The Face Beautiful

II Timothy 1:5

This is a charming paragraph on the young man to whom Paul is writing. He is manly and clean and winsome. Any mother would be proud of such a boy. He is a Christian, in an age when Christianity is very rare. He is a preacher and a preacher in a day that tried men's souls. Paul loved him, I think, as he loved no other man. And in this sentence he tells Timothy how he came to be the man that he is.

And how does he account for his friend Timothy? He does not do so by appealing to his environment. He does not go on to tell in what a delightful city he had been brought up. He does not enumerate any of Timothy's own fine qualities. He tells him that what he is he owes to his grandmother and to his mother. He makes us look into the beautiful face of mother Eunice and he says, "My son, you are a man of sincere faith. But don't forget that this faith of yours dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice."

So we are interested in mother Eunice this morning. We are interested in her because she was a successful mother. Being a successful mother she was successful at the greatest of all undertakings. Now, I am not saying that she can not succeed at all enterprises in which men are succeeding. But what I do say is this: that she and she alone can succeed at the supreme enterprise. God has especially made her for that. Man is her superior in doing only those things that are secondary. Throughout nature the male is the stronger. The male bird is more highly colored than the female. The cardinal with his bright coat says to the hunter of the bird of prey, "Are you out for game? Take me and leave the little mother to brood upon her nest."

Today there is going on a battle of ideals. It is a fight between masculine ideals and feminine. I am afraid that the masculine is in the ascendency. We seem to think, man of us, that if the American woman can get to be man the millennium will have dawned. I heard a very wise man speak along this line the other day. And he summed up the whole question in this word: "If all the fowls in the barnyard take to crowing, then who is going to cackle?" That cartoon that represents the rooster watching disconsolately by a nest of chilling eggs, while the hen is away at the Poultry Club delivering a lecture on "How to Hatch Eggs", is very much to the point today.

Not only was this woman a mother, but she was a pious mother. It is to such mothers that the world has owed its supreme debt throughout the centuries. A friend of mine who is one of the best preachers I know told this bit of his personal history the other day. A friend told it to him after his own mother had been in Heaven for years. He said, "Your mother came home one day from Church, when you were a wee bit of a baby, and took you in her arms and with tears of laughter and joy, dedicated you to God for the ministry." The richest benedictions that have come to this struggling old world have come through consecrated mothers.

In the third place, she was a strong mother. She was able to stand alone. Her husband was a heathen. Unfortunately she is not the only woman that has a heathen for a husband. I do not know how Eunice managed to marry. I suppose he promised many things before marriage that he did not make good after marriage. She is very foolish for trusting him.
The face beautiful

But however this may have been, once married he threw all the religious responsibility for the household upon the shoulders of his wife. It is a cowardly thing to do. It is wicked and unfair. It is unfair to God. It is unfair to the wife. It is unfair to the child.

But while this is true, I am absolutely certain of this fact, that the wife and mother will come far nearer getting on without the religious support of the husband and father than the husband and father will without the support of the wife and mother. How rare it is to find a really consecrated man who has a worldly woman for a wife. Often and often you see the sweetest and purest and most consecrated of women married to men who are religiously worthless. Eunice was such, but she remained true to her Lord.

In the fourth place, she was a faithful mother. She took upon herself the training of her own boy. As civilization goes forward we are delegating an increasing number of tasks to the hands of others. Once the cloth was woven inside the home and the garments were made there. But we have given this task to others. So often we have even turned over the moral and religious training of our children to others.

Now, this is a fatal mistake. No others are so well fitted by nature for this task as the father and mother. One has called attention to the genius that was shown by the Catholic Church in organizing itself on the basis of the home. The priests are brothers and the nuns are sisters and the Pope is father. God teaches us through parenthood the divine parenthood, and the most natural way for the child to be lead to believe in the Heavenly Father is through the divine fatherhood. (He's no father. He has seven children.)

Not only did this woman take upon herself the training of her child, but she began early. Paul says, "From a babe thou hast know the holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise." She believed that God had the first right in her child's life. She did not believe that he had to go wrong before he could go right. She believed that God had shut the world out for the first years to give her her chance. Mother, you are the supreme influence in the life of your child today. There may come a time when almost everybody will seem to have more influence than you. Therefore, your opportunity is now. (The cat call whistle.)

And last of all, this woman succeeded because she gave to the world a genuine Christian. She gave to the world a Christian minister. His name is coupled along with the names of the very greatest of the sons of men. And Eunice had the consolation of knowing that she had rocked Timothy to sleep in her arms; that through her unselfish, sacrificing devotion his life had been made possible.

Now the path of Eunice is not the easiest of paths. It is a costly road in which to walk. It means cost from the beginning to the end. You remember what Simeon said to Mary with regard to her own child. He said, "A sword shall pierce your heart, also." Motherhood for her was not to be all joy. It was to have a bleeding heart connected with it. We know how it came. We read, "There stood by the cross of Jesus, His mother." Motherhood has the most intimate fellowship and association with the cross. It is associated with it in pain and suffering and self-giving. But thank God it is associated with it also in its power to bless. This woman took the way of the cross and she won. And when she gave to the world a consecrated minister, it never occurred to her that the price was too great.
"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that is in thee also". It is a delightful little family group that we face in this verse, a gentle old grandmother, a winsome and sweet-faced mother and her preacher boy. I call your especial attention to Sister Eunice. She is a plain, simple woman who was rescued from obscurity not by her cleverness nor by any work of genius that she accomplished. She is remembered today because she was a mother because she succeeded at the high task of motherhood. For this reason her face looks out upon us out of the mists of all the centuries and we are glad of the glimpse of it. And I am sure as we shall look upon this tender mother face today that we shall see much in it to remind us of the face of the mother who is still sweetening our own homes or who has passed into that silent country where hailstorms and fire showers do not reach and where the heaviest laden way-farer at last lays down her load.

We shall love Sister Eunice, I think, for herself, but most of all because she is so like our own mothers. On a train coming out from Chicago some months ago there was a plain man into whose lap a sweet little girl climbed, and she put her arms around his neck and kissed his lips and played with him and talked to him, and under the warmth of her caresses the man's plain face became almost handsome. We wondered why the little girl gave him so much and such loving attention, and then at last she said to him in her sweet, childish way, "You know, you look just like my papa". And that was the secret of the love she gave him, because he, a stranger, reminded her of somebody else.

Now, when I say that Eunice made good as a mother, I am paying her the highest compliment that could be paid to any human soul. For to succeed in the high task of motherhood is to succeed in the noblest of all vocations. There is no other quite so queenly, no other vocation that calls for so much sacrifice, nor does it bring with it such rich and eternal rewards. And this, I say, not in disparagement of women who follow other vocations. I know that God did not intend that all women should marry, and all honor to her who fulfills her mission as God has planned it and as God has called her. All honor to the princess who, deprived of the privilege of mothering her own child, will take some little, strangled Moses to her heart. But what I am saying is, and I believe that most good women agree with me, that wifehood and motherhood is still the highest vocation, and that she who deliberately turns away from it abdicates her supremest throne, lays aside her most resplendent crown, and with her own fingers stops her ears to the deepest and sweetest secret of human blessedness.

Of course we are to remember that Sister Eunice lived a long time ago. In that far day women had no other vocation that was honorable except that of wifehood and motherhood. Today things are different. We have come upon the time of what we call the emancipation of woman. Her sphere is no longer circumscribed. Roadways lead directly from her home into every vocation into which man is entering. A woman today may succeed in business; she may succeed as a physician; she may succeed as a lawyer; as an actor; as an author; she may even succeed as a politician. And I am not condemning her for entering any of these spheres of service, but I am still old-fashioned enough to believe that the sphere of Eunice is the
highest in this progressive day, just as it was in that distant day when she lived her life and achieved her destiny. And when I say this I do not mean for a moment to discount woman's ability or to insinuate her inferiority. A window-smashing, bonfire-building, speech-making woman may demonstrate her equality to man, but the mother in the home demonstrates her superiority. She is the ruler of the world. The world of today is in a large measure what the mothers of yesterday made it. The world of tomorrow will be what the mothers of today make it. Anarchy and bolshevism are not born in the slum - they are cradled in the arms of incapable mothers. Right revolutions and reforms are not brought about on battle fields or in legislative halls, but first of all, in the hearts of mothers. I do not know whether Mrs. Luther was a brilliant speaker or not, but I know that she could rock a reformation in her cradle. The mother of Moses was a slave woman, but she held the destiny of future civilizations to her heart. Mrs. Wesley never wrote a book, but she nursed into existence a church that has been the mightiest power for the spread of real holiness that this world has ever seen. Yes, Eunice was a successful mother and as such she made the highest of all possible successes.

How did it come about? How did she achieve the victory? In the first place, let me say it was not because of the influence of her husband. Like some other few women I have known, she was married to a heathen. Her husband was a Greek, - loyal to the flabby and nerveless religion of his fathers. Of course even then he was far less to be blamed than the modern heathen who is oftentimes loyal to no religion at all. Now, it is possible for a brave, consecrated woman to succeed with her children in spite of the fact that she has a godless husband. Her success is far more difficult and far more doubtful; and I do not know of anything more unfair, more utterly unmanly, than for a husband to throw all the religious responsibility for the upbringing of his children upon the shoulders of his wife. You remember the little fellow who was taken suddenly sick in the wheat field in the Old Testament story. And what did the father do? What so many of us do - a naked nothing. He said "Take him to his mother". It is God's purpose that there should be two heads in counsel and two beside the heart and two in the tangled business of the world. And the home only becomes really Christian when the father and mother unite in the high task of making it so. And the father that is too busy or too careless for this enterprise is endangering by his carelessness and by his godlessness the lives of his children for time and for eternity.

This woman owed her success in the first place to the fact that she was a consecrated woman. She was a woman of real and vital faith. Now, I am not claiming that a woman is under any more obligations to be religious than is a man. She is not. But what I do claim is that it is harder for me to understand how any woman can reject Jesus Christ than it is to understand how a man can reject Him. For all that womanhood is today she owes to the Cross of Calvary. She is come to the high position that she occupies through the religion of Jesus Christ. The two greatest poets of antiquity were Homer and Virgil. The heroine of Homer is Helen at whose beautiful and soiled feet two nations lie bleeding. The heroine of Virgil is Dido. And how like two soiled rags these women look today as we stand alongside the mothers that Christianity has made possible. The change in the ideal woman has been wrought by the power of the Gospel and the woman who shuts Christ out of her life, the irreligious
woman, is an ingrate who spits into the face of her own emancipator. And I am by no means sure that the changes that the present day has brought in a woman's position have made for her deeper consecration. I am afraid that religious women, genuinely religious, are not on the increase so rapidly as they should be. There is this great danger: that as a woman comes to live a man's life more and more, she will also become more and more to share a man's sins - his coarsenesses and his immodesties. There are many cigarette-smoking, swearing woman coming among us today; - women whose dainty feet trip along the brink of positive indecency. I am told by a reliable man that an investigation made by the Y. M. C. A. in one of the leading high schools of one of our cities showed that 75% of the girls in attendance there used profane language and that 50% of them were either habitual or occasional smokers of cigarettes. Now, if I were hunting for a mother I would not select this type. If I were hunting for a sweetheart, a sister, or a friend, I would avoid these as I would a pestilence. A woman of this type is as little fitted for the high task of motherhood and motherhood as spring violets are fitted for the north pole. To expect anything worthy from this type is to spit in the face of reason and throw dust in the eyes of common sense. My own experience in recent years as the pastor of a church attended by a coeducational school and also as the pastor of another church attended by a girls' school has taught me that the average modern girl is less susceptible to the appeal of religion than the average modern man. In the revivals I held in these churches the first to be reached were the boys and not the girls.

Eunice was a consecrated mother. That was the first part of the secret of her success. I have no hope for the rearing of a new and better civilization except at the hands of a consecrated, Christian womanhood. It seems to me that if there is any responsibility that would bring a woman to her knees it is the responsibility of motherhood. It seems that if there is any hand mighty enough to lead her to the cross it would be the hand of her own baby. Eunice was consecrated. Sister Eunice could pray. God pity the child that grows up in a home where nobody prays! He has poor chance in this big world where there are so many voices that call "Down". I believe the last cord that snaps between a young fellow and the good life is the memory of a consecrated, praying mother. John G. Wooley tells us how he slipped out of a saloon past his mother who was kneeling in the snow praying for him. That prayer cost her her life, but it was the means in after years of bringing her wayward boy back to God.

And not only was Sister Eunice religious herself, but she sought to bring up her son in the faith. She gave her personal time and attention to this holy and important task. The text book she used was God's Word. She wanted him to be 'M singing to God. She believed that his highest interest would be found in his consecration to the highest. There are some women who are afraid to dedicate their children to God for fear He will call them into the ministry or into the mission field or into some hard place where she is unwilling that they should go. No mother could make a greater mistake. God knows the needs of your child as you yourself do not know. And happy is the mother who dedicates her child to Him and who is willing that God should have His way. When Matthew Simpson came timidly telling his mother that he felt called to preach, not knowing what he would say about it, with tears of joy she told him that that had been her daily prayer since before he was born.
Not only did this mother try to make a Christian out of her boy, but she undertook the task while Timothy was yet a child. Paul says that from a babe he had known the holy scriptures. There are people who want their children to be Christians in later life, but do not think of seeking to Christianize them in infancy. There are certain facts that every father and mother needs to remember: The first is that a child can be a Christian. The second is that a child can be a Christian easier than anybody else. The third is that a child makes the best Christian; and the fourth is that unless the child becomes a Christian as a child, the chances are he will never be.

And the result of this mother's efforts for her boy was that she made good. She succeeded. And when I open the pages of the Book today and I turn to the Philippians letter, it gives "Paul and Timothy", - Paul, the greatest man that ever set foot on this earth, the greatest soldier of the Cross that ever went forth to battle, the hottest heart that ever took part in the big job of setting the world on fire. And along with that great name is coupled the name of Timothy. In letter after letter he is mentioned. Two of the choicest letters of all literature and the Bible are written to him. He was Sister Eunice's baby, - her preacher boy. How proud she must have been of him and how little she must have regretted the pious devotion that led her into the prayerful and careful task of training him to be a Christian!

Now, you will miss the point of the story if you regard Timothy as an abnormal boy. What Timothy was he was as a result of his training. Had Eunice been a heathen, as her husband was, Timothy would never have been heard of, - he would never have preached - he would doubtless never have come to know Jesus at all. What he was he was by virtue of his mother's touch upon his life. And of how many others of millions can that same thing be said! In a meeting of one hundred and twenty preachers when they were asked what influence had led them unto Christ and into the ministry on the human side, a hundred of them said that it was the influence of their mothers.

So if you are a mother today, appreciate the high honor to which God has called you. Appreciate also its exacting responsibilities. Remember the task is too great and too important for you to undertake it alone. Let God share it with you. Be a praying mother, a trusting mother, a consecrated mother, a mother who has time to impress upon her child the supreme needs and the supreme hopes of the human heart.

Let me say to you who are young, if your mother is with you today in the prime of her womanhood, appreciate her, help her to make good. Make her task as light as possible. Be loyal to her. A few years ago in the state of Minnesota an editor of an inconspicuous paper came out as a candidate for governor. He was a Democrat and the state was overwhelmingly Republican. But the republican candidate had a bad heart and a bad judgment to make the statement that his opponent was the son of a drunken wreck. This made an explanation necessary and the facts were published. And they had to confess that the candidate's father was a drunken wreck and the candidate's mother had to take in washing to support the family and that life for them was a hard and dreary drudgery. They had to acknowledge also that this man who was then a candidate for governor, when only a lad of thirteen, made his mother quit taking in washing while he himself took upon his boyish shoulders the responsibility of earning the living. And it was that
alone that elected him governor. And it ought to have elected him. There is infinite hope for the boy that will so stand by his mother. So you appreciate your mother. Remember that nobody will ever be quite the friend to you that she is. When Christ wanted to tell us of His own love to us He measured it in the terms of a mother’s love: “As one whom His mother comforteth so will I comfort thee”. When a boy goes wrong, you know how it is that clings to him longest. When the girl is shamed, you know how it is whose arms are always open to her. It is mother’s arms. Appreciate it. Make glad her heart by your appreciation now. Give her the flowers today that you expect to send when the preacher says “Earth to earth; ashes to ashes; and dust to dust”. Above all else, give her the dearest wish of her heart: your pledge of consecration and loyalty to the God that she serves and to the Christ in whom is centered all her hope.

If she is with you today no longer young, appreciate her still. And maybe the last feather of the rove’s wing has long ago fallen from her hair, - it may be that the last rose petal has dropped from her faded cheek, - it may be that there are more wrinkles upon her face than there are graves in the cemetery over which she has wept; but do not let her feel that she is a care in this, the sere and yellow leaf of her life. If she talks a good deal about her aches and pains, remember that there was a time when you too came to her with every broken toy and with every childish grief, and that she made more over a splinter in your finger than you would make today over a broken bone. If, as you walk down the street, she can not keep step with you or walk as fast as you desire, remember that there was a time when you could not keep step with her and she had to take you up in her arms and carry you. Go home and caress the old hands - they have toiled many a day for you. Support the stooping old shoulders - they have carried many a load for you. Kiss the old lips - they have uttered many a prayer for you. Smooth the way for the old feet - their journey is almost ended. Give them that kindly attention and consideration that will bring into their eyes the light at even-tide.

And it may be that you have no mother on this side of the river at all. But I am confident that you do not feel that you have lost her. Somehow I am as far as possible from feeling that way about my own mother. But when I get homesick for her, I shall try not to think of her simply as she used to be in my boyhood’s home. But I shall think of her as she is yonder where the blessed Physician has touched her with strength healing and has brought back to her faded cheeks the blush of an eternal youth, and by the memory of the life she lived, and by the memory of the love she gave, and by the memory of her consecration to the highest I shall be moved afresh to embrace her large faith. And by the hope of having her arms once more about me in that miracle country where tears are not known and where death is a vanishing memory. By this hope I will set myself anew to the fine task to which God has called me.

A soldier upon the battle field was dying. And a chaplain bent over him and said: “Shall I pray?” And he said, “Yes, pray this prayer: ‘Thank God for my mother’”. So, as we close this service today, let us in the grip of all the tender memories and the holy hopes that come to us at this hour, bow our heads and hearts and thank God for our mothers. Mothers who through their consecration, and through the hands of God, and through their own response and appreciation, have in some measure, at least we may dare to hope, made good.
"For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: I bear the fruit of my ungodliness with my body in the flesh.

Romans 7:18

The Supreme Certainty

You can see at once that this is not in a strict sense an Easter text.

But in spite of that fact, it is pervaded with all the joys and hopes that belong to that glad day. In fact, this very text is big enough to hold all our hopes, all our great expectations, both for time and for eternity. If it is in a single flower, as in Easter Sunday morning, it compensates for the by being a whole springtime with every form of beauty, with every note of beautiful song, with every thrill of greatness that springtime brings. This great spring, then, with the spirit of Easter throbbing in his heart and shining out through his eye, and speaking through his entire personality, is eager to share with us his breaching certainty. "I know," he says.

That is it that Paul claims to know. The certainty that he claims to possess is of supreme worth. It is so important that if we possess all, if possible, we might miss everything else and still life would still be unspeakably rich. It is so important that if we would miss it and would obtain all other knowledge, life would still be a mean and starved something.

Paul knew what he believes. That is not what he says exactly, but the
THE SUPREME CERTAINTY

"For 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."—Hebrews 13:20.

The apostle Paul in his letter to the Hebrews speaks of the certainty with which he knew and believed in Jesus Christ as the resurrected Lord. This certainty was grounded in the faith that Jesus had promised to keep all that He had committed to His Father. The apostle was not merely sharing his personal beliefs; he was affirming the foundational truths that defined the Christian faith. This belief was not just for the sake of the present, but for the day of judgment when all will be revealed. The promise of Christ's ability to keep thedeposit of faith is a cornerstone of the Christian faith, assuring believers that their commitment to Christ will be upheld in the end. This certainty is a beacon of hope, guiding believers through the uncertainties of life towards the ultimate fulfillment of all their hopes and expectations.

In his letter, Paul speaks of the certainty that he possessed in Jesus Christ. This certainty is not just a matter of personal belief, but an affirmation of the very heart of the Christian message. By sharing this certainty, Paul was not merely expressing his own faith, but was offering a testimony to the transforming power of the gospel. This certainty is not something that can be easily shaken or doubted; it is a rock on which all Christian faith is built. For Paul, this certainty was not just a matter of academic knowledge; it was a living reality that permeated every aspect of his life. It was a certainty that he shared with others, a certainty that was the foundation of his witness.

That is it that Paul claims to know. The certainty that he claims to possess is of supreme worth. It is so important that if we possess all, if possible, we might miss everything else and still life would still be unspeakably rich. It is so important that if we would miss it and would obtain all other knowledge, life would still be a mean and starved something.

L. Paul knows what he believes. That is not what he says exactly, but the
greater includes the less. Paul had a well defined faith. Paul was sure of his creed. It has been the fashion in recent years to belittle creeds. We have said with vast silliness, "It doesn't matter what a man believes so long as his life is all right." But that is as nonsensical as to say, "It doesn't matter whether the sun rises or not so long as the world is flooded with light and warmth." But our world would not be so flooded unless the sun does rise. Blessed is the man that knows what he believes. On cloudy days it is hard to tell where the earth leaves off and where the heavens begin. Many of us have been hazy in our convictions. We have made no clear distinction between right and wrong. Here is a man who can face life and say, "I know what I believe."

2. Not only did Paul know what he believed, but he knew why he believed it. That, too, is important. Faith ought to be rational and intelligent. Simon Peter called on the saints of his day to be able to give a reason for the hope that was within them. So often we take our positions and then look around for a few reasons to bolster up that position. But Paul believed something definitely, and he was able to tell any man who asked him why he believed that something.

3. But this all-inclusive assertion of the great Apostle is this, "I know whom I have believed." Here he passes beyond a creed to a Person. He claims to know Jesus Christ personally. He claims that he lives in daily fellowship and friendship with that amazing Man who had been crucified in Jerusalem just a few months before. He claims also that through knowing this risen Christ he has come to know God. Confronting a bewildered world such as ours, facing an age that threatens to go to pieces, even as you and I, he declared with conviction, "I know Jesus Christ personally, and knowing Him I know Almighty God."

II.

Now this knowledge that Paul claims to possess is of vital interest to you and me. This is the case for at least two reasons.
1. This is of interest to us because we all desire to know God. Hunger for God is a universal hunger. Thirst for God is a universal thirst. We can no more find a man who can live satisfactorily without God than we can find a man who can live satisfactorily without bread and without water. The longing to know God is a universal longing. One day certain Greeks came up to Jerusalem to say to Phillip, "Sir, we would see Jesus." That is what countless millions have said as the centuries have come and gone.

The night before Jesus went away he was trying to comfort his grieving friends. "Let not your heart be troubled," he said, "ye believe in God, and you believe in me." Then one of them broke in rather pathetically saying, "Lord, show us the father and it is enough." This groping disciple was not the only one that ever said that. That is a longing that is as old as man. It was felt long before Abraham left Ur of the Caldees to journey into the unknown. It was felt long before the towers of Babylon ever lifted their tall heads to smile down upon the waters of the Euphrates. It is a cry that is the very mother of religion. Every man has said it either articulately or inarticulately. "Show us the father."

By this I do not mean of course that every man is consciously hungry for God. Such is not the case. We are restless and wretched and dissatisfied, but often we mistake the cause. We think that what we need is a better salary, a greater degree of security, a more sure position in society. My wife left me with our baby one time. He was asleep when she went away. By and by he awoke and began to yell. We had a small addition of Woolworth's toy department. I shook every toy in his face one by one, but he only squall ed the louder. At last his mother came and he was quiet almost in an instant. Naturally I was indignant. But the truth of the matter was, the little chap had reached the place where the choicest of toys did not satisfy, he was hungry. And millions of folks are just like that. They are fretful and peevish and do not know that the reason
for it all is that they have never found God.

Then there are those who are wise enough to know what the matter is. They are consciously hungry to know God. They are consciously thirsty for the Water of Life. That was the case with an ancient Psalmist. "As the hart panteth after the waterbrook, so panteth my soul after Thee 0 God." "My soul," he tells us, "is as thirsty for God as a spent deer is thirsty for the waterbrook." Here is a man then that is wise enough to know the real reason for the hunger that is gnawing at his vitals and for the thirst that is parching his throat.

I remember a Commentary on this text that I saw years ago. One day I was working in a field that was skirted by the Buffalo River. By and by I heard the baying of hounds among the hills in the distance. At first their baying impressed me but little. By and by I became a bit interested because it was coming closer. Then I looked up to see a magnificent deer running in my direction with the hounds close upon its heels. Why was he running toward me? Behind me was a waterbrook. If he could only reach that he could throw the vicious hounds off his track. If he could only reach the waterbrook he could rest a bit and slake his burning thirst. If he could reach the waterbrook he would live. If he failed to reach it he would die. But when he saw me his heart failed him, his strength was almost gone, he tried to turn, and the fangs of the hounds clutched at his throat. The waterbrook to this deer was a matter of life and death. This thirsting for God on the part of the Psalmist was a matter of life and death. And so it is for you and me. We are interested then in a man who has found Him because it is above all else what we most long to know.

2. Then this assurance on the part of Paul heartens us because if he came to certainty, so may you, so may I. Most of our knowledge we must take on hearsay. We can never investigate for ourselves. When I am told that the sun is ninety odd millions of miles from the earth I accept it. I never intend to measure it.
My work lies in another field. When I am told that a certain star is so many light years away, I accept that. When Admiral Byrd reports on conditions at the South Pole I accept what he has to say. It is hearsay evidence, but it satisfies me. I never intend to find out for myself. But here is a knowledge that is supreme, and yet the wonder of it is, it is open to everyone of us. All of us can know God.

By this I do not mean that we may all know about God. It is well to know about him, but that is not enough. It is well to know about bread, but if all we have is knowledge of bread then we will starve to death. It is well to know about water, but I must know water as an experience. Evidence of God is helpful. We see Him all about us in the blue of the sky, and the green of the earth, we hear Him in the song of the bird, but evidences are not enough. I still have a few evidences of my father and mother, but these do not satisfy. No evidences of my Lord will take the place of knowing Him.

We may be sure that this knowledge is for everyone of us because if it is true that all of us are hungry to know Him, it is even more true that He is eager to be known by all of us. I have an idea that the greatest heartache of God at this moment is that so many of us refuse to recognize him, miss him somehow, and fail to enter into fellowship and friendship with him. He is a father, a father always longs for communication with his children. He is a lover. A lover always longs to have fellowship with the beloved. This seeking Friend is in quest of us even now. His strong hand is feeling out your hand and mine.

How we miss Him we cannot say. Sometimes we are too busy with other matters. You remember in Bunyan's story that there was a man with a muckrake. This man was busy raking up sticks and straw, when all the while a mighty angel was posed just above his head holding a crown in his hand. He was longing to crown this man if he would only look up. But he could never get his attention. He was too busy raking up his dirt and sticks and straw. Some of us are restless
and feverish and fretful, but we are so busy we haven't time to look up and receive upon our fevered foreheads the cooling touch of God.

Then some of us are strangely blind and strangely shut within ourselves. It is said that when Helen Keller was a little girl, her mother used to bend over the cradle and sob as she said, "O Helen, how your mother loves you, and how she longs to tell you about her love. But your eyes are shut and your ears are stopped." So our tender Christ bends very wistfully above you and me saying, "O child of my heart, how I love you, and how I long to make myself known to you." And he can make himself known if we give him a chance. And this knowledge was not the knowledge of Paul alone. It has been shared by countless millions in every walk of life.

III.

How did Paul come to possess this knowledge? Listen to what he says. "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." You will notice here three big, fundamental words. "belief", "committed", "know." That was the road that Paul took and it led him to certainty. That is the road that has been taken by an innumerable company that no man can number. It is a road that you and I may take. By it we shall surely arrive. That, I think, is as certain as the fact of God.

1. I believe. It is one of the familiar facts of the scriptures that we are saved by faith. It is through the doorway of faith that we enter into the knowledge of God. But faith is the door of entrance into every kind of knowledge. Faith is an essential condition of every kind of salvation. All the discoveries of the scientists, all the mapping of new continents by the explorers has been brought about by faith. When Paul, therefore, said to the jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," he was stating a fundamental condition of salvation. But faith is essential in every department of life. But wherever
faith is real it leads to a committal.

2. This then brings us to the second step, I believed, I committed. A few years ago there were two brothers who came to believe that it was possible to make a ship that would fly in the air. Few indeed were those who shared their faith. One gentleman went so far as to say that an airship will never be invented. But, if one is invented it will not be by the Wright brothers. But these men believed so profoundly in their dream that they committed themselves to the task of making it come true. They actually made a ship and flew in it.

Centuries ago there was a man who was convinced by his friends to be a bit of a crack-brain. He came out with the wild theory that the world was not flat as everybody knew it was, but round. That was about as silly and unbelievable as any theory that had ever been hatched in an addled brain. But this man Columbus actually believed it. He believed it so much that he committed himself to the task of changing it into a certainty.

3. As these men believed and committed, they came to know. The Wright brothers might have lived and died quite sure of the possibility of an airship, but they only knew it when they had staked their lives on it. Columbus might have lived and died perfectly confident that the world was round, but after he had risked his life by a wild voyage across the Atlantic, he had his faith no longer as a theory, but as an absolute certainty. It was thus that Paul came to know God. He heard the Gospel, he believed it, he believed it so profoundly that he said, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

Here then is a path that will bring every man to certainty. If here and now you will live up to the best you know however dim your light, it will come to be a fuller light. That is what Jesus meant when he said, "If any man is willing to do His will he shall know." Horace Bushnell was an agnostic. When a great revival was sweeping Yale University he could not conscientiously participate in it, but he felt that it was doing good, therefore, he ought not to oppose it.
But one night in the quiet of his room he committed himself to do the right as he was given to see the right whatever the cost. And what came of it? After he had been pastor of one church in Hartford, Connecticut for forty-five years he gave this testimony, "Better than I know any man in Hartford I know Jesus Christ." Here then is a knowledge that is for everyone of us.

IV.

What is the good of it?

1. To know God is to have eternal life in the here and now. "This is life eternal to know Thee the only true God in Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Paul was living in the here and now in the consciousness of life eternal. He had a quality of life that was satisfying his present needs. He was living courageously. He was living unselfishly. He was living sanely. "God hath not given us the spirit of fearfulness, but of power, and of love, and of sanity." Because Paul was finding light through Jesus Christ sufficient for his needs today, he believed that he would be sufficient through all eternity.

Here it strikes me is the one essential. If we are to be certain of what Easter really means, it is not enough to believe that we go on living after death. Some find life in the here and now so unsatisfactory that they throw it away. Merely to exist is not enough. But by eternal life the New Testament writers do not mean simply eternal existence, they mean an ever-growing fellowship with God, an ever-growing likeness to God. They mean also an ever-growing fellowship with each other.

To the man therefore who is conscious of Christ, to the man who is possessed of this knowledge of which Paul says claim, nothing can bring real hurt. "What shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that
neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things
present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall
be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

In possession of this knowledge, death cannot put a grim period to all that
we have known and loved. Such a thing is meaningless. It seems impossible to
believe. Would it not seem strange if the God who walked with Paul during stormy
days of his pilgrimage would let go his hand and drop him into a ditch that we
call the grave, at the end of the journey and sever that sweet friendship forever?

Will the Good Shepherd go home at the close of the day and leave the sheep that
he has watched during the sunny hours to shift for themselves during the eternal
night? I for one cannot believe it. I am sure that he who holds our hands today
will hold them through eternity. It is in this faith that I have said goodbye to
my own loved ones. It is in this faith that I expect to meet the great Adventurer
by and by.

Till that time we carry on in the assurance of complete victory. "Be ye
stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye
know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." We dishonor our Christ, we
dishonor our loved ones who are alive in his fellowship when we lose hope and
heart in their Home-going. We honor them both when we carry on bravely in the
assurance that there are no broken lives with God, but he at last brings all to
perfection. The wife of a certain minister who was dying of a lingering disease
left this word for the husband. I imagine it braced him in the lonely days that
followed.

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 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, 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 hush
Would have you always at your golden best.

So Paul lived through the knowledge of God always at his golden best. So may you
and I till we meet in that Yonder to which we look with satisfied hope.
THE SUPREME CERTAINTY

II Timothy 1:12

"I knew them; I have believed; and I persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto His against that day."

Here is a man the reputed exponent of the generation of which he was a part. Whenever he went there was a flurry of change; there was an awakening; there was intellectual enlightenment. Even his enemies confessed that he had turned the world upside down. At last he was put to death, but instead of his execution hindering his influence and power, it only increased them. His mighty hands have been placed upon all the continents. We feel the impact of his personality in this hour and at this very moment we sit under his spell. Why is this the case?

1. He is the spell of one who knows. He speaks with authority. The man who can speak with authority on any subject will always command a hearing. Truly it is said that 'let one make a better mousetrap than any other man and the world will make a pathway to his door.'

2. We have one among us whose mentality is that of a twelve-year-old child, yet who receives a larger salary than the president because he knows better how to hit a baseball than any other living man. I do not believe that the future of our country is dependent upon our capacity to play bridge; yet we have men who have made immense fortunes because they knew better how to play a certain card game than their fellows. The man who knew in his body he is over no trifling commandant hearing.
3. Not only do we listen to Paul because he knows, but because of the character of his knowledge. His knowledge is of supreme worth. It is a knowledge for which there was a universal longing. He gives the answer to the cries of every human heart. When those Greeks said, "Sir, we would see Jesus," they were voicing a longing as old as man. We listen to Paul this morning because he speaks with authority in the supreme realm. Listen to his declaration.

"I know what I believe." That is not what he says, though that is something very worth saying. The trouble with a large part of our present day humanity is that they do not know what they believe. They have flung away from the standards of their fathers and have found no new ones for themselves. With Arnold they are between two worlds, the one dead and the other powerless to be born. Happy is the man who can stand amidst the flux of change that this disturbing day has brought, and say with assurance, "I know what I believe."

Neither does Paul say "I know why I believe. Had he said that as he could have said it, it would have been well worth saying. Peter was giving the sanest advice when he said, "Be ready at all times to give a reason for the hope that is within you." Happy is the man who has a rational faith. Believe me, the most genuine faith is in no sense inconsistent with the clearest sanity and the keenest intellectuality. Blessed is the man who in this doubting and perturbed age can look his fellows in the face with quiet heart and steady eyes and say, "I know why I believe."

But Paul has passed beyond the "what" and the "why" to the "whom." He knows more than mere convictions. He knows more than reasons. He knows a personality. He knows Jesus Himself. Through Jesus he has come to know God. That is the knowledge for which your heart and mine cries this morning. It is the knowledge that is the one hope of our torn and disordered world.
II

How did Paul come into possession of this knowledge? His story is plainly written here in the text: "I know," he says, "whom I have believed." He entered by the door of faith. It is the doorway to every form of knowledge. Edison believed that electricity, whatever it is, is a most abiding something. Therefore, by faith that resulted in obedience he came to know. Columbus believed that the world was round. He ventured on that faith and came to know. So Paul came to know Jesus. It was not the vision that came to him on the way from Jerusalem to Damascus that brought him this knowledge. That blinding light might have left him in eternal darkness. The secret of his victory is here: "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

Now just as he came to know Jesus through faith that led to obedience, so his knowledge increased as he continued to believe and obey. I heard a man of beautiful character tell how he thought he knew his bride when he led her across the threshold of his home more than fifty years ago. But he went on to say how much deeper was that knowledge and love because of what they had suffered together and enjoyed together through the trials and triumphs of more than half a century.

III

What was the good of this knowledge? What did it do for Paul?

1. It made him confident. It gave him assurance. "I am persuaded," he said. By this he means, "I am absolutely sure. There may have been scars on his faith as Stanley Jones says there is on his. But underneath there were no uncertainties.

(1) He was sure of Christ's ability. He is able. Testing Him through strenuous years he found that He had never let him down,
that He was ever adequate, that His grace was always sufficient.

(2) He was able to keep, to keep Himself, to keep His church, to keep everything that He had committed to Him. He is able to keep the baby that you lost. He is able to keep the wayward son who is breaking your heart and that you sometimes find yourself half wishing was sleeping by the white-souled little fellow that slipped out of your arms years ago. He is able to keep whatever you commit to His hands.

(3) He is able to keep it against that day. That is, He is able to keep it under all circumstances and to the end of eternity, today, tomorrow, forever.

3. This experience giving Paul confidence, gave him power. He is the one strong man on board that vessel that is going to pieces. In the most terrifying situations he could say, "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind.

3. His experience had brought love to the heart of Paul.

4. It had brought him a sound mind, sanity, poise, level-headedness. One of the most cultivated women of my acquaintance said to me this summer, "I have never been a real Christian. I want to be one but I do not want to be a fanatic." And I called her attention to the sanity of Jesus, and the clearest, keenest mind that ever thought. The more Christlike we become the greater is our sanity.

IV

Now this is a knowledge that is not simply for the few. It is for the many. There are certain forms of knowledge that you and I can never possess. I never expect to master Einstein's theory of relativity. But here is a knowledge that millions of nameless souls have possessed and have found life rich in joy and usefulness
because they possessed it. Here is knowledge that has been the priceless possession of some of the keenest intellects of all the centuries. Take Michael Faraday for instance. He is on his deathbed. A friend asks, "What are your speculations?" He answers, "I have no speculations, I have certainties." "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." Those who have read "The Man Who Played God" by Morris, or if you have seen is acted by that great English artist, George Arliss, will recall the story of a master musician who lost his hearing and who had to give up his music. And with that loss came a sadder loss of faith in God. One day he took the Bible and read to an old friend, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And yet not one of them is forgotten before God." "I do not believe that any more," he said bitterly. "God is cruel. He has taken from me the one thing I love." But he was induced to learn lip-reading. Having learned it, through his opera glasses he watched the pageant of life. One day he saw a frail young man with a girl on his arm. As he watched his lips he heard him tell how he was suffering from tuberculosis. He might live if he could go west but that would cost a thousand dollars. But he had no thousand dollars. And his lips moved in prayer as he asked God to give it to him. And the great musician answered that prayer. Days passed on and he answered other prayers, and as he set himself to doing what Christ was doing they ran into each other and the man who had lost his faith came to know. Set yourself to doing Christ's work today and soon or late you will meet the One who walks the same road you walk. "If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know."
TRIUMPHANT CERTAINTY

II Timothy 1:12

Hear the text: "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." "I know." There is something genuinely heartening in this declaration. Such a word puts courage into us more than the thrill of martial music. "I know." Here is a man who speaks with authority. He is not telling us of his theories or of his dreams. He is not even telling us of how he faintly trusts the larger hope. He comes to us with a sure word. His voice has in it the ring of a triumphant certainty. "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."

This message of certainty is needed in every day. It seems to be especially needed at this present hour. The atmosphere of this moment is literally rent with cries of uncertainty from pulpit, platform and press. There seems to be an unusual eagerness, especially on the part of men in the ministry, to tell us what they do not believe and what they do not know. I can well understand the passionate eagerness of Paul to tell what he knows, but this wild eagerness to publish bewildering doubts and utter ignorance of things spiritual and fundamental is something that is a bit hard to understand. And yet much of the preaching of our day seems to concern itself with the things of which we are by no means aware, rather than the things of which we are absolutely certain.

I was reading not long ago a report of a sermon preached in a Church that was very critically situated. This Church was in the heart of a great city. And this city was in the heart of a needy nation and this nation a part of a most needy world. And that man gave the whole time that was allotted to him to the discussing of the authorship of the third epistle of St. John. And we have the dismal and disgusting spectacle to-day of the great Church in New York City that is trying to pose as a martyr and leave the communion on which it is a part because the Bishop objects to the practice of the Greek dances in the Church. The pastor of this Church is sure. He claims that people cannot be won to religion by the old time way. And so he is resorting to the appeal of the nude through the pagan dances.

So it is refreshing to hear amid the turmoil and the confusion of our modern day this voice of assurance: "I know whom I have believed." Such a declaration puts heart and hope into us. Even if we do not know ourselves such a voice makes us feel that it would be wonderful to know. It also makes us believe that there is a possibility of our knowing. Therefore Paul has a hearing even to-day. And any other man will have a hearing who is able in sincerity and truth to give utterance to this triumphant certainty that comes so thrillingly from the lips of St. Paul.

And notice what is the sum of Paul's knowledge. "I know whom I have believed." Paul does not say, "I know about Him." Paul possessed such knowledge. Paul was a theologian. But it is not enough to know about Jesus. We must know Jesus Himself. Theology is a most barren knowledge unless it brings us to an experiential knowledge of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Master. Botany is a fruitful knowledge, but it can never take the place of roses and violets. Astronomy is interesting, but no book of astronomy will ever be able to take the place of the sun nor to spill from its pages, as well written, the pale light of stars. Knowledge about
Triumph of Certainty

Jesus is useful, but knowing Jesus Himself, that is the supreme essential.

I know whom I have believed.” Paul claims to know Jesus Christ Himself. He claims to be personally acquainted with Him who “was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary.” He declares that he knows Him “in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily”. He is acquainted with the one “who being the brightness of His glory (that is, the Father’s) and the express image of His person and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had purged our sins sat down upon the right hand of the throne of the majesty on high.” He claims to know Him who declared: “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” Paul knows Jesus Christ. And knowing Jesus Christ he knows God.

And this knowledge that Paul possessed is the supreme need of this world yesterday, today and forever. The reason that at this present moment it is red in tooth and claw is because it is in such large measure ignorant of God. The failure and the emptiness of your life and mine in so far as they have failed, is just here, that we are so little acquainted with God. It is this knowledge and this alone that is the hope of the individual and the hope of society and the hope of the world.

Not only is the knowledge of Jesus Christ Himself the supreme need of the world. It is the supreme longing both of God and man. There is nothing for which God and intensely longs as that we might come into a personal acquaintance of Himself. It is just to help us to this high end that He has given us His Book. If you will read the Bible with an open mind it will make you wise to many things, but it will certainly make you wise unto salvation. The Bible was written to help men to get acquainted with God. It is God’s message to the human soul.

The same is the purpose of the incarnation. Jesus Christ came into the world to save the world, but His hope of saving them was by getting them to know God. The purpose of every Christian, of every Sunday School teacher and of every preacher, if they are living within the will of God, is to get men acquainted with the Lord Jesus. However much enlightenment I may bring to you as a Christian minister, if I fail to get you to become acquainted with Jesus Christ, or if I fail to get you to know Him better, then my ministry has been a tragic failure and I am likely to stand confounded and ashamed at the end of the day.

God wants us to know Him because He loves us, and love always longs to reveal the treasures of its tenderness. It is said that when Helen Keller, the deaf, dumb and blind genius, lay in the cradle her mother used to bend above her and rain her hot tears down upon her face and say, “Oh, Helen, how your mother loves you and how she longs to reveal her love, but she can not make you understand.” And so God bends above us, longing to show us what He really is, longing for us to know Him.

You remember the story of Enoch Arden. He married a girl to whom he was passionately devoted and then went away on a voyage. He was wrecked and for years he was never heard from. At last he came home, but the wife whom he so passionately loved had given him up and had married another. And when Enoch came to his old home it was night, night in the world and night in his own soul. The house was deserted. He then went down to where his friend Philip lived and looking through the window he saw her. There
was the boy and the girl, his and hers. They were grown to manhood and to womanhood. And there was a child upon his wife’s lap, hers but not his. And how he longed to tell her that he had come back home. But he could not because he knew that it would break her heart. And so he broke his own instead. There he lies flat on his face, digging his fingers frantically into the soil, and he is praying, “God help me not to tell her, never to let her know.” And he never told. But he died of a broken heart. And this is God’s heartache, that He cannot make us know, that He cannot lead us to get acquainted with Himself.

Not only is this knowledge the supreme longing of God, but it is the supreme longing of the human heart. When Philip said to Jesus, “Lord, show us the Father and it is enough,” he was voicing the heart-cry of all the centuries. This is the longing that is older than civilization. It was uttered before Abram ever left Ur of the Chaldees to journey into the unknown. It was uttered long before the Tower of Babel ever lifted its tall head to gaze down upon the smiling waters of the Euphrates. It is the cry that is the very mother of religion. Articulate or inarticulate it is the cry of every human soul: “Lord, show us the Father; acquaint us with God.”

I know we are accustomed to think that only the pious want to know God. They do want to know Him better and better. But the wicked and wayward want to know Him too, though that longing is often one that they misunderstand. There is a little baby crying in the cradle. He cannot tell you what he wants. But when his mother takes him in her arms his cries are hushed. He knows when his wants are met. And so there are multitudes today, infants crying in the night, infants crying for the light and with no language but a cry. They think they want a thousand things, but the real longing of their hearts, the real thirst of their souls is for Jesus. Unconsciously they are sobbing out with the psalmist this age old longing: “As the hart panteth after the waterbrook, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.”

Does not Jesus discover this fact to us as He talks to the woman by the well? There He sits on the well curb and the day is hot and wistful. And across the plain comes one with a water pitcher on her shoulders. And she wears the tarnished finery of a woman of the street. For years she has lived in the ugliest sin. Not only has she lived so, but she has seemed content to live so. No one ever dreamed that she longed for anything better. But what a surprising thing Jesus is saying: “If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him and he would have given thee living water.” That is, you are longing for the water of life. You are longing to know God Himself. There is only one reason why you do not change this well curb into an altar and this midday glare into the dim religious light of the closet and that is because you do not realize that it is possible for you to know God. The longing was there though the possibility was little dreamed of. And that is the longing of you who are listening to me to-day.

That is all that keeps people coming to Church. And the amazement is that so many keep coming when they are so often disappointed. While in Paris I went one Sunday to one of the great cathedrals and watched the people throng in and throng out without ever a word of exhortation or instruction or without ever a single verse from the Word of God. And I thought of that pathetic cry of Mary: “They have taken my Lord away and I
"For 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." —II Timothy 1:12

This is a tremendous assertion. It would be next to impossible to make a higher claim than this. "I know," says this bold and dogmatic apostle. He claims to have come to certainty. The man who knows in any realm is worthy of consideration. The man who has a sure word to speak on any subject demands attention. But here is a man who claims to be possessed of that knowledge that is supreme. Of course, there are those who think he was mistaken. Yet this is to be said in his favor: his was the type of character, and his the kind of life that we should expect of a man who was possessed of the knowledge that he claimed.

Here, then, is his tremendous assertion: "I know whom I have believed." His is the knowledge of a Person. He claims that on the way from Jerusalem to Damascus he has come to know Jesus Christ personally. He claims that through knowing him, he has come to know God himself. He is claiming to know Him who in the beginning created the heavens and the earth. He is claiming to know Him who dipped his hand into the chalice of the eternities and made the oceans to dry and the rivers to flow. Paul faces his perplexed and bewildered generation—he faces the perplexed and bewildered generations of all the centuries—and makes this supreme assertion, "I know God."

You will agree with me, I think, that Paul could have said nothing bigger than this. Paul was a theologian—one of the greatest. He knew about Jesus, but no knowledge about him will take the place of knowing Jesus himself. It is well to
know about water, but no knowledge of water will prove a substitute for kissing a spring on the lips. It is well to know botany, but no knowledge of flowers can take the place of the whiteness of the lily, or the perfume of the honeysuckle. It is well to know astronomy, but no book of astronomy can give the splendors of a sunrise, or spill from its pages the pale light of stars. Even so, no knowledge about our Lord can take the place of knowing the Master himself.

II

Since this is true, when Paul says, "I know whom I have believed," he is making an assertion that is of universal interest.

1. This is true, in the first place, because hunger for God is universal. It is just as universal as hunger for bread. When bewildered and tortured Job cried, "Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!" he was uttering a cry that is as old as man and as new as today. There is in every heart an insatiable longing for God. The only difference between the worst and the best of men in this respect is that whereas the best are sure it is God for whom they hunger, the worst are conscious only of a craving that nothing has been able to satisfy.

2. Then this assertion of Paul is of universal interest because every man needs to know God. Sometimes we are not willing to confess this need. Sometimes in our blindness, we feel that we have run past it. Sometimes we do acknowledge our need, but whether confessed or not, because such an acknowledgement is wrung from us by a gnawing agony. Of this I am sure: When we are most sane, when we dare to face the facts about ourselves, we know that the supreme need of our lives is God. This is true for the poorest of us; it is true also for those whose hands are full to overflowing.

3. Finally, this assertion of the Apostle is of universal interest because it gives hope that we, too, may know God. Most of our knowledge we must take at second hand. When the astronomer tells us that the sun is ninety odd millions of miles from the earth, we accept it. Personally, I never intend to try to prove it. When
they tell me that a certain star is so many light years from earth, I accept that. I read some time ago something of what Admiral Byrd had to say about conditions at the South pole. I suppose that what he says is true. At least, I accept it. I never intend to journey there to see. So it is with most of our knowledge. We take it second hand. But that knowledge that is of supreme worth we may know each for himself. Every man may know God.

I am quite aware that this is a big declaration. How ridiculous it seems, that the God of the universe should take knowledge of creatures so small and frail as ourselves. A certain psalmist felt this difficulty long ago. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" If we think only in terms of bigness, the assertion that God may be known by all of us seems a bit incredible. But if we think of God as our Father, and of ourselves as the children of his love, then the picture is changed. If God really does love us there is nothing so reasonable as that he longs to make contact with us.

III

How then may we know him? There is surely no question more important than this. Here is one who has come to know; how did he arrive? Listen again to his testimony: "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." Here, you see, is a three-fold assertion. "I believed, I committed, I know." That is the road along which he traveled to certainty.

"I believed." It is one of the commonplace truths of the Bible that we are saved by faith. We come to know God through faith. That is neither surprising nor unique. Faith is the pathway to discovery in every realm of knowledge. Columbus discovered that the world was round through faith. The scientist in his laboratory makes all his discoveries through faith. We need not be astonished, therefore, when
all the saints assert that we discover God through faith. But what is the nature of the faith that leads to discovery? It is a faith that dares. It is a faith that makes the first step that Columbus made toward his knowledge of the fact that our world was not flat, but round, was a mere belief. How did that belief become a certainty? He put this theory to the test. He staked his life upon it.

Just so, it is a faith that dares that brings us to the knowledge of God. When the frightened jailer flung himself at the feet of Paul, he asked this age-old question, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul gave the sanest of all answers, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." But what is it to believe on Jesus? It is to do more than accept some theory about the personality of Jesus. It means to believe on him so fully that we commit ourselves to him. However much we may claim to believe, if that belief does not lead to a definite committal, it falls short. However vague our faith, if it does lead us to commit our all to him, then we are headed toward certainty.

So Paul had found. "I believed," he declares. "I committed." And what was the outcome? "I know," comes the confident answer. A faith that issues in obedience is ever the roadway to knowledge. That is what Jesus meant when he said, "If any man is willing to do his will, he shall know." However bright your assurance of God may be at this moment, if you begin to be disobedient to your heavenly vision, your light will go out. However dim that light may be, if you begin here and now to live up to the best you know, then that dim light will one day grow into a sunrise.

How strikingly this is illustrated in "The Man Who Played God"! There was a certain pianist, a deeply religious man, who was touring Europe. One night he was invited to play before royalty. But enemies, in an effort to kill the king, threw a bomb into the room. Nobody was killed, but the explosion destroyed the hearing of the great musician so that he became as deaf as the dead. Broken in heart and hope, he had to give up his career. He came back to New York to take up his broken life, seemingly with nothing ahead but despair. When a friend came one day, he took down
his Bible and read to that friend: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? yet not one of them is forgotten before God." "I do not believe that," he said bitterly. "I once believed it, but I do not believe it anymore. How could a God of such tenderness take from me the one thing that I love?"

By and by this musician was induced to learn lip-reading. He soon became very proficient. Little by little he began to amuse himself by standing at his window that overlooked Central Park, New York, and reading the lips of those that passed by below. One day he saw a frail young chap come into the park with a beautiful girl on his arm. It was evident that they were in trouble. "We can never marry," he read the lips of the youth saying to the girl. "The doctor tells me that I have tuberculosis. He says that I could be cured if I could only go into the mountains. But that is impossible because it would cost a thousand dollars." Then in desperation the youth lifted his face toward Heaven and prayed.

The great musician heard that prayer, and his heart was touched. So much was this the case that he wrote out a check for a thousand dollars and sent it down to the young couple with his congratulations. Their faces became so radiant that he felt some of the brightness in his own heart. In fact, it brought him such a thrill that he began to make it his business to listen to the prayers of the desperate souls that came his way. More and more he came to forget himself by remembering them. More and more he threw himself under their burdens, till, little by little, he lost his own. Not only so, but as he thus played God, his faith came back to him sweeter and stronger than ever before. Such has been the experience of multitudes. It is perfectly marvelous how doubt melts away in the warmth of an effort to do some good in the world. Men have found, over and over again, that as they walk the road that God is walking they meet him and thus become able to say with Paul, "I know."

Those who have found this true make an innumerable company that no man can number. They are made up of all sorts and conditions of men. Some have been simple souls with very little education. Others have been brilliant to the point of genius. Here, for instance, is a young fellow dying on the field of battle. The chaplain
kneels beside him. That he might the better know how to instruct him, he asks of what religious faith he is? The young chap's face is all alight as he whispers his joyous answer: "I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

Here is another—a mature man, and one of the greatest of the scientists; Michael Faraday is his name. On one occasion, after he had read a paper before one of the leading scientific societies of Great Britain, a vote of thanks was moved by the Prince of Wales. But when the chairman sought to deliver this vote of thanks, the scientist had gone. He had slipped out to his prayer meeting. When a friend asked, during his last illness, "What are your speculations now?" Faraday had a thrilling answer. "Speculations," he replied with a bit of holy swagger, "speculations! I have no speculations, I have certainties. '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!' That is the supreme knowledge; and the best of it is, it may be the personal possession of every one of us. Here is the road: Believe, Commit, Know.
"I know him whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day." — II. Timothy 1: 12

Here is a man who commands our attention. He fairly compels us to listen to him. He compelled the people of his own day to listen. Even his enemies had to confess that he had turned the world upside-down. For 1900 years, men from every walk of life have sat at his feet. He has cast a spell over the ages. It is the spell of one who knows.

To be able to speak with authority on any subject is to command attention. Emerson was right when he said that if one could build a better mouse tray than others, the world would make a trail to his door. To be a master in any branch of knowledge, however trivial, is to win distinction. It is my personal conviction that civilization might have been saved without bridge, yet when a man like Eli Culbertson knows more about bridge than anyone else, he advances at once to fame and fortune. The spell of Paul is the spell of the man who knows.

I.

Not only does Paul know, but the knowledge that he possesses is of supreme worth. What is Paul claiming in this amazing text?

1. He is claiming to know what he believes. His is not the language of the Muses, but it is included in his declaration. Paul says something far bigger than this, but if he had only said, "I know what I believe," he would have said something that is infinitely worth saying. One of the greatest tragedies of our present day is right here. So many of us are morally confused. So many of us do not know what we believe, We have flung away from old standards and old authorities and have found no satisfactory new ones. Like Matthew Arnold, we are between two worlds, the one dead, the other powerless to be born.
When there is a heavy fog or a choking dust storm, we lose our horizon, we get to the place where we cannot tell where the earth leaves off and where the heavens begin. In times of confusion like this, we tend to lose our skyline. We fling away our compass, we lose sight of any North Star by which to guide our ship, we tend to get morally and spiritually adrift. There are multitudes in this condition today. They are lost, because they have no fixed principle by which to guide their lives. And this is about the worst possible condition.

There is a rather ludicrous story of a gentleman who got lost in the mountains of western North Carolina. He found a typical mountaineer boy and decided to get some information from him. "Son," he said, "which is the road to Asheville?" "I don't know, Sir," came the answer. "Well, which is the road to Jucalusa?" he asked again. "I don't know, Sir," came the reply. "Which is the road to Henderson?" he asked. And still came the monotonous answer, "I don't know, Sir." "Well," said the stranger with considerable impatience, "you don't know much about this country do you?" "Well," said the lad, "I am not lost like you are." To know the most limited area for certain is better than having absolutely no certainty about a lot of things. Paul knew what he believed. Thousands are making shipwreck for want of that knowledge.

2. Then Paul might have said, "I know why I believe." He did not say this, but his answer includes this. That is a knowledge that is worth having. Peter was talking good sense when he urged his fellow-Christians to be able at all times to give a reason for the hope that was in them. "And faith, mark you! I have grown a bit weary with the assumption that it is a mark of intellectual ability to doubt and a mark of stupidity to believe. Faith is certainly just as intelligent as doubt.

For instance, suppose you cast in your lot intellectually with the atheist Bertrand Russell. What does he ask you to believe? He asks you to believe that this amazing universe with its infinite adaptations/means to ends is nothing more than a product of a blind force that had no pre-vision of why—they—were—created. He would have you believe
that something with infinitely less intelligence than a fishing worm created a Socrates and a Plato, or a Martin Luther and a John Wesley, or a Saint Paul and a Jesus Christ. To my mind, it is impossible to find anything any more incredible than that. Remember than that faith is quite as intellectually respectable as doubt. Paul knew why he believed.

3. But the claim that Paul makes is an all inclusive one, "I know whom I believed." That includes the what and the why. Though he had never seen Jesus Christ in the flesh, he was absolutely sure of Him. We hear him saying, "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord." "I knew Him who of old laid the foundations of the earth, I knew Him who dipped His hand into the chalice of eternity and made the oceans to drip and the rivers to flow. I knew Him who wove the scarf of the rainbow and flung it about the shoulders of the dying storm." I knew Jesus, and through knowing Him, I knew God.

Now this is a supreme knowledge. Nothing will or can take the place of it. It is well to know about Jesus, but no amount of knowledge about Him will take the place of knowing Him. It is well to know about bread, but no knowledge of bread can satisfy your hunger. It is well to know about water, but no amount of such knowledge can slack your thirst. It is well to know about botany, but no amount of knowledge about botany can take the place of flowers. It is well to know about astronomy, but no amount of knowledge about astronomy can take the place of a sunrise or a beam from its pages the pale light of stars.

II.

Now the supreme wonder of this knowledge is seen from these facts.

1. It is a knowledge that everybody desires. Everybody wants to know God. When those Greeks representing the intellectuals of the ancient world came saying, "We would seek Jesus," they were voicing a longing. They belong not only to the most cultivated, but also to those most lacking in culture. When Philip said, "Lord, show
us the Father," he was voicing a longing that is as old as man. Saint Augustus said, "God has made us for Himself, and we never find rest till we rest in Him." The longing for God is a universal longing.

It belongs to the best of mankind. The saints cry passionately, "Like as the hart desireth the water brook, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God." But their longing for God is no more genuine than the longing of the sinners. The only difference between the saints and the sinners in this respect is that the ones have that for which they long and the others do not. This heart-hunger is as universal as the hunger for bread. The thirst for the water of life belongs to every man, just as does the thirst for water.

2. Then this knowledge meets a universal need. Not only does every man want to know God, but every man needs to know Him. To miss this knowledge is to miss the best. It is to be forever in some measure a wanderer - to drift by the numbing of homesickness. God is the heart's true home. To know Him satisfies the deep need of everyone for a home.

Then every man needs to know God because such knowledge brings life. "This is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." "For me to live is Christ," wrote Paul. In finding Him, he found life. In finding life, he found a new world. He was able to shout, "Old things shall pass away, for behold they are become new."

Then this knowledge is our supreme need because it is a roadway to highest usefulness. Think for a little while of those who have meant most in your life. They are not necessarily the smartest people. The older I get, the less I care about mere cleverness. Who loves anybody simply because they are brilliant? I tell you, the folks who help you most are the folks who bring to you a sense of God. No service that one man can render another is quite so great as that of making God a reality to him.

Stanley, searching in darkest Africa found Livingston and finding Livingston he found
God. There was that in Livingston that brought to Stanley an irresistible sense of God.

3. Then this knowledge is for everybody. Not only does everybody long to know God, not only does everybody need to know Him, but everybody may know Him. Assuming that God loves us, assuming that we are His children, certainly there is nothing for which He so naturally longs as to reveal Himself to us. He is always out seeking the sheep that is lost. Our restlessness, our dissatisfaction with ourselves, our gnawing hungers, our burning thirsts, are all by the very voice of the Great Shepherd as he seeks the sheep that is lost.

Scientists are fond of telling us how much alike is the embryonic man and the embryonic monkey. It would be impossible for the layman to tell the one from the other. Yet these two creatures are in reality infinitely wider apart than the spaces between the stars. That which separates them by infinite chasms is this, one is headed out to an existence that is essentially of the earth earthly; the other has in him the capacity of fellowship with God. He has in him this high capacity, he has in him to say what Paul says in our text, "I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day."

To find this knowledge then is to find the satisfaction for our deepest longings; it is to find our highest character; it is to find our greatest usefulness. If we miss this knowledge, though we were to attain all others, life must be a lean and mean affair and end in tragedy. If we obtain this knowledge, though we might possibly miss all others, life must be an everlasting victory.

III.

Now since this knowledge is desired by all of us, since it is needed by all of us, since it may be had by all of us, how may it become ours? How may I be sure of God?
The road to certainty is made plain here in our text. I have read this text many times, but I never noticed its simplicity till I was preparing this sermon. Listen to what Paul says, "I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day." Paul makes here a three-fold declaration. "I have believed; I have committed; I know." Now these are the sure steps to religious certainty. Let us look at them in their order.

1. "I have believed." Faith is always the first step toward discovery. The scientist in the laboratory begins his discovery through faith. So does the explorer begin his work by faith and so does the astronomer. And so does the saint. One of the fundamental doctrines of the Bible is that salvation is by faith. It is the door of entrance. Without faith everything collapses both in the material and the spiritual world.

2. But while faith is the first essential, it is not the only essential - there must also be a commitment. We must venture on what we believe. Should I land on this world from Mars and be told that the way to have a harvest of wheat would be to take certain golden grain and fling it to rot in the ground, I might believe it but that would get me nowhere unless I actually sowed the wheat. I might believe that by slipping a letter into a little iron box on a post it would reach my wife, but unless I actually mailed the letter, she would never get it. Even so, I might believe every promise in the Bible, but if I never acted on one of them, they would be to me of no value. A promise becomes a value only as I act upon it.

How much then must I believe in order to be saved? The answer to this question has created in some earnest people genuine confusion. There are those who tell us that we must believe in a certain type of orthodoxy, that we must believe in certain theories of the atonement, that we must believe in certain theories of inspiration, but
all of this is aside from the point. How much must I believe in order to begin to be a Christian? I must believe enough to commit my life to Christ. However vague and hazy and heterodox my faith seems to be, if it leads me to commit it ends in spiritual salvation. If it falls short of committal, it ends in spiritual ignorance and uncertainty.

That is what Jesus meant when He said, "If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know." However little you may believe, if you dare to act on that faith, it will grow into a fuller faith and will end in radiant knowledge. This is not mere theory, this is experience. I dare to say with conviction that it is my experience. It is the experience of some of you. All the faith in the world that does not issue an obedience comes to nothing. A mere mustard seed of faith that leads to obedience results in victory.

Did you give yourself the pleasure and uplift of reading "The Man Who Played God?"

There was a great musician, you remember, a genius at the piano. He was a man who accepted his talents as a gift from God. One night while playing before the king, some anarchists, seeking to kill the king, threw a bomb into the room where the concert was being held. Nobody was killed by the explosion, but it destroyed the hearing of the great pianist, and left him deaf as a stone.

Naturally, with the loss of his hearing, life fell into ruins for this gifted musician. He had to give up his career. He had to give up everything that had meant most to him in other days. He came back to New York embittered and sour. One day he read these words to an old friend, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, yet not one of them is forgot before God?" "I don't believe that," he said bitterly. "God is cruel, otherwise he would not have robbed me of everything I hold dear." Now by much persuasion, his friends induced him to learn lip reading. They thought it might make his life a bit less empty, a bit less bitter. He had already made one attempt at suicide so they turned to this as a last resort. He made rapid progress in his study. By and by, he began to amuse himself by looking from his windows high up over
A GOOD SPORTSMAN

"If any one takes part in an athletic contest, he gets no prize unless he obeys the rules." (Hebrews)

—II Timothy 2:5

Paul had a fighting heart. His vocabulary is not that of the cloister, it is that of the barracks and of the athletic field. He thought of himself and of his fellow Christians as engaged in the most exciting of all games, the most exciting of all conflicts. Now he is a member of the track team. He is running with every muscle out to win the prize. "I am run, not as uncertainly." Again he is a boxer. "I am fight, not as one that beateth the air." The game he was playing, the fight he was making, demanded all the high daring and courage required of the soldier and the athlete. And Paul felt that he and his fellow saints were not the least inferior in this respect. "We are Christians are not cowards," he declares with a kind of holy swagger. "In point of sportsmanship, we are no whit behind the best athletes. Let us think then of the characteristics that go to make a good sportsman in the Christian sense.

I

The first characteristic of a good sportsman is that he takes part in the game. The team of which Paul was a part was out to change the world. It was seeking no less a goal than the bringing in of the Kingdom of God. Paul regarded it as his solemn obligation to have a part in this game. He could do no less and discharge his obligation to God and man. "Woe is me," we hear him say, "if I preach not, if I fail to play the game." But to have a part in this game was more than a duty. It was a high privilege. He could never think of it without a thrill of sheer joy.
"To me," he shouts in glad amazement, "is this grace given that I might preach the unsearchable riches of Christ." To have a part in such a contest was to Paul the highest possible privilege. It ought to be for you and me. No man can come to his best by merely standing on the side line and criticising the players.

But in spite of this fact, there are those who refuse to play. There are those, for instance, who excuse themselves on the grounds that they do not like the game. That was the case with certain ones to whom Jesus spoke. "You are like children, sitting in the market-place," He said, "crying unto their fellows, We have piped unto you, and you have neither danced. We have mourned, and you have not lamented." Jesus had evidently come across a group of children that, instead of playing, were pouting at each other. "What is the matter?" He asked. "They wanted to play wedding," a surly little chap answers, "but I told them that was too glad. Then they wanted to play funeral, but I told them that was too sad." Therefore, they stood glaring at each other instead of playing the game. That was poor sportsmanship.

There are others who refuse to play from a sense of weakness. They feel that they have so little to give that they give nothing at all. This was the tragic blunder of the man of one talent. He was proud of his gifts and of the part that those gifts would enable him to play until he realized that a friend of his had two talents, while another had five. Having discovered this, he felt himself outclassed. "I would be willing to play," he said, "if I could be superior, or even equal to the best. But, since I can not, I refuse to go on the field at all." But a good sportsman takes part in the game whether he is captain or water-boy.

There is yet another group that we like even less than those who feel themselves inferior. This is made up of those who refuse to play, not
because they have too little to give, but because they have too much. These are the smart boys, who say, "Show me a perfect church, and I will join it. Show me a perfect team, and I will play on it." This only means that these superior souls will not play at all, for no team is perfect. Even the New York Yankees lose a game now and then, and every man on the team has struck out more than once. If, therefore, they will not play with the Yankees, of course, they are far too important to play with a bunch of street arabs on a vacant lot. But what is really wrong with these is not that they are so brave and skillful; they are suffering from bad sportsmanship. A good sportsman plays the game.

II

A good sportsman not only plays the game, but he plays it according to the rules.

Now the mere mention of rules arouses antagonism. But a game must have rules or it will not be a game. It is the rules that make the game, just as the banks make the river. To undertake to play a game of baseball with no rules as to how many men should be on a side, or how many strikes should put the batter out, would end in utter confusion. To rebel against rules, therefore, is to destroy the game.

But in spite of this fact, our generation has witnessed a widespread revolt against all rules. "Write your own ten commandments," one free soul suggests. Why not go on with an equally sane suggestion, "Write your own multiplication table." The fact that two times two make four is getting a bit monotonous anyway. Write your own law of gravitation. The one that Newton discovered is thoroughly stale, to say nothing of what it often does to airships. But we can not get rid of the fundamental rules of life so easily. As dusty as the Ten Commandments may seem, no individual and no group can play the game of life in scorn of them.
But here is a rule that, though derived from the Bible, is not in it. It is in substance like this: "So act that your conduct is worthy to become a principle of universal law." By this, he means that we are to act in such a fashion that, if all others did the same, we should build a better world instead of a worse. That is reasonable. That is good sportsmanship. But the trouble with many of us is that we demand that we be exceptions. For instance, we are proud of our democracy. We glory in our freedom of assembly and freedom of speech. We can criticise just as we please. But some of us refuse to vote. Suppose everybody followed our example. There would never be another election from now until the end of time. Therefore, the democracy in which we glory would be at an end. You have no right to treat your nation in such a fashion that, if everybody else pursued the same course, it would either hurt or destroy your nation.

As a member of the family, we ought to act in such a fashion that, if every other member followed our example, it would build the best possible home. But some husbands are such poor sportsmen as to demand one rule for themselves and another for their wives. There are also, wives who practice the same poor sportsmanship. As a member of the church, you ought to act in such a way that, if your fellow churchman followed your example, they would build the best possible church. But we are such poor sportsmen that we wish to make our own rules. There are some who give to the church in such a fashion that, if others were to follow their example, not another penny would come into the coffers of the church from now to the crack of doom. If everybody attended as thousands of church-members attend, there would never be another worship service. Then, how many take an attitude toward the evening service that, if taken by theirfellows, would destroy this important service altogether?

The way we are headed in America at this time, it will not be many years before the evening service is a thing of the past. Thousands of churches
are already closed at the Sunday evening hour. I am not arguing for this service simply because it has come to us from yesterday but because, in my opinion, it is sorely needed. What effect, let me ask, is it going to have upon the moral and spiritual forces of our land when Sunday evening is turned over entirely to social engagements, to theater parties, to night clubs, and to various forms of amusement, good and bad?" The only possible answer is that these forces will be greatly weakened. Who will bring this about? Not those outside the church, but those within! We have no right, therefore, as members of the team to play in such a fashion as to lessen our chances for victory.

Now, since our game has rules, the violation of those rules involves penalties. A law without a penalty is not a law at all. It is merely advice, good or bad. A good sportsman plays according to the rules because he is a good sportsman. He also plays according to the rules because he knows that to fail to do so means a penalty. In what is perhaps the oldest book in the Bible, we read this word: "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Every man played the game in his own way without regard to the rules. What was the result? It was not a golden age. It was an age of mud, blood, and tears. The very roadways grew up because men dared not travel them.

But if, as a member of the football team, I wish to be off-side when the ball is snapped, whose business is it? Even if I do get a five-yard penalty, I can take it. But being a part of the team, I am not the only one who is penalized. All my teammates must suffer with me. It is ever the case. Nobody goes right alone. To keep the rules is to help the other fellow. To violate the rules is to penalize both myself and others. That is true in the home, in the church, in the world, everywhere.
A few days ago, I had a distressing letter from a radio listener. "I am a mother," she wrote, "with a house full of children. Two years ago I broke with religion. I thought I might be better off, but I have been miserably at war with myself ever since. To add to my wretchedness, the children fight and scratch and yell from morning till night. I stand it as long as I can; then, I lock myself in my room and curse, and curse, and curse. At night, when they are all quiet in bed, I am sorry. But the first thing in the morning, the battle is renewed. Soon, in impotent rage, I am cursing again."

What is the matter with this poor mother? She has refused to play the game according to the rules. She is, therefore, being penalized. This is the case not because the Umpire is angry with her. She is being penalized in the very nature of things. Not only so, but her children are being penalized with her. A child is intensely sensitive to an atmosphere. In a home where the mother carries with her an atmosphere of peace, the child tends naturally to be peaceful. But where the mother is tense with conflict, as in this home, discord among the children is natural and inevitable. Such a spirit is as contagious as smallpox. A good sportsman, then, plays the game according to the rules because he is a good sportsman, also because he knows that to fail to do so is to penalize both himself and others.

Not only does a good sportsman play the game and play it according to the rules, but he plays it his best.

Who wishes to play any game with an antagonist who is not interested enough to put his best into the game? Worse still: Who of us desires to play with one who has such a poor opinion of our sportsmanship that he gives us the game because he does not think we could stand defeat? Who wants
to see a game where each team is trying to give the victory to the other? Such a farce would be merely disgusting. It is such a spectacle that gives us the only example of divine disgust to be found in the New Testament. What was the matter with the Church at Laodicea? It had not gone off the field and quit the game altogether. It was still playing, but it was only playing half-heartedly. Therefore, Jesus said, "I would that you were either cold or hot, but because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to vomit you up." The half-hearted player is merely disgusting.

Not only does the good sportsman play the game his best, but he does so whether he is winning or losing. There are some players that are most enthusiastic at the time when they are least needed. There are other choice souls who are most enthusiastic when the need is greatest, and when their cause seems all but lost. We have an example of these two types in an Old Testament story. The Israelites, cowed by their traditional enemies, the Philistines, no longer dare show their faces. They are hiding in the dens and caves of the earth. But just because things are so desperate, Jonathan decides to make a stand. His heroic effort wins results that are a surprise even to himself. Soon he has the foe on the run. What then? These shirkers that were hiding, when they see the foe actually on the run, come out and follow hard after them for battle. They were poor sportsmen. A good sportsman fights his best whether he is winning or losing.

Not only does a good sportsman play the game his best, but he keeps himself fit to play his best. When an athlete becomes a member of the football squad, he is put under training rules. There are certain foods that he is permitted to eat, while others are forbidden. Suppose I am entertaining a member of the football team. For dessert I have served a juicy piece of mince pie. I expect my guest to go for it eagerly, but he
refuses it altogether. Why? Does he think it would be a sin to eat a bit of pie? No! Does he think the pie would kill him? No! He has been told that he might play the game better if he leaves off sweets. Therefore, he refuses the pie because he feels it his duty to be in the best form possible. This is perhaps the sanest test of what we may or may not do as Christians. There is no practice that is either right or wrong in itself. Shall I take this course or not? I can find help in my decision by asking this question: Will such a course help me to play the game or will it hinder? If it will help, I ought to take it; if it will hinder, I ought to reject it.

Ralph Connor tells of a great football game between the two leading universities of Canada. The outstanding star on one of these teams was a brilliant player, named Cameron. Cameron was the hope of his university and of his team. But the night before the great game, he broke the training rules and got on a big drunk. His friends sobered him, and he went onto the field, seemingly his old reliable self. But his eye was not quite so quick, his touch not quite so sure. He fumbled at a moment of crisis, and the victory went to his foes. The game came to be known in after years as the game that was lost because Cameron was not fit. A good sportsman plays the game his best, and that he may do this, he keeps himself fit to play his best.

IV

Finally, we are to remember that to play the game, to play it according to the rules, and to play it our best, is the sum total of what is required of us. We are certainly not here to lose the game. But no more is it required of us that we always win. Nobody can win all of the time. No team is required to make so many home runs or so many touch-downs. You and
I am not here to win certain results. We are here to play the game the best we can.

When the Kentucky Colonels were winning one victory after another under the leadership of Bo McMillan, the spectators used to smile to see this team go into a huddle for prayer when they came upon the field. That was something out of the ordinary. "Why do you pray?" a reporter asked one day. "Do you beg God to take the victory from your opponents and give it to you?" "No," was the same answer, "we do not pray to win, we pray to play. We ask God to help us to play the game in a clean, sportsmanlike fashion." That is our business. When we do that, we can meet with triumph and disaster, as Kipling says, and treat those two imposters just the same.

The other day the team of Oklahoma University returned from a rather disastrous encounter with the Volunteers of Tennessee in the Orange Bowl. Ours is a good team. It won every game except this one. But in spite of this, when the train neared the University, the boys requested the engineer to let them off a mile from the station so they could slip away to their quarters unseen. When they were denied this and had to go to the station, they lost themselves as quickly as possible in the crowd of three thousand that had come to meet them. Meantime, I am told that their fellow students were as silent as a funeral vault.

Now it strikes me that this indicates a tragic misunderstanding of good sportsmanship, both on the part of the players and the spectators. If to be a good sportsman we must win every game, no man can qualify. These boys had played the best they could. When one does that, if he wins, he should accept his victory without swaggering. If he loses, he should accept defeat without shame. This is what Jesus meant by the story of the talents. When the man who had received five talents came into his master's presence, he said proudly, "I have made your five talents into ten."
A GOOD SPORTSMAN

man who had received two talents came just as proudly, saying, "I have made your two talents into four." To both of them, their Lord uttered the same commendation. He did not say, "You have been successful." He said rather, "You have been faithful. You have done your best." That same commendation he would have given to the man of one talent if he had only dared to do his best. This he would have done, even though he had lost his master's money, instead of doubling it.

The fact that our approval depends not upon our skill, nor upon our success, but upon our faithfulness, should give us hope and courage. It puts all of us on an equal footing. The man with five talents has no advantage over the man with the one. In fact, he often does not surpass him in point of service rendered. It was a member of the third team whose forward passing won the victory over Duke in the latest Rose Bowl game. But it is our playing that counts, not either our victory or defeat. Therefore, if we have played our best, when the game is over and we go home, some may greet us as silently as the Oklahoma University team was greeted. But not so our Lord! He will come to meet us, all enthusiasm, and bid us welcome with these words, "Well done! Well done!"
A GOOD SPORTSMAN

"Any one who engages in an athletic contest wins no prize except he obeys the rules."
—II Timothy 2:5 (Weymouth)

Paul had a fighting heart. He was a scholar and a thinker, but his language is not the language of the class-room nor of the cloister. It is the language of the athlete and the soldier. Paul was evidently interested in athletic contests. Being often a prisoner, he had perforce to spend much time in the company of soldiers. There is no doubt that he admired them for their courage and loyalty. He thrilled to the skill and grit of the athlete. He felt himself a sportsman with them in a higher sense.

This was the case because he, too, was engaged in a great contest. He was having a part in the greatest possible adventure. He was out for no less a prize than driving out the darkness with light. He was seeking to make the kingdoms of this world into the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. He was playing for higher stakes than that of the athlete or the soldier. He was playing with a courage that was in no sense inferior to theirs. "We Christians are not cowards," he declares with a kind of holy swagger. "No more are we inferior to you in white-hot earnestness. If you are a member of the track team, so am I. I so run not as uncertainly. If you are a boxer, so am I. So fight I not as one that beateth the air. If you are going forth to battle, so am I. I am fighting in the good fight. If you are a sportsman, so am I."

Now it is about Christian sportsmanship that I am to speak to you this morning. I do not think it is possible to be a good Christian without at the same time being a good sportsman. What are the characteristics of a good sportsman?
The first characteristic of a good sportsman is this—he plays the game. Paul felt that that was an absolute necessity for himself and for all others. He said, "I play the game because I ought to play. I am a debtor both to the Greek and the barbarian, to the wise and the unwise. I am bound by obligations that I can no more escape than I can unhitch myself from my shadow. I play the game because, having been called of God, I feel that I must. Since He has honored me, I must honor Him. To fail to do so would mean my undoing. Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel! Woe is me if I refuse to play the game! Then, I play the game because it is life's supreme privilege." Paul could never think of it without a shout of sheer joy. "To me," he cries exultantly, "is this grace given that I might preach the unsearchable riches of Christ." Every good sportsman plays the game. But in spite of this fact, some of us refuse. "Did it not?"

1. Some refuse to play because they are too childish. Everything must be exactly to their taste or they stand aloof. Jesus drew these to the light. He said they were like children standing in the marketplace saying, "We have piped unto you and you have not danced, we have mourned and you have not lamented." The Master had no doubt looked upon this very scene. Here was a group of children in the marketplace, but they were not playing as normal children naturally would do. Instead they were glaring at each other. "Why don't you play?" a passer-by asked. "We can't find a game to please him," the children answer, indicating a spoiled young chap who is puffed up and pouting. "You won't play yourself," said the pouter. "That is, you won't play like I want you to." They wanted to play wedding, but I wouldn't do it. I said that was too glad. Then they wanted to play funeral, but I said that was too sad." So he wasn't playing and was interfering with the play of the others.

This tribe did not pass with the first century. The childish are still with us. Child-like folks are most delightful, but childish folks are most offensive. Little babies are winsome and beautiful, but big babies are a weariness to the flesh.
They always have an excuse for refusing to play the game. Everything must be exactly to their liking or they will have no part in it. They are too childish to be good sportsmen.

2. Then, there is a second group that refused to play because of a false humility. They claim that they are so humble that there is nothing that they can do. Of course, this attitude is not humility at all. It is a rather slimy, cowardly caricature of humility. That was the trouble with the man of one talent. He was proud of his talent until he found a friend that had two and another friend that had five. Then he told himself, "I have little chance with these. If I can't be leader, I won't have any part at all."

Along with this false humility, there went a ruinous cowardice. He said, "I was afraid." Of what was he afraid? He was afraid to be himself. He was so afraid he might strike out, that he never went to bat. He was so afraid that he might fumble that he refused to carry the ball. Since he was so possessed by an inferiority complex, he refused to play the game. Then, there was a third group that is, if possible, even more repellent than the childish and those possessed by an inferiority complex. That is the crowd that refuse to play because they are so superior. These are the ones that say, "Show me a perfect church, and I will join it." In other words, "Show me a perfect team, and I'll play on it." But it so happens that there is no any such team. Even the New York Yankees lost the last World Series. Even the very best men on this best team strike out sometimes. The man, therefore, who will not play until he finds a perfect team will not play at all.

What a pity for such a perfect player to go to waste! The more you have to give the greater opportunity you have to serve. It was bad enough for the man of one talent to bury his lord's money in the earth. But to bury five or ten or a hundred such as this vastly superior chap has is a tragedy indeed. But his real trouble is that he is not a good sportsman. A good sportsman plays the game whether he approves it in every detail or not, whether he is skillful or unskillful, whether he has much to give or little.
II

Not only does a good sportsman play the game, but he plays it according to the rules. That is necessary for the following reasons.

1. There are rules. Do not let this fact offend you. Without rules there can be no game as more than there can be a river without banks. The river that has no banks ceases to be a river and becomes a swamp. The game that has no rules ceases to be a game and becomes mere chaos. How would you like to see a game, when one team might have nine and the other nineteen, when three strikes meant out for one but six for another, when one team had to touch the bases as it ran around the diamond, while the other might cut corners. No, there must be rules or there can be no game.

Life, Christian living also has its rules. I know some of us do not like this. Ours has been a day of widespread rebellion. "Write your own ten commandments," urges a certain would-be spiritual guide of a few years ago. How reasonable and up to date! It would be just as reasonable to say, "Write your own multiplication table." The fact that three times three makes nine is terribly old-fashioned, yet even Einstein cannot run past it. It would be just as wise to say, "Write your own law of gravitation. The one that Newton discovered has served its day. Besides, look what it often does to airships." But we can as well write a new multiplication table or a new law of gravity as we can write a new moral law. The principles of Jesus fit into life. Life will work that way. It will not work any other way.

Take this for instance. He did not utter it in these words, but it is derived from it. "So act that your conduct is worthy to become a principle of universal law." In other words, "So act that if all your fellows were to act in the same fashion, we would have a better home life, a better civic life, a better church, a better world." That rule is reasonable and practical. In fact, one of the great troubles of our world is this—so many of us want to be exceptions to the rule.

This is necessary for the right kind of home-life. Without it the best homes cease to be homes and become wrecks. Why do we have so many divorces? There are
some husbands that want to have one set of rules for their wives, another for themselves. There are wives that won't play the game according to the rules. Why are so many children loosed upon the world to be a menace to themselves and a menace to society? What is the secret of the problem child? Generally speaking, it is the problem parent. Juvenile delinquency is increasing. Why? Because parental neglect is increasing. To have a good home we must so act that if others act in the same fashion, the home would be stabilized and not destroyed. This same rule holds with regard to the state. We rejoice in our democracy. We pride ourselves on our Four Freedoms. But some of us do not think enough of those freedoms even to vote. If our democracy depended upon such, it would cease to exist.

Generally speaking, all of us believe in the church. We believe that religion is not a mere luxury but a necessity. It is the saving salt of society. We would not live in a community where there was no church. There are thousands that believe this and yet act in such a fashion that, if others were to act in the same way, every church in America would cease to exist. What right have you to take a position that if taken by your fellows would wreck that institution that is the supreme hope of the world?

This position is not taken simply by those who have never united with the church. It is taken by those who move into a community and leave their membership behind them. What we really prize we carry with us. We can only serve where we are. We cannot serve where we are not. But the supreme evil of such conduct is this—if everybody left their membership at the home church as you are doing, ninety-five percent of the church membership would be lost. So act that your conduct is worthy to become a principle of universal law. The man who refuses to remove his membership is not playing the game according to the rules.

Then there is a third class who move their membership and are in good standing but still demand that they be exceptions. Some of these refuse to contribute. The church is like any other organization in that it must be kept up in part by money.
The church where nobody had to give would be dead. A church is also like any other institution in that it must be kept up by attendance upon its services. In every church there are those who act toward its services as if their fellow members acted in the same fashion, there would never be another worship service until the crack of doom. This is especially true of the night service. I read only last week of a First Church in a certain Southern city that had decided to abandon its evening services until Lent. What an acknowledgment of failure! It is more than a failure—it is an ugly ruinous sin.

3. Not only will a good sportsman play the game and play it according to the rules, but he does this with the realization that to violate the rules involves a penalty. Every law has a penalty attached to its violation. Where there is no penalty, it ceases to be a law and becomes mere advice, good or bad. When I fail to play according to the rules, I am penalized. I am penalized in my body. I am penalized in my mind. All sin involves suffering. All sin hurts the sinner.

But this is not all. My violation of the rules hurts others. Here am I a member of the football squad. I say to myself, "I am going to be offside whenever I please. The officials may not see me. If they do see me and penalize me, I can take it. What is the loss of five yards to me?" But I am not the only one that loses five yards. Every member of the team loses five yards. My university loses five yards. In getting penalized myself, I penalize others.

If I as a father or a mother wish to live my own life, whose business is it? Even if I do suffer a bit, I can take it. But the trouble is that you penalize your children. When I was on the radio, I had a letter from a mother. It read something like this: "I have a large family of children. Two years ago I broke with religion. Since then, I have been utterly miserable. I am constantly at war with myself. To add to my wretchedness, my children fight and howl from the time they wake in the morning until they go to sleep at night. I stand it as long as I can and then I lock myself in a room and curse and curse and curse in utter wretchedness." What is the matter? Refusing to play according to the rules, she...
is being penalized. Sadder still, her children are suffering with her. There is nothing so sensitive as the mind of a child. The war within the mother's heart imparts itself to the whole family. She is failing in good sportsmanship.

III

Not only does a good sportsman play the game and play according to the rules, but he puts himself, his very best, into the game. That is one thing that makes a game interesting. How would you like to play with somebody who had such a poor opinion of your sportsmanship that he would not half try? How would you like to see a game of football with Alphonso captain of one team and Gaston captain of the other, and each one insisting that the other make the touchdown? A game where the players do not care enough to win to play their best is not a matter of interest but of contempt and boredom. But if listlessness and half-heartedness is ugly and unattractive in a game, how much more ugly it is in the business of Christian living. So far as the New Testament goes, there was only one something that ever disgusted our Lord. It was not sheer antagonism. It was not the cowardice of Peter or the treachery of Judas. It was the lukewarmness, the half-heartedness of a church that, engaging in the greatest of all enterprises, was listless and lukewarm. "I would," He said, "that thou wert either hot or cold. Because thou art lukewarm and neither cold or hot, I am about to spew thee out of my mouth."

Not only does a good sportsman give his best to the game, but he does so regardless of his place on the team. He does so regardless of whether he is winning or losing. There are some folks that the more they are needed, the less they can be counted upon. There are others, thank God! that the more they are needed, the more they can be counted upon. We have both kinds in a story coming out of the Old Testament. The Israelites were being cowed by their traditional enemies, the Philistines. They had been brought so low that they were hiding in the caves, in the dens of the earth, and no man dared show his face.

Then it was that Jonathan came upon the scene. He undertook to do something
not because the situation was so promising, but because it was so hopeless. He knew that even if he were defeated that would not be the worst possible. The worst possible would be to be too big a coward to try. So with his armor-bearer, he went out to the conflict. He met the enemy in a narrow pass and gave such a good account of himself, he and his armor-bearer, that the Philistines betook themselves to a headlong flight. Then said the story, when those that were hiding in the caves saw that the Philistines fled, they too followed hard after them to battle. Theirs was a shout of the shirk. They could fight only when winning.

A good sportsman fights when he is winning. He fights with the same dogged courage when everything is going against him. That is one way in which England has won the admiration of the world. After the collapse of France, Hitler was dead-sure that she would surrender. To take any other course would be sheer madness. But to his utter indignation and to that of his fellow criminals, he found out that they did not know when they were whipped. They so conducted themselves according to the suggestion of Churchill that if the Empire lives a thousand years they will look back to that as one of their finest moments.

Not only does a good sportsman play his best but he keeps himself fit to play his best. Suppose as a member of the football squad, I invite you out to dinner. Suppose further my wife serves a slab of mince-pie that half floats in its own rich syrup. I expect you to go for it in a big way, but you refuse. Then I remind you that it is not spiked, but you still refuse. Then I ask you in all good conscience, "Do you think it would be a sin to eat this pie?" You answer, "No, it would not be a sin, but I am a member of the football squad. We have been told that we can play the game better if we leave off sweets. Therefore, for the sake of myself and for the sake of my team, I let it alone. I am out to be the best possible player. What helps me to play I take. What hinders me I leave off."

That is sound sense. In matters of athletics it is sound sense, in matters of religion. Ralph Connor tells of a great football game between the two leading uni-
versities of Canada. The star man of the McMillan team was a young chap by the name of Cameron. On him the team and the university rested its supreme hope. But the night before the game Cameron broke the training rules and got drunk. His teammates sobered him up. When he went on the field, so far as the eye could see he was none the worse. But it turned out that his eye was not quite so quick, his touch not quite so sure, his nerve not quite so steady. In a critical crisis he fumbled and through that fumble the game was lost. It came to be known as the game that was lost because Cameron was not fit. I wonder how many games have been lost in our church because we were not fit.

IV

Finally, a good sportsman not only plays and plays according to the rules, and plays his best, but he keeps his eye on the central purpose of the game. Why does he play? He is not playing to lose, surely. He is out to win if he can. But his supreme purpose is not to lose; no more does he look upon winning as an absolute necessity. He can meet with "triumph and disaster and treat those two imposters just the same." He knows that he has not gone on the field to make a certain number of touchdowns. He is not bound to make a certain number of home-runs. His duty is to play the game his best, come success or failure.

When Bo McMillan was captain of the Kentucky Cardinals, that game little team won victory after victory. The crowd used to watch in awed amazement as the team ran on the field and went into a huddle, not to discuss signals, but to pray. It was something new. "Why do you pray?" a newspaper reporter asked McMillan one day. "Are you asking God to take the game from your opponents and give it to you?" "No," he answered emphatically. "We don't pray to win. We pray to play. We ask God to give us the grit and the grace to play the game in the clean, manly fashion that a game should be played." That word puts its finger on the fundamental purpose of the game.

Since our supreme business is to play our best, we ought to be able to win with-
out swaggering. We ought to be able to lose without shame. Some of you will remember a game played in the Orange Bowl a few years ago between Oklahoma and Tennessee. Oklahoma had a magnificent team. They were confident of victory. But the Squirrel-Shooters proved the better team. I am told that when the Oklahoma team returned home they asked the conductor to let them off a mile from the station. They were ashamed to face their fellows. I am told that when the conductor refused and they had to come into the station, they were greeted in utter silence. Now I do not know whether this is true or not, but if it is it is bad sportsmanship. It is not my primary business to win. It is my business to play the game the best I can. Having done that, no man has a right to criticize me. I have no right to criticize myself.

The fact that we are here to play our best and not simply to win puts us all on an equal footing. When the man of five talents reported to his master that he had doubled his capital, that master said, "Well done." When the man of two talents came, saying that he had made his two into four, he was greeted in the same fashion. If the man of one talent had only tried even though he had lost every penny, he would have received the same greeting. It is not how much we have but how we use it. It is surprising also how greatly third-rate gifts can be used when we really consecrate them. When Duke University played in the Rose Bowl, they had the game sewed up until within less than a minute of the end. It was a third-string man who went in and by three forward passes won the game. But whether we win or lose, if we have played our best though the crowd may not applaud us, when the game is over, there is one who surely will. Our Master will come to meet us all enthusiasm, saying, "Well done, well done!"
2nd Timothy 2:15 (Moffatt) Do your utmost to be a sound workman, with no need to be ashamed of the way you handle the word of Truth. Perhaps the first thought that grips the conscientious minister when he wakes on Monday morning is this: Sunday will soon be here. It will come whether I am prepared or unprepared. It will come whether I am energetic or lazy. When it comes scores, perhaps hundreds, of busy and hard pressed people are going to come to the house of God to worship, and to be helped or hindered in their worship by hearing me preach. For this reason I ought to have something to say that is vital and worthwhile. That this may be the case, I ought to study to show myself a sound workman without cause to feel ashamed.

Often enough the most earnest of us fail to measure up. We finish delivering our sermon with a sickening feeling that the hungry sheep have not been fed. If our failure has been due to the infirmities of the flesh, if we have failed after we have done our prayerful and earnest best, then there is some excuse. But, if we fail because we have taken it easy, or because we have presumed on our ability to prepare the sermon quickly, then we are without excuse. It is horrible to make a deliberate failure. This is the case whether the congregation to which we preach is made up of three people or of three thousand.

Yet how many of our failures are purely our own fault! For just as we sometimes seem to fail when we feel that we have a right to expect victory, even so we sometimes seem to win when we have every reason to expect defeat. For instance, this experience comes to almost every young preacher. At the hour for worship he enters his pulpit consciously unprepared. But a happy inspiration uplifts him and he wins through with flying colors. Some even tell him that the sermon
just preached was his very best. But such a victory is likely to prove far more harmful than the most humiliating of failures.

It is easy to see why this is true. On the next Monday morning when his good angel reminds him, "Sunday is coming again. You had better get busy"; the devil of presumption will say, "Never mind. You did not prepare last week and look what you did. Of course, you realize that preparation is necessary for your brethren, but you are different. They do not possess your gifts. They, poor dullards, must reap as they sow. But not you. With your abilities you can outwit the laws of nature and gather grapes from the thorns of idleness and figs from the thistles of laziness". But be not deceived. Other things being equal, you are going to win in proportion to your preparation. How, then, shall we prepare the sermon?

The first hurdle we have to take is the selection of a theme. That is not always easy. Sometimes we are helped by the needs of our local situation. Sometimes we are helped by some topic that is timely, if not timeless. Always we have the resources of New York and Nashville. But even then our choice is often difficult.

In fact, it is possible to spend so much time deciding on what to preach that by the time we have reached our decision, it is too late to prepare the sermon.

It seems a capricious thing that the landlord in the parable of The Laborers of the Vineyard paid the men who had worked but one hour as much as he paid those who had worked twelve. But we can understand the reasonableness, and especially the kindliness of his conduct when we realize that these men who had worked in the vineyard for only one hour had not been loafing the other eleven hours. They had been working just as hard as those who had borne the burden
and the heat of the day. They had spent themselves seeking for a job instead of working at one. Even so, many a minister has but one hour to put on his sermon because he has spent eleven hours seeking for his theme.

For ministers of certain denominations this problem is solved by their following the Christian year. Others solve it by selecting their subjects for a year ahead. Personally, I have never been able to do this. However, increasingly I have preached by series. Preaching by series has many advantages. First, it has the very decided advantage of enabling the minister to know his destination when he wakens on Monday morning. And then it is marvelous how what we see, what we experience, what we read, will thus contribute to the sermon we are preparing. In fact, there is almost nothing that the preacher knows that cannot be made to pay tribute to his preaching if he broods over his subject long enough. Blessed, therefore, is the minister who begins early to prepare his sermon.

Then, preaching by series will save the minister from riding a hobby. It will save him from preaching only on those themes that are congenial and easy, while neglecting other themes that his congregation need to have discussed. Some years ago when I set out to preach a series of sermons on the Ten Commandments, I discovered to my amazement that though I had been preaching for a quarter of a century, I had not preached on a single one of these commandments. I was also amazed at the richness of the material in these ten rules for living. They have no more been altered in the passing of the centuries than the law of gravity has been altered.

In the course of a series of sermons on the Lord's Prayer, I found most of the petitions very congenial, but there was one that gave me no end of trouble. I should never have preached on it if I
A WORKMAN WITHOUT SHAME

had not come to it in a series, and that was the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread". Yet, when I had prepared and preached the sermon, it was my conviction that it was the best of the series. I believe that this was also the conviction of my hearers. Preaching, therefore, by series has at best these two advantages: The saving of time that might otherwise be largely wasted in seeking a theme. It will also save the preacher from riding a hobby by compelling him to use more varied themes.

Now, in selecting such a think, generally speaking, that they ought not to be too long. To announce twenty subjects at once is rather to swamp the interest of the prospective hearer. A series of five to ten is better. These may be vastly varied. A series on certain types of Bible characters may be both vital and gripping. In the Bible we have a book that holds the mirror up to nature as no other book ever written. Here are men that if you prick them they will bleed. They are as vivid as your next door neighbor and sometimes far more interesting. Given a chance they will walk right into your pulpit and live and laugh and sing and sob with you. They will also preach for you, a kind of preaching that will be fresh and interesting because it comes right out of life. Then, too, such preaching will always be up to date because the heart of humanity is the same through the ages, ever pulsating "to the same great needs, the same great loves and lonings". Preaching, therefore, from Bible characters is at once gripping and helpful.

Then a series on the Books of the Bible will be found vital. I have given, at my mid-week services, what I called "Book Reviews of the Bible". Generally, to count a congregation is somewhat like weighing a fish, it reduces it to shamefully low terms. Yet I have seen by actual count nearly six hundred people present to hear such a review. It was my custom to begin with Genesis and undertake to review each book as if that book had just come from the press. It is
my conviction that a series of sermons on books of the Bible can be at once fascinating, interesting, instructive, and satisfying.

In selecting your themes let me urge you not to neglect the Old Testament. Naturally I am not claiming that the Old Testament is equal to the New; nor am I saying that I believe every word of it from cover to cover! If you take that position you are a far better believer than Jesus. Some of the Old Testament he rejected. Some of it he corrected. Some of it he used. Some of it he found the very bread of life to his soul. Some of it he found to be the sword of the Spirit with which he fought his battles against the tempter. As I read, therefore, what amazes me most is not the crudity of some of its stories, but the richness of the knowledge of God possessed by its choicest saints before Jesus had come to reveal Him.

Here, take, for instance, the Book of Psalms. This amazing hymn book, after all these years, is still the greatest book of devotional literature in the world. In it we find reflected almost every mood of the human soul. If you are lonely and sick for God you will find there somebody who can understand and share your loneliness. If you are rejoicing in the blessedness of His presence, you will find somebody who can shout and sing with you. Among its songs is one that after all the centuries is still the most popular song ever written. It has won its way into more hearts, it has put its arms around more grief-burdened shoulders than any other song in the Bible or out of it.

Some years ago I went to visit an old grandmother who was weeping "to where beyond these voices there is peace". When I arrived the daughter met me at the door and said: "We are glad you came, but Mother won't know you. She hasn't recognized any of us all day. But I'd be glad if you would go in and sit at her bedside a moment. I know she would desire it if she were conscious".

Therefore, I went in and took my place at the bedside and watch-
ed her as she swung like a pendulum between life and death. Then it came into my mind to make an experiment. So I put my lips close to her ear and read the song to which I refer, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want". And as I read those deathless words, the thin lips smiled a little, and the head nodded a wee bit. Thus when she could no longer recognize the voice of her own child, she could still recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd that came in the gloaming to gather his lamb to his bosom. So accurate a picture is this of our Lord that, if we may believe the words of St. John, Jesus himself virtually said, "I sat for that picture. I am the Good Shepherd who giveth his life for the sheep". Do not, therefore, throw away the wealth of preaching material in the Old Testament.

Now, whether I am preaching by series or not I always use a text. That is a great help both to the preacher and his hearer. If you do not believe a text why waste your time and that of your congregation by trying to make a sermon? What do you hope to gain by telling bewildered and perplexed people what you do not believe? Preaching your doubts is as futile as trying to make a unit out of ciphers. Add a column of ciphers as high as from here to Mars and you end with nothing. If you don't believe your text, drop it and find one that you do believe.

I suppose I began to use this method because it was in vogue when I entered the ministry. I have continued to use it through the years because of a very profound conviction that Bible-centered preaching is at once the most helpful and the least taxing. Of course there are excellent ministers who make scant use of the Bible. They first prepared the sermon, then find a text to fit it. This, in my opinion, is to preach the hard way. When the Egyptians were compelled to make so many brick with so little straw, they thought they were having a pretty hard time, but when Pharaoh lost his temper and compelled them to
A WORKMAN WITHOUT SHAME

make brick without straw, they found themselves in sore straits still.

Even so, the minister who prepares his sermon without the help of his own heart is in an even worse case than the one who makes bricks without straw. I am convinced, too, that he might have made better bricks if he had availed himself of the priceless material to be found in the Bible. It speaks of a right opportunity, it is speaking directly to all who breathe a universal language. I have heard some earnest and intelligent worshippers complain that their minister made too little use of the Bible, but never in all my life have I heard one single soul complain that his minister made too liberal use of the Scriptures.

Since, I invariably use a text, how do I go about finding one? There was a time when I said to myself, "Go to, now. I must preach next Sunday. Therefore, I must find a text". But so far as I knew I never once found a text when I was searching for one. I have never once found it as a by-product.

Through many years now it has been my custom to read devotionally each morning a lesson from the Old and from the New Testaments. In reading these lessons, I try to forget that I am a minister and to remember only that I am a needy human soul, dependent upon God for the water of life and for the bread of life. And as I thus read the Word for myself, when I come to a passage that speaks home to my own heart, then I take courage to believe that this same passage might speak helpfully to my people.

It is thus that I have found my text. This method has had for me at least two results. First, it has led me to preach on texts that I believe. (Secondly, too)

Of course, as many other young ministers, I became the fashion among certain ministers a little more than a generation that were fresher rather than the other. I enjoyed taking time to preach on queer texts. They delighted to take a text that was anemic and to thrill the congregation by giving it a blood transfusion.
A WORKMAN WITHOUT SHAME

They picked a dead text and showed the congregation how they could make it live. Such preaching may be ingenious, but it is not vastly helpful. Not even a magician can get a rabbit out of a thimble. If your text is a triviality you may depend upon it that your sermon will also be trivial. No man can speak grandly about something that goes not matter. Instead of doing this, go to the opposite extreme. Select great texts, helpful texts, strong, brawny, masculine texts. Personally, I like a text that I do not have to support, but that will support me. I like a text upon which I can lean all my weight with the certainty that it will not let me down, that I will not have to help but that will help me. I like a text that, if things get hard, I can flee to and find "as rivers of water in a dry place and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land". Therefore, select a great text, my young brethren. Preach from great texts. If you do that, your people will still have a strong word from God to take to their hearts and their homes.

II

Now, having decided upon a theme, the next step is the developing of that theme.

How are we to go about that? Speaking out of my own experience, when I have decided upon a text I read and reread the text and the context. This I do over and over again. As I thus, read, I seek to open every door of my mind and heart to both text and context. I listen not only to what the passage says directly, but to what it suggests. I also listen to every story of which it reminds me. As it is to do, not in full, but in the briefest possible form, suggests these things, I jot them down.

Having thus listened to the text and jotted down what it had to say, I then read everything that I could find on the subject. Those
He declared that the practice of reading sermons should, and danger and destroy every originality, even that to put this advice with a grain of salt, that grain was never greater with so barrack easy to see that if it is dangerous to read sermons, it is more so dangerous to hear them. This is the case because in hearing and not only the sermon but the person of the preacher was there. But in spite of a more wisely while recognizing the principle of listening to must on the sermon is of speaking it urgent the preacher to hear nobody, but himself.

We see know what it is possible for us as ministers to become that of others keep from the sermon of others, whether we own reach them or from them, or the greatest benefit in the matter of growing. Perhaps the greatest benefit in the matter of growing, may never understand another's minister. Can minister show task his to give him an opportunity, experience, or machinery in mind and experience such a sermon motion. Having been led such a sermon motion. Having been led such an entirely different line, may we ever think of another. But, direction from that of another, the new factor of that one, become, and
that with a just and upright purpose of that would not have been done without
the permission. We are, too, to say, that it is
possible to make large use of the permission
of another without endangering one's
own integrity. We may have to refrain from
learning as we know what we have
learned from another.

Then I think that my friend was wrong
in affirming that the reading of a sermon
in offering up that the reading of a sermon
would destroy my originality. Such an
assertion, in my opinion, is born of an
entirely wrong conception of what
originality is.
A WORKMAN WITHOUT SHAME

of you who keep a filing may be able after you have made your notes to find help there. I cannot speak with authority on that as I have never kept one. In later years I have found reading for one particular sermon less necessary. But I used to read everything on the subject that I could find.

This means that, in my earlier years, I read sermons. I still do. I read the sermons of any man who has a message for me. No man has a universal appeal. The fact that a certain able minister does not ring my bell does not mean that I am criticizing him. I am only criticizing myself. I used to wade through a book that everybody said was good whether it was doing anything for me or not. I have stopped wasting my time in that fashion. If an author does not say something to me in the first few chapters, then I am going to give him a rest.

This brings me to the question of reading sermons. When I was quite a young minister a fine old presiding elder spent a large part of one evening laboring with me to use good Methodist terminology. He warned me against reading another man's sermon. He said that if I did so I would surely lose my originality. I took his advice with a grain of salt because I had it in the back of my mind that if it were wrong to read another man's sermon, it would be still more wrong to hear that sermon. This would be the case because in hearing you would then have the sermon plus the personality of the preacher as well. How then can you write the sermon as if you had written it? When I think I was altogether wrong, as to the meaning of originality. What is it to be original? It is not to think of something that nobody else ever thought of, or to say something that nobody else ever said. If you say something next Sunday that was never said before by you, then the chances are a thousand to one that it will be wrong. Originality is not saying something new or strange. It is taking an old truth and, reminding it in your own will, and so hammering it out on the anvil of your own soul that it becomes new to you, and will be new to those who hear you. Such a preacher, 'is like a householder who brings out his treasure what is new and what is old.' His message...
A WORKMAN WITHOUT SHAME

Whoever said it, it is profoundly true. Reading and much reading is good, but the power of infinitely classifying and using the matter read is better. Whoever said it, it is profoundly true. To try to preach a sermon without organizing your material would be as futile as for a coach to expect to win a football game with a squad that had never been either organized or trained.

Yet we have all heard sermons like that. The language was beautiful, the tone of voice pleasing, the thoughts impressive. But when the preacher had concluded you realized that the sermon had failed to arrive. It had reached no definite goal. In fact, you could not but feel that the middle might have been at the beginning and the beginning might as well have been at the end. What was wrong? The sermon had good material, but the material was not organized. It is, therefore, a matter of fundamental importance in preaching that your sermon should have a simple, logical and concise outline. It ought to start, travel and arrive. Failing this, you may travel far and fast, but you will get nowhere.

I am aware that there are those who argue against laying down an outline. No less an authority than John Arthur Gossip does so. Naturally he uses an outline in arguing against an outline, but in my opinion, an outline is more than a luxury, it is an absolute necessity. It is possible to have a jelly fish without any skeleton, but you cannot have a man without a skeleton. No more can you have a sermon without a skeleton. Of course, it is not always necessary to tell...
A WORKMAN WITHOUT SHAME

how many parts there are to your sermon. It is not always necessary to let people see the wheels go round. But it is necessary that you have an outline. If you do not neither you nor your people can possibly remember what you say. We have all heard pleasing sermons that left us with no abiding treasure.

If, on the other hand, the minister has a simple concise outline, his people can get what he says and can remember at least a part of it. Not only so, but the minister himself can remember it. There are some who find it very difficult to speak without a manuscript or without extensive notes. Do not think that I am presuming to condemn all those who use manuscripts. There are such the latchets of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose. But, however good they are, this I make bold to say, that they would be better if they could dispense with their manuscripts. It is my conviction that any man who will make a simple, logical, concise outline can preach without either notes or manuscripts. This the case, such an outline fairly tugs at you and all but forces you to remember.

For instance, some years ago I undertook to preach on the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. It gave me no end of trouble. I must have thought I made at least fifty different outlines. By and by one came to me like an inspiration, the final outline. At least it was final for me, but it might not have been final for you at all. One of the thrills of creating a sermon is that feeling that comes when we know that we have arrived so far as we are personally concerned. Here was the outline to which I had come. "This parable," I said, is a three-fold contrast.

First, it is a contrast between the two men who went to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a Publican. This Pharisee was a pillar in church and state. Jesus had much to say in condemnation of the Pharisee, but he also had much to say for himself. He was endless leagues ahead of this Publican who came to share the privileges of the sanctuary on that
for a quarter of a century 2. The American
reminded a gripping summary, produced
by G. Campbell Morgan. The text, the common
people had them gladly. Then, History

Space that from "Earth Over Moon." Here in
the Outline
I. How was the Space of a Man Who Knew
"to speak with authority"
II. How was the Space of a Man Who Knew
there was a certain kind of man involved, the kind of
man
III. How was the Space of a Man Who Knew
 Everybody fell the tone in the Court
Of Eleven years ago
in Burma, to prepare a sermon on
the担当 and the Pithought. The
theme and the Pithought must have made at least fifty outline
notes have been made. On the theme, you
before; but after that was found four
before it hit after I had four four
before, it might not be final for you at
me. It might be final for you at
I. These were the words, the words, why, we must

The Contrast: Between the two men who went

One was on the left, the ladder in
2. The other went down the ladder.

A Contrast in Their Pithoughts
1. One prayed with a good eye on the world, and
a bad eye on the world of the eye
2. The other looked at God's eye

A Contrast in the Results
1. One went up on the ladder, hard and back
2. The other went down the ladder.
Here are three texts that belong to one:

1. I believed
2. I committed
3. I know

If it is a man of change, that man who is willing to do his work to certainty, is he not interested in me?
The other man was a Publican. He wore the livery of a foreign power. While the Pharisee was at the top of the ladder, he was at the bottom. While the Pharisee was at the front of the procession, this Publican was at the rear of the procession. He represented the worst in the society of his day. He had no good word to say for himself.

The second contrast was a contrast in their prayers. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men". You can see that he had a good eye on himself, a bad eye on his brother, and no eye on the Lord at all. The Publican, on the other hand, did not dare lift up so much as his eyes to Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, "God, be merciful unto me, a sinner".

The third contrast was the contrast in the results of their praying. What did his prayer do for the Pharisee? It did nothing for him. When the service was over he went away just as hard, cold, and lifeless as he had been before. No eager soul touched him on the elbow and asked him for the secret of his radiance and beauty. He had none. He went away just as he came.

The Publican, on the other hand, went away justified. That means that he went away pardoned, that he went away a new creation. Now, that three-fold contrast says, it seems to me, what the parable says. It is not only easy to remember it, it is next to impossible to forget.

There are those who, while believing in the necessity, argue against three divisions in sermons as something mechanical and as robbing them of variety. It is my conviction that the number of parts into which a sermon is divided has nothing to do with its variety. Few Preachers would be bold enough to assume two or more divisions.
A WORKMAN WITHOUT SHAME

You better not read him because you will have to say what he says.

He simply leaves nothing else to be said. Whether, therefore, your sermon has two, three or five parts has nothing to do with its variety.

Now, it is rather remarkable how many sermons have three natural divisions. When I was at school my old pastor used to begin almost every sermon by saying, "My text falls naturally into three parts." Of course, the number of parts didn't interest me much as a youngster. What did strike me was that they nearly always fell. But you are different from me and I am different from you. And yet we have the same number of parts, the same outline. We have the same number of bones.

The number of parts, therefore, that your sermon has is not the sign of divisions. Of course, the sermon has no thought to do with variety, but to be different from me and I am different from you. And yet we have the same number of parts, the same outline. We have the same number of bones.

There are many texts that almost outline themselves. Take this great work from Paul. "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." In this word, you see, Paul is pointing out the roadway to certainty. He is telling us how he came to be sure of God through Christ. How did he do it? He indicates three steps.

First, I believed. Second, I acted on my belief and committed myself to Jesus Christ. Third, as a result of that believing and committing, I came to know. That was the way Paul came to certainty. It is the way any man can come to certainty in any age. It is simply another way of saying what Jesus said, "If any man is willing to do his will, he shall know." If, therefore, you are planning to preach a good sermon, never give over till you make a satisfactory, or at least a partially satisfactory, outline.

Now, having made the outline, having done this most difficult and most important part of the sermon preparation, I come to the step which is filling in. Having made the outline, I proceed to preach the
There are at least three grave objections to this practice. First, it is expensive in time, and other people may come to the task with better and more efficient methods and discover that by following this plan, he is in danger of falling into the habit of reading or dreaming instead of speaking from his heart. Third, he is driven by the fear of forgetting to reason, because his thoughts become mere productions of his imagination, and latterly also mere productions of his mind. If I speak to a man with my entire being, I mean that the words he speaks are but the expression of my innermost thoughts and ideas. If I speak to another I would not be so free. I would not have the same freedom of speech.
A WORKMAN WITHOUT SHAME

The sermon to myself. I do not mean by this that I proclaim it aloud so that the neighbors will think I am crazy. I simply walk up and down my study and say it over to myself in an inaudible voice. Having done this, I say it over again, and I keep on till I can see every step of it. I can see down that sermon as one can look down a hallway.

Having preached the sermon to myself until I am thoroughly familiar with it, I write it. I used to peek my sermons out on an Oliver typewriter. In recent years I have dictated them to a stenographer. But I always prepare the sermon before I write it. There are other ministers far better than I who take the other way around. They write the sermon first. But I think, in preaching the sermon first and preaching it with a congregation in my eye, the sermon will sound spoken instead of sounding written. There is a difference between what is spoken and what is written. It is my conviction that a sermon ought to sound spoken when it is read.

Having thus prepared and written the sermon, I lay it aside. Sometimes I read it over before I preach it. Sometimes I do not.

This means that I never memorize a sermon. The man who makes a habit of memorizing his sermons will find himself hard pressed for time, stop sermons, and frequently rewrite them because he is in danger of falling into the habit of declaiming or reciting, rather than speaking, from his heart. I rather bear in mind my outline, then I speak the words given me. Having that type of memory, many of the things I say are just as I have written them. Yet there is no effort to remember. Notes in a manuscript would be of no greater help to me than an extra hand.

Now, young gentlemen, I am not commending this method to you at all. I am simply telling you what I have found helpful to myself across a ministry of forty years. But I do close with this urgent word—Do your utmost to let God see that you at least are a sound workman with no need to be ashamed of the way you handle the word of Truth.
THE CHURCH AND ITS MESSAGE

"From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation."

II Timothy 3:15

My subject is "The Church and its Message." To state it more plainly it is "The Church and its Book." I am to speak to you this morning on the Book that I love the best, the Bible. I do not speak as a professional, I speak as an amateur. An amateur is one who plays for the love of the game. I am speaking because of the love of the Book. I first heard its appealing message about the family altar in childhood's morning long ago. It has been my constant companion through the years. For half a life time I do not remember to have ever passed a day without refreshing my soul by a glance at its dearly loved pages.

I.

What is this book that we love?

1. It is not so much a single book as it is a library. It is composed of sixty six volumes. These books were written by some forty different authors. They were men of varied types of character. The message of everyone is colored by his own personality. They represent every stratum of society. Some were peasants, some were aristocrats. Some wrote in
fishermen's huts, some from the eminence of a throne. Each spoke his own message in his own way.

These men were not only separated from each other by differing social position, but by spaces of time. The books of the Bible cover at least fifteen centuries. These men living so far apart naturally did not see eye to eye on many questions. Each man spoke the language of his own day. Each man believed in the science of his day. Science then as now was constantly changing. These men wrote in various forms of literature. There was history, drama, epic and didactic poetry.

2. These books are born of human experience. They come up out of life. The Bible is the most human of books. It is also the most divine. Why did these men write? They had made discoveries that they wished to share with others. They had found their way to new continents of spiritual truth. They desired to give to others a map of their journey. We find one man declaring joyously, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." This man had discovered God. He had found God to be incredibly kind and tender. He could only think of Him in terms of fatherhood at its highest and best. Naturally he is eager to share that discovery with as many that he knew to be living as orphans.

When we turn to the Gospels we find writings that come out of experience. These men had met a man named Jesus. They had found him so immeasurably great and satisfying that they discovered in him all the values that they found in God. Therefore, as they write their gospels they are not theorizing they are telling good news. They are seeking to share with you what they have found. "That which we have seen and heard, that which our hands have handled is the Word of Life." Their books are born of experience.

Again when we turn to the writings of Paul, that great intellect who dug the channels in which the theological thought of the centuries has flowed,
what do we find? How did Paul get his theology? It came out of experience. He is simply trying to tell us of the amazing transformation that took place in his own life when he met Jesus on the way from Jerusalem to Damascus. He is telling us that that same Christ can transform ourselves. Confronting broken and weakened humanity he shouts with glad assurance,—"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation." The Bible is a book of experience. It tells us of God's endless quest for man. It tells us how men have quested for Him and have been found of Him.

3. But how did these sixty six books come to be bound in a single volume? It is perfectly safe to say that not one of all these writers ever dreamed that he was writing a book that would be put in the Bible. How did his volume arrive? It was not because of any claim that it made to infalibility or to inspiration. We believe in the inspiration of the Bible, but we do not believe that every book of the Bible is equally inspired. These writers tuned in on God, but some had better receiving sets than others. If you claim all the Bible is equally inspired then you flatly contradict Jesus, he did not think so. Some of the Old Testament he repudiated, some he corrected, some he found to be the very Bread of Life.

How then, I repeat, did these books get together? They were chosen because they had been found of value by those who had read them. Men believed they were inspired because they themselves drew inspiration from their reading. That is the case today. Whatever may be your theory about the Bible I defy you to expose your soul to it day by day without being changed. You will find new light breaking in, you will discover new sources of courage and hope and power. These volumes have been brought together and preserved because they have been found peculiarly helpful. They are like certain choice remedies in the drug store, they are there because men have been helped by them.
How then ought we to treat this supreme Book of mankind?

1. We ought to treat it with great reverence. Jesus had a profound reverence for the Word of God. But reverence is not enough. It is not enough even to believe in the Bible. There are those who would be outraged were I in any fashion to discredit this precious book. They would tell you hotly that they believe every word of it from cover to cover. But having confessed their faith they lay it gently upon the center table and allow the dust of neglect to accumulate upon it. Reverence and respect are good, faith in its truth is also good, but that is not enough. If I am suffering with appendicitis it is not enough for me to believe in the ethics of an operation. I must actually undergo that operation if the best results are to be obtained.

No more is it enough to read books about the Bible. Some of these may be very helpful. It is very helpful to know everything possible about food. We are far wiser in those matters than our fathers. Dietitians have come forward to tell us all there is to know about vitamins and calories. This is all to the good. But knowledge about food is not enough. However much we know, unless we actually eat we are going to starve to death. However learned we are about matters relating to water we must actually drink or we shall die.

Many of us do not think of the Bible as we once did. Some feel that it has been discredited and displaced by science. Finding that the book of Genesis, for instance, does not agree with the declarations of modern science they dispose not only of Genesis, but the whole Book. Nothing could be more silly. The writers of the Bible accepted the science of their day. That science changed as the science of our day will change. They thought the world was flat. They thought the sun moved around the world instead of the world around the sun. But the writers of the Bible were not concerned about these facts.
"The Lord is my Shepherd," is true whether the earth is round or flat.

What, I repeat, are we to do with the Bible? I am not asking that you approach it with a certain theory, I am only asking that you read it. The Bible can always take care of itself. It has only one deadly foe, that is neglect. It can survive anything but that. That is the deadly danger that threatens it today. We still reverence it, we still believe it, but too few of us read it. So prevalent is this neglect that one man has written a book about it under this title, "The Book that Nobody Knows."

Of course, that title is exaggerated and yet it has more truth than we should like to acknowledge. When we oldsters were boys and girls we heard the Bible about the family altar. When we went to Sunday school, these Sunday schools, in spite of all their faults had one great merit—their textbook was the Bible. Now, I am not claiming that the Bible contains all the truth there is, but I do say that since many boys and girls have but one chance to know anything about the Bible, and that is in a lesson that lasts thirty minutes each Sunday morning, we ought to specialize on this Book. It is at once the most timeless, the most rewarding, and the most interesting. There are no stories so abidingly gripping as the stories of the Bible.

But many of us do not read the Bible. Hence the ignorance of the average man regarding the Bible would be downright laughable were it not so tragic. Now and then I listen to "Information Please." The vast amount of information that has been accumulated by those men who have a part in this program has amazed me. But there is one type of question that they nearly always fumble, that is the Bible questions. There was a time when the Bible was the very leaven of our civilization. But it has become decreasingly so today. We are losing the Bible out of our lives through the tragedy of neglect.

III.
Why ought we to read this old book? I am going to give just three reasons, there are many.

1. We ought to read it because it is great literature. There is absolutely no literature equal to it that is bound in one volume. If you love biography, you will find it here at its best. When we write the lives of our heroes we use what is best about them and keep what is worst about them in the background. The Bible tells both the best and the worst. We see these men as they really are. We watch them in their hours of temptation and struggle. We see them as with one hand they clutch the mud and as with the other they reach the stars. If you want great biography, read the Bible.

If you want great poetry you can find it here. Here every mood of the soul is reflected. If your heart is broken you will find one here who can share your heartache. If you are filled with joy and your soul is bursting with song, you can find one here who can share your song with you. If you have lost your way, if you are desperate as a frightened child who has lost its mother, here is one who is in your same plight. If your feet have found the path that leads to peace you will find that you are not walking that path alone. Here are songs that breath battle into us and send us out to fight where the victor is to the brave. Here are songs that touch our hearts with healing and fall like soothing lotion upon eyes that are smarting and blinded by tears.

Then if you want great oratory you will find it here. No finer oration can be found in the literature of the world than some of these in this amazing book. Take the oration of Paul before Felix. In it we still hear the thunders of a great soul telling of a great experience. It still has a strange power to lead us into the holy place where we stand face to face with God. If you love
great literature read the Bible.

2. Every man ought to read the Bible because it has been the inspiration of the best in our modern literature. In speaking of modern literature I do not mean that which has been written in the last fifteen or twenty years. I doubt if during these years we have produced any great literature. I am speaking of the great masters of English prose and poetry. One could make a small Bible of the gleanings of Ruskin and Carlyle, Tennyson and Browning, Shakespeare and Milton. They came to this sparkling spring with their choicest water. They dug in this inexhaustible mine for the most brilliant jewel. They wrote great literature partly because their minds were saturated by the great literature of the Bible. We cannot understand them unless we know something of their source book.

3. But the supreme reason for our reading the Bible is that it is the Book of the heart. It is God's message to the human soul. If you read it with an open mind it will make you wise about a great many things. But it will certainly make you wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus. That is the supreme purpose of the Book. It is this high purpose that binds its varied volumes into a single whole. When you open it, it seems anything but a whole. It seems to deal with almost every matter under the sun. But it is above all else a book of religion.

Open it, as another has said, and you have plunged at once into an ocean of detail. Almost everything is there. There is the love affair between a man and a maiden, with their marriage and home-building. There are the rivalries between neighboring tribes enlivened by their rage one upon the other. There are the orations of the statesman as they warn their people against impending disaster, or comfort them in their hours of humiliation or overthrow. There is the career of a successful man and the unmerited suffering of a martyr. There is a radiant record of deeds of chivalry and the black stories
of the acts of treachery. There is the devotion of a mother to her child, and the jealousy of two women fighting for the same man's love. There is the nomad of the desert and the dwellers in the city, the soldier and the traitor, the ploughman and the vine dressers. There are patriarchs going forth driving huge herd with them, and the peasant going forth with nothing in his hand. There is the tax collector at the seat of custom, and the priest offering sacrifice in the holy place. All of these pass the stage in unarranged naturalness. Nothing could be more artless, nothing more fascinating. Yet, as you watch the procession you get a glimpse of the face of God. You come to feel how he thinks about man and man's sin and suffering and salvation. As you watch you pass from the low lands of the Old Testament to the high table lands of the New, and realize that he in that time spake to us through his prophets has in these last days spoken to us through his Son.

IV.

Now because the Bible does this, it does for the reader what no other book has done or can do.

1. It shows us what is wrong with us. It puts its finger on the sore spot in our individual, social, and national life. It tells man plainly of his sin.

2. It tells man of the consequence of his sin. It says, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." What this book asserts of the individual it asserts also of the nations. It was written among international upheavals such as are going on today. Here great nations pass across the stage; Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Egypt, Macedonia, Rome. They were world empires. They lived by the sword. They sinned as the nations are sinning today, and they dyed as the nations today are dying.

3. Not only does it show man's sin and its direful consequences, it
shows the remedy. It is a saving book. One day a man slipped a New Testament through the prison bars to Jerry McCauley. This Jerry McCauley was the meanest river thief that ever vexed the police force of New York. But the reading of that Book lead to his transformation. Its reading has lead to the remaking of countless millions. There is no other book that has wrought such mighty changes. Wherever it has gone the heart has become more tender, the light has sprung up. It has breathed like a Gulf stream upon a wintry world and set the fields of the heart to flowering.

4. Finally, it is a hopeful book. It records the saddest tragedies of human history, yet it believes in the final triumph of the righteous. It believes in a coming Kingdom of God in this present world. In spite of all the hell and hate, its writers have looked forward to a good day when the lion and the lamb should lie down together. They have looked forward to a new world where men would beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruninghooks and learn war no more.

Then it has a bracing word to say in the face of those sorrows that break our hearts. If you are having to go where men must go on living when they feel there is nothing for which to live, here is a Book to take with you. It is a source of unfailing strength. A great saint speaking out of his own experience declared that those who feed upon it should be like trees planted by the rivers of water. They should be God's evergreens. They should never shed their leaves in the life that now is.

Then when the end comes and we push our tired feet into the shadows it has a word to say that no other book can speak. It sings to us the song of the Good Shepherd. It puts sheltering arms about us like the arms of a strong and tender father and bids us be of good cheer. "Let not your heart be troubled," it says, "Ye believe in God believe also in me. In my father's house there are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you." Here is a timely
book, it is also timeless. It is as inexhaustible as the resources of God. It holds out the promise of the life that now is as well as the life that is to come. It is one of the supreme gifts of the Church.

Holy Bible, book divine

Precious treasure, thou art mine."
"He that made them in the beginning, made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt in thy grandmother Lois and in thy mother Eunice, and which I am persuaded is in thee also. "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." In talking to you about the family, I am talking to you about a subject in which we are all interested. We are vitally interested because we all belong to some family. We are vitally interested because the family life conditions all other life. We are vitally interested because the family is the little fountain stream out of which all the streams which make up the great Mississippi of our national life. If the streams are clear and pure, then the great Mississippi will be clear and pure. If the streams are brackish and bitter, then that great river will be brackish and bitter. It is only a truism to say that the home will be either the making or the wrecking of the nation. If there is a better America in the tomorrow it will be because we have a better family life. As you know there is an army on the march in America that is going to take over every business house, every bank, every store, every school, every college, every university, every law office, and every home, and this army will be made up of the boys and girls who are in our homes today. If there is any hope in the tomorrow, it is because we gave the world better children. How can we make our families contribute the larger happiness to themselves and the largest usefulness to society in general? I think this is one of the fundamental principles on which we can all agree — it is this — That if the home is to make the contribution that it ought to make, some have some degree of permanency about it.
That is, it is perfectly natural to see that when father and mother and children are all within the walls of the home, the children have a better chance than when the home is shattered and broken.

That is just plain common sense. When we look about for the best citizens and the most useful men and women, they did not come as a rule out of shattered families and broken homes. I shall never forget how the first time years ago, I was invited to speak at a large reformatory in Texas. I never knew anybody to be reformed by a reformatory. Generally speaking, a reformatory is high school from which the students graduate into the university of the penitentiary. But I was invited to speak to this crowd in the reformatory, a great crowd. I confess to you that I went with fear and trembling. I said what in the world can I say to a bunch of nitwits and a bunch of morons like that? But would you believe it, It has been my privilege to speak to all sorts of audiences, in universities up and down but far and ahead the quickest audience to which I have ever spoken in all my life, is the reformatory audience. A joke that you would barely see and might have to explain it to you when got through, this crowd had laughed me down before I got half through telling it. Why? They were sharp; they were keen. They were no nit wits. They were not there because they were nit wits, because they were stupid and dull, no, they were there because they were shattered fragments of broken homes, fathers and mothers, having shared with God in their creation, have gone and left them, especially fathers and sometimes think that of all the corruptible scoundrels is the man that helps to create a child only to leave him alone. Now then, if the home is to be permanent, it must have a permanent foundation. What is the foundation of the home?

The foundation of the home is the marriage. If the marriage is a thing founded on the rock, of God, then the home will be steady and when the rains descend and the
floods come and the winds blow and beat upon that house, it will stand. But if the marriage tie is a thing of sand, then when the storms descend and the winds blow and beat upon that house, it will go down and complete will be the wreck of it. Now how can we make our marriage relationship permanent? I am going to refer you again to the words of Jesus, what Jesus said about marriage. And mark you, my Christian friends, what Jesus said about marriage was not a bunch of rules. Jesus never passed a rule in his life. There is a whole lot of difference between a rule and a principle. A rule may be timely but it is seldom timeless. It will be good on one occasion but it will not be good for another century as another century. A principle is equally at home in one century as another century. What Jesus said about marriage would have been just as true if he never had said it, as it is after He said it because it is true in the very nature of things. For instance, when I bought my last car, a little than quarter of a century ago, I discovered among other things that came with it, a nice little booklet that told me how to care for that car. It was a kind of automobile bible. When I took that little bible and looked it over, it made me indignant. I said "I paid my good money for this car and here the maker of the car is trying to dictate to me how I am to use it." I tore it up and said "I'll have nothing of it" and just threw it down. I said "I'll grease it when I get ready and oil it when I get ready. I'll give it gasoline when I get ready and it is nobody's business but mine." Of course I can treat my car any way I want to and the owner won't have a word to say about it. He won't have me locked up but I won't get as good use out of it as if I would do what the man who made the car and who knows about it, tells me to. That is the way with Jesus. He says "Here is the way marriage was made to work. Now there was a time when the multiplication table was not written, not one single bit of it. But after while it was written much to the vexation of our boys and girls."
It was written. There is no use in quarreling with our ancestors for not having made twice two five. It couldn't have been written any different from the way in which it was. It is just that way. And so Jesus made certain assertions about marriage, true to the nature of things. Firstly He said that marriage is a Divine institution. That does not mean as we sometimes say that marriages are made in Heaven. I've seen quite a few that I thought were made in the other place. But it does mean that marriage is God's plan for the propagation of the race; that He said that children will have a better chance fenced in by a mother and father who shared in their creation, than they will in any other way in the world, and so marriage is a Divine institution. It is God's way of carrying on His world.

The second thing He said is that the marriage relationship is the most intimate and binding of all human relationships, that it takes precedence over the relationship between parent and child and no other Book in the world makes so much of the relationship between parent and child, as does the Bible. You know that. "Children, obey your parents". "This is the first commandment with promise that it may be well with thee." Why was that? Does the Lord promise to give you some fine barns if you obey your parents. Oh no, it is not on that basis at all. The commandment was written on the assumption - I know it is silly - very silly it sounds to some of our youth- it was written on the bold assumption that our fathers and mothers, already having lived a good many years know more than we, having lived only a few years. Of course they do not think it is true oftentimes. Sometimes it isn't, but it is written on that assumption and so the relationship was to be very close. "The eye that mocketh at his father and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out and the young eagles shall eat it." (Prov. 30:17)
And you know what Jesus said to those folks who would not support their fathers and mothers and said "All of my money is dedicated to God. He said - Oh no, that won't work." Now the great difference between the east and the west, the occident and the orient is this, that the orient has been held back through the centuries because it put the emphasis on the duties of father and mother, instead of in the other direction. An oriental was asked if a boat had capsized out yonder on the Lake and your father and your wife were in it, which would you save and every oriental would say "Why, I'd save my father" but in saving his father, he would be saving yesterday, whereas in saving his wife, he saves tomorrow and the New Testament always puts the emphasis on tomorrow. Now this relationship between husband and wife is the most binding in the world, that is nobody is to come between the husband and his wife and nobody is to come between the wife and the husband. You don't have to work it that way, but if you do not work it that way, you have got a hell. "Mother" you know is about the most beautiful word in the language, and yet one of the ugliest words in the language is "mother-in-law", not because our mothers-in-law are bad, but enough of them have done such things as to ruin the reputations of the good ones. And why have they done it? Not because they are bad, but usually for this reason, because there are so many mothers who can't stand to have anybody to take first place in the heart of their son or daughter, and after they are married, they still want to be first, oftentimes the undoing of what might have been a beautiful marriage, so that you can sympathize with the chap who said to a fellow sufferer who was also married into the same family "Mother if lying at the door of death, come and help me pull her through." You remember also that chap who took his Boston terrier down to the veterinarian and said "I want you to cut off his tail, just even with his body."
The veterinarian said "My he's only got about an inch and a half of tail now." Yes, "the man said "Cut it off" close to his body. My mother-in-law is coming to see me and I don't want anything or anybody to show the least degree of friendliness." One or two of you didn't get that, but just play like you're in the reformatory. Husband and wife have a compact with each other.

Third: Husband and wife are to be one. They twain shall be one flesh.

That means more than a figure of speech. If you don't believe it, see two old bodies who have lived together for fifty or sixty years and have grown into each other and when something happens, Mary said "I knew exactly what John was thinking" and John said "I knew just exactly what Mary was thinking." and by and by when Mary died, then John died. They were so bound to each other like Siamese twins, that after the one goes, then the other goes out into the great Beyond with them. They are one in their mutual self-giving, one in their devotion to each other. Then I think, they are to be one in their material interests. I could never understand where husbands and wives, specially where they have married young can't be partners in their business, assuming that your wife is a sensible woman. Some husbands who make beggars out of their wives. Your wife has to go and plead and beg you for every bit of money that she gets. It is humiliating.

On the streets of Waverly, Tennessee where I spend the summer, I once walked up to a husband when he was talking to a man, and asked him for a dime. When he gave her the dime, he was a very generous man, she turned and went away. The other man, not knowing who he was, he said "These beggars are terribly annoying, aren't they?" I take it, that of every single dollar I make, God owns half of it. (She usually gets more) They are to be one in their devotion to God. What a tragedy it is to go hand in hand in all these external things and then be unable to pray together. Oh, I know that saying "She is the praying member and I'm the paying member."
But no man has the right to place the moral and spiritual responsibility of the home over on the shoulders of his wife. It is the rarest thing on the face of the earth to see a man continue his devotion to God when his wife does not back him up. But tens of thousands of women will go into the church and carry every chick and child with them, but whose husbands do not back them up. You are a cheater at home, if you don't help them.

Last of all, marriage is for life. It doesn't mean that you are to be married. I see Rody can say Amen to that! When you are married, you are not married until you come across some cause for incompatibility.

Cylinder 2

It is to be for life. That there is no right to divorce with the privilege of remarriage of both parties except that written in terms of green grass contracting on the grave of one of the contracting parties. You say, this is a hard truth. I will ask you just this - That is the way marriage was made to work. If marriage according to Madam Star or according to Hollywood, as the young woman flits from one husband to the other and the husband goes from one wife to another, like the bird in the branches of the tree. Yet at the close of the day when the sundown comes, if they have received a larger happiness for themselves and given to the world finer sons and daughters than the old fashioned couple who celebrated their golden wedding, then I will say that Jesus made a mistake, but if you will show me to the contrary, I will say that He was right. I was called out in my own congregation some time ago to perform a wedding.
And when I got out there, the wedding ceremony that I was to perform, was not for two people in the springtime of life but for an old couple who were celebrating their golden wedding. They had lived together for 50 beautiful years and as I was ready to say the words once more, I looked into their radiant faces, though I knew the last petal of the rose had dropped from her cheek and the last feather of the raven's wing had gone from her hair and he had given his strength to sons and daughters who had gone far afar to establish homes of their own, but there was more of heaven in those sweet old faces after these 50 years, and they had found more of the richness and joy of life, than all the promiscuous marrying people have found in a lifetime. It works that way.

Marriage must not only have some permancy about it, but it must have some sort of vital religion. We need in the first result of place to make it permanent. Here is the greatest study in our social problems today, found after long investigation that people who are vitally Christian - I don't mean nominally so, have 25 time as good chance to make a success of life, as people who are not Christians. Then the home ought to be religious because the child needs religion. A child needs religion just as much as it needs milk and bread and vitamins. I don't know how our grandfathers got along without vitamins! You say, the child needs religion. ? Yes, God has not given us the spirit of fear but of sound mind power and of love and of a - a serenity of mind. Everybody needs that! Old folks and young folks need it just as much. How many thousands of young people today, young married people, brought up in homes nominally Christian but who have ceased to attend church, have come to thus conviction more and more and they have said it over and over again "I find largely of that though I have broken with religion myself, that there is a stability and a purpose correct in my life that my children do not have and I want them to have it and for this reason, I am coming back to religion.
One of the leading psychologists in the county today said this, after long investigation that the children who go to Sunday School have a higher personality rating than the children who do not go to Sunday School. And not only so, but the children who do not go to Sunday School and whose parents do not go to Sunday School - that the children of parents who attend church, have a higher personality rating than the children of parents who do not attend church. Then the FBI comes along to say that modern delinquency has come for one big reason and that is delinquent parents. Let me say this, even here. I think mothers who have a family of children and fathers who have a family of children and run off deliberately to do some patriotic work are losing their biggest chance in the home. Let me say to you mothers, the best contribution you can make to America is being true to the child which God put into your own hands. I saw a cartoon the other day that reminds me of someone that I know. There is an old rooster standing up by his nest. The eggs were just hatching, some of the chicks were half out and the other eggs were picked. Now I don't know if you know what a picked egg is or not. Some of you I know, are not experienced. Well, if you don't know, better look it up in the encyclopedia. And there he stood looking at that nest with the little chicks just hatching and a crane looked on and looked at him and he seemed at the nest and the big tears were just rolling down the rooster's face and he said "Where is your wife?" He said, as he choked back the sobs, "She's out delivering a lecture on how to hatch eggs." Amen! The child needs religion. A child is not so much born as he is made. Was ever a child born a crook, a drunkard or a libertine? No.- Children are not so much born as made. Who said that? First of all, the Bible says it "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." It did not say simply "Try to train up a child in the way it should go." I know parents do make a mistake sometime in what it does mean.
It does mean that if you get hold of a child in childhood it will never get away from you. But the god of many a modern man also says - that is modern science says it, if there is anything of which modern science is sure today, it is this, that children are not so much born as made. They have demonstrated it over and over again and they tell us, after experimenting, that it is just as easy to train a child to love its mate and fear a rabbit as is to love a rabbit and fear its mate. It is all a matter of training. Sometimes I've gone to speak at youth programs and they have this subject "What our Youth is thinking". Our youth is thinking just exactly what they are taught to think and what they think in one place is not the same thing that they think in another place. Education is not a revolutionist or trail blazer. If youth isn't thinking what he has been taught to think, then education in itself would be meaningless. As soon as a child is trained, the law of sowing and reaping is evident. The Bible says it, the scientist says it, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Of course, we know that what a man sows in his field, that he reaps. You don't have to sow wheat and then stand in fear and trembling all the summer season wondering what you will reap. What you sow in your garden, you will reap. What you sow in your life, you reap. Wouldn't it be a strange world if God had so fixed it that He could determine the quality of harvest.

Then experience says it. You can change the moral and spiritual character of any generation by giving a different kind of training. "What manner of child shall this be?" said an ancient group as they clustered about the cradle. Now when the Jew stands about that cradle, he answers emphatically, This child is going to be a Jew." and he is generally always right. When a Catholic stands by that cradle, and they say "What manner of child shall this be?" Then comes the answer "He is going to be a Catholic and he is almost always right."
But when the Protestant stands at the cradle and says "What manner of child shall this be?" We often think "Well, the Lord only knows and I've got to go to the movies anyway." Oh, you say "why is that children—preachers children are just about the worst children in the world?"

Did you ever hear that? Well it is not so. It is not only not so but 800% more preachers children make good than any other children. There is only one class that beats them and that is the sons and daughters of missionaries and they are preachers themselves. If your child needs religion, who is going to give it to him? Your child needs religious training and half, I think more than half of the children in America today are receiving no more religious training than if they had been born in the heart of Africa two hundred years ago. If your children are to be Christian and if they are to receive Christian training, who is going to give it to them? Your children need their chance. You know there are thousands of parents who say "I'm not going to influence my child one way or the other." We still have that antiquated chap who says "One reason why I do not go to church is because I had too much church when I was a child." I've heard chapters of the Bible, an yet he could not quote you "Jesus wept," to save his life. Every man out in the world today who is staying away from church because he had to go as a boy, every one whom you can show me like that, I can show you 100,000 who are not going to church because they did not have to go when they were children. I was in a home the other day and I said to the mother in talking to her about her responsibility to her children, that she ought to join the church, she said "I'm not going to join any church, I'm not going to be a Christian just now. I'm going to wait and see what church my children want to join." I said to her, do you say I'm not going to feed my child, until it can feed itself, and decides what it wants to eat? Let me tell you this, if you don't influence
your child definitely in favor of religion, the world and the flesh and the devil and you will bar him very definitely against religion and oh how easy it is to do that. Some Sunday morning you wake up and it is raining- and you are so afraid of rain and you rise and smilingly say "Thank the Lord, we don't have to go out today. We will all stay in and keep the children dry." You know, if you got wet going to church there wouldn't be a bit of use in the world of using sulfa drugs on you, you would surely die, and so you stay in, very dry and say "I could not go out in a down pour like this." But Monday morning, it was coming down pitchforks, and then what? "Get up, every single one of you and go about your duties just as usual and every chick and child go on to school. I wish I could say it in the most emphatic language on the face of the earth. You can be religious all right but never let it interfere with anything you want to do. Shunt it over on the side line and never get your feet wet on account of religion'. Who is going to give it to your children? You are, if they ever get it. I want to close with just this word "You radio friends want to close with just this word "You radio friend and you here today, a child can be a Christian. Jesus made him the model Christian. He said "Unless ye be converted and become as little children, yet cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Not only can a child be a Christian but can become a Christian easier when he is a child than at any other time, because it is easier to be childlike when you are a child than at any other time of life. A child can become a Christian easier than anybody else because he has the characteristics that makes a Christian God has put them there. Take faith for instance. It is harder for an older person to believe but a child will believe anything you tell him, till by deceiving him, you make him believe otherwise. For instance if you go home from this service and say to your boy, "Son I climbed up last night and bit a piece out of the face of the moon."
He won't say "How did you get there?" but "Daddy, how did it taste?"

Well of course, sometimes we begin very early by depriving them of something they want, sometimes something that they need. I saw a mother some time ago and she said "Don't you do that again! Don't you do that again! If you do that again, I'll skin you alive." You know that occurred! But she does it again and come up to receive the same rebuke.

The child is naturally loyal to what it loves. I was going up the street of a certain city the other day and I say a little girl with her face pressed up against a brick wall and she was sobbing as if her heart would break.

Of course, I knew nothing about her, but I could not pass her by and I stopped and said "What's the matter?" She looked up into my face and said "I've lost my daddy." "Well, I said, "I'll help you find him". And so I took the little girl's hand in mine and we went up this way and down this way and on my way back, she ran out into the street. I stood still for a moment and then hurried on to find her. There she was standing by a liquor store with her arms around a man who had come out. He was about half drunk. Of course, we have changed our opinions greatly on liquor during the last 15 years and we have undergone a revolution. Liquor used to be an outlaw but it has become "respectable" now.
The best pianist and the best preachers those who begin young. I was preaching in old St. James Church in Montreal some time ago, where the used to be pastor and /times came and we didn’t have any Saturday and Saturday morning there was some skiing going on out at Mount Royal and I wonder if you wouldn’t like to see them December skiing and I never had seen them ski and so I said, “I’ll be glad to go”. Oh, it was terribly cold, I put on all the clothes I had and all he had and went out to see the skiing. They were going to build a run way on top of the mountain and then they came down, it looked to me a hundred miles an hour and then leap off into space and I sat down and watched them straight for a while and then he came up to me with perfect face, and he said, “Doctor, we are an extra pair of skis going along an extra /skiing, we thought maybe you might want to ski”, and I said, “What?” I said, “Man I got a family to support and I might of enjoyed skiing 75 years ago, but it’s too late now”. If your child doesn’t become a christian as a child, chances are, he never will. Religion can be taught. How do you expect him to know his letters, some body taught him his multiplications tables, he had to be taught. You know more can reject religion out of a child then you can mathematics. Not only can religion be taught but most important part of it all, it can be taught. I can confess that I have loved the King James Version of the Bible, I learned to quote it not by reading it but by hearing my father read it around the family alter long years ago.

And after I had gone away to college and every debating team quoted and my one talent in educationthat I remember the scripture on all occasions and I remember and he had a friend with him and he said, “Here is Chappell, Give him a passage of scripture this morning” and I said, “I will keep my mouth to the bottle while the wicked are before me”, and I learned to love English because I caught it from him. Religion can be taught. It can be made very ugly or it can be made the most unspeakably beautiful subject in the world. When I was a lad of ten, I was very ill with pneumonia and the old family physician came to my father and mother and said, “He won’t live till morning”, and my father instead of turning
the task over to mother, he was all granite on the outside but he was soft on the inside. He turned to his ten year old boy and I was quite young to face but he put one hand on one side my pillow and the other on the other and then very cheerfully very wistfully leaned over me, and said, "Son, the doctor tells us you are going to meet Jesus before morning. You are not afraid are you?" "Honestly and truly, I'm not afraid". Why was I not afraid? I was not afraid because he was not afraid. He made me feel that Jesus was so close that it would be like being lifted in his arms and carried into the next room, put into yet stronger arms, though more than forty years now, he slept at the foot of the hill beneath the morning pine tree. His hand is on my head and heart to this day.

Oh, my christian friend, in these days when the current flows so swiftly about the feet of our boys and girls, if we are going to save them, we must build homes. God bless you.
THE FAMILY

"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Junia— from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." II Timothy 1:5 and 3:15.

This morning we are to study the oldest and most important institution in the world—the family. It is a matter of universal interest because all of us belong to some family. It is a matter of universal interest because what the family is in the moral and religious coloring determines the moral and religious coloring of our nation. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the home is the fountain source of all else. Our homes are the springs from which flow the very streams that make up the Mississippi of our national life. If the streams are clear and pure, the river will be clear and pure but if the streams are blackish and muddy so will the river be. Our nation will be just as good or just as bad as our home life makes it.

Now since all for which we can hope in the world of tomorrow depends upon what we do in the homes of today, how shall we as Christian people set about to building of that kind of family life which will make the best contribution both to the present and to the future? The kind of homes we build is not a mere matter of chance. It is a matter of choice. It ought to be a matter of careful and conscientious choice. What kind of home and family life then will find the best in today and give the best to tomorrow? I am going to make two or three suggestions on which I think we can all agree.

I

First, if our homes and families are to make their best possible contribution
to today and tomorrow, they must have a certain permanence about them. Our best citizens, generally speaking, are not made up of shadowy fragments of broken homes. Homes that go to pieces often leave their deep marks of tragedy upon the husband and wife. Their failure to make a success of their marriage is no trifle. It often means that the deepest and sweetest secrets of human blessedness has half whispered itself to them and then forever passed them by. But if it hurts the father and mother, generally speaking, it hurts the children far more.

The home, therefore, that finds the best and gives the best must have some permanence about it. To do this it must be built on a solid foundation. The foundation of the home is the marriage tie. If the marriage tie is weak, the home built upon it is weak. If it is a thing of sand, when the winds blow and the rains descend and the floods come and beat upon that house of marriage it will fall and complete will be the wreck of it.

How then shall we give a greater permanence to the marriage tie? I think it will be well to clarify our thinking by referring once more to the teaching of Jesus on this important matter. Jesus lived in a day when His own people taught the theory of marriage that flatly contradicted the mind of God. It was Jesus' purpose to state how marriage was meant to work. He did not make the laws governing marriage. He simply enunciated those laws that existed in the very nature of things. For instance the law of gravity was in vogue long before Newton saw the apple fall. The multiplication table was true long before primitive men discovered its truth and wrote it down. The cave man did not know the multiplication table but when he developed sufficiently to discover it and write it down, he is not to blame for having written it as he did. He could not have made twice two seven however much he might have desired to do so. So the laws of life as they exist in the very nature of things were not made by the writers of the Bible, they were discovered by them.

Mrs. Chappell is learning to use the typewriter. She has the advantage of a borrowed machine. In looking over this machine this week, I noticed that with
had come a little book, a kind of typewriter Bible that told how to use and care for this machine in order to get the best results from it. Now the owner of that machine might have resented that book and said, "I paid my money for this machine and the maker of it has no right to interfere. I will use it just as I please." But the maker was not trying to interfere. He was simply setting up a guide post and saying, "If you take this road, you will reach the goal of greatest usefulness and effectiveness.

In the same way Jesus gave certain guide posts toward successful marriage. He tells us how marriage was meant to work. He makes four assertions about it. First, He declares that marriage is a divine institution. By this He does not mean that all marriages were made in Heaven. Some of them were made elsewhere. But He does mean that marriage and home-life is God's method of propagating the race. He knew that in the nature of things children in the home of parents that had shared with God in their creation would stand a better chance than children born of promiscuous parents. That is just common sense.

Second, marriage is to take precedence over all other human relations. The relationship between parent and child is very binding. The Bible emphasizes the necessity of the parent and of the child to the parent over and over again, but there is a relationship more binding still. That is the relationship between husband and wife. To look after one's parents is to look after yesterday. To be loyal to husband or wife is to safeguard tomorrow. This was put first because it is first.

Here are the words of Jesus, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother and be joined unto his wife." No individual however important is to come before the husband in the wife's heart or before the wife in the heart of her husband. It is just this desire to hold first place that has changed many a sweet and gracious mother into that home-wrecker - the mother-in-law. Some of you can sympathize with the gentlemen who took his Boston terrier to the veterinarian to have his short tail cut off even with his body. When the veterinarian asked the reason the owner said, "My Mother-in-law is coming and I do not want anything or anybody to show the least degree of friendliness."
Third, the married couple is to be one. "That twain shall be one flesh." This is more than a figure of speech. It means they are to be one in their mutual self-giving, one in their joys and sorrows, one in their material possessions, one in their devotion to God.

Finally, Jesus said that marriage is for life. There is no divorce for both parties except that written in terms of green grass in the grave of one of the contracting parties.

Now I am aware that this high ideal is often beyond the reach of an unchristian society. But this is the way marriage was meant to work. If it could be shown that those who follow the modern method of flitting from one husband to another or from one wife to another as a bee flitting from flower to flower a greater return in personal happiness, if they gave to the world better sons and daughters than those prosaic couples that celebrate their golden weddings, then I would conclude that Jesus was wrong. But as narrow as the teachings of Jesus may seem, taking Him seriously has been back of about all the moral uplift that has come to the world. The homes that find the best and give the best are permanent homes.

II

But not only must a home have stability, it must have vital religion. For us it must be Christian.

The fact is that vital religion is one of the greatest safeguards of successful marriage. Of the leading students of domestic problems, after examining thousands of cases it has been found that people who were vitally religious stood twenty-five times as good chance to make a success of marriage as those without religion. This is plain common sense. Genuinely religious people are not self-centered. They have that love that suffers long and is kind. Let two self-centered people marry and it is a bit like the irresistible forces hitting the immovable body. There is likely to be an explosion.

But the home needs to be religious not only to give it permanence but because children need religion. Religion is just as truly the need of a child as is daily bread.
God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness but of power and love and of healthy mind. These characteristics are needed by the child just as they are needed by the adult. There is a stabilizing force in religion that the child cannot find anywhere else.

To this conviction, many modern parents who have broken with organized religion are being driven. There are thousands of fathers and mothers today who had a formal religious training in their childhood but the real thing did not take so they have given up all religious practices. Yet they have been forced to see that even this imperfect religious training gave them a civility and purposefulness that their children without any religious training whatsoever have missed. Thousands of these are being driven back to religion, not so much because of their own sense of need as because they feel that they must have something to give to their children.

Surely this is motive enough. One of the beautiful characters that we meet on the pages of the New Testament is that of a father who came to Jesus, it would seem, solely because he had an afflicted son that needed help.

"To feel his little hand in mine,  
So clean and so warm,  
To know he thinks I am strong enough  
To keep him safe from harm;  
To see his simple faith  
In all that I can say or do,  
It sort of makes him better too,  
Levei fancy I am a better man  
Than I used to be  
Because I have this chap at home  
That thinks the world of me."

This need of religion on the part of a child is not a discovery of intellectual parents simply but of the psychologists and law enforcement officers as well. Dr. Link, after much investigation, declares that children who attend Sunday-school have a higher personality rating than children who do not. Not only so but even children whose parents attend church have a higher personality rating than those who are not touched at all by religion.
Finally, our law enforcement officers have emphasized the fact again and again that juvenile delinquency is born of a lack of religious training. Where we find a delinquent child, we find in almost any instance a delinquent home or no home at all.

One New York judge declared that of the 4000 juveniles that had passed through his court not one of them was a regular attendant to Sunday-school and church. Religion then is not a luxury for the child, it is an essential. Therefore the child needs a religious home in which to grow up.

III

How then are we to make our homes vitally Christian? This, I realize, is an important question and the answer is not always easy. It is more difficult, generally speaking, for the dweller in the city to have a Christian home than for those who live in the country. When I was growing up, our home was a unit. We worked at a common task, we rose at a common hour, we had our meals together, we kneeled in prayer together. In the modern home where children rise at off hours and work at different places, any form of family worship is not easy.

Yet having said this, I hasten to say that if your home is to be vitally Christian it is up to you fathers and mothers to make it so. I am addressing myself now especially to those of you who have your children about you. There is nobody who can bring the atmosphere of vital religion in your home permanently but you. It is up to the father and the mother. It is not up to the father alone or the mother alone. It is for both of you. Neither has the right to throw it off on the other. It is a terrible piece of moral cowardice on the part of the father who accepts his responsibility for providing for the physical needs of the children and makes no contribution to their spiritual needs.

Now if parents are to Christianize their own homes, they must do so of set purpose. They will not do so working at haphazard or not working at all. What your child knows about religion, what he knows about right and wrong will depend on what you teach him. You do not expect him to learn music or grammar or chemistry by pulling it out of thin air. No more does he learn religion in that way.
The Jews who through the centuries have been among the best home-makers had this command laid upon them, "To teach diligence to their children." Timothy became a Christian minister not by chance but because from a child he had known the holy scriptures. He had known them because he had been taught them.

Not only can we teach religion formerly but above all else we can teach it by living it. That, by the way, is the best method of teaching anything. I confess to a deep love for the stately English of the King James Version of the Bible. I came to that love by hearing my father read these great passages about the family altar. He did not explain to me the mechanism of the Word, he made me love it by first loving it himself.

In my early school days I majored in mathematics but later I switched from mathematics to English. This came about because I came under the influence of a professor of English who read great literature to me, both prose and poetry, until my heart burned within me as through his voice these masters spoke to me. I owe something to his formal teaching but I owe more to the fact that he made me love great prose and poetry by loving it himself. And that, let me say, is the greatest service we can render our boys and girls. When they have forgotten our precepts they will still remember how the beauty of the Lord rested upon our lives as the sunshine rested upon the hills.

It is well also to bear in mind that whether we wish it or not we are going to teach our boys and girls some kind of attitude toward religion. There was a growing number of parents a few years ago, and many of them are with us still, who thought they could raise their children as color neutrals. They refused to bias them one way or the other. They were going to let them do their own thinking. Indeed a mother told me not two months ago that she was not a member of any church. That she was going to wait and join whatever church her children desired to join. That sounds incredible but it is a fact.
But suppose you take this broadminded view. You refuse to fight for religion or against it, so what? You simply neglect it. Now the fact that you neglect it is quite obvious to your boys and girls. From you they get the impression that religion does not matter. That it is a thing to be shunted on the sideline or rejected altogether. Believe me, you are going to bias your children very definitely on the side of religion or you are going to bias them against it. You cannot do otherwise however hard you try.

But the utter folly of your position is seen when you realize that you cannot take such position regarding any other matter that is vital to the health and happiness of your child. You do not allow him to choose his own toys. If he is a small boy he might be satisfied with a toy postol but he would much rather have a tommy-gun. You do not allow him to choose his own food. If you did he would live exclusively on chocolate candy and licorice. Spinach would never be in all his thoughts no more than in that of an honest adult. A child hasn't enough experience for the making of an intelligent choice. He needs help in making that choice. That is what parents are for.

IV

Now let me say that in this vital business of christianizing your own home and thereby christianizing your children, you can work hopefully for the following reasons:

1. There is a natural affinity between Jesus Christ and little children. If children are exposed to Him they love Him as naturally as they love their mothers. All the characteristics that go to make a Christian at his best belong to a child by nature. God put them there. Take faith, for instance. A child is naturally humble. He is loyal to those he loves. It is our privilege to take this faith and humility and loyalty that are interwoven in the life of a child and tie them on to our Father in Heaven.

2. Not only can a child be a Christian but a child can become a Christian easier as a child than at any other time in all his life. That is only common sense.
He can become a Christian easier because it is easier for him to submit his will to a Higher Will. He can become a Christian easier because he is not bound by habit of evil thinking and evil living.

3. Finally, if we are to win, let us bear in mind that religion can be taught but best of all it can be caught. What we say about kindness will mean little if we are not kind. What you say about prayer will mean little if we do not pray. What we say about the worth of the church will count for nothing if you show no devotion to it. What you say about faith in God may be useless and at times even worse than useless if that faith is not a working force in your own life. To most of you who have a sense of God in your life this day, this blessing came because that was an experience of the father and mother that you love.

I have much to remember that was great and beautiful in the life of my father but there is one gracious memory that is about the most precious of all. I was very ill with pneumonia. The doctor had told my parents that I would not live until morning. It was my father who came to tell me that I might be lifted into the Everlasting Arms during the night and to assure me that I had nothing to fear. I felt that it would be no more than being carried into my room upstairs. I felt that way because that was the faith of my father. You may leave your child much that is of value but I submit to you that there is no value greater than this.
"That the man of God may be complete, perfectly equipped for every good work."

What a joy it is that our Master knows all about ourselves and all about the world in which we are to live our lives. He knows the fascination and the beauty of this world. He also knows its dangers and its difficulties. He knows that a right life in such a world is not easy. What a mercy, therefore, that He makes full provision for us. He does not leave us orphans. He does not leave us powerless with our foes closing about us as hungry wolves might close about a defenseless traveler at eventide.

He has made provision for our physical conquest. When He said to man "Have dominion" man did not look so much like a conqueror. There were thousands of creatures that were stronger than he. There were thousands that could shout louder, run faster, out fly him and out swim him. Yet, man was better equipped for he was able to think. The result is that today he is master. He can out run the deer, he can out swim the whale, he can lift more than the elephant, he can out fly the eagle, he can send his voice around the world.

But He has not only made provision for our dominion over nature, He has also made provision for our spiritual dominion. That, of course, is of supreme importance. It is worth little to conquer the world of material forces and yet ourselves be conquered by the powers of evil. We must have spiritual victory or we shall become slaves of the things that we ourselves have created. Our wrestling is not simply with material foes but with the spiritual. We must have equipment for this conflict or life for all of us will be a tragic failure and will end at last in a
tragedy as deep and dark as any woven out of the warp and woof of desolation and death.

But it is not enough for God to provide for us. We must avail ourselves of that provision. This is true in the world of every day life. If I am going to farm today I cannot compete with the crude implements of a century ago. If I am going to travel, I must have something better than an ox wagon. If I am going to enter the company of brain workers, I must have brains. I shall never forget some of the tragic weeks thru which I passed my first year at Webb school. I had not had the training of those with whom I was compelled to compete.

When the war broke out Germany at first swept everything before her. The other nations were not equipped. In passing thru England and Scotland a few years ago I witnesses something of the appalling wreckage of the open saloon. I say there, as I see now, if America remains a saloonless nation the British Empire will have to adopt prohibition if not for moral reasons then for economic. All these things being equal a wet nation cannot compete with a sober nation.

PART I.

What is this equipment that God has put at our disposal?

It is the Word of God. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God ... that the man of God may be perfectly equipped for every good work." This does not mean, of course that we are to read the Bible and nothing else. But it does mean that the study of the Word of God is a fundamental necessity. Many who have known almost nothing but the Bible have lived nobly and usefully. Others who seem to have known almost all else have lived lives that had more of cursing than of blessing.
Fully Equipped.

Bud Robinson knew only the Bible. His atheistic friend knew far more, but one was rich while the other was miserably poor.

The Bible is our supreme equipment. This is true.

1. Because it is inspired of God. By inspiration, of course, I do not mean that God dictated the Bible as you would speak into a dictaphone. I do mean that the writers of the book were men whose hearts and minds were illuminated with the spirit of God. I mean that I believe that Peter spoke the sober truth when he said, "Holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The Bible is so inspired that those who wrote it were able to say and to say truly "Thus saith the Lord."

2. The Bible being inspired of God is true. It is broadly and magnificently true. Its truth in many direction has and can be tested. We may know, if we will, for an absolute certainty that the supreme declarations of the Bible are true. It tells us the truth about ourselves. It tells us the truth about sin. It tells us that sin finds the sinner out. Surely it does not stretch your faith to believe that. It tells us the truth about God. And millions living today can testify that what the Bible has to say about our Lord is true.

3. This book is the living book. Other books may be out-grown. We run pass them as we run pass the toys and the dreams of our childhood. But this book no individual and no nation has ever out-grown. Its words are quick and powerful today. If you cut them they bleed. They spoke powerfully and personally to the people of the dead yesterday, but they speak as powerfully and as personally to our day as if written peculiarly for ourselves.
Folly Equipped.

PART II.

How does this Bible equip us for the life that we are to live?

1. It tells us what is wrong with us. Mark you it does not require the Bible always to tell us that something is wrong. The fact that there is trouble in the human heart has been known by man in all times and climes. The altars that men have builded and the sacrifices that they have offered all around the world bear testimony to this fact. Man has always know that something was wrong. Some have been foolish enough to talk as if he would have been perfectly satisfied had not the Bible lifted its voice of accusation. Ingersol said that the Bible casts a pall over the cradle and a gloom over the grave.

But nothing could be further from the truth. The pall and the gloom were there before a single word of the Bible was written. Something was wrong with man and he knew that something was wrong before the Bible was written. But the Bible comes to put its finger upon the sore spot. It comes to diagnose the case. It comes with a chance in its hand because it lets man know what his foe is. The Bible says tenderly and truly, "your trouble the trouble with the world is that you have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

2. But the Bible does more than diagnose the disease. It offers a remedy. It is able to make us wise unto salvation thru faith that is in Christ Jesus. It's words are life-giving. It's words have regenerating power. To lay hold of its truth is to be reborn. "Being born again, not of corruptable seed but of incorruptable by the Word of God which liveth and abideth."

3. Not only does the Bible give life but it sustains it. "It is
Fully Equipped.

written, man shall not live by bread alone." To deny yourself the Word of God is certainly to suffer starvation. I trust we may take this matter to heart. We cannot be a living healthful Christian unless we feed habitually upon the Word of God. Vast numbers in the Church are living in total neglect of the Bible. Therefore, many are sickly and weak and starving.

One privilege that our new day has brought to womanhood is that of being robust. It used to be a kind of disgrace to be vigorous and strong. The waist must be like the Equator, just an imaginary line. But some have not claimed that privilege. They are possessed of the passion of the boyish figure. Personally, if I had to marry over again, I would not marry a boy. I would still marry a girl. But assuming that the boyish figure is the most desirable thing in the world, we pay too much for it. Many today are wrecking their health and some are killing themselves because they are so eager to be as near like the cross bones and skull as possible.

But if reducing physically is dangerous, what shall I say about reducing spiritually. /There are so called saints today who would have indigestion from eating a meal over which a Canary bird would starve to death. You can no more have strong spiritual life without the Bible than you can have strong physical life without bread.

4. The Bible is a means of growth. I love to look at growing corn. Especially if I do not have to do anything but look at it. It is a joy to be on a farm and see the growing calves and colts and pigs and chickens. Especially chickens. It is finer still to see growing boys and girls. But the finest thing of all is to see a growing soul. To see a boy or girl or man or woman growing into a deeper and richer
Fully Equipped.

spirtual life. Therefore, Peter says, "Desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby." Desire it so much that you will come to the prayer meeting and hear a talk.

5. The Bible equips us by giving us comfort. "That thru the comfort of the scriptures you might have hope." What a comforting book is this! When you are lonely for God it has a message of comfort for you. When you are weary and heaven-laden here again it has a word of comfort. When you are passing thru the valley of the shadow it is a staff upon which you can lean. It is a friend with a voice of comfort. When you are turning from a new made grave it has a consolation that belongs to no other book in the world. Therefore, it fits into the needs of sinning and suffering people like ourselves. It brings us an equipment rich beyond all words.

PART III.
For what does it equip us?
It equips us for finding the most of joy and the most of gladness in the life that now is. But that is not its supreme purpose. Furthermore it equips us for entering heaven. It sends us up with confidence to knock on the door of the house of many mansions. But this is not its first and fundamental purpose. What then is it? It is to equip us for work. It is to equip us for every kind of good work. It is to equip us to teach, to give, to pray, to do personal work, to sing, to love, to suffer. It is to equip us for every good work.

PART IV.
How is the Bible to equip us for every good work?
It will not do so by our merely giving assent to the book as a
Ful1y Equipped.

There is hardly one here who if asked, "do you believe the Bible?" would say "yes, I believe it with all my heart. I believe it from Genesis to Revelation." Yet such a belief is not transforming your life. In the old days I have heard Christians say to those who were at the altar, "just believe now." But that is not enough. There must be something specific and something definite to be believed. Infinite more benediction would come from just believing one single promise of the Bible than by giving intellectual assent to the whole of it.

Neither will the Bible equip you if you let it alone. I may be desperately ill. There may be a remedy in my very hand that I believe if taken will cure me. I may prize that remedy very highly. I may prize it so highly that I lay it reverently in a safe place and leave it alone, but in so doing it will not cure me. Neither will the Bible equip you, however much you reverence it if you just let it alone.

Neither will the Bible equip you if you simply read about the Bible. It is helpful and necessary, sometimes, to read about it. We are living in the day of diagnosticians. It is fine to know all about calories and vitamins. It is fine to know what constitutes a balanced ration, but unless you do more than study about food you are going to starve to death.

What then is necessary? You must appropriate the Bible. You must take its specific promises and claim them for yourself. Of course, even the Bible is not an end in itself. "Search the scriptures," said Jesus, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life. These are they which do testify of me." The supreme glory of the Bible is that it instructs us, that it brings us face to face with the living Christ.
Fully Equipped.

Here is a telescope. It is interesting in itself. It is marvelously made. You may give yourself to admiring how one part fits into another. You may wonder at its highly polished lenses. But in so doing, you have not found the highest purpose of the telescope. Go yonder on the house top. There look out to the sea or out to the mountains. Open it and look thru it and the far things will become near and the unseen things will become seen. So it is with our Bibles. As we look not only at them but into them and thru them, the unseen becomes the seen and the unreal becomes clothed with reality, and we are brought face to face with the King. It was the looking and the experience of the poet when he sang,

"Break thou the bread of life, Dear Lord, to me,  
As thou didst break the loaves beside the sea;  
Beyond the sacred page I seek thee, Lord;  
My spirit pants for thee, O living Word!"

Bless thou the truth, dear Lord, To me, to me,  
As thou didst bless the bread by Galilee;  
Then shall all bondage cease, all fetters fall;  
And I shall find my peace, My All-in-All."
"Do the work of an evangelist". II Timothy 4:5

Do the work of an evangelist. These words take on a four-fold impression. First, they impress us because of the one who uttered them. They came from one of the greatest men of all the centuries. It would be next to impossible to exaggerate Paul. You might drop certain nations in the ocean and not miss them as much as you would this one Pikes Peak personality. Not only do they impress us because of the one who gave them them utterance but because of the one to whom Paul was writing or speaking. Paul had a roomy heart. His soul was a veritable house of many mansions. There he entertains all sorts of guests—from social and nameless nobodies to men of high ranking position. But the coziest room in his heart was given to this son of his, Timothy, a timid man whose life was one long battle with sickness and yet Paul loved him, I think, as he loved no other living man. Third, they were impressive because of the time of this letter. He didn't write it in the heyday of his ministry. He wrote it when he was getting far into the years. He wrote it under the mellow light of the sunset and the evening star. He is summing up what he has learned in all his tempestuous yesterdays. He is now putting his accent on the syllable he considers most important and in so doing he writes to this son of his, "Do the work of an evangelist." Then this is impressive in the fourth place because it is such an exact reproduction of the parting words of Paul's Master. What was his last charge to us, Paul, to all saints, to you and me? It was this: "Go and make disciples". So these words lay upon us. They take us by our slumbering shoulders and shake us into wakefulness, that if we are to do the thing that is central in the purpose of the Lord and in the purpose of the greatest of the saints, we must do the work of an evangelist.

Part I

But in spite of this holy urgency, evangelism is not a vastly popular theme.
The truth of the matter is, though the word is musical in itself, to some ears it is as crashing as instruments played out of tune. Somehow in its journey from the Jerusalem of yesterday to the Jericho of today, it has fallen among robbers that have wounded it and stripped it, leaving it half dead, so that it now takes a rather rash Samaritan to stop and render first aid. This is especially true when so many charming and cultivated priests and Levites are passing. Not only refusing to lend a hand, but inwardly chuckling in the hope that they have seen the last of the poor chap.

If this is true of evangelism in general, it is especially true of that type of evangelism called the revival. Now I confess that I am among the elders in Israel. I am such a one as Paul the Aged. I am unashamedly old. I have no desire to be young. I have fished that stream out and for me to long to be back again as young and ignorant as some of you young ministers would be very foolish. And I am not that foolish. Yet I remember a day when the revival was something that had real power in our church. To announce a revival was to awaken an added interest and for an increased congregation. But such is not the case today. Such an announcement would be about as magnetic as it would be to say: "We are going to put on display some interesting cases of contagious disease. Come out and bring the family, and you may catch one or more." It is now a red flag in the face of many charming church people that warns them to take to the shelter of their homes or the more secure shelter of the highway. For this reason it has come to pass that a great many of our best churches will not dare announce a revival. Even if they make a gesture in that direction the once musical word has to travel under an alias. We call it Religious Emphasis or a Preaching Mission and we try to slip the disabled chap in some way without letting folks know exactly what we are about. And yet, there is nothing to make us blush over a revival. When I catch a glimpse of the face of this ancient peet as he waits before God and when I listen to the content of his prayer, "Revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee". He is praying for something that everybody wants for everybody in the deeps of his soul genuinely longs. He wants new life. Everybody needs more life. We are living far
longer today than did our fathers. We are adding many years to our lives, but we
are not always adding a life to our years which makes for wretchedness rather than
for gladness. Why does this man want a revival? That God's people may rejoice
in him. Now that is another commodity on which we are very short. We are
delightful and fairly upright people and we are interested in religion. But we
endure it so often rather than enjoy it. It is a kind of a grim task that must be
put through in some way. We are short on joy and yet almost all that we do, the
wise things and foolish things, is just to get a little thrill, just to have a few
rays of sunshine to flood our drab and commonplace lives.

I was in a large church sometime ago trying to speak to a little handful of
dilapidated saints who looked so utterly woebegone that I said something to them
that I do not say except in the pulpit. I used language that I never use except on
such occasions. They looked so utterly threadbare, they seemed to be trying to make
the wealthy promises of God look as cheap and false as possible. So I said, "The
people out yonder that are passing your church without a glance in your direction
are willing to concede that you are going to heaven, but they think you are having
a hell of a time getting there". Now a little added life that would put an added song
into our hearts and upon our lips is a consumation devoutly to be wished and the
one who prays for it is not ridiculous but he is rather ridiculous to

Part II

Now how did we get that way? I do not believe that generally speaking we have
thought our way to this position. I do not think we have prayed our way to this
position. We think we have rather drifted into it, or we have done some fuzzy
thinking about it. One reason for this of course we love to lay upon the shoulders
of the old time evangelist whose work was not very solid. I can remember when
we at church wanted an easy out of a hard situation. They would send for a professional
and that church would have what amounted to a religious spasm for a few days and
then the evangelist "Would fold his tents like the Arab and as silently steal
away" and that church would be weaker than it was before and its last state was
worse than the first. But even when that happened the fault was not with the
evangelist anymore than it was with the pastor and the congregation.

Then there are some who have no enthusiasm for revivals because they have never experienced one. They have never seen a church where the 'wings of heaven blew strongly and where things took place that could not be explained except to say, "This is the Lord's doings and it is marvelous in our eyes". A revival can be a fascinating thing. It can be a gripping and a thrilling something. It can produce a moral revolution in those who participate in it and in the community. I have seen it happen in my own ministry as some of you have seen it happen.

There are others who have never seen a church "That added unto the Lord day by day such as were being saved". That is the ideal situation. That is even better than a period of revival. I knew a young chap a few years ago who went to an old church in a large city. That church was tradition bound. Respectability was lying like a huge stone across the mouth of the sepulcher where the Lord was trying to raise the people from the dead. But this young chap, with the enthusiasm that had come to him from the west, began at once, not to have target practice as was the custom in that church, but he began to shoot to kill. The result was that at the first Sunday evening service more than a dozen people came forward, dedicating their lives to the Lord. News got around and it wasn't long before every service was an overflow service. What was the matter? Not the great preaching of the minister, not the great singing of the choir--the matter was, the congregation came expectantly and on the human level there is no way to draw a congregation equal to a congregation that expects something and that where people come together service by service, not to see Jesus only but Lazarus also whom he raised from the dead. That church will be about the most thrilling and fascinating institution in the world. There are those that never saw such a church. Hence they are not deeply interested in evangelism.

Then I am persuaded that there is an unspoken conviction that evangelistic preaching and evangelistic work is a little intellectually inferior to the type of preaching that some of us feel that we are called to do. A Methodist preacher said to me sometime ago with considerable self-satisfaction, "My message is to the
intellectually elite". Well, perhaps it is so but all I could say for him was, "You have a very small congregation". Of course our message is to the elite, but it is for those who are not elite as well and the church that neglects the average man, the ordinary run of the mill, is already headed toward the gates of the cemetery. We dare not neglect any class and especially we dare not neglect the ordinary man of the street.

Of course there have been evangelists just as there have been pastors who were not highly cultured men. Had you slipped into the study of Simon Peter you wouldn't have found many sheepskins on his wall. D. L. Moody had no degrees to display and that queer genius, Bud Robinson, whom it was my privilege to know personally, had no formal education at all. He broke every law of grammar but he broke your heart while he broke the laws of grammar. He always said, "I seen" when he ought to have said, "I saw" but I had rather a man would say I seen and see something than to say I saw and never see anything. But if there have been those who were inferior in their educational attainments who were evangelists, there have also been those who were superior. A friend dismissed a brilliant and gifted and consecrated young man the other day with the word, and he was a pastor at that, "Oh, he is just an evangelist". Well, one might dismiss Saint Paul in the same fashion. He might dismiss Wesley in the same fashion. He might also dismiss Jesus Christ in the same fashion. They were all evangelists and believe me from the very nature of evangelism the man who does not preach evangelistic sermons really does not preach at all. Then there is no badge of inferiority on a sermon because it is evangelistic.

But I think perhaps the supreme reason for the neglect of evangelism is because it is so costly. It is work and we shirk work especially religious work. We somehow feel that while it is necessary to struggle in every other field of endeavor, we ought to succeed in our religious lives with a minimum of effort. Indeed, there are those who are actually astonished if they are asked to do anything that is really costly.

I remember how this was brought home to me as a young pastor. I was holding
a meeting in my own church and making afternoon visits I came to a family where
not a single member had had interest enough to attend during the months that I had
been the pastor. The mother was going some needlework. It was summertime and she
came to the screen door that was latched, not looking over her glasses as we who
wear them usually do, but looking under them. And seeing me she said, "What is
it?" I hardly knew whether to tell her what is it or not, but I drummed up the
courage and told her I was the new pastor that had come to town and her face lighted
up as you have seen a landscape light as the black clouds pass from the face of the
sun and she said, "Come in, come in, come in." And I went in and in and when I
was seated she turned to me and with a tone that oozed unction she said, "Oh, what
I had rather do than anything else in all the world is just to work for the Lord
all the time". And I told her how glad I was to hear it and I said, "There is a
neighbor of yours, stranger in town, she has just come and she wants to attend our
services tonight and has nobody to come with her. You go over there and bring her
out." And she looked like a skyrocket making its return trip. She went up in a
blaze of glory but she came back in the night and ended by the lame excuse, "I'd
like to but it wouldn't be convenient." Those were my salad days when I was green
in judgment and I said what I would possibly not dare to say now but it would be
ture if I did. "IX I said, "Anybody that claims to want to work for the Lord
and shies away from a thing because its inconvenient, your religion is not
Christianity, it's a dupe, it's a substitute, it's a caricature on Christianity."
We shy away from evangelism because of its costliness. It is costly to the
evangelist. It's costly in terms of consecration and in terms of work. There is
nothing more exacting. "For their sakes, I consecrate my soul that they also may
be consecrated." Scarcely a member of your church that would not like to have
a warm, rich religious experience if he could have it on his own terms. Nor is there
a church that would not like to be a life-giving church. A writer of fiction said
a few years ago this sentence, "It was high noon and the church on the corner was
giving up its dead". What a horrible sentence! Now for a church to give up dead
when they might give up life. That is very hell and yet that was what this writer of fiction said. Every church would like to be a life-giving center but some churches, and some individuals are not willing to pay the price. Evangelism is costly. It can only be compared to the agonies of a mother who goes through the valley of the shadow of death to lift a new life into the light. And it is only when Zion travelleth that she brings forth sons and daughters. We shy away because of its costliness.

Part II

Yet costly or not, evangelism is not an elective in our Christian course, it's a requirement. It's not optional, it's a necessity. It's not for us to decide whether we will be evangelistic or not and at the same time be Christians. Christianity is essentially aggressive. Whenever it ceases to be aggressive, it loses all its glamor and all its thrill and all its glory. Not only that, but it ceases to be Christian. It loses its power to win. No church is strong enough to hold its own. It is a fact that in almost every contest between the free world and the world behind the iron curtain it is the world behind the iron curtain that wins because they are aggressive. Communism is a crusading religion and they are out to conquer the world and we, rightly so, are simply trying to hold our own. But the fact that we are playing on the defensive puts us at a disadvantage. I used to coach football, believe it or not, I wasn't any great as a coach, but I knew this much, that my side would never make a touchdown while the other side carried the ball. We've got to have more ball carrying by the individuals of the church. It is a necessity. We simply cannot be Christian without it and we certainly can't win without it.

Now what is it to do the work of an evangelist? Evangelism in its simplest definition is simply telling good news about God. It is well to bear that in mind. It is not telling bad news about our world situation. God knows there is plenty to tell about it. I went to hear a friend sometime ago and he painted a picture so horribly black that everybody that took him seriously went bumping away on four flat tires with his spare stolen. The only reason I didn't do the same was because my minds ignition drove out my discouragement. He did this in the name of
facing all the facts. Now I'm not asking anybody to blank the facts but a man who preaches a discouraging sermon preaches a wicked sermon, I do not care how sincere he is. This is the case because of all the books that face up to the most grim and terrible in human life there is none other equal to The Bible, nor is there any other equal to The Bible when it comes to being a book of encouragement, to breathe battle into a man and send him out to fight where the victory is to the This brave is the case because always over against the worst that man can be and do is the best that God can be and do. There are two words that come together over and over again "but God". The patriarchs moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt and they watched him disappear and said, "He'll die in the oblivion of a slave pen on the banks of the Nile". But God was with him and they road they thought was going to lead him into utter slavery, led him to an immortality of usefulness. There they crucified him. couldn't go beyond that. But God was with him so that the best thing that could happen to Joseph, the best thing that could ever happen to Jesus was the tragedy that came into their lives.

I think it well to remember, too, that evangelism is not merely telling bad news about the world. It is telling bad news about the church. Here again we ought to face the facts about the church. It is certainly not above criticism. But to be mean the church, to forget that the church is not made up of perfect people, that it is made up disciples, learners in the school of Christ, that the church is of the body of Christ, that it is the bride of our Lord. We are not to spend our time finding fault with the church and spreading bad news about it. I heard a man preach sometime ago that villified the church and then had the nerve when the sermon was over to ask people to join it. He said virtually, "Come and join this bunch of defeated crooks. You might get something out of it. Possibly you'd be better off without it." We are to tell the good news about God. Good news could be summed up in four simple facts. First of all is the news of how God broke into human history, in the coming of Jesus Christ that the word has really become flesh and dwelt among us. It tells, in the second place, this word, "God was crucified". That he loves us and has loosed us from our sins by his own blood. It tells us
in the third place that this crucified Christ rose from the dead and that he manifested himself to the men that had known him in the days of his flesh. When he had reminded them of his going away, it broke their hearts. But he said, "It is for your good, because a spiritual Christ can do for men what a physical Christ cannot do." He can be among them and within them every hour, everywhere, in every situation. He came back and gave them an awareness of his abiding presence such as thrilled them with a joy that was to the eyes of men at once bewildering and winsome and absurd. And the fourth big fact is that same risen Christ of whom his followers became so blessedly aware is available for you and me, that he offers himself to us as a savior not simply to relieve us of a penalty, but to take us into his friendship and into his fellowship. News better than that could not be dreamed of in a million years.

Another fruitful field is our own congregation. Stanley Jones who estimates that some 2/3 of the people who belong to our churches have never really been converted. I cannot be sure of the exactness of his figure, but I am quite sure of this: That many of them have never been converted and they do come to hear us preach and they do give us an opportunity as outsiders do not. What a fruitful field of evangelism are the folks that occupy our pews Sunday by Sunday. Then there is the outsider. We will never win any great number of an adult generation, but Blessed is the preacher that between Sundays can find at least one and get him to commit himself to the Lord and promise to be present on Sunday to make an open acknowledgement of his faith. So many times he will prove a decoy to bring others with him.

Years ago when I was pastor in Fort Worth I went to see quite a successful merchant. We were friends but I think he was more afraid of preachers because they were preachers than almost any man I have ever met and he was very suspicious of my purpose in calling on him so that almost the moment I entered his store he would undertake to wrap up everything almost that he had. I think that if he had had a piano in it he would have tried to put a piece of paper around it or stick it in a paper sack. He knew I wouldn't make an attack on him when he was busy
And so after going three or four times and finding that he was too busy to listen
I got hold of Mr. one of his leading clerks and I said, "What is nearest to the heart of your boss?" What is his hobby? Of what does he think more than anything else? And the man was an intelligent and thoughtful man and he thought it over a moment and he said, "He has one child, a little girl about seven. He's absolutely devoted to her." And with that information I went away. The next Sunday he was out at church with six or seven of his clerks. I preached the best I could, focusing much of my attention on him, telling him what a privilege a father has leading a little child into the life beautiful and what an unspeakable tragedy it would be if through sheer carelessness he were to let that child tangle her innocent feet in the ragged life of his own neglect and fall out and thus miss the best.
And when the invitation was given he was the first man forward, but he brought every clerk that he had with him. Paul's method of preaching from house to house as well as publicly cannot be improved upon. But I am still old fashioned to believe in the power of preaching. In a New Testament preaching and salvation are related to each other as cause and effect. I believe that when the light shines in the pulpit, it shines in some measure across the land. And when the light goes out in the pulpit, it goes out around the world. I believe strongly in evangelistic preaching.
If we are going to do such preaching we ought to do it interestingly. There is little use in speaking when nobody is listening to you. There are few sins of which we ministers are guilty that are more ruinous than rambling right on when nobody's paying the least bit of attention. How are we to be interesting? Well we must be interesting by being interested ourselves. If you don't care anything about what you are saying, the chances are that your listener won't care or that your supposed listener won't care. You must be interested in your message and you must speak with simplicity. Remember that our messages to the intellectually elite, the more intellectual a man is the more he will appreciate simplicity. Any intelligent man knows any great genius to muddy the water. The Gospel ought to be preached with simplicity.

Then it ought to be preached with authority. I wouldn't have selected the
woman that Jesus met at the well as a promising evangelist and yet her report is an astonishing report. We read that many believed because of the saying of the woman. How many ministers will go to Conference this year without reporting one single addition on confession of faith? "Many believe because of the saying of the woman." What was her qualification? Not her reputation. She came from a first hand personal interview with the Lord Jesus and a woman like that will never go up quite empty handed.

Finally, we are to speak directly and with expectation. It is a sad day when we lose the expectancy out of our hearts, when we get to the place that we can display the unsearchable riches of Christ and not even expect anybody to be interested enough to take an order. Speaking thus definitely and expectantly because we have spoken prayerfully our message will not be in vain.

Part IV

Many of you have experienced. This I have experienced. Now I have never fancied myself as an evangelist. If any of you are seeking for a good evangelist, I am not recommending myself. But what I do say is that I did have an evangelistic ministry as a pastor. I did it Sunday by Sunday. Then far and ahead the best revivals I have had have been the revivals that I have held myself. Why? Because I was better than other preachers. No! But because I was able to make the right sort of preparation and because I could put the responsibility where it belonged and that is in some measure on my people. Our church, our Methodist church, is too much of a preachers church. When I would induce my people to share with me and get under the burden with me, we never failed to have a real revival.

Years ago I was brought in from Oklahoma to go to a lovely church in Waco, Texas. No sooner had I reached the conference when I would go up to a group of men they would say, "God pity the man that goes to Blooming Grove". And I would turn away and go to another group and hear the same thing, "God have mercy on the man that goes to Blooming Grove." I didn't pray for him a syllable. I had already been to two or three Blooming Groves, but I did know that that particular station was in a desperate situation. But it also slid off me because I knew where I was going. Then the end of the conference came and I went in to hear where
my brethren were going to be sent. Just as I was entering some wise man who always knew everything said to me, "Yes, you are going to Waco, I have seen the secretary's minutes." But I hadn't been in that conference five minutes until I was read out to Blooming Grove. I confess it was the greatest jar that I had in my ministry. I went down and found it far worse than I dreamed. Then I said to my Lord, "I've got to get closer or get away altogether. I can't live with this," and so I decided upon a revival.

I tried to prepare my people. Then I had met a man a good long while before, a tenant farmer who though not schooled in things greatly, a very intelligent man, but he was deeply schooled in prayer. I invited him to come and stay at the parsonage, not to sing, not to exhort but to pray. So service by service we would go to church together and almost every time going or coming some son of discouragement would say to us, "Well, it's going just as it has always gone. You can't do anything with the church." And this fine Christian would look at him as if he were telling the best news in the world and say, "My brother, you wouldn't say that if you knew the Lord as I know him." And so we would go on our way, he leaning on the Lord and me leaning on him. At last we came to the tenth night. The house was crowded. I got there a little late and my friend was sitting on the pulpit stairs. He came up and put his arm around me and said, "Say what the Lord tells you to say tonight, he is going to break loose." If that had been most men I would have simply said, "Oh, fooey." But I knew where he lived and so I preached and gave an invitation and there wasn't a move. But remembering what he said, I announced that we would linger a little while and if anyone wanted to go, they could. I think one man left. Then something happened. The next fifteen minutes the windows of heaven were opened. I have been preaching now for fifty-two years but I think that was the high spot in my ministry. Those people who had hated each other were either falling on each other's neck or kneeling at the altar. It wasn't a tide of high emotions simply, it made the church and it went far toward remaking the community. What was the matter? Somebody wanted a revival enough to give God a chance. Evangelism makes religion real. Without it we are
empty ourselves and we face continuous defeat." Do the work of an evangelist.
Evangelism is a beautiful word that has lost its meaning. Somewhere in its journey from Jerusalem of yesterday to the Jericho of today, it has fallen among thieves that have wounded it and stripped it, and departed, leaving it half-dead. It takes a rather rash Samaritan, therefore, to dare to turn aside to get this poor sheep upon his heart and take him to an inn and take care of him. This is especially true because a veritable procession of priests and levites are passing by, not only refusing to lend a hand, but, we fear, inwardly smirking at the plight of the poor fellow; and secretly hoping that they are seen to see the last of him.

Now this has not always been the case. I can remember when the first day of the revival brought the people together in unusual numbers and with heightened expectancy. And I have seen multitudes come together greatly wondering, saying, "What do these things mean?" because there were big events taking place that could only be accounted for in terms of God. But that is largely of yesterday. The announcement of a revival in the average church is no longer a clarion call for the rallying of the hosts of Zion. It is rather a warning song that calls, "To your tents, 0 Israel." Our people, even some of the best, flee for refuge to the security of their homes, or to their cars on the open road. The announcement of a revival today in the average city church would be about as effective in bringing together a congregation as if the pastor were to say, "My brethren, next Sunday we are to have
an exhibition in this church some very interesting cases of
contagious disease. If you come and bring your families, you
may be able to contract one or more of them."

As to just how this change has come about, it is not
my purpose fully to explain. Of course I knew the one on whose
shoulders we are accustomed to lay the heaviest part of the
responsibility. It is upon the professional evangelist. But,
of course, no fair-minded man would make a wholesale condemna-
tion of these men. Some of them are the salt of the
earth. (They are holy men, the latches of whose shoes I
personally feel myself unworthy to unlace.) But there was a
type of which this is not the case. You remember how they
used to come with their high-powered methods and their veteran
sermons that had done yeoman service in many a hard-fought cam-
paign, but had not grown shorter, but rather longer. For you
knew an old sermon is a bit like a snowball rolling down a hill -
it grows larger all the time, but what it accumulates is
generally rubbish. These brethren often had a genius for count-
ing sham results and real money. They reigned as kings for a
few days, and then folded their tents like the Arabs, and
silently went away, leaving us on four flat tires spiritually,
and with our spares stolen.

But even for this type of spurious evangelism the
evangelist was by no means solely to blame. As equal, if not a
heavier part of the responsibility must be put upon the pastor
and his people. Often when we invited the evangelist we did
not do so because we were eager for a real refreshing from the
presence of the Lord. We were rather seeking a smooth road out
of a hard situation. We wanted a million dollar return on a
five cent investment, we were eager for a bumper crop without
giving ourselves to the pressing task of clearing, and breaking, and tilling the soil. This counterfeit evangelism, I am sure, has done much to bring the genuine into disrepute.

Then, there are those who look askance at evangelism, because they feel that it has been too individualistic, and has demanded too small a sovereignty over life. But in my opinion, our best passion for evangelism is due more to our lost sense of God than to any other cause. "Then," said I, "here am I, send me," is the testimony of one who years ago burned with a hot enthusiasm for sharing the blessings that had come into his own life. "Then," this is a backward-looking word. Upon what does it look? It looks back to the time when Isaiah had seen "the Lord high and lifted up"; to the time when in the light of that vision he had seen himself as a sinner, and had been made clean. The fires of evangelism always burn in hearts that are conscious of the Divine Presence. And when men lose that consciousness, the fires go out.

II

Just what do we mean by evangelism? Its simplest meaning, as you know, is to tell Good News. But fully to understand it we need more than a definition—we need to see it in terms of personality. Let us, therefore, turn to the Supreme Evangelist. Mark, in his romantic and aggressive gospel, shows Him to us with peculiar clearness. "And Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Good News about God." He told men that they were all the sons of God, that it was every man's privilege to call God "Father." He showed how life's supreme tragedy consists in our effort to be independent toward our Father. That was the tragedy of the graceless laddie of whom we read in the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke. He went away from home, not
because he wanted to grieve his father, but because he wanted to
be independent of him. But life was transfigured for him the
moment he determined to take a son's place in his father's house.

By telling men that they are all the sons of God, he
told them the farther 'good news' that they were brothers one to
the other. He told them that men need live as a stranger in
this world, that men need no longer glare at each across frozen
chasms of indifference, or fiery chasms of hate — that every man
might see in his fellow a brother. And Jesus not only preached
brotherhood, but he lived it. He put himself under every man's
lead. He dined with outcasts. He talked to harlots with the
same gracious courtesy that he showed to the purest of the pure.
Thus he dug a chasm between himself and decent folks and went
to the areas for doing the work of an evangelist.

But after he had been crucified, men who had been
baptized into his spirit took up his message. One gifted young
man, by the name of Stephen, evangelized so compellingly in
Jerusalem that 'they were not able to resist the spirit and the
wisdom by which he spake.' Unable to answer him with words,
they mobbed him. But though they stoned the life from his body,
they could not stone the radiance from his face, 'they saw his
face as if it had been the face of an angel.' Though they
robbed him of his life, they could not rob him of his love. He
died with this Christ-like prayer upon his lips: 'Lord, lay
not this sin to their charge.'

Among those having a part in this ghastly crime was a
young man who was about the best intellect of his day. He tried
to forget the ugly memory by giving himself to an orgy of
persecution. But he was never able to brush the beauty of that
radiant face from his mind. He was never able to stop his ears
to that Christ-like prayer. At last, on the way from Jerusalem to Damascus Paul surrendered and fell upon his face, and cried, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?" He then rose to his feet to do the work of an evangelist. He, along with certain nameless nobodies, went about over the Roman Empire establishing little colonies of heaven.

These colonies were made up of men and women who did not fear the world's fears. They were men and women who were not gripped by the world's greed. They were not divided by the chains that divided others. The pagan world looked on with wistful wonder, and exclaimed: "How these Christians love each other!" And because they wanted to love and be loved, they were drawn into these little groups. Thus the Lord added unto them day by day such as were being saved. And as they increased in numbers, they increased in power. Out from them flowed rivers of living water that had a perfectly amazing capacity for withering all that was selfish and unclean, and for making all that was beautiful to grow. The Roman Empire took knowledge and tried to destroy them. But the more they were killed, the more they lived. At last they became so mighty that they displaced the Roman Eagle with the cross. Then they began to fear the world's fears, and to be gripped by the world's greed. Then the sun went down and the night came on, the night of the Dark Ages that lasted almost a thousand years.

Then centuries went by, and England is in the throes of a terrible reaction from Puritanism. And Christianity seems to many a dead and exploded theory. But one night there came out of a little service in Alger's Gate Street a man who declared that he had felt his heart strangely warmed. That man mounted his horse the next day and set out on an evangelistic tour that carried
him literally through the century, and out of his hot heart there breathed upon England a veritable Gulf Stream. At the kiss of its warmth the icicles fell from the eaves of the houses, the winter-stripped trees put on their verdant foliage, the flowers bloomed, the birds sang, and the heart stood up in the glad consciousness that God had come. Every reader of history knows today that by far the biggest event of that eventful century was the evangelism of John Wesley and his followers.

III

And now we come to our bewilderment and perplexed day. It is a day of cynicism, a day of disillusionment, a day of bitter hunger of heart. Some poet a century from now might sing of large areas of the life of our day:

"On that hard pagan world, disgust and secret loathing fell,
Deep weariness and sated lust made human life a hell."

Multitudes are between two worlds, the one dead, the other powerless to be born. But our desperate need is at once our challenge and our opportunity. Surely multitudes both within the Church and out of it, are realizing as never before that there is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved but the name of Jesus.

The call of the hour, therefore, is for the right kind of evangelism. It is only as we evangelize that we shall build up the body of Christ. Doing the work of an evangelist builds up the evangelist himself. There are multitudes even in our churches to whom Jesus Christ is as vague and dim as the shadow of a dream. Is there a roadway to spiritual certainty? I am sure that there is. Jesus is still coming to seek and to save that which is lost. If you and I set out on the same quest,
our roads and his are sure to run together sooner or later, we will come face to face with the Christ who is doing what we are undertaking to do. For if any man is willing to do His will, he shall know. We shall also build by capturing from without. It has been my habit through the years to give an opportunity at every service for men and women to make a public confession to Christ. Many times I have called when nobody has responded, but the vast majority of calls have not been in vain.

While seeking the lost we are to realize that our most fruitful work is not with adults, but with childhood and youth. It is still hard for some to believe this. A fine old gentleman said to me after a service that I had had with the boys and girls, "I do not believe in services of that kind," "Why," I asked? "Because," he said, "ten or twenty years from now some of those boys and girls could not tell you when they were converted." "That of it?" I asked. "Why," he said, with vehemence, "I would not give the pop of my finger for any man's religion who could not tell you the day and the hour in which he was converted." Now if you know when you were converted, thank God for it; but remember this, there may be one sitting beside you who is more beautifully conscious of the Divine Presence than you are, who does not know.

When I was a boy, my father gave me a little colt. He gave me that colt the very day it was born. I began at once to get on good terms with it. I would rub its nose and stroke its ears. Now and then I would give it an apple core (if I could spare it). Then, at last I dared to mount that colt and go for a ride. Never once did he throw me, nor kick me, nor paw me. If you had asked that colt three years later, "When were you converted into a work horse?" he would have doubtless answered you
in the language of Socrates, "search me."

But there was another colt about the same age as mine to which nobody paid any particular attention. One day my father said that he was old enough to be converted into a work horse. Therefore we chased him out of a pasture into the lot, and out of the lot into a stable. We bridled and harnessed him, and placed him beside a mature horse. Then, we unhitched him and led him out to where the ground was soft. We called a colored friend in whom we had a personal interest and asked him if he would be as kind as to mount. And when he mounted, the back of that colt went up like the apex of an isosceles triangle, and the colored brother erased himself. Finally, after he had thrown a few more men, after he had torn up one or two pairs of harness, and kicked the spatter board out of the buggy, a strong man could drive him provided he was tired. If you had asked him three years later when he was converted, he would have said, "I shall never forget it as long as I live. It was a terrible ordeal." But I submit to you that my colt was broken in a far more normal and a far more natural way. All of which leads me to say that the best field of evangelism is the home, for the only sure way to have Christians is to raise them.

Finally, if we are to do the work of an evangelist, we must be willing to pay the price. Evangelism is costly. There is no twilight sleep process for the bringing of new-born souls into the Kingdom. It is only as Zion travaileth that she brings forth sons and daughters. That is the reason that an ease-loving Church like ours shies away from it. We do not like to be bothered. The passionate words of the saints sound to us a bit like a foreign tongue: "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall
me there, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me." And here is rugged John Knox crying, "Give me Scotland or I die." We rather say, "Give me a comfortable bit of Scotland, or I will move." Too few of us believe in evangelism enough to be eager to pay the price. But where the price is paid results are sure.

Several years ago I was conducting a revival in a little town where there were seven or eight churches that had just enough interest to quarrel among themselves. The meeting was going badly, and I was desperately discouraged. At last I tried to have a testimony meeting, and the testimonies dwindled into discouraging and critical sermonettes. Just as I was preparing to close the service in despair, a gentleman stood up, that I came to know intimately, and to honor and love with genuine devotion. His presence was not prepossessing. He was rather shabbily dressed. He used bad grammar. But what redeemed him from commonplace was a marvelously illuminated face. It looked like it had a sunrise behind it, and you felt yourself almost unconsciously peeping round to see where the light came from. He turned that wonderful face toward me and said, "Brother, I thank God that things are just as they are." I looked at him in wide-eyed amazement. But he went on to explain, "I love to get in a hard place for my Lord." I love to get in a place that is so hard that there is no chance to get into, without you get down on both hands and knees and crawl through to God." I saw a new secret of which I was too little familiar. After this testimony, we dismissed, and went home.

In the evening service that followed, the tabernacle was
crowded to overflowing. There was a mourner's bench that ran entirely across the tabernacle. It was long enough to have accommodated at least a hundred mourners, though an inch long would have been long enough for what we had been having. I stepped out on this mourner's bench and began my sermon. I had been preaching only two or three minutes when this brother came and knelted down beside me, and as he prayed I tried to preach. And, account for it how you may, the atmosphere was utterly changed. I saw strong men come from out the dark to kneel at the altar, but before they could get on their knees they rose into newness of life. "And the place was shaken where we were assembled together, and we were all filled with the Holy Spirit." And it is my conviction that Methodism will never rediscover the lost secret of its evangelistic power till it learns again the high art of prayer. Let us therefore take to heart the challenging words of our text, "Do the work of an evangelist."
Our Thrilling Task

"Do the work of an evangelist."
—II Timothy 4:5

This is an impressive word for more than one reason. It is a word of an old man to a younger man. It is December speaking to June. It is evenside giving morning the benefit of its accumulated wisdom. The man who uttered these words has lived much and thought much and accomplished much. He has learned the best way to use life. He has learned where to invest himself to bring the largest possible returns.

Not only is this the word of a man of vast intellect and of vast experience, but it is the word of one who is now close upon the sunset and the evening star. Paul has reached the end of his journey and he knows it. He is speaking with that solemnity that characterizes even the most flippant when they come to the parting of the ways. Speaking with the conscious presence of the executioner, this earnest man naturally speaks of matters that lie closest to his heart. He is all the more bent on doing this because the one to whom he is speaking is his own son in the Gospel. Paul has a roomy heart. He has loved many. But he doubtless loves this young minister Timothy more than he loves any other man in all the world. For this reason he is the more eager to give him his best. Therefore, when this wise and aged man delivers his parting charge to the one that he loves the best, what does he say? This—"Do the work of an evangelist."

But in spite of the fact that evangelism held such a high place in
the mind and heart of Paul, many of us moderns do not think so much of it: Evangelism is a musical word that has lost much of its winnowing. Somehow in its journey from the Jerusalem of that day down to the Jericho of today it has fallen among thieves that have stripped it and wounded it and have left it half-dead. It, therefore, takes a rather rash Samaritan to dare to stop and administer first aid. This is all the more the case because so many cultured and respectable priests and Levites are passing by, not only refusing to lend a hand but even chuckling inwardly in their mirth that they have seen the last of the poor chap.

How has this come about? Of course it is not universally true, but in many churches evangelism is a rather frightening word. In the language of our youngsters, how did we get that way? I know one easy and familiar answer. We love to lay it on the professional evangelist. But of course this is a very inadequate and unfair answer. We cannot group all these men in one company of condemnation. Some of them were the salt of the earth. They as ourselves are a bit like William Crimbletoe's hens—"Some lay eggs and some lay none."

For instance, in the good old days there were professional evangelists that did some very shoddy work. You can remember how they used to come with their high-powered and sensational methods. You can remember their sermons—veterans they were that had done service on many a field. You can remember how these often reigned as kings for a few days. Then they folded their tents like the Arabs and as silently stole away. After they were gone, we often found ourselves on four flat tires spiritually with our spares stored. Often their curious results could not be conserved. Too often the last state of that church was worse than the first.
OUR THRILLING TASK – page 3

But when this happened the failure was by no means solely the fault of the evangelist; it was even more the fault of the pastor and of his people. When we secured his services in the first place, it was often not because we were seeking a real refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Too often it was because we were seeking a smooth road out of a rough situation. We were eager for a million dollar return on a penny’s investment. We thought we could raise a bumper crop without giving ourselves the trouble of turning the soil, sowing the seed, cultivating the crop, and reaping the harvest. But it so happens there is no easy way to get great things done.

But while some lost their zeal for evangelism because the type that they had witnessed did not seem sufficiently rewarding, others ceased to be evangelistic because they were not willing to pay the price of doing the work of an evangelist. "When Zion trampled, the prophet said, "she brings forth sons and daughters." The work of evangelism is always work. It is always expensive work. It is so expensive that it can best be compared to the sufferings of a mother as she passes through the valley of the shadow of death to lift into the light a new life. Naturally an ease-loving church does not like to do the work of an evangelist.

Then perhaps the supreme reason was the lost sense of God. Here is a man who is eager to do the work of an evangelist: "Then said I, Here am I; Send me." How did Isaiah come to be possessed by such a passion? The "then" of the text is a backward-looking word. It looks back to an experience that had come to this brilliant young prophet. To what does it look? Listen: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord...

......Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of
unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: \( \text{And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.} \)

Having seen God and having been cleansed by the power of God, he is eager to share his experience with others. Every such man has a passion for doing the work of an evangelist.

II

What do we mean by the work of an evangelist? I am not here arguing for one type of evangelism against another. We evangelize in many ways, but all seek the same end. The meaning of evangelism in its simplest form is telling good news. When we want to see evangelism at its best, of course we see it in terms of personality. Suppose we turn to the supreme Evangelist, our Saviour and Lord. Listen to his story as told in that gripping and aggressive Gospel of Mark. "And Jesus came unto Galilee telling the good news about God."

What was the content of that good news? Jesus told men that they were all sons of God; that the only difference between men was that some took the position of sonship while the others tried to be independent. He told them that since they were sons they were also brothers. Since they were brothers, they need not live in a lonely and unfriendly world. They need not glare at each other across frozen chasms of indifference or across fier chasms of hate, that they might all be brought into one great family—the Family of God.
Not only did Jesus preach this gospel of a Loving Father and of brotherhood, but he practiced it. He threw himself under every man’s burden. He bridged the chasm between Himself and the hopeless outcast. He sat down with harlots and talked to them with the same gracious and tender courtesy that He would have shown to the sweetest flowers of womanhood. One day when He went for a visit to Jericho, He ignored the courtesies of the reception committee to spend the night with the best hated man in Jericho, a runty little tax-gatherer by the name of Zaccheus. So passionately did He evangelize that while some loved Him, others hated Him so intensely that they hung Him on a cross.

But death could not hold Him. After His resurrection came Pentecost. From this experience, men baptized under His spirit went out over the hard Roman Empire to do the work of an evangelist. Some of them were great preachers. The vast majority were ordinary people—ex-slaves, artisans, and what-not. But through their preaching and testimony, they established “little colonies of heaven,” little groups of brotherly people. Astonished pagans who longed to love and to be loved were drawn into these little groups, for they had a strange power to make every beautiful thing flourish and grow and to make every evil thing wither and die. That hard Roman world was remade by them. In three short centuries the Roman eagle had been displaced by the Cross.

Then came days of compromise and complacency. Slowly the sun set and the darkness gathered, a darkness that lasted for long centuries. By and by the morning broke for a while because a certain man named Martin Luther did the work of an evangelist. Then in the sixteenth century when religion in England had grown so stale that that little island was spiritually like the valley of dry bones in the prophecy of Ezekiel, something else happened. A brilliant Oxford don who claimed that his
heart had been strangely warmed mounted his horse one day and started on an evangelistic tour that took him literally through the century. He and his followers breathed on the frozen life of that day like a Gulf stream. Historians agree that the greatest event of that troubled century was the work of evangelism done by Wesley and his followers.

Today we find ourselves in a situation that bristles with difficulties. We find ourselves engaged in a War whose faint-line dimensions make every other war seem small and inconsequential. Judging the future by the past, this War will not minister to the growth in grace of those who engage in it. We are going to come out of it with a civilization torn, bleeding and depressed. The one institution whose supreme purpose it is to hold up the light of vital Godlikeness is the church. She can only do this by doing the work of an evangelist.

III

How shall we do the work of an evangelist?

1. Our first and vastly important field is the church. We are to evangelize our own members. That is a prime need of every local congregation. One of the greatest handicaps of the church is the vast number of its own membership who let all its services and its activities severely alone. These are far more dangerous than any foes on the outside. Enemies without the church can never do vast harm, but those within the church can do immeasurable harm. There are hundreds who belong to this church who never attend. What is their testimony to their world? It is this: "I have been on the inside. I know what the church has to offer. I rate the worth of those offerings at naked nothing."
What are we to do about this large company of men and women whose names are on our church roll but who never attend? We can continue to do what we have done in the past and that is let them severely alone. But if we are willing to pay the price, we can bring them back again. Once many of them were active and earnest. As a rule they did not break with the church all at once. They drifted into their present position. Little by little they lost interest. Little by little they fell into the habit of utter neglect. Neglecting the cultivation of their religious lives, they are backslidden, but in spite of this they can still be reached. They afford one of the most hopeful fields for our evangelistic effort.

Of course, another field is the community in which we live. There are always those who attend our Sunday School who are not definitely committed to Christ and to His church. We all have friends who might be interested if we would interest ourselves in them. At always the most fruitful field of evangelism is childhood and youth. I know that there are those who sometimes fling at any sort of evangelistic effort that results only in the bringing in of a company of boys and girls, but to take such a position is to be guilty of the grossest misunderstanding.

This is true for the following reasons:

1. A child can be a Christian. Not only can a child be a Christian, but Jesus makes the child the model Christian. "Except ye be converted and become as this little child, ye cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

   Not only can a child be a Christian, but he can become a Christian easier than anybody else. This is the case because those characteristics necessary to becoming a Christian belong to the child by nature. It is a truism for instance that we are saved by faith. When is it easier to believe? In childhood or when one has reached forty? A child believes naturally. A child will believe anything you tell him until by deceiving
him you teach him to believe otherwise. Then a child naturally leans on a higher power. A child is naturally loyal to what it loves. We are to take these qualities that are inherent in the life of a child and direct them out towards God. A child can be a Christian and can become one easier in childhood than ever again.

3. A third fact that we need to bear in mind is that not only can a child become a Christian easier in childhood than at any other time, but by coming to Christ in childhood they make the best Christians. We need not be surprised at that. Who make the best baseball players? Who make the best tennis players? Who make the best musicians, the best artists in every field? Certainly, not those who begin when they are fifty, but those who begin in childhood. The work of the church is being done today by those who came into the church as boys and girls. If we were to take out of the active work of the church all who joined after twenty the church would be a wreck.

Finally, not only can a child be a Christian and become a Christian easier in childhood than ever again; not only do such make the best Christians, but if they fail to come in childhood the chances are that they will never come. I am speaking to parents who still have their children about them. The privilege of leading your children into the church is going to be offered to you at this Easter time. Let me urge you to take this opportunity seriously. It is a question of now or never. If your boys and girls reach the age of twenty without being committed to Christ and the church, the chances are overwhelmingly great that they will go through life and on beyond life without such commitment.

Let us witness then before the great congregation, let us witness to the church members that have lost their way, let us bear our testimony to the community, but above all, let us evangelize our own children.
This we can do if we will. We can do it in part by direct appeal, by formal teaching, but far more we can do it by what we are. More impressive than anything that we say is the atmosphere that we carry with us, the atmosphere that we create in the home. I cannot remind you too often that while religion can be taught that far more often it is caught. Here then is a field to our hand, a field for which we are definitely responsible.

IV

Why should we seek under God to measure up to this responsibility?

And mark you that it is not the responsibility of the minister, it is not the responsibility of the official board, it is not simply the responsibility of the teachers in the Church School, it is not even the responsibility solely of those who already belong to the church. A young man today is not free from loyalty to the government simply because he does not wear a uniform. If he were to claim such exemption on that ground, we would answer that he ought to wear a uniform. If you claim that the work of the evangelist is no work of yours because you do not belong to the church, then we would answer you ought to. The only difference in point of obligation between the church member and the non-church member is that one has accepted his obligation while the other has not.

Why then, I repeat, should we take this command seriously.

1. Because it is a command! It comes not only from the inspired lips of Paul, but it is the fundamental marching order of Jesus Himself. He made it definitely clear that it is our business to make disciples. We cannot refuse obedience to this command and enjoy His fellowship. What is our Lord about today? Why is He here? He has come as in the long ago
to seek and to save that which is lost. He is out after the sheep that has
gone astray or the lamb that might go astray unless brought into the fold.
You and I must walk that road if we are to enjoy His fellowship. The refusal
to do this accounts for much of the spiritual sickness and weariness and
boredom that characterizes a great many in the church today. Set out on the
road that your Lord is walking and sooner or later you will meet. It is
only as we do the work of an evangelist that we can enjoy a vigorous spiri-
tual life.

2. This is the only way to have a growing and thrilling church. One
danger of the church always is to become complacent and self-satisfied. We
read of such a church in the New Testament. Once it had been all afloat with
enthusiasm. "At noon it has room large and strong and influential. Listen
to the resolution passed by its efficient board. Here is what it thought
of itself. "Thou seest I am rich and increased in goods and have need of
nothing." There you have it. Don't you need a deeper spiritual life? More
consecrated teachers in your Church School? No. A more vigorous members-
ship? No.

What happens to a church like this? It ceases to be aggressive. It
seeks merely to hold its own. It tries to dig in and stand the siege. What
is the saddest handicap of the allied nations in the present world conflict?
It is just this: We are on the defensive. No team can make a touchdown
if the other side has the ball. A nation on the defensive is headed for
defeat unless it can take the offensive. The same is true of the church.
The church that seeks to hold its own is already headed for the cemetery.
But the church that is aggressively going to the attack becomes for that
very reason the most alive and thrilling institution in all the world.
It is only as we do the work of an evangelist that we can be alive and
growing church.
It is only as we do the work of an evangelist that we can hope to save the world. At this moment, the outlook is unspeakably dark. As the sun set in the long ago and the night we called the Dark Ages settled over the world, so we are threatened today? What is our hope in changing this possible night into a new and better day? It is in the right kind of evangelism. Jesus is still the Way, the Truth, and the Life. It is still true that there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. If He has not the answer, then there is no answer. I believe that the answer is with Him. Therefore, I am fully persuaded that as we do the work of an evangelist, we save ourselves. We enrich our church. We remake our fellow and help to remake our broken and bleeding world. Therefore, I can do nothing better than pass on this great word from the fiery lips of St. Paul: "Do the work of an evangelist."

Why do we fail? People...
1. Professional plus Pastor plus hurt in the words - spices up the work of an evangelist.
2. It is work-willing magic - I want to work for the Lord.
3. Lack of vital experience - failure to see that evangelism is not a superficial service, but a spiritual experience.
4. Materialism.

What do we do it for? Jesus and the individual and the family.

Where shall we do it? Where life is, in church, in community, in world.
1. Field, not church.
2. Missionary, not Sunday.

Why do it? Right experience.
1. Only way to vigorous church.
2. Only way to vigorous world.
OUR THRILLING TASK

"Do the work of an evangelist."

II Timothy 4:5

Here is an old man who is writing a letter. This man is easily one of the greatest intellects of his day. He is a man who has lived much, thought much, suffered much. He knows exactly what he believed. He has reached a definite conclusion as to those values that are worthwhile. Having begun by being the bitterest enemy of the Christian movement, he is now one of its most loyal friends. He is writing a parting letter to his own son in the Gospel.

In all probability he loves this young man, Timothy, more than he loves any other man in the world. In this parting charge he is laying upon his heart those things that he is convinced are fundamental. If we are never deadly in earnest before, we are in earnest as we come close to the Sunset and Evening Star. Paul is writing with a knowledge that in all probability the door of his prison will open soon. But when it opens he will not likely pass to the freedom of the outer world, he will rather go to lay his head upon the block of the executioner. Writing thus a parting charge to one whom he loves better than he loves his own life he speaks of what lies closest to his heart. He tells his son how to carry on when he is gone. What does he tell him? Among other things he tells him this, "Do the work of an evangelist."

To some this will sound a bit like an anti-climax. Evangelism is a musical word that has somehow lost its winsomeness for many of our modern ears.
Once all music, it clashes now like instruments played out of tune. Somehow in its journey from the Jerusalem of yesterday to the Jericho of today it has fallen among thieves who have stripped it and wounded it and have departed leaving it half dead. It therefore takes a rather daring Samaritan to stop and administer first aid. This is especially true in the face of the fact that so many decent and cultivated priests and Levites are passing by, not only refusing to lend a hand, but inwardly chuckling over the plight of the chap, and secretly hoping that they have seen the last of him.

This has not always been the case in our church. I am not among the ancients but I can remember when this word had charm. I can remember when the old-time revival had a real place in our church. I can remember when the first day of the evangelistic campaign called people together in large numbers and with a heightened expectancy. Not only so, but I have seen things take place in these meetings that could only be explained in terms of God. I have seen the multitudes come together not to see Jesus only, but Lazarus also who he raised from the dead. But that is largely of yesterday. The announcement of a revival in the average city church today would not be a trumpet blast for the rallying of the hosts, but rather a warning gong that would scatter the saints to their own homes and to their cars upon the highway.

I.

How has this come about? How were Methodists of all others, whose church was born of a revival, come to shy ground evangelism?

The first obvious reason is that we have recognized some of the abuses and shortcomings of the old time revival. We are accustomed to lay the blame for the disrepute of evangelism of our day largely upon the shoulders of the professional evangelists. Of course some of these professionals were greatly at fault. While others were men of high character, who were the salt of the earth. But some of them did do shoddy work. We can remember how they used to come with
their sensational announcements and high powered subjects and veteran sermons and genius for counting real money and sham results. They reigned as kings for a few days, then at last they folded their tents like the Arabs and slightly stole away, leaving us on four flat tires spiritually with our spares stolen. And we remember still how the last state of that church was worse than the first.

But even when this happened we are compelled in all honesty, that the fault was no more the fault of the evangelist than it was the pastor and his people. Often times when they sent for this evangelist they did so not because they were eager for a real refreshing of the presence of the Lord, they did so, because they were willing to pay the price for such. On the contrary they were seeking an easy way out of a hard situation. They were bargain counter saints obsessed by a conviction that they could get a million dollar return on a penny investment. They were trying to secure a bumper crop without taking the trouble of turning the land, tilling the soil, planting the seed, and cultivating the crop. They were in quest of an easy religion and an easy religion is always a religion that satisfies neither God nor man.

Of course this desire to find an easy way to do a difficult task was only the symptom of an inner disease. It meant that we had in some measure lost our passion, our willingness to sacrifice. This meant a lost sense of God. Here is a testimony of one of the great men of his day. "Then said I, here am I send me." Here is a man who is eager to do the work of an evangelist. Why is he eager? When did he become eager? "Then said I." This, then, is a backward looking word. It looks back to a transforming experience. What was that experience? "I saw the Lord... then said I woe is me for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips... . Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand... And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged." It was after this had taken place, it was after he had come to experience
the cleansing power of God in his own life that he is eager to tell his own story and to share his blessing with others. We have lost our fervor some of us, because we have lost our sense of God.

Having lost our fervor we began to rationalize. It is a human trait that when we stand face to face with a task that we know we ought to perform and yet have not the gallantry to perform, we explain it away. Those grapes that the fox saw were beautiful grapes. The very sight of them made his mouth water. But when he discovered that it was necessary for him to climb and risk a fall in order to gain them, he decided they were sour and not worth having. When the ten spies first looked upon the Promise Land they were thrilled. But when they saw the giants and became convinced that the possession of the land might involve some blood-letting, they gave over their purpose to possess it, declaring that it was no good anyway. And I fear that many of the saints realizing that real evangelism is always costly, realizing that there is no bringing men and women to birth without travail of soul, have dismissed evangelism as being no good anyway. In fact it has come to be synonymous with ignorance in the mind of many. Thus we have turned it over in a large measure to the speckled bird churches, and to those who we believe are intellectually backward. So consistently have we done this that there are many excellent people in our church who really do not know what evangelism is.

II.

When Paul said, "Do the work of an evangelist," what did he mean? What is it to evangelize? Its simplest meaning is to tell good news. But we can best understand the richness of the word by seeing it in terms of personality. It would help us to understand an evangelist by turning to the Supreme Evangelist, Jesus Christ our Lord. Mark tells us in his thrilling Gospel of Jesus coming into Galilee telling the good news about God. When he did that he was doing the
work of an evangelist.

What was the content of this good news? He came telling men that they were all the children of God, the good and the bad, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the respectable and the outcasts. He told all and sundry that God was their Father. But while God was the Father of all, all did not take the place of sons. That was one reason it was so necessary for him to tell this good news. Some did not dare to act as sons. Some did not believe in their Father enough to take such a position.

In the telling of this good news Jesus told of a certain father who had two sons, but neither of these took a position of sonship. One ran away from home and wasted his substance with riotous living. The other did far better. He remained at home and worked. But he worked not as a son but as a slave. His experience, therefore, was a mean and lean affair. When he told it it was in words like these, "All these years do I slave for thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandments, and thou never gavest me a kid with which I might make merry with my friends. You have compelled me to live a starved life." The father in making answer did not deny that he had led a starved life, but he did deny that he had been compelled to do so. While confessing that he had lived as a slave, he said that he might have lived as a son. "Son, thou art ever with me and all that I have is thine." It was this type of evangelism that led Jesus to the cross. It was this evangelism that he commanded to his followers.

When Jesus was crucified the Christian movement seemed at an end, but Jesus arose from the dead. At Pentecost there came to his followers a certainty of the divine presence. They themselves were transformed from mere imitators of Christ into sharers of his nature. They no longer imitated him, they reproduced him. They came to be possessed of something of his amazing joy, of his hot enthusiasm. They came to be gripped by a passion to share that thrills us to this day. Without material resources, without social standing, without churches, they went out
to do the work of an evangelist and the world was remade.

How did it come about? There were some great preachers among them who preached in Jewish synagogues and in the open streets. But the results accomplished by these were small in comparison to the accomplishments of ordinary men and women who went out to awaken an eager and unquestionable interest by their own interest in others. That hard pagan world was remade by the personal testimony of ordinary men and women. As friend talked with friend telling him out of his own experience the good news about God, that wilderness and solitary place became glad and the desert blossomed as a rose. This is fact not theory. It was largely through the efforts of men who were ignorant slaves the ancient world was reborn.

Then the centuries slipped by, Christianity in England became stale and ugly and dead. Cultivated men as a rule were throwing it into the discard as something with which men of their intelligence could have nothing to do. Then again something happened that was flatly impossible. An Oxford don, an aristocrat intellectually and morally, a cultivated stickler for form entered into a new experience of God. The next day this intellectual patrician mounted his horse and set out on an evangelistic tour that carried him literally through the centuries. For days and years he rode, and as he rode, the winter changed to spring, the barren trees put on verdant foliage, the flowers bloomed, the birds sang, the human heart stood up in the glad consciousness that God had come. Every historian knows that all the great happenings on land and sea of that thrilling story fade into insignificance in comparison with the work accomplished through the evangelist, Wesley, and his followers. So this morning as the sons of Wesley, and above all else, as the sons of God, we, listening again to this same command upon the lips of the greatest evangelist, Paul, "Do the work of an evangelist."

III.

How shall we evangelize?
One difficulty in the discussion of this question is that the hearer is likely either to lose interest or to become antagonistic because he assumes that the speaker is urging a certain type of evangelism. We think especially of mass evangelism. But I am not contending for one method, but for any method that will accomplish results. A method that might be effective in one day might prove futile in another.

For instance in some churches the revival method that once was quite effective would not be effective at all. Were the pastor to announce a revival in most city churches it would be about as effective as it would be if he were to announce, "We are going to have some very interesting cases of contagious diseases with us next Sunday. If you will come and bring your children you may be able to contract one or more." Some are as afraid of that type of evangelism as of a pestilence. But let us bear in mind what evangelism is. It is telling the good news about God. This we can do in many ways.

Naturally, whatever may be our method the evangelist needs to know what the gospel is in his own life. What we are is always more effective than what we say. I heard a man preach sometime ago who was sparkling and up-to-date. He had the modern slant. There was nothing fanatical or foolish about him. He was full of sweet reasonableness. But somehow he left me unmoved. He did not make me in the least wistful. He did not send me away saying, "I wish I had a redeeming and beautiful vision of God." Then I heard another who was nothing like so reasonable nor cultivated. I felt that in some respects he had lost step and was behind the time. But I could not resist the conviction that he had found Reality. I had a feeling that the discovery that he had made was so vital in his own life that he was desperately eager to share it with me. I could not but be moved and helped. If we are Christian, therefore, we are always evangelizing by what we do, by our presence, by our gifts, by our kindnesses, or the spoken word.
Our field is everywhere our lot is cast. Of course our best evangelistic opportunity is always the childhood and youth. I have heard preachers of the old type lament the fact that we would train and receive into the Church a group of children at Easter time. But that is all to the good. I think we could far better lose the revival than lose our educational evangelism. We have discovered these important facts—that a child can be a Christian, that he can be won easier as a child than at any other time, that those won at that time make the best Christians. Therefore we are to evangelize in our homes and in our Sunday-school classes. But we are never to forget that a man may be born anew when he is old. There are some that slip through our fingers, there are some that have never had an adequate opportunity, these are often pathetically eager for help. The only reason they do not come to us is that having a suspicion, that amount to a tragedy, they think we are not concerned or that we do not possess in reality what we claim to possess. There is one thing that I have learned through quite an