises. Because I saw that you are going to use it. It is easy to do nothing. It is easy to sow ourselves broad-and the armies you are going to combat. I saw that you are going toCAST. It is easy to joy ride till the machine is worn out and the gas is "Is thy servant a dog," the young fellow asked in comment. "Then he should burned up. But to the man that would arrive I commend this motto, "This do this thing." He was exhorted that such a monopoly should be made. The one thing I do." There are ten thousand ways in which the hunter may
The Joy Rider

did not believe that he could ever become the thing he did become, but he was just facing in the wrong direction.

On the other hand, Jesus said to Peter one day. "Thou Simon, son of Jonah, thou shalt be a rock-like character." It sounded a bit absurd then. Peter was the most fickle of men and he was constantly changing. It looked at times as if Christ's dream for him was not going to come true. Peter fell but he always had the courage to get up again.

By and by there came a day when Peter was strong with something of the very strength of Jesus Himself. If you are facing in the wrong direction any evil is possible for you. If you will face right though ever so feebly there is no telling how splendid you may one day become among the tall sons of the morning.

III

Then because the joy rider is indifferent as to his goal, and as to his direction, he wears out his machine and burns up his energy for nothing. Now it is all right to burn ourselves out if the enterprise is worth it. And whatever is worth doing costs something. Let us be brave enough to face that fact. If the road is easy it is not worth the traveling. If the task is altogether sweatless and bloodless, it is not worth the doing. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.

Years ago a brilliant young student, graduate of Yale University went out as a missionary to China and died in the Boxer uprise. With his last breath he gasp out a message with regard to his only child, a boy. "Tell my wife," he said, "to send Horace to Yale and when he has finished let him come out and take my place." He thought that he had found a way of using life that was so worth-while that he wanted the one that he loved best
The Joy Rider

the best to enter into the secret.

But burning up life for nothing, that is the supreme tragedy. We are great wasters in this country. But all wasting is as hoarding wealth in comparison with our waste of manhood and womanhood. The life spent in sin is wasted. It is thrown away, it is worse than thrown away. We burn our lives out doing such trifling things when we might do such big things. We throw ourselves away in the doing of the secondary when God offers us that which is supreme.

As a school boy I used to study by an old kerosene lamp. You know how the candle flies come in and buzz about the light. I have looked up from my work more than once and tried to save the life of one of these silly joy riders. But later I would hear a little flutter and look up and find him with feet burned and wings scorched, giving his last gasp. Why did he die? Not that the world might be boosted up the hill a little. He wasted himself. He just threw himself away.

IV.

Then the joy rider is a menace to the safety of the road.

1. He is a menace to his own safety. Sometimes thru sheer carelessness he goes into the ditch. Sometimes he is too much occupied by the one at his side. There are some that might be able to drive with one hand but when you have no hands at all and just one foot and that on the accelerator you are likely to knock what brains you have out against a telephone post.

Now no man has a right to be wreckless with his life. Cowardice is contemptable but recklessness may be equally so. Life is too precious to be trifled with. And just as no man has a right to make a joke of his
The Joy Rider

physical treasure, still less has he a right to treat lightly the spiritual self that is to outlast the world. Yet to every one who endangers himself by wreckless driving there are hundreds who endanger themselves by wreckless disregard with that which is as deathless as God.

There is truth in that old story, time worn as it is, of the gentleman all whose wealth was invested in one marvelous diamond. He was coming to this country upon a French vessel. He was to change his diamond into money and to make his way in the world. But one day he took it out of its case and watched it sparkle and scintillate. A friend warned him that he might lose it, but he only laughed. "It is perfectly safe." Then the vessel lurched and his gem was gone. A rather mad story. I doubt if it ever happened, but a million worse things have happened. We wrecklessly toy with our opportunities to know and love and serve. At last we fling away, the big offer of life in Christ as if it were mere rubbish.

2. The joy rider endangers others. Some listening to me know that to their sorrow. If you are the only one living on your street, if you are the only one passing down the road, then drive as fast as you please. I suppose it is no one's business but your own. But it so happens that there are children that live on your street. There are other ears that drive your road. Therefore, you cannot do as you please. If you do so even your fellows will count you as a criminal.

But there are those who say swaggeringly, "I am going to live my own life. I am going to live just as I please." Possibly that is right if your life never touches another. If you can track your way out into the night absolutely alone, then possibly that is your own affair. But this you cannot do. Our lives are enterlocked. It is my business
what you do and it is your business what I do. No man can go right alone
and no man can go wrong alone. 'To ask, "Am I my brother's keeper?" is to
ask the question stained with blood and black with murder.

Some time ago I chanced to meet a man, an old school mate. We
had attended school together at Flatwoods. I asked him about a pal of his.
He said, "He is dying, dying of T.B." Then he added sadly. He is dying
because he tried to keep up with me. We dissipated together. I was able
to stand it but he was not. I made my way to shore but he is drowning now
out in the waters where no human hand can save him.

I wonder if you could say that about a friend of yours. He is
dying to the best things because he tried to keep up with me. When I met
him he was clean, now he is unclean. When I met him he was sober, now he
is a bondslave of drink. When I met him he prayed and now he blasphemes.
It is a greater privilege to pass down the road of life if as we pass some
of us play the Good Samaritan and help pick up the wounded. There are some
who despoil and rob and leave even those dear to them half dead. How about
you?

V.

The final failure of the joy rider is that he misses the joy for
which he rides. There are a great many recipes for being happy. You may
not believe any of them. I can tell you one sure recipe for being miserable,
or at least failing to find happiness. That is, go out to seek it. There
is a law known as the law of indirection. We arrive at the goal better by
the indirect route. You can go to sleep better when you do not try. You
can have your picture taken better in the same fashion. Set out to seek
happiness and some how it will elude you.

On the other hand, if you forget it in an effort to reach a
worth-while goal, if you forget it in an effort to do your duty as God gives
you to see it, if you forget it in an effort to bring happiness to others,
then you are likely to find it, but it is never discovered when it is
sought in and of itself, but it always comes as a byproduct to the one who
puts Christ at the center of his life. If tonight as you face your chance
you will say with Paul, "This one thing I do," you will come to know some-
thing of Paul's usefulness and something of Paul's gladness of heart.
THRILLING PROGRESS

This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

These words are autobiographical. Paul here is giving a glimpse of the secret of his greatness, a greatness so pronounced that one feels that it would be next to impossible to exaggerate it. Indeed certain whole nations might drop into the depth of the sea and not be missed as much as this one single personality. Why is this the case? Here begins the answer, "This one thing I do".

PART I

Paul is a man of one purpose.

That is of tremendous importance. It matters not how gifted one may be, if that one never makes up his mind what he is going to do with his gifts, he will likely squander them for a poor second best. However excellent his car, and however abundant his supply of power, if he does not decide upon his goal he will likely wear out his car and burn up his power without reaching any worthy destination.

On the other hand, however meager his gifts, if he allows the Lord Jesus so to unify his personality that he can say, "This one thing I do", he can become and he can accomplish what would forever otherwise be impossible.

Not only was Paul a man of one purpose, but his was a worthwhile purpose. So many who are selling life far too cheaply. A few years ago a group of youths standing on the banks of the Tennessee River when it was at flood, saw a rabbit swim and take refuge on a lumber stack some three hundred yards from the bank. One of the boys, knowing that the rabbit is not a good swimmer,
said to his companion, "I'm going out and catch that rabbit", assuming that the animal would be less afraid of himself than of the raging river.

He was correct. He caught the rabbit with his bare hands, knocked his head against the lumber stack and put him in the pocket of his overalls. He then started back for the bank. But not being skillful in the handling of a canoe, when he struck a cross current, the boat capsized and the poor chap was drowned. Three days later when they found his body, one of his companions pulled that dead rabbit out of his pocket and said, "That's what he gave his life for". He paid so much for so little.

In a book of a generation ago, entitled "Santa Claus' Partner", the hero, a brilliant young business man, was rapidly becoming rich. A fine old friend asked this young man, "What is your ambition?" He replied, "I want to be worth a million dollars". "Well," said his friend, "that's a big ambition. Why do you want to be worth a million dollars?" "So I can tell the other fellow to go to hell," was the disappointing answer.

Now that reply is not as brutal as it sounds. What this young man was seeking to say was, "I want to be worth a million dollars so that I can be absolutely independent". But, of course, he was speaking out of the abundance of his youthful ignorance. No amount of money can make one independent. If I owned a grocery store in this town with ten customers, I should be more or less dependent on ten people. But if I owned a chain of stores stretching from New York to San Francisco, I should be dependent on millions of people. Nobody is ever independent. In fact, the
greater our possessions, the greater the number of people on whom we have to depend.

What was Paul's ambition? He was out to capture the greatest prize in all the universe. There are many fine prizes that we should like to win that are beyond our reach. It is silly to say, "I can do anything that anybody else can do". Of course that is not true at all. But we can still do the greatest thing that is possible for any human soul. We can do the will of God. That is what Paul was after. He declared that he was seeking to lay hold of that for which he had been laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Paul demanded the best. Too many of us sell too cheaply.

I bargained with life for a penny, And life would give no more, However I begged at evening When I counted my scanty store. For life is a just employer. She gives us what we ask. But once we have set the wages, Then we must bear the task. I worked for a menial's hire, Only to learn dismayed That whatever I had asked of life, Life would have gladly paid.

PART II

Not only was Paul out after the best of all prizes, but he went about his quest in the sanest possible fashion. He resolved to keep the things that would help and to throw away whatever would hinder. Now for sheer sanity no one could beat that. He put it this way. "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize".

Naturally when Paul said that he forgot the things that are behind, he did not mean that he forgot everything of the past.
That would be at once impossible and immoral. For instance, if in looking through the desk of life, you find any unpaid bills, do not throw them away. I knew a man some time ago who took the bankrupt law and paid off his creditors twenty-five cents on the dollar. Later he became rich. He still owed seventy-five cents. We can't cover up dishonesty with legal verbiage and make God call it honest.

PART III

What are we to keep and what throw away?

1. As hinted above, we must keep our unfulfilled obligations. We must keep our vows to the Church, remembering that they were made not to many but to God. For the sake of others as well as for ourselves, we must keep our marriage vows. We must realize that "a promise made is a debt unpaid". Therefore when we go through the desk of life we must not throw away our obligations either to man or God.

2. Keep a sense of gratitude for the kindnesses that have been shown you. Now and then somebody will say, "Nobody ever did me a favor". When I hear one say that, I know two facts about him. First of all he is not telling the truth. Second he is a bit of a grouch. All of us have had favors. I have had so many that I did not deserve, and from people whom I had never seen before, that many times I am ashamed that I myself have not been more kind.

Then Paul kept fresh his memories of the mercies of God. Paul had been mightily saved and mightily used. Therefore he had a great yesterday in which to stroll around now and then. Over and over he is going back to the gracious mercies of God that enriched his past. Blessed is the man who keeps fresh and green
the memory of divine memories that brightened his yesterdays. Paul
did not forget the mercies of God. But there were some things that
Paul did throw away, and that you must throw away, if you are going
to make progress. What are some of these?

1. Throw away your failures, unless they help you to succeed next
time. I often meet those who started to do a worthy task, but
something happened that it didn't go through well. So what? They
threw it all down and have been afraid ever to start again. Every­
body fails at times. The difference between the finally defeated
and the finally victorious, is not that one sometimes failed and
the other never did. It is rather that one wallowed in his self­
pity, while the other had the grit and the grace to start again.
Throw away your failures.

2. Throw away the petty slights and insults, or the big ones for
that matter, that come to you along the way. It is well enough
to be a stamp collector, but for heaven's sake, don't be a
collector of grudges. Why make yourself miserable by being a
collector of insults?

As a pastor I use to get a good many anonymous letters. Some
were tender and gracious as a caress. But by far the majority were
the opposite. The worst I ever received was so scorching as to
make me wonder how it got through the Post Office without setting
it on fire. It should have been written on asbestos. Naturally
having read that horrible letter I hurried down to my bank and
put it in my safe deposit box so that I could read it over every
morning and keep myself "mad". "No", you say, "nobody would be
that foolish". Wrong! Millions are just that foolish. Pet a
canary, if you like, but why pet a vulture?

When I read said letter, as well as I remember, I smiled to myself and said, "This chap is trying to get under my skin. It so happens that I am already there. I am not going to move over and give him a place". I then threw that fangless serpent into the wastebasket. Today I can not remember a single word of it. Throw away your grudges. If you cling to them they may not hurt the other fellow, but they will certainly make hell for you; and that not in some far off tomorrow, but in the here and now.

3. If you are going to make progress, throw away your sins, after you have repented of them. Here is God's own promise, "I will forgive their inequities and their sin will I remember no more". I know of nothing in all the Bible that is more encouraging. God is saying that whatever you may have done wrong, if you bring that ugly deed and lay it at the foot of the Cross, He will not only forgive, but also forget that you have ever sinned. Since God has forgotten our sins, we have a right to forget them. We do not honor God by constantly turning back to some soiled page in our imperfect yesterday. Forget your sins.

But how am I to forget?

I can tell you how you cannot. You will not win by making a frontal attack on forgetfulness. The harder we thus try to forget, the better we remember. It is a bit like getting in a hurry to go to sleep. Did you ever get in a hurry to go to sleep? But when we pursue sleep we usually find that it is far more fleet footed than we. Since you can not make your mind a vacuum, the best way to forget one something is by remembering something else.
Now and then I go to bed at night thinking of a sermon. When I find that that sermon is going to do for me what it might not do for my congregation, that is keep me awake, what do I do? Say "Go to, now I am going to forget it". Not a bit of it. I think of something else. I begin to quote favorite passages of Scripture. As I quote these great words, my own words slip out of my mind and soon I have fallen asleep. Thus, not because I have made my mind a blank, but because I have thought of something else.

Even so, Paul forgot the past by looking toward the future. "Yes," you say, "but my situation is different. I am old, or too young. No matter, if you are a Christian, the best is yet to be. That is true whether you are six, sixteen, or sixty; whether you are nine, nineteen, or ninety, whether your situation is easy or bristling with impossibilities. Browning was not simply writing poetry, but stating sober fact for every Christian when he said, "The best is yet to be." Whatever you may have run past, the best is yet ahead.

PART IV

Let me name a few values that are ahead for every one of us, if we are His.

1. Jesus Christ our Lord is ahead. We have not run past Him. We have run past many an opportunity, many a chance to serve. We have run past some bitter sorrows and bright joys. But we have not run past Him. A certain essayist tells of how the old geographers, long before the discovery of America, used to make a map of the known world and then out in the unknown make insertions like this - "here be demons", and "here be dragons that devour men".
But there was a certain psalmist of that dark day who had a sunnier reading of things. He said that even out there in the unknown was our loving Lord. "Whether shall I go from Thy spirit, or whether shall I flee from Thy presence. If I ascent up into heaven, Thou are there. If I make my bed in hell, behold Thou are there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Thy hand shall lead me and Thy right hand shall hold me". Our God is still ahead.

2. Eternity is ahead. If you feel that you do not have much longer to live, don't get feverish. You have as long as God has. "He has set eternity in our hearts." When our Lord said to that dying highwayman, "Today thou shalt be with me", he was affirming that life goes on, not only so but that it goes on in His fellowship, if you are in His fellowship now; that it goes on in a place, that it goes on now, not simply in some far off tomorrow.

3. Because God is ahead, and because eternity is ahead, Christlikeness is ahead. We are not too impressive as saints this morning. The beauty of the Lord does not rest upon us as it might if we were more dedicated to Him. But if we keep on in His direction we are going to be impressive one of these days. As that Scotch sain'd use to say, "One day the very angels of God will look at you and say, 'how like Jesus Christ he is, how like Jesus Christ she is'. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God and it has not yet been made manifest what we shall be. But we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see Him as He is."

4. God is ahead. Eternity is ahead. Christlikeness is ahead.

Then surely home is ahead. Since all this is true, certainly I
can leave you no finer word upon which to live day by day than this, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize".
THE WASTE BASKET

"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 3:13-14

Whatever you may think of my sermon, you must agree that I have a great text. It is great because of the light that it flashes upon the face of one of the greatest personalities of all history. Here is a man that influenced the world as few others that have ever lived. Here is a man that was the truest sense a light-bringer. Though he was poor he made many rich. In fact, he has breathed upon all the continents a breath of power that has been like the coming of spring. What was the secret of his life? This text is an autobiography that lets us into the secret.

1.

1. Paul was able to accomplish his mighty work because he was a man of one purpose. "This one thing I do." The most powerful and gifted of men can accomplish little unless they are unified. Coleridge had a genius almost equal to that of Shakespeare, but he left nothing behind him but a few glittering fragments. This was the case because he could never say--"This one thing I do." A unified personality possessed by a single purpose is a personality of immeasurable power.
2. Not only did Paul have one single purpose, but that purpose was one that was altogether worthy. Even though you might focus upon one purpose you can never live grandly unless that purpose is a worthy one. Too many of us bargain with life for a penny. We seek goals that are so cheap that the winning of them means the impoverishment both of ourselves and of others. Paul had a high purpose. It was the highest possible. He was out to lay hold for that for which he had been laid hold of by Christ Jesus. That is, he was out to realize God's purpose in his own life. The man who does that, the man who becomes what God intended him to be has made the highest possible success.

3. Not only was Paul a man of one purpose, and that a worthy purpose, but he set about the achieving of that purpose in the sanest possible way. He kept the waste basket. Day by day he went through the desk of life keeping only the things that were worth keeping, and throwing the rest away. Everybody ought to have a waste basket. Everybody ought to learn to use his waste basket in the same fashion in which Paul used his. Here is the way he did it. "Forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark..."

What then did Paul keep and what did he throw away? When he tells us that he forgets the things that are behind he does not mean, of course, that he forgot everything that was behind. He did not blot out his past altogether. Such a course would have been impossible and immoral. We cannot blot out the past altogether. Not only so, but we ought not to blot it out. There are some things in the past, that if we are honest and fair with ourselves, with our fellows, and with our Lord, we must remember.

II.

What are some of the things belonging to the past that you and I ought to keep?
1. Our unpaid bills. If in looking through the desk of any bills owing to the grocery man, to the merchant, or even to the Church, that you have not paid, do not tear it up and throw it away. In the courts of law there is a certain something known as the statute of limitation, but there is no such statute in the realm of morals. You cannot get rid of an obligation by simply turning your back upon it and forgetting about it. This is true of the vows that you have taken as of the bills that you have forgotten. Remember that a promise made is a debt unpaid. Do not forget your unfulfilled obligations.

2. Do not forget the wrongs that you ought to right, the wounds made by your own hands that you ought to help to heal. Of course, I am aware that there are some wrongs that we can never right. But there are others that we can. And, because we can, we ought to. In fact, we must if we ever find peace. If we are to be right with God we must not only cease to tear down our neighbor's fence, but we must put up the panels that we have torn down, in so far as is in our power. Zacchaeus realized this, therefore, he said to his master, "If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation I restore it fourfold."

Some years ago a minister of my acquaintance was holding a meeting in a prominent city church. On the official board of that church was a wealthy and highly respected bachelor. One day the minister preached a sermon on restitution. That wealthy bachelor went home to a night of agony. The next day he decided, at the price of shame, to right an old wrong. He sent away to a backwoods community for a girl whose heart he had broken, and for a boy that he had never dared to own. The wronged woman had passed to "where beyond these voices there is peace." But he found the boy in an orphanage and brought him to his home. And it was his testimony that he found God in the hugging of the arms of his boy. Among the things you throw away on the threshold of
this year, do not throw away any unrighted wrongs. If you do you will throw away your own peace.

3. Then if in looking through the desk of , you found some kindnesses that have been shown you; if you find some words of encouragement that were spoken on a dark day, do not throw them away. If you find some flowers that were sent you when you felt that nobody cared; if you find a few letters of appreciation and of encouragement, do not put them in the waste basket. Keep them for your own joy and consolation. Keep them to remind you to show the same kindnesses to others that have been shown to you.

4. Finally, as you do not forget the kindness of friends, do not forget the mercies of God. Paul never made that mistake. He was constantly going back to that wonderful day when Christ met him on the road from Jerusalem to Damascus. He was thinking constantly of his unfailing mercies that had been his since that distant day. Because he was constantly thinking, he was constantly thanking. He entered every day with a song because he thought much upon the mercies of God. So may we. You may have found a highly successful year. You may have found it tragic. Your heart may have been broken. But through it all, God has loved you and His mercies have been new every morning. Do not forget this.

III.

But there are some things that we can throw into the waste basket. In fact, we must throw them away. We must turn our backs upon them and forget them, or we shall not find a new year. We shall find a year that is more old and sordid than the one through which we have just passed. What then are some of the things that for our own good, and for the good of others, we simply must forget?

1. Forget the slights, the wrongs, even the insults, if there are such,
that have come to you through the year that has passed. If somebody has written you a sweet and complimentary letter, keep it. But if somebody has undertaken to blister you, throw such a letter away. I went into my study some time ago and found a letter that was so fierce that it should have been written on asbestos. What did I do with it? I tore it up immediately and threw it in the waste basket. I am telling you the honest truth when I say that I do not know whether it was signed or not. Why keep it? If somebody has sent you a violet, put it away between the covers of a book, but why keep a nettle? I can understand why folks pet a canary, but I can never see why anybody would want to pet a vulture.

2. Not only are we to throw away our grudges, but we are to throw away that which results from keeping them. If you nurse a grudge you will become resentful. By and by your resentment will harden into hate, and there is no more deadly poison that you can take with you into the new year than plain everyday hate. It is often poison to the hated, but it is unfailingly a deadly poison to the hater. As you love joy and peace, as you long for the fellowship of God, do not let the sun of this old year go down on your wrath. Get rid of your grudges and your hates, they are certainly not worth keeping.

3. Then if you are wise you will throw away your failures. During the year that has passed you did not always do your best. Opportunities came that you passed up. Big chances were yours that you threw away. This morning you feel that you have largely made a mess of things. In fact, some of us are so obsessed with the sense of failure that we are paralyzed. We have our eyes so fixed on the mess we made of yesterday that if we do not quit, it is going to cause us to make a mess of tomorrow. We ought to learn from our failures. But having passed through the gate, there is only one sane thing to do and that is to shut it.

Not only are we to forget our failures, but we are to even forget those
tragic things that are worse than failures--our sins. You have sinned during the year that has passed. What are you to do about it? When Jesus took his three friends to watch with him in the Garden, those friends went to sleep. They messed things up miserably. When their Master was depending upon them they failed him shamefully. But what did he say to these pathetic sinners? He said "Rise, let us be going." That is what he is saying to you and me.

There are some wrongs that you cannot right. There are stains upon your hands and heart that you can never wash out. What then? There is nothing for you to do but to forget, and go forward in the fellowship of your Lord. "Go," the Master is saying, "and sin no more." We have a right to forget our sins because God forgets them. The only something in the universe that God forgets is your sin and mine. "I will forgive your transgressions and rememt, and I will remember them no more." Let us dare to forget what God forgets.

IV.

All this you agree is very well, but also quite impossible. There are some blunders, some tragic failures, some horrible sins that I can't forget. There are wrongs that I have suffered that I must remember forever. It is useless, therefore, to tell me to forget because such forgetfulness is impossible.

But that is where you are wrong. We are commanded to forget. And this amazing Book never talks nonsense. Of course, some people fail to forget because they go about it in the wrong way. Some of us try to forget by sheer effort of will. We say "Go to now, I have got to forget." A brilliant teacher came into our community when I was a boy. Intelligent people wondered that a man of such rare gifts should be burying himself in our backwoods village. But one day I overheard him letting my father into the secret. "Mr. Chappell, he was saying desperately, "there is something in my life that I
have to forget." But he could not. And I saw him go away to a Mad House.

But there is a way to forget that is sure and effective. How can we forget the things that are behind? Answer. By remembering the things that are ahead. Do you remember the first love affair you ever had. You thought it was going to be fatal. She was so bewitchingly lovely you knew you could never forget her. but you did. How did you manage? Not by gritting your teeth and squaring your jaw, you did it by falling in love with somebody else. There is no way quite so effective as that.

One evening Silas Warner came home to gladden his miserly soul by fondling his gold. It was his joy to let the glittering shower rain through his bony fingers as he whispered to those coins "My beauties, my beauties." But by and by he forget this gold. How did it come about? "Somebody stole it," you answer. That is true, but that did not cure him. He loved the gold after it was stolen just as much as he did before. What cured him was that he came home and found little Eppie asleep upon his heart; little by little that lovely child slipped into his heart and filled it so full of a tender human love that the harsh golden love was crowded out. He forgot his gold by remembering Eppie. So we can forget our soiled past by looking to the things that are ahead.

But what are these things? some will ask, so much of my life is already behind me. I am already past the noon-day. I am even coming close to the sunset and the evening star, what is there ahead for me? However old or however young you are there are treasures out ahead beautiful and worthful beyond your wildest dreams. What then can we hope for in tomorrow? There are many secondary values of which we cannot speak with certainty, but there are supreme values about which we can be absolutely sure.

1. God is ahead. He was in yesterday, I know, but I am equally sure that He will be in tomorrow. We may have run past many an opportunity, many a fine possibility, but we have not run past the living Christ. He is here, He is in tomorrow.
He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

2. Not only is God ahead, but eternity is ahead. "Only a few days are left me," you say. Perhaps you are right. But even though you have but one brief hour to live on this side the veil, you still have a whole eternity. As long as God is God, you and I are going to live. "He has a wonderful future," we sometimes say of a promising youth. You and I as God's children have a wonderful future because all eternity is yet ahead of us.

3. Because God and eternity are out ahead, perfection is ahead. "We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God." The more earnestly we have lived, the more conscious we are of that fact. As we look at ourselves, and at the men and women we might be, we are filled with shame and confusion. But if we are facing in the right direction, perfection is still ahead of us. However petty we may seem to ourselves now, we shall yet be, among the tall sons of the morning. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God. And it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. But we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

4. Finally, home is ahead. Perhaps last year, or the years gone by, have seen your home fall into ruin. Where is the home of my boyhood? Nowhere. There is a road that leads back to where it used to be, but the only road that leads to where it is is the road of memory. But while my earthly home is a ruin, my real home is yet ahead. It is there I expect to find my choicest friends. It is there I am expecting to find those that I have loved long since and lost a while. It is there that I expect to see Him, whom heretofore I have seen but as through a glass darkly.

Because this is true, I dare to say with Tennyson:

Come my friends,
It is not too late
To seek a newer world.
I know that yesterday has been tragically marred; I know that the book of my life still is kept open by blighted flowers of opportunity; I know that many bright days have dropped into the sunset, but inspite of all this, the best is yet ahead. Therefore, I pluck up courage to go forward assured that I can find in tomorrow what I, through my blindness or willful folly may have missed in yesterday. Therefore, 'forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'
GREAT LIVING

Philippians 3:13-14 - This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before; I have pressed toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

This text is a bit of thank you note that Paul sent to some dear friends who had shared his need in difficult days. They are evidently the words of a man who lived grandly. Indeed it is impossible to get a glimpse of his face across the space of the centuries without a thrill. That is the way we feel that a man should use life. That is the way I should like to use my own. It would be hard to exaggerate this great personality. Certain nations might be dropped into the sea without being missed as much as we should miss this one tremendous man. What is his secret? We can not share his genius, but we can share something of his greatness.

PART I

He was a man of one dominant purpose.

1. He could say "This one thing I do". It matters not how gifted and many-sided one may be, if that one never decides what he is going to do with his gifts, he will likely squander them for a poor second best. However excellent his ear may be, and however abundant his supply of power, if he does not know where he is going, he will likely wear out his machine and burn up his power without reaching any worthy goal.

Another has called attention to the fact that Coleridge had a genius almost equal to that of Shakespeare. Had he written all the books he dreamed of writing, he would have left a small library. But all he left was a few glittering fragments to show how vastly gifted he was. He never could say "This one thing I do". On the other hand,
however mediocre one may be, if that one will only allow God to enable him to say “This one thing I do”, he can become, and he can accomplish, what would forever otherwise be impossible.

2. Not only was Paul a man of one dominant purpose, but his purpose was of supreme worth. Suppose you could lay hands upon your supreme ambition this day, how much better off would you be? Years ago I went to perform a marriage ceremony. Some pranksters had got hold of the honeymoon car and draped the rear of that car with a large placard. In an upper corner there was the picture of a snarling man. In a lower corner the picture of an equally snarling woman. “When you get what you want you don’t want it”, the placard growled. Sad to say that is sometimes true, not only of husbands and wives, but many other prizes. Most of us sell out too cheaply.

Some years ago a company of youths standing on the banks of the Tennessee River when it was in flood, saw a rabbit swim and take refuge on a stack of lumber some two hundred yards from the bank. One of the boys knowing that the rabbit being a poor swimmer hates water, said “I’m going out and catch that rabbit”. He was sure the rabbit would be less afraid of him than of the raging water. His supposition was right. He caught the rabbit with his bare hands, knocked his head against the plank, and put it in the pocket of his overall, got into his canoe and started toward shore.

But he was not skillful in the handling of his boat. He struck a cross current, the canoe capsized and he was drowned. When they found his body three days later, one of the boys who was present at the tragedy came and drew that dead rabbit out of his pocket and held it up and said, “That is what he gave his life for”. He sold out too cheaply.
Some of you may have read a charming little book of a generation ago called "Santa Claus' Partner". The hero of the story was a brilliant young chap with a genius for making money. He had started from scratch and was rapidly growing rich. A fine old friend asked him, "Jim, what is your ambition?" "I am going to be worth a million," was his prompt answer. "Why do you wish to be worth a million?" "So I can tell the other fellow to go to hell", was the disappointing reply.

Now in saying this, Jim did not mean to be as brutal as he sounded. What he meant was, I want to be worth a million so I can be absolutely independent. But, of course, he was speaking out of the abundance of his youthful ignorance. Nobody is ever completely independent. In fact, the greater our wealth, the greater is the number on whom we must depend. If I owned a little grocery store in this town with twenty customers, I should be in a measure dependent on twenty people. But if I owned a chain of stores stretching from New York to San Francisco, I should be dependent on millions.

Were Isaiah to walk our crowded streets as he once walked the streets of Jerusalem, he would again throw up his hands in amazed horror crying, "Wherefor do you spend money for that which is not meat and you labor for that which satisfieth not". Most of us sell out too cheaply.

I bargained with life for a penny, and life would give no more. However I begged, at evening when I counted my scanty store. For life is a just employer; she gives us what we ask, But once we have set the wages, then we must bear the task. I worked for a menial's hire, only to learn dismayed. Whatever I'd ask of life, life would have gladly paid.

What was this prize of supreme worth that Paul was seeking? He was seeking "To take hold of that for which Christ once took hold of me".
That is it was Paul's conviction that he had been created and redeemed for a purpose. Hence his supreme ambition was to realize that purpose, and so do the will of God. He knew that to flout the will of God was to make ultimate victory impossible. He was sure also that to do the will of God was to make ultimate defeat impossible, even though he should have to live in a whirlwind and die in a storm.

PART II

Not only was Paul a man of one worthy purpose, but he set about achieving that purpose in a most commonsense way. It was Jesus who declared that the saints do not always exercise as much wisdom in pursuit of their goals as the sinners. "The children of this age are in their generation wiser than the children of the light." But no child of this age ever exercised a greater sanity in gaining his purpose than did Paul in gaining his. How, I repeat, did he go about it?

1. There were some things Paul kept. For instance he kept a wastebasket and every day as he went through the desk of life, he threw into the wastebasket everything that would hinder him in achieving his purpose. He kept only those things that would help him. He put it like this, "Forgetting those things that are behind and reaching forth to those things that are before". Now when Paul said he forgot what was behind, he did not mean that he forgot everything that was behind. That would be at once impossible and immoral. When Paul in going through the desk of life found any unpaid bills, any unfilled pledges, he did not throw them away.

If in going through the desk of life you should find any unpaid bills, even if they are owed to the Church, do not throw them away.
Do not throw away your marriage vows. Millions are doing just that. Do not throw away your Church vows. You did not make those vows to the congregation. You made them to the Christ of the Church. Don't dare throw them away. "A promise made is a debt unpaid."

Do not throw away the favors that have been shown you. Paul was constantly lifting some unknown saint into immortality by expressing his gratitude for a remembered kindness. When a gentleman said recently, "Nobody ever showed me a favor," at once I knew two facts about him:- first he was a grouch; second, he was not telling the truth. Everybody has been the recipient of many a kindness. I have had so many that I am ashamed that I have not shown more.

A few months ago as I was driving home one night, in the pouring rain, I had a puncture. When I drew to the side of the road to change the tire, I found that I did not even have a screwdriver to remove the hubcap. For a moment I was at an utter loss. Then a light suddenly blazed behind me. A young chap, a total stranger, got out and asked if I was in trouble. "I certainly am. I have a puncture and don't even have a screwdriver to get the hubcap off." "I will lend you one", he said, and he hurried away. When he came back I think the light was shining a little better on my face than at first, Looking me over he saw that I had a touch of Methusalitis. "I will fix it for you," he said, as if it were a great privilege. So in that pouring rain he set himself to the accomplishment of that ugly task. Naturally I was fairly brimming over with appreciation. I was almost desperately eager to let this young stranger know of my gratitude. But there was nothing I could think of to do except talk religion to him. Gladly I set myself to this task. But I'll be
dogged if he wasn't a Baptist. Believe me I have not only loved my helper, but the whole waterlogged lot ever since. They are a wonderful people and are making a great contribution.

Not only did Paul keep his gratitude for the kindnesses of friends, but above all for the tender mercies of God. Paul had suffered for his faith. He had been battered and stoned so many times that his body was little more than a scar. Yet his song of gratitude never hushed. This because having a radiant yesterday in which to stroll around now and then, he was constantly mindful of the mercies of God.

2. But some things we, as we, must throw away. Throw away the slights and insults that may come to you on the way. Collect old coins, if you like, or rare stamps, but don't collect grudges. I use to get a great many anonymous letters. Some of those letters were as sweet as honeysuckle. Some timid souls that felt that I had helped them were giving me a secret pat on the back. But most of them were the opposite. I think the bitterest one that I ever had was while I was Pastor at First Church, Memphis. It was a terror. As I read it I could not but wonder how it got through the Post Office without setting it on fire. It should have been written on asbestos. Naturally as soon as I finished that poisonous letter I hurried to the bank to tuck it into my safe-deposit box. This I did so I could read it every morning to keep myself angry. "Nobody," you say, "would be that foolish". But millions are. They file away and keep that which will make them at once miserable and mean.

I did not take that course. As well as I remember, I looked at that letter and said to myself, "This chap is trying to get under
my skin. I am already there. I am not going to move over and make room for him." Today I haven't the slightest idea of who wrote that letter, or what he said. But I do know this. He wasted his time. Though I served as pastor for more than forty years, I can still hold all the grudges in my eye that I have accumulated.

Finally throw away your sins when you have repented of them. Here is one of the most radiant promises God ever made - "I will forgive inequities and their sin will I remember no more". If the worst man in the city would repent this morning, our Lord would not only forgive him, but would forget his soiled yesterday. What God forgets, we have a right to forget. We do not honor Him by constantly torturing ourselves by the memory of an ill spent past.

PART III

But how can we forget?

I can tell you how you can not forget. You will not forget by clenching your fist and squaring your jaw and saying, "I have will-power. I am going to forget". The harder you try to forget in that fashion the better you will remember. It is a bit like going to sleep. Do you ever get in a hurry to go to sleep? You have a heavy day coming up tomorrow and you tell yourself, "I must go to sleep". Then you bend your energies in pursuit of sleep, and you become about as victorious as a tortoise in pursuit of a hare. You can't forget by making your mind a vacuum.

How did Paul forget the past? By fixing his eyes on the future. That will sound comforting to some, but not to others. "I am old," you may say. "The future doesn't have much for me". Perhaps not so far as this present world is concerned, but if you are a Christian,
far the best is yet to be. Whatever your yesterday may have been, tomorrow can be far better. Look at a few of the values on which you can even now fix your gaze.

1. Your Lord is still ahead. You may have run past many opportunities, many heartaches, many a joy, but you haven't run past Him yet. Another has pointed out how the geographers of the long ago, having made a map of their narrow known world, would then write on the wide seas such words as these: "Here be demons." "Here be dragons that devour men."

But there was a certain saint who lived in that dark day who had a sunnier reading of things. As he looked into that world of terrors, he saw no demons and dragons, he saw God. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit or whither I shall flee from their presence? If I ascend to heaven, thou are there. If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there thy hand shall lead me and thy right hand shall hold me." What is ahead for us? Sickness? Loneliness? Death? Yes, but as we face all these, we need never fear no evil for God is there.

2. Eternity is ahead. Time is very short, yet we need not get feverish. We have as much time as God has. This is the case because eternity is ahead. There are those who tell us that it doesn't matter to them whether life goes on or not. But that it does go on is a fact. You can not change a fact, whatever your attitude. When I hear one say it doesn't matter to me in the least whether there is any afterlife, or not, I know that the chances are that he is thinking only of himself, or that he is not thinking at all. God has
set eternity in our hearts. Therefore life goes on.

3. Because God and eternity is ahead, Christlikeness is ahead.
As Christians we are not now vastly impressive. The beauty of our Lord does not rest upon us as it should. But there is coming a day when this will no longer be the case. As a certain Scotch saint used to say, "One day the very angels of God will look at you and me and say, "How very like Jesus Christ she is". "How like Jesus Christ he is." "Beloved now are we the sons of God and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. But we know that when He shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see Him as He is."

Finally home is ahead. There is perhaps no road that leads back to the home of our childhood. But there is a wide open road that leads into that other home where a place is prepared for each one of us. Therefore, though much has been taken, far more abides. Our Lord is ahead. Eternity is ahead. Christlikeness is ahead. Home is ahead. Surely "The best is yet to be". Therefore as a receipt for great living, I know of no word better than this, "Forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to those things that are before, I press forward to the mark that is the prize".
Philippians 3:13-14 - This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before; I have pressed toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

This text is a bit of thank you note that Paul sent to some dear friends who had shared his need in difficult days. They are evidently the words of a man who lived grandly. Indeed it is impossible to get a glimpse of his face across the space of the centuries without a thrill. That is the way we feel that a man should use life. That is the way I should like to use my own. It would be hard to exaggerate this great personality. Certain nations might be dropped into the sea without being missed as much as we should miss this one tremendous man. What is his secret? We can not share his genius, but we can share something of his greatness.

PART I

He was a man of one dominant purpose.

1. He could say "This one thing I do". It matters not how gifted and many-sided one may be, if that one never decides what he is going to do with his gifts, he will likely squander them for a poor second best. However excellent his car may be, and however abundant his supply of power, if he does not know where he is going, he will likely wear out his machine and burn up his power without reaching any worthy goal.

Another has called attention to the fact that Coleridge had a genius almost equal to that of Shakespeare. Had he written all the books he dreamed of writing, he would have left a small library. But actually all he left was a few glittering fragments to show us how vastly gifted he was. He never could say "This one thing I do". On
the other hand, however mediocre one may be, if that one will only allow God to enable him to say "This one thing I do", he can become, and he can accomplish, what would forever otherwise be impossible.

2. Not only was Paul a man of one dominant purpose, but his purpose was of supreme worth. Suppose you could lay hands upon your supreme ambition this day, how much better off would you be? Years ago I went to perform a marriage ceremony. Some pranksters had got hold of the honeymoon car and draped the rear of that car with a large placard. In an upper corner there was the picture of a snarling man. In a lower corner the picture of an equally snarling woman. "When you get what you want you don't want it", the placard said. Sad to say that is sometimes true, not only of husbands and wives, but many other prizes as well. Most of us sell out too cheaply.

Some years ago a company of youths standing on the banks of the Tennessee River when it was in flood, saw a rabbit swim and take refuge on a stack of lumber some two hundred yards from the bank. One of the boys knowing that the rabbit being a poor swimmer hates water, said "I'm going out and get that rabbit". He was sure the rabbit would be less afraid of him than of the water. His supposition was right. He caught the rabbit with his bare hands, knocked his head against the plank, and put him in the pocket of his overall, got into his canoe and started toward shore.

But he was not skillful in the handling of his boat. He struck a cross current, the canoe capsized and he was drowned. When they found his body three days later, one of the boys who was present at the tragedy came and drew that dead rabbit out of his pocket and held it up and said, "That is what he gave his life for". He sold out too cheaply.
Some of you may have read a charming little book of a generation ago called "Santa Claus' Partner". The hero of the story was a brilliant young chap with a genius for making money. He had started from scratch and was rapidly growing rich. A fine old friend asked him this. "Jim, what is your ambition?" "I am going to be worth a million," was his prompt answer. "Why do you wish to be worth a million?" "So I can tell the other fellow to go to hell", was the disappointing reply.

Now in saying this, Jim did not mean to be as brutal as he sounded. What he meant was, I want to be worth a million so I can be absolutely independent. But, of course, he was speaking out of the abundance of his youthful ignorance. Nobody is ever completely independent. In fact, the greater our wealth, the greater is the number on whom we must depend. If I owned a little grocery store in this town with twenty customers, I should be in a measure dependent on twenty people. But if I owned a chain of stores stretching from New York to San Francisco, I should be dependent on millions.

Were Isaiah to walk our crowded streets as he once walked the streets of Jerusalem, he would again throw up his hands in amazed horror crying, "Wherefor do you spend money for that which is not meat and you labor for that which satisfieth not". Most of us sell out too cheaply.

I bargained with life for a penny, and life would give no more. However I begged, at evening when I counted my scanty store. For life is a just employer; she gives us what we ask, But once we have set the wages, then we must bear the task. I worked for a menial's hire, only to learn dismayed Whatever I'd ask of life, life would have gladly paid.

What was this prize of supreme worth that Paul was seeking? He was seeking "To take hold of that for which Christ once took hold of me".
That is it was his conviction that he had been created and redeemed for a purpose. Hence his supreme ambition was to realize that purpose.

His one ambition was to do the will of God, knowing that is the prize of supreme worth. It was the will of God, though it were possible we might win every other prize, life would still be a futile failure. But if we do the will of God, then nothing can defeat us.

This does not mean that the will of God is the easy way. It cost Jesus the cross. It will cost us no less. But it does mean that though we should have to live in a whirlwind and die in a storm, the ultimate issue must be a radiant victory.

PART II

Not only was Paul a man of one supremely worthy purpose, but he set about achieving that purpose in a most sane and commonsense way. It was Jesus who declared that the saints do not always exercise as much wisdom in pursuit of their goals as the sinners. "The children of this age are in their generation wiser than the children of the light". But no child of this age ever exercised a greater sanity in gaining his purpose than Paul in gaining his. How, I repeat, did he go about it?

He kept a wastebasket and every day as he went through the desk of life, he threw into the wastebasket everything that would hinder him in achieving his purpose. He kept only those things that would help him. He put it this way, "Forgetting those things that are behind and reaching forth to those things that are before". Now when Paul said he forgot what was behind him, he did not mean he forgot everything that was behind. That would be at once impossible and immoral. When Paul went through the desk of life and found any unpaid bills, any unfilled pledges, he did not throw them away. Nor should we.
If in going through the desk of life you should find any unpaid bills, even if they are owed to the Church, do not throw them away. Do not throw away your marriage vows. Millions are doing just that. Do not throw away your Church vows. You did not make those vows to the congregation, or to the Pastor. You made them to the Christ of the Church. Don't dare throw them away. "A promise made is a debt unpaid."

As you look through the desk of life, don't throw away the favors that have been shown you. Paul was constantly lifting some unknown saint into immortality by expressing his gratitude for some remembered kindness. When a gentleman said recently "Nobody ever showed me a kindness," I at once knew two facts about him:—first, he was a grouch; second, he was not telling the truth. Everybody has been the recipient of many a kindness. I have had so many that many times I am inwardly ashamed that I have not shown more.

A few months ago I was going home from an engagement. It was about ten o'clock at night, and was pouring rain. I had a puncture. When I drew to the side of the road to change the tire, I found that I did not even have a screwdriver to remove the hubcap. For a moment I was at an utter loss. Then a light suddenly showed behind me, and a young chap, a total stranger, got out and asked if I was in trouble. "I certainly am. I have a puncture and don't even have a screwdriver to get the hubcap off." "I have one—I will lend you," and he hurried away. When he came back I think the light was shining a little better on my face than at first. Looking me over in a clearer light he saw that I had a touch of Methusalitis. "I will fix it for you," he said, as if it were the greatest privilege. So in that pouring rain he set
himself to the accomplishment of that ugly task. Naturally I was fairly over with appreciation. I was almost desperately eager to let this young stranger know of my gratitude. But there was nothing I could think of to do for him except talk religion to him. With a glad earnestness I set myself to this task, and I'll be dogged if he wasn't a Baptist. Believe me I have loved the whole waterlogged lot better ever since. They are a wonderful people and are making a great contribution.

Not only did Paul keep his gratitude for the kindnesses of friends, but above all for the tender mercies of God. Paul had suffered for his faith. He had been battered and stoned so many times that his body was little more than a scar. Yet his song of gratitude never hushed. This because having a radiant yesterday in which to stroll around now and then, he was constantly mindful of the mercies of God.

Throw away the slights and insults that may come to you on the way. Collect old coins, if you like, or rare stamps, but don't collect grudges. I used to get a great many anonymous letters. Some of those letters were as sweet as honeysuckle. Some timid souls that felt that I had helped them were giving me a secret pat on the back. But most of them were the opposite. I think the bitterest one that I ever had was while I was Pastor at First Church, Memphis. It was a terror. As I read it I could not but wonder how it got through the Post Office without setting it on fire. It should have been written on asbestos. Naturally as soon as I finished the poisonous letter I folded it up carefully and hurried to the bank to tuck it into my safe-deposit box. This I did so I could read it every morning to keep myself angry. "Nobody," you say, "would be
that foolish. But millions are. They file away and keep that which will make them at once miserable and mean.

I did not take that course. As well as I remember, I looked at that letter and said to myself, "This chap is trying to get under my skin. I am already there. I am not going to move over and make room for him." Today I haven't the slightest idea of who was, or what he said. But I know this. He wasted his time. Though I served as pastor for more than forty years I can still hold all the grudges in my eye that I have accumulated.

Finally throw away your sins when you have repented of them. Here is one of the most radiant promises God ever made - "I will forgive inequities and their sin will I remember no more". If the worst man in the city would repent this morning, our Lord would not only forgive him, but would forget his soiled yesterday. What God forgets, you have a right to forget. You do not honor him by constantly torturing yourself by the memory of an ill spent past.

PART III

But how can we forget?

I can tell you how you can not forget. You will not forget by clenching your fist and squaring your jaw and saying, "I have will-power, I am going to forget". The harder you try to forget in that fashion the better you will remember. It is a bit like going to sleep. Do you ever get in a hurry to go to sleep? You have a heavy day coming up tomorrow and you tell yourself, "I must go to sleep". Then you bend your energies in pursuit of sleep, and you become about as victorious as a tortoise in pursuit of a hare. You can't forget by making your mind a vacuum.
How did Paul forget the past? By fixing his eyes on the future. That will sound comforting to some, but not to others. "I am old," you may say. "The future doesn't have much for me". Perhaps not so far as this present world is concerned, but if you are a Christian, far the best is yet to be. Whatever your yesterday has been, tomorrow can be far better. Look at a few of the values on which you can even now fix your gaze.

1. Your Lord is still ahead. You may have run past many opportunities, many heartaches, many a joy, but you haven't run past Him yet. Another has pointed out how the geographers of the long ago, having made a map of their narrow known world, would then write on the wide seas such words as these: "Here be demons." "Here be dragons that devour man."

But there was a certain saint who lived in that dark day who had a sunnier reading of things. As he looked into that world of terrors, he saw no demons and dragons, he saw God. "Whiter shall I go from thy Spirit or whither I shall flee from their presence? If I ascend to heaven, thou are there. If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there thy shall lead me and thy right hand shall hold me." What is ahead for us? Sickness? Lonliness? Death? Yes, but as we face all these, we need fear no evil for God is there.

2. Eternity is ahead. Time is very short, yet we need not get feverish. We have as much time as God has. This is the case because eternity is ahead. There are those who tell us that it doesn't matter to them whether life goes on or not. But that it does go on
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is a fact. You cannot change a fact. You cannot change a fact, whatever your attitude. When I hear one say it doesn't matter to me in the least whether there is any afterlife, or not, I know that the chances are that he is thinking only of himself, or that he is not thinking at all. God has set eternity in our hearts. Therefore life goes on.

3. Because God and eternity is ahead, Christlikeness is ahead. As Christians we are not now vastly impressive. The beauty of our Lord does not rest upon us as it should. But there is coming a day when this will no longer be the case. As a certain Scotch saint used to say, "One day the very angels of God will look at you and me and say, "How very like Jesus Christ she is" How like Jesus Christ he is". "Beloved now are we the sons of God and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. But we know that when He shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see Him as He is."

Finally home is ahead. There is perhaps no road that leads back to the home of our childhood. But there is a wide open road that leads into that other home where a place is prepared for each one of us. Therefore, though much has been taken, much abides. Our Lord is ahead. Eternity is ahead. Christlikeness is ahead. Home is ahead. Browning was speaking the sober truth when he said, "The best is yet to be". Therefore as a receipe for great living, I know of no word better than this, "Forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to those things that are before, I press forward to the mark that is the prize".
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Philippians 3:13-14 - This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before; I have pressed toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

This text is a bit of a thank you note that Paul sent to some dear friends who had shared his need in difficult days. They are evidently the words of a man who lived grandly. It is impossible to get a glimpse of his face across the space of the centuries without a thrill, all but envious admiration. That is the way a man should use life, we feel. That is the way I should like to point my life. It would be hard to exaggerate this great personality. Certain nations might be dropped into the sea, and not be missed as much as we would miss this tremendous man. What is his secret? We can not share his genius, but we can share his greatness.

PART I

1. He was a man of one dominant purpose. He could say "This one thing I do". It matters not how gifted and many-sided one may be, if that one never decides what he is going to do with his gifts, he will likely squander them for a poor second best. However excellent his may be, and however excellent his supply of power, if he does not know where he is going, he will likely wear out his machine and run out of power and not get anywhere.

Another has called attention to the fact that Coleridge had a genius equal to that of Shakespeare. Had he written as many pieces as he could, he would have left a library. But all he has left are a few fragments to show us how vastly gifted he was. He never could say "This one thing I do".

On the other hand, however meager one's gift may be, if that
one will only allow God to enable him to say "This one thing I do", he can become, and he can accomplish, what would forever otherwise be impossible.

2. Not only was Paul a man of one dominant purpose, but his purpose was of supreme worth. Suppose you could lay hands upon your supreme ambition this day. How much better off would you be? Years ago I went to my church to perform a marriage ceremony. Some pranksters had got hold of the honeymoon car and draped the rear of that car with a large placard. In an upper corner there was the picture of a snarling man. In a lower corner a picture of an equally snarling woman. Printed in large letters was this forbidding word, "When you get what you want you don't want it." Sad to say that is true sometimes of husbands and wives. But it is true of many prizes. Most of us sellout too cheaply.

Some years ago a company of youths stood on the banks of the Tennessee River when it was in flood. They saw a rabbit that had been drowned out of its refuge swim out and take safety on a large plank not too far out from the bank. One of the boys knew that rabbits can't swim. They hate water. He said, "I'm going out and get that rabbit". He was sure the rabbit would be less afraid of him that he was of the water. His supposition was right. He caught the rabbit with his bare hands, knocked his head against the plank, and put him in his coat pocket. He got into his canoe and started toward shore.

But he was not skillful in the handling of his canoe. He struck a cross current and the canoe capsized and he was drowned. When they found his body three days later, one of the boys who was present came up and drew that dead rabbit out of his pocket and
held it up and said, "That is what he gave his life for". He sold out too cheaply.

Some of you may have read a charming little book of a generation ago called "Santa Claus' Partner". The hero of the story was a brilliant young chap who had a genius for making money. He had started from scratch and was rapidly growing rich. A fine old gentleman friend who loved him questioned him. "Jim, what is your ambition?"

"I am going to be worth a million," was his answer. "Why do you wish to be worth a million?" "So I can tell the other fellows to go to hell", was the disappointing reply.

Now in saying this, Jim did not mean to be as brutal as he sounded. What he meant was, I want to be worth a million so I can be absolutely independent. But, of course, he was speaking out of the abundance of his youthful ignorance. Nobody is ever independent. We belong to each other. In fact, the greater our wealth, the greater is the number on whom we must depend. If I owned a little grocery store in this town with twenty customers, I would in a measure depend on twelve people. But if I owned a chain of stores stretching from New York to San Francisco, I would be dependent on millions.

Were Isaiah to walk our crowded streets as he once walked the streets of Jerusalem, he would again throw up his hands in amazed horror saying, "Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not meat and you labor for that which satisfies not". Most of us sell out too cheaply.

I bargained with life for a purpose, And life would give no more.
However I begged, at evening when I counted my scanty store.
For life is a just employer; she gives us what we ask,
But once we have set the wages, then we must bear the task.
I worked for a menial's hire, only to learn dismayed
Whatever I'd ask of life, life would have gladly paid.
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What was this prize of supreme worth that Paul was seeking? He was out to lay hold of that for which he had been laid hold of Christ Jesus. It was his conviction that he had been created and redeemed for a purpose. His supreme ambition was to realize God's purpose in his life. In short, he was out to do the will of God. That is a prize of supreme worth. Its worth is so supreme that if we flout the will of God, or if it were possible we might win every other prize, life would still be a futile failure. But if we find a place secure within the will of God, then nothing can defeat us. This does not mean that the will of God is the easy way. It cost Jesus the cross. It will cost us no less. But it does mean that, though we should live in a whirlwind and die in a storm, the issue must be radiant victory.

PART II

Not only was Paul a man of one purpose, and that a supremely worthy purpose, but he set about achieving that purpose in a most sane and commonsense way. It was Jesus who declared that the saints do not always exercise as much wisdom as the sinners. "The children of this age," He says, "are in their generation not wiser than the children in the light." But no child of this age ever exercised a greater sanity, entertaining his purpose than Paul did entertaining his. He: How, I repeat, did he go about it?

Paul kept a wastebasket and every day he went through the desk of life, he threw into the wastebasket everything that would hinder him in achieving his purpose. He kept only those things that would help him. He put it this way, "Forgetting those things that are behind and reaching forward to those things that are before".

Now when Paul said he forgot what was behind him, he did not mean he forgot everything that was behind. That would be at once im-
possible and immoral. When Paul went through the desk of life and found any unpaid bills, any unfilled pledges, he did not throw them away. Nor should we.

If in going through the desk of life you should find any unpaid bills, even if they are owed to the Church, do not throw them away. Do not throw away your marriage vows. Millions are doing just that. Do not throw away your Church vows. You did not make those vows to the congregation or to the Pastor. You made them to the Christ of the Church. Don't dare throw them away. "A promise made is a debt unpaid."

Then if you look through the desk of life, don't throw away the favors that have been shown you. Paul was constantly lifting some unknown saint into immortality by his gratitude for some remembered kindness. We have all had a touch. When a gentleman said, "Nobody ever showed me a kindness," I knew two things about that gentleman. First, he was a grouch. Second, he was not telling the truth. Everybody has been the recipient of favors.

I can speak here with conviction. I have had so many that I have had no right to expect, that many times I am inwardly ashamed that I have not shown more. A few months ago I was going home from an engagement. I was at least seventy-five miles from home. It was pouring rain. I had a puncture. I drew to the side of the road to change the tire. When I looked at my tools I did not even have a screwdriver to get the hubcap off. I was for the moment, at an utter loss, when a light suddenly showed behind me and a young chap, I should say in his mid-twenties, got out and asked if I was in trouble. And I gave a very positive affirmative. "I have a puncture and don't even have a screwdriver to get the hubcap off." "I have one I will
lend you", and he moved away. When he came back I think the light was shining a little better on my face then it was at first. Looking at me in a clearer light he saw that I had a touch of Methusalitis. "I will fix if for you," he said, as if it were the greatest privilege. So in that pouring rain he set himself to the accomplishment of that ugly task. Naturally I was fairly boiling over with appreciation. I was almost desperately eager to let this young stranger know of my gratitude. But there was nothing I could do for him except talk religion to him. With a glad earnestness I set myself to this task, and I'll be dogged if he wasn't a Baptist. Believe me I have loved the whole waterlogged lot better ever since. They are a great people and are making a great contribution.

Paul never forgot the kindness that had been shown. Not only did Paul keep his obligation and his gratitude for the kindesses of friends, but above all his gratitude for the tender mercies of God. Paul had passed through a transforming experience. An experience that etched so many times that his body was lithe more than a had enabled him to say "The old has passed, the new has come." Paul never forget the mercies of God.

But there were some things that he threw away. There are some things that we must throw away, if we are going to live grandly. If you are going to achieve God's purpose, throw away your failures, unless by remembering them you may the better succeed in the future. "Are you a Christian," I questioned a young chap. And he answered sadly and almost sneeringly. "I tried it once," How disappointing and cowardly. No child has ever learned to walk if he quit trying after one fall or after one hundred. Throw away the slights and the insults that may come to you on the way. Collect old coins, if you like, or rare stamps, but
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don't collect grudges. I use to tell my congregation, "If you want to insult me, go ahead, but when you are finished it will be wise for you to take me aside and tell me what you have done. Otherwise the chances are you will be wasting your time. I am not expecting to be insulted." I have stood in great crowds when I was lonely and have said to myself, "There are scores of people in that crowd that would like me, if they knew me." Why? Because I would like them.

I use to get a great many anonymous letters. Some of those letters were as sweet as honeysuckle. Some timid souls that felt that I had helped them were giving me a secret pat on the back. But most of them were the opposite. I think the bitterest one that I ever had was when I was Pastor at First Church, Memphis. I went into my office one morning and opened it up and read it. It was a terror. I wonder how it got through the Post Office without setting it on fire. It should have been written on asbestos. As soon as I finished reading it I folded it up carefully and put it in my pocket and hurried to the bank to tuck it into my safe-deposit box. This I did so I could read it every morning to keep me angry. No-I did not do this. Nobody, you say, would be that foolish. But millions are. They file away that which will make them at once miserable and mean.

I did not take that course. As well as I remember, I looked at that letter and said to myself, "This chap is trying to get under my skin. I am already there. I am not going to move over and make room for him." I haven't the slightest idea of who the writer was, or what he said. But I know this. He wasted his time. I served as pastor for more than forty years and you can see all the grudges in my eye this morning that I have accumulated.

Finally throw away your sins when you have repented of them. Here
Great Living - Page 8

is one of the most radiant promises God ever made - "I will forgive your inequities and their sin will I remember no more." If the worst man in the city would repent this morning, our Lord would not only forgive him, but would forget his yesterday. What God forgives, you have a right to forget. You do not honor him by constantly torturing yourself by the memory of an ill spent past.

PART III

How it is easy today to forget the things that are behind, and reach to those that are before. But how can we forget?

I can tell you how you can forget. You will not forget by clenching your fist and squaring your jaw and saying, "I have willpower. I am going to forget". The harder you try to forget in that fashion the better you will remember. It is a bit like going to sleep. Do you ever get in a hurry to go to sleep? You have a heavy day coming up tomorrow and you tell yourself, "I must go to sleep". Then you bend your energies in pursuit of sleep, and you become a tortoise in pursuit of a hare. You don't forget by making your mind a vacuum.

How did Paul forget the past? By fixing his eyes on the future. That will sound comforting to some, but not to others. "I am old," you may say. "The future doesn't have much for me". Perhaps not so far as this present world is concerned, but if you are a Christian, far the best is yet to be. Whatever your yesterday may have been, tomorrow can be far better.

Look at a few of the values on which you can fix your gaze.

1. Your Lord is still ahead. You run past many opportunities, many heartaches, many a joy, but you haven't run past Him yet. Einstein has pointed out how the geographers, having made a map of their
narrow known world, would write on the wide seas such words as these: "Here be demons." "Here be dragons that devour men."

But there was a certain saint who lived in that dark day who had a sunnier reading of things. As he looked into that world of terrors, he saw no demons and dragons, he saw God. "Whither shall I go from the Spirit or whither I shall flee from their presence? As I ascend up into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me and they right hand shall hold me." What is ahead for us? Sickness? Lonliness? Death? But our Lord is ahead. As we face all these, we need fear no evil for He is there.

2. Eternity is ahead. Time is very short, yet you need not get feverish. You have as much time as God has. This is the case because eternity is ahead. There are those who tell us that it doesn't matter to them whether life goes on or not. But that it does go on is a fact. You can not change a fact. You can not change a fact, whatever your attitude. When I hear one say it doesn't matter to me in the least whether there is any afterlife, or not, I know that the chances are that he is thinking only of himself, or that he is not thinking at all. God has set eternity in our hearts. Therefore life goes on.

3. Because God and eternity is ahead, Christ likeness is ahead. As Christ is we are not now fully impressed. The less J. M. Scott does we are none too impressed today, but such is the case for too few of us. But there is coming a day when this will no longer be the case. As a certain Scotch saint use to say, "One day the very angels of God will look at you and me and say how very like Jesus Christ she is." "How like Jesus Christ he is." "Beloved now are we the sons of God and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. But we know
that when He shall appear we shall be like him, and we shall see Him as He is.

Finally home is ahead. There is perhaps no road that leads back to the home of your childhood, but there is a wide open road that leads into that other home where a place is prepared for each one of us. Therefore, though much has been done, much abides. Our Lord is ahead. Eternity is ahead. Christlikeness is ahead. Home is Ahead. Therefore Browning was speaking the sober truth when He said "The best is yet to be". Therefore as a receipt for great living, I know of no word better than this, "Forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to those things that are before, I press forward to the mark that is the prize".
"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize."
Philippians 3:13:14

This text is auto-biographical. It flashes a blaze of light upon the face of one of the greatest men that ever trod this planet. He was a man who lived so richly, so beautifully, so joyously and helpfully that to come into his presence is to be made at once glad and wistful. His life was a long and beautiful spiritual progress. He knew the joy of going on; he knew the thrill of having his sun hang in an Eastern sky and of constantly brushing the flower of life's radiant morning.

What is his secret?

1. He was a man of one purpose. "This one thing I do." However weak you may be by nature if your life becomes unified, it becomes strong. There is enough heat in an acre of sunshine that focused will blast a stone as if it were powder. The strong men are the men who can say "this one thing I do." That gives strength even to weakness.

On the other hand, strength becomes weakness if it has no fixed goal. Coleridge had a genius almost equal to that of Shakespeare. He planned enough books to have filled a library and yet all he left behind were a few glittering fragments. He could never say, "This one thing I do." However fast your car, if you do not know where you are going, you can never get anywhere. But any sort of jollity may help if you know your goal.

Years ago this advertisement appeared in the Sportsman Magazine, "Send us one dollar and we will tell you how to keep any gun from scattering shot."
A certain farmer who had a gun that would put a shot in every plank on the side of his barn, sent in his dollar. In due time he received his answer. It was
this: "Put one shot in your gun." This man may have felt himself cheated but he was not. The first step in living powerfully is to lead life with one purpose.

2. Not only did Paul have one purpose, but it was a worthy purpose. That is of supreme importance. You are selling your life day by day for something. What are you seeking to buy with it? You remember the young man in Santa Claus' Partner who determined to be worth a million dollars. When a friend asked him why, he did not say that he was bent on this wealth in order the better to serve his generation. He said, "I want a million so I can tell the other fellows to go to Hell." What a shabby purpose!

Years ago a group of boys stood on the banks of the Tennessee river when the river was at flood. They watched a spent rabbit that had been drowned out of its burrow, swim and take refuge on a lumber stack several hundred feet from shore. One of the boys said to his companions, "I am going out there and catch that rabbit." So he got into his canoe, made his way to the lumber stack, caught the rabbit, struck its head against the plank and put his prize in the pocket of his blue overalls. On the way back he struck a cross current, his boat capsized and he was drowned. When they found his body three days later, one of the boys who had witnessed the tragedy drew the old dead rabbit from his pocket and held it up and said, "That is what he gave his life for." Well, whether you sell out for a million or for a dead rabbit, both are too cheap.

It was just this spending so much for such small returns that amazed the Prophet Isaiah, while it broke his heart. He could not look on and be still. So he threw himself in front of the people of his day as he would those of our day if he were present, flinging at them this question, "Why do you spend money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which satisfieth not?"
remember that while there is such a thing as a statute of limitation in the laws
of men, there is no such thing in the laws of God. A promise made is a debt unpaid.

I heard of a man some time ago who was converted in a revival meeting. The
next morning a friend who had heard of his high adventure, met him and said,
"Jim, I understand you were converted last night." "Yes", said Jim, "I was con-
verted." "Well", continued his friend, "I suppose that now you will pay me that
twenty-five dollars you owe me." "No", said Jim, "the Lord forgave me of that along
with my other sins." But God does not do business that way.

We need, therefore, to remember our unpaid debts in terms of money, also our
unpaid debts in terms of obligations - our vows taken, our promises made. There
are those who feel that they have a right to break up their marriage and forget
their solemn vows any time they desire. But you can't get rid of an obligation by
merely pushing it aside.

There are those who have stood at the altar of the church and have vowed, not
to the minister, not to the congregation, but to God to keep his Holy will and
commandments and walk in the same all the days of their life. You do not cancel
these vows by moving from your home town to another city. Don't throw away the
vows you have made.

2. Don't forget the wounds you have inflicted that you might heal. I dare-
say I am speaking to some who will never find peace with God until they make right
certain wrongs against their fellows. There is an apology that you ought to make;
a tear of your own causing that you ought to dry. There is such a requirement as
restitution. To be a Christian is not only to stop tearing your neighbor's fences
down, it is to build back the fences that you have torn down if it is within your
power. Remember that you cannot cover up filth with snow and make God call it white.

3. Do not throw away the kindnesses that have been shown you. If somebody
has stretched a hand to you when you were about to sink; if somebody has sent you
some lovely flowers when you felt yourself forgotten; if somebody has written a
love letter that put a new sparkle in your eye, don’t throw these treasures away. Keep them and let them make your heart tender, not only toward those who have been thoughtful of you but to others who need such help as you have received.

4. Finally, do not forget the mercies of God. Paul was constantly rejoicing in the kindness of his friends. He was constantly thrilled with the memory of the mercies of God. We find him in trying situations, sometimes he is imprisoned; sometimes he is without his books, without enough clothing to keep him warm. But however hard his circumstances, we never find him without his song of praise and thanksgiving. Paul kept green the memories of the kindnesses of men and the mercies of God.

III

But while there are treasures that we ought to keep, there are other things that we ought certainly to throw away.

1. If you propose to make progress in your Christian life, make a habit of throwing away the petty slights, even the injuries that come your way. Two people can walk over the same landscape; one will gather a handful of flowers and the other a handful of nettles. I am thinking of one now who used to live in our home. She was not a stamp collector but she was a diligent collector of slights. Almost every day when she came home from work she brought a new one. Therefore, she had a growing number of enemies and a lessening number of friends.

We ought to throw away our slights because, if we keep them, they will make us angry. If we keep our anger it is likely to harden into hate. That is the reason that Paul urged "Let not the sun go down on your wrath." Breast over your wrongs and you will come to hate the one who has wronged you. Then, just in proportion as you harbor hate, in that proportion do you harbor hell.

Some of you will remember the lovely communication from our unknown friend in England that was in the Bulletin a week ago. I am going to keep that without apology. It serves to make me very humble while it makes me very glad. But why
keep letters that only irritate? I went into my office years ago at Memphis to find a letter so fiery that it ought to have been written on asbestos. What became of it? I tore it up and threw it in the waste basket. I could not tell you for the life of me whether it was even signed or not. It is well to pet a canary but why pet a vulture?

2. Throw away your mistakes. Some of you are thinking with a bitterness too deep for tears of some terrible blunders that you have made. You keep looking back at them. You keep allowing them to throw you. That only spells weakness. When you pass through a gate, the only sensible thing to do is to shut it. More than thirty years ago I forgot a poem while preaching. For a year after that whenever I started to quote anything, I would have to fight with terror saying to myself, "I forget once; what if I should do so again?" If I had kept looking at that failure, I would have largely thrown away my power to remember.

3. What is more important, turn your back not simply on your failures, but on your sins. Some of you perhaps have made a mess of life and know it. Maybe you have wrecked your home; maybe you have broken somebody’s heart. Right the wrong if you can. If you can’t, forget it. We have a right to forget our sins when we commit them to God because he himself forgets them. There is only one something about you that God ever forgets— that is your sin. "I will forgive their iniquities and their sins will I remember no more." Bear in mind that remorse may be as ruinous and as damning as hardness of heart. The only help for any of us is to accept God's forgiveness and forget the sins of our yesterdays. As God forgives you, be wise enough to forgive yourself.

IV

"But", you ask desperately, "how can I do that? I have tried to forget, God knows I have, but I can't." But the truth is, you can. How?

1. There is a so-called remedy that will not work. You cannot forget by merely clenching your fists and squaring your jaw. When I was a boy, a man of
outstanding ability came to take charge of our village school. The most blind
of us could see that he was equipped for a far superior place. Why was he
there? One day I overheard him talking to my father and he said desperately;
"You wonder why I am here, Mr. Chappell. I am here because there is something in
my life that I have to forget. I must forget." But in his effort to forget, he
lost his mind and the last time I saw him he was being taken away to an institution
for the insane.

2. There is only one remedy that results in a cure - forget the past by
focusing our attention upon the future. You cannot make your mind a vacuum but
you can forget one thing by remembering another. How did you forget the first beau
you ever had, if you can remember back that far? Not by determining to forget but
by falling in love with somebody else.

You remember Silas Marner, how broken of heart, he gave himself to the love
of gold. He used to come home and run his fingers through his golden heard and
fairly worship his treasure as he would worship God. By and by he lost that love
altogether. How did it come about? "The gold was stolen", you answer. No,
that was no remedy. He loved his gold as much after he had lost it as he did
before, even more. Here is how he was cured. One day he came home and saw
something that sparkled in the firelight. Thinking that it was his gold come
back again, he went forward to run his miserly fingers through it and hear the
music of its clinking, but he found that what seemed to be gold was the silken
tresses of a little girl who was sleeping by the warmth of his fire. This little
girl stole into his heart 'till she so filled that heart with a tender human love.
that the old love was crowded out. We are to forget the past by fixing our gaze
upon what is ahead.

"But what", you ask desperately, "is there ahead for me? I have run past
so much. I have thrown away so many fine opportunities. Not only that but I am
no longer young. I am coming close to where the clouds are homing for the night."
There are some treasures that whosoever you are, and however much you have squan-
dered, and how few the days you still have to live are still ahead. These are
ahead for all of us, however bad we are and however much we have wasted:—

1. Eternity is still ahead. "I have only a few years left me", you say
despairingly. Perhaps so, on this side of the river. Yet whether you have a
mere fraction of life or a full life, you have a whole eternity ahead. However
close you have come to the eventide, you are destined to live as long as God
lives. So I can say to you what we say to a bright youth sometimes; "You have a
wonderful future."

2. God is ahead. We have not run past him yet. You have run past many
privileges and many opportunities. Granted. But you still have not run past the
eternal God in "whose hands your breath is and whose are all your ways". When
the old geographies used to draw their maps, they would picture the known world,
then out beyond its borders there would be wide strips where such entries as
these were made: "Here be demons. Here be dragons that devour men." But the
psalmist had a sunnier reading of the riddle. He said, "Out in the unknown future
is God." "Whither shall I fall from thy presence or whither shall I go from
thy spirit? If I ascend up into heaven, behold, thou art there. If I make my bed
in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell
in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me and thy
right hand shall hold me."

3. Now, because God is ahead, because eternity is ahead, perfection is ahead.
However little progress we have made, we still have it in us to become increasingly
Christlike as we go on climbing one Alpine height after another with him in
eternity. "We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him for we shall
see him as he is."

4. Finally, home is ahead. These dear homes that we know in the here and now will
not and cannot last. It is not morbid to call attention to that grim fact.

It is just the plain truth that we all need to face. Some of these days you and I shall not live here any more. Maybe your home is already a wreck, but there is one ahead that is at once satisfying and abiding. Therefore, the wisest decision that we can possibly make is to join with Paul in this high resolution: "Forgetting the things that are behind and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize."
PERPETUAL PROGRESS

"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize."
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This text is autobiographical. It flashes a flood of light upon the face of one of the greatest men that ever set foot upon this planet. He was a man who lived so richly and so beautifully, so joyously and helpfully that to come into his presence to this day is to be made at once glad and wistful. His life was a thrilling spiritual progress. He knew the joy of going on; the gladness of constantly climbing toward his goal.

I

What is his secret?

1. He was a man of one purpose. "This one thing I do." However weak you may be by nature if your life becomes unified, it becomes strong. There is enough heat in an acre of sunshine when focused to blast a stone as if it were powder. The strong men are the men who can say "this one thing I do". That gives strength even to weakness.

On the other hand, even great strength becomes weakness if it has no fixed goal. Coleridge had a genius almost equal to that of Shakespears. He planned enough books to have filled a library, yet all he left was a few glittering fragments. He could never say, "This one thing I do." However fast your car, if you do not know where you are going, you can never get anywhere. But any sort of jaloppy may help if you know your goal.

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ing shot." A certain farmer who had a gun that would put a shot in every plank on the side of his barn, sent in his dollar. In due time he received his answer. It was this: "Put one shot in your gun." This man may have felt himself cheated but he was not. The first step in living at once powerfully and joyfully is to load life with one purpose.

2. Not only did Paul have one purpose, but it was a worthy purpose. That is of supreme importance. You are selling your life day by day for something. What are you seeking to buy with it? You remember the young man in Santa Claus' Partner who determined to be worth a million dollars. When a friend asked him why, he did not say that he was bent on this wealth in order the better to serve his generation. He said rather, "I want a million so I can tell the other fellow to go to hell." What a shabby purpose!

Years ago a group of boys stood on the banks of the Tennessee river when it was at flood. They watched a spent rabbit that had been drowned out of its burrow, swim and take refuge on a lumber stack several hundred feet from shore. One of the boys said to his companions, "I am going out there and catch that rabbit." So he got into his canoe, made his way to the lumber stack, caught the rabbit, struck its head against a plank and put his prize in the pocket of his overalls. On the way back he struck a cross current, his boat capsized, and he was drowned. When they found his body three days later, one of the boys who had witnessed the tragedy drew the dead rabbit from his pocket, held it up and said, "This is what he gave his life for." Well, whether you sell out for a million or for a dead rabbit, both are too cheap.

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Prophet Isaiah, while it broke his heart. He could not look on and keep silent. So he confronted the people of his day, as he does those of our day, flinging at them this question, "Why do you spend money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which satisfieth not?" He saw that they were spending their all for prizes that were unworthy. Paul had a purpose that was worthy.

What was his purpose? He was seeking to lay hold of that for which he had been laid hold of by Christ Jesus. He was seeking to live his life according to the plan of God. That is a purpose that is really worthwhile. To choose the will of God before all else is always to live grandly. We all ought to make that choice in the realization that what God chooses for us is far, far better than anything that we can possibly choose for ourselves. To make a lesser choice is surely to allow ourselves to be cheated.

"I bargained with life for a penny,
And life would give me no more,
However I begged at evening
When I counted my sorry store.

"For life is a just employer,
It gives us what we ask,
But once we have set the wages
Then we must bear the task.

"I worked for a menial hire,
Only to learn dismayed
That whatever I had asked of life,
Life would have gladly paid."

3. Not only did Paul have one purpose and that a worthy purpose, but he went about attaining that purpose in the wisest possible fashion. He determined that he would throw away, that he would forget everything that hindered him in the attaining of his purpose. He determined that he would keep those things and those only that helped him in the realization of his purpose. That is, he did what Jesus is constantly calling
us to do. He put first things first.

II

What were some of the things that Paul kept?

When he tells us that he forgot the things that were behind, he did not mean, of course, that he forgot everything that was in the past. To forget all the things of yesterday would be a great calamity. It would also be at once impossible and immoral. There are some things that we ought not to forget.

1. We ought to remember our unpaid debts. If you contracted a debt yesterday, remember that while there is such a thing as a statue of limitation in the laws of men, there is no such in the laws of God. "A promise made is a debt unpaid."

I heard of a man some time ago who was converted in a revival meeting. The next morning a friend who had heard of his high adventure met him and said, "Jim, I understand you were converted last night." "Yes," said Jim, "I was converted." "Well," continued his friend, "I suppose that now you will pay me that twenty-five dollars you owe me." "No," said Jim, "the Lord forgave me of that along with my other sins." But God does not do business that way.

We need, therefore, to remember our unpaid debts in terms of money, also our unpaid debts in terms of obligations - our vows taken, our promises made; There are those who feel that they have a right to break up their marriage and forget their solemn vows any time they desire. Others seem to think that the vows they made to God when they joined the church can be set aside when they leave the home church. But you cannot get rid of an obligation by merely pushing it aside.

2. Do not throw away the kindesses that have been shown you. If somebody has stretched a hand to you when you were about to sink; if
somebody has sent you some lovely flowers when you felt yourself forgotten; if somebody has written a love letter that put a new sparkle in your eye, don’t throw these treasures away. Keep them and let them make your heart tender, not only toward those who have been thoughtful of you, but toward others who need such help as you have received.

3. Finally, do not forget the mercies of God. Paul was constantly rejoicing in the kindnesses of his friends. He was constantly thrilled by the memory of the mercies of God. We find him in many trying situations. Sometimes he is in prison; sometimes he is without his books; sometimes without enough clothing to keep him warm. But however hard his circumstances, we never find him without his song of thanksgiving. Paul kept green the memory of the kindnesses of men and of the mercies of God.

III

But while there are things of yesterday that we ought to keep, there are others that we must throw away or be heavily handicapped.

1. If you propose to make progress in your Christian life, make a habit of throwing away the petty slights, even the injuries that come your way. Two people may walk through the same garden but with vastly different results: One will gather a handful of flowers, the other a handful of nettles. I am thinking of a young woman who used to live in our home. She was not a stamp collector, but she was a diligent collector of slights. Almost everyday she came home from work with a new one that she seemed to keep as if it were a treasure. Therefore, she had a growing number of enemies, a lessening number of friends, and a constant increase of wretchedness.

We ought to throw away our slights because, if we keep them, they will make us angry. If we keep our anger, it is likely to harden into
hate. That is the reason that Paul urged, "Let not the sun go down on your wrath." Brood over your wrongs and you will come to hate the one who has wronged you. And just in proportion as you harbor hate, in that proportion do you harbor hell.

2. Throw away your mistakes. Some of you are perhaps thinking with bitterness of some blunder that you have made. You keep looking back at it. That only spells weakness and wretchedness. When you pass through a gate, the only sensible thing to do is to shut it. More than thirty years ago, in the course of a sermon, I undertook to quote a poem which I forgot. For at least a year after that whenever I started to quote anything, I would have to fight with terror as I said to myself, "What if I should forget again?" If I had kept looking at that failure, I would seen have thrown away my power to remember.

3. What is more important, turn your back not simply upon your failures, but upon your sins. We all have soiled chapters in our lives of which we are rightly ashamed. Maybe you have been guilty of doing somebody an ugly wrong. Right the wrong if you can. If you cannot, forget it. We have a right to forget our sins when we accept the forgiveness of God because he himself forgets them. There is only one something about you and me that God ever forgets - that is our sin. "I will forgive their iniquities and their sins will I remember no more." Bear in mind that remorse may be as ruinous and as damning as hardness of heart. The only help for any of us is to accept God's forgiveness and forget the sins of our yesterdays. When God forgives you, be wise enough to forgive yourself.

IV

"But", you ask, "how can I do that? I have tried to forget, God knows I have, but I cannot." But the truth is, you can. How?
1. There is a so-called remedy that will not work. You cannot forget by merely clenching your fists and squaring your jaw. When I was a boy, a man of outstanding ability came to take charge of our village school. The most blind of us could see that he was equipped for a far superior place. Why was he there? One day I overheard him talking to my father and he said desperately, "You wonder why I am here, Mr. Chappell. I am here because there is something in my life that I have to forget. I must forget." But in his effort to forget, he lost his mind and the last time I saw him he was being taken away to an institution for the insane.

2. There is only one remedy that results in a cure - we can forget the past only by fixing our attention upon the future. We cannot make our minds a vacuum, but we can forget one thing by remembering another. How did you forget your first love affair, if you can remember back that far? It was not by determining to forget, but by falling in love with somebody else.

You remember how Silas Marner, broken of heart, gave himself to the love of gold. He used to come home at night to run his fingers through his golden hoard and fairly worship it. But by and by he lost that hard and hardening love altogether. How did it come about? "The gold was stolen," you answer. No, that was no cure. He loved his gold as much after he had lost it as he did before, even more. Here is how he was cured.

One evening he came home to see something that sparkled in the firelight. Thinking that it was his gold come back again, he hurried forward to run his miserly fingers through it and hear once more its metallic music. But he found that what looked like gold was the silken tresses of a little girl who was sleeping by the warmth of his fire. This girl stole into his heart little by little and so filled that heart with a tender,
human love that the old love was crowded out. We are to forget these things that are behind by fixing our gaze upon those that are ahead.

"But what," you ask, "is there ahead for me? I have already run past so much. I have thrown away so many fine opportunities." That may be true, even for you who are still in life's springtime. But in spite of this, whosoever you are, and however much you have squandered, the best possible is still ahead if you will only dare to claim it.

Look then at some of the priceless treasures that are ahead for everyone of us.

1. God is ahead. We have not run past him yet. We may have run past many privileges and many opportunities. Granted. But we still have not run past the eternal God in "whose hand our breath is and whose are all our ways". It is said that when the old geographers used to draw their maps, they would picture the known world, then out beyond its borders there would be wide stretches where such entries as these were made: "Here be demons. Here be dragons that devour man".

But the author of the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm had a far sunnier reading of the riddle. He said, "Out in the unknown is God." Here is his confession of faith: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me."

You, my young friends, are going out to futures that will not be easy. You will have to contend with many a demon and many a dragon. In the face of these difficulties and dangers you may be tempted to play the
coward. You may whine with Hamlet —

"The world is out of joint, O cursed spite,
    That I was ever born to set it right."

But if you face your tomorrow with faith in God, you will find His grace sufficient. He will steady you by enabling you to say, "Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved." Remember always that God is still ahead.

2. Eternity is ahead. That is true for all of us regardless of how few or how many birthdays we may have had. That is a fact we need to keep in mind every day that we live. Always, however old we grow, we have still a whole eternity ahead. We are destined to live as long as God. Whether this fact means heaven or hell depends upon what kind of folks we are. Some of us are perhaps not finding it easy to live with ourselves even now. It is going to grow harder with the passing of the years unless we face in a different direction.

"I have to live with myself and so,
    I ought to be fit for myself to know."

3. Now, because God is ahead, because eternity is ahead, perfection is also ahead. However little progress we have made, we still have the privilege of becoming increasingly Christlike; both in the life that now is and as we climb one Alpine height after another with him in eternity.

"We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is." Therefore, the wisest decision that we can possibly make on this, our Commencement Day, is to join with this fine word of Paul our very own: "Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize."
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I

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2. Not only did Paul have one purpose, but it was a worthy purpose. That is of supreme importance. You are selling your life day by day for something. What are you seeking to buy with it? You remember the young man in Santa Claus' Partner who determined to be worth a million dollars. When a friend asked him why, he did not say that he was bent on this wealth in order the better to serve his generation. He said rather, "I want a million so I can tell the other fellow to go to hell." What a shabby purpose!

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What was his purpose? He was seeking to lay hold of that for which he had been laid hold of by Christ Jesus. He was seeking to live his life according to the plan of God. That is a purpose that is really worthwhile. To choose the will of God before all else is always to live grandly. We all ought to make that choice in the realization that what God chooses for us is far, far better than anything that we can possibly choose for ourselves. To make a lesser choice is surely to allow ourselves to be cheated.

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It gives us what we ask,
But once we have set the wages
Then we must bear the task.

"I worked for a menial hire,
Only to learn dismayed
That whatever I had asked of life,
Life would have gladly paid."

3. Not only did Paul have one purpose and that a worthy purpose, but he went about attaining that purpose in the wisest possible fashion. He determined that he would throw away, that he would forget ever ything that hindered him in the attaining of his purpose. He determined that he would keep those things and those only that helped him in the realization of his purpose. Therefore, he forgot his follies, his failures, his sins. He forgot, not by force of will, but
by fixing his attention on the things ahead. What is ahead? This for all, however old we are - God, eternity, home.

II

What were some of the things that Paul kept?

When he tells us that he forgot the things that were behind, he did not mean, of course, that he forgot everything that was in the past. To forget all the things of yesterday would be a great calamity. It would also be at once impossible and immoral. There are some things that we ought not to forget.

1. We ought to remember our unpaid debts. If you contracted a debt yesterday, remember that while there is such a thing as a status of limitation in the laws of men, there is no such in the laws of God. "A promise made is a debt unpaid."

I heard of a man some time ago who was converted in a revival meeting. The next morning a friend who had heard of his high adventure met him and said, "Jim, I understand you were converted last night." "Yes," said Jim, "I was converted." "Well," continued his friend, "I suppose that now you will pay me that twenty-five dollars you owe me." "No," said Jim, "the Lord forgave me of that along with my other sins." But God does not do business that way.

We need, therefore, to remember our unpaid debts in terms of money, also our unpaid debts in terms of obligations - our vows taken, our promises made. There are those who feel that they have a right to break up their marriage and forget their solemn vows any time they desire. Others seem to think that the vows they made to God when they joined the church can be set aside when they leave the home church. But you cannot get rid of an obligation by merely pushing it aside.
2. Do not throw away the kindnesses that have been shown you. If somebody has stretched a hand to you when you were about to sink; if somebody has sent you some lovely flowers when you felt yourself forgotten; if somebody has written a love letter that put a new sparkle in your eye, don't throw these treasures away. Keep them and let them make your heart tender, not only toward those who have been thoughtful of you, but toward others who need such help as you have received.

3. Finally, do not forget the mercies of God. Paul was constantly rejoicing in the kindnesses of his friends. He was constantly thrilled by the memory of the mercies of God. We find him in many trying situations. Sometimes he is in prison; sometimes he is without his books; sometimes without enough clothing to keep him warm. But however hard his circumstances, we never find him without his song of thanksgiving. Paul kept green the memory of the kindnesses of men and of the mercies of God.

III

But while there are things of yesterday that we ought to keep, there are others that we must throw away or be heavily handicapped.

1. If you propose to make progress in your Christian life, make a habit of throwing away the petty slights, even the injures that come your way. Two people may walk through the same garden but with vastly different results: One will gather a handful of flowers, the other a handful of nettles. I am thinking of a young woman who used to live in our home. She was not a stamp collector, but she was a diligent collector of slights. Almost every day she came home from work with a new one that she seemed to keep as if it were a treasure. Therefore, she had a growing number of enemies, a lessening number of friends, and a constant increase of wretchedness.
We ought to throw away our slights because, if we keep them, they will make us angry. If we keep our anger, it is likely to harden into hate. That is the reason that Paul urged, "Let not the sun go down on your wrath." Brood over your wrongs and you will come to hate the one who has wronged you. And just in proportion as you harbor hate, in that proportion do you harbor hell.

2. Throw away your mistakes. Some of you are perhaps thinking with bitterness of some blunder that you have made. You keep looking back at it. That only spells weakness and wretchedness. When you pass through a gate, the only sensible thing to do is to shut it. More than thirty years ago, in the course of a sermon, I undertook to quote a poem which I forgot. For at least a year after that whenever I started to quote anything, I would have to fight with terror as I said to myself, "What if I should forget again?" If I had kept looking at that failure, I would soon have thrown away my power to remember.

3. What is more important, turn your back not simply upon your failures, but upon your sins. We all have soiled chapters in our lives of which we are rightly ashamed. Maybe you have been guilty of doing somebody an ugly wrong. Right the wrong if you can. If you cannot, forget it. We have a right to forget our sins when we accept the forgiveness of God because he himself forgets them. There is only one something about you and me that God ever forgets - that is our sin. "I will forgive their iniquities and their sins will I remember no more." Bear in mind that remorse may be as ruinous and as damning as hardness of heart. The only help for any of us is to accept God's forgiveness and forget the sins of our yesterdays. When God forgives you, be wise enough to forgive yourself.

"But", you ask, "how can I do that?" I have tried to forget, God
knows I have, but I cannot." But the truth is, you can. How?

1. There is a so-called remedy that will not work. You cannot forget by merely clenching your fists and squaring your jaw. When I was a boy, a man of outstanding ability came to take charge of our village school. The most blind of us could see that he was equipped for a far superior place. Why was he there? One day I overheard him talking to my father and he said desperately, "You wonder why I am here, Mr. Chappell. I am here because there is something in my life that I have to forget. I must forget." But in his effort to forget, he lost his mind and the last time I saw him he was being taken away to an institution for the insane.

2. There is only one remedy that results in a cure - we can forget the past only by fixing our attention upon the future. We cannot make our minds a vacuum, but we can forget one thing by remembering another. How did you forget your first love affair, if you can remember back that far? It was not by determining to forget, but by falling in love with somebody else.

You remember how Silas Warner, broken of heart, gave himself to the love of gold. He used to come home at night to run his fingers through his golden hoard and fairly worship it. But by and by he lost that hard and hardening love altogether. How did it come about? "The gold was stolen," you answer. No, that was no cure. He loved his gold as much after he had lost it as he did before, even more. Here is how he was cured.

One evening he came home to see something that sparkled in the firelight. Thinking that it was his gold come back again, he hurried forward to run his miserly fingers through it and hear once more its metallic music. But he found that what looked like gold was the silken tresses of
a little girl who was sleeping by the warmth of his fire. This girl stole into his heart little by little and so filled that heart with a tender, human love that the old love was crowded out. We are to forget these things that are behind by fixing our gaze upon those that are ahead.

"But what," you ask, "is there ahead for me? I have already run past so much. I have thrown away so many fine opportunities." That maybe true, even for you who are still in life's springtime. But in spite of this, whoever you are, and however much you have squandered, the best possible is still ahead if you will only dare to claim it.

V

Look, then, at some of the priceless treasures that are ahead for everyone of us.

1. God is ahead. We have not run past him yet. We may have run past many privileges and many opportunities. Granted. But we still have not run past the eternal God in "whose hand our breath is and whose are all our ways". It is said that when the old geographers used to draw their maps, they would picture the known world, then out beyond its borders there would be wide stretches where such entries as these were made: "Here be demons. Here be dragons that devour man."

But the author of the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm had a far sunnier reading of the riddle. He said, "Out in the unknown is God." Here is his confession of faith: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me."

You, my young friends, are going out to futures that will not be easy.
You will have to contend with many a demon and many a dragon. In the face of these difficulties and dangers you may be tempted to play the coward. You may whine with Hamlet—

"The world is out of joint, O cursed spite, 
That I was ever born to set it right."

But if you face your tomorrow with faith in God, you will find His grace sufficient. He will steady you by enabling you to say, "Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved." Remember always that God is still ahead.

2. Eternity is ahead. That is true for all of us regardless of how few or how many birthdays we may have had. That is a fact we need to keep in mind every day that we live. Always, however old we grow, we have still a whole eternity ahead. We are destined to live as long as God. Whether this fact means heaven or hell depends upon what kind of folks we are. Some of us are perhaps not finding it easy to live with ourselves even now. It is going to grow harder with the passing of the years unless we face in a different direction.

"I have to live with myself and so, 
I ought to be fit for myself to know."

3. Now, because God is ahead, because eternity is ahead, perfection is also ahead. However little progress we have made, we still have the privilege of becoming increasingly Christlike; both in the life that now is and as we climb one Alpine height after another with him in eternity. "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is."

Therefore, the wisest decision that we can possibly make on this day is to join with this fine word of Paul our very own: "Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize."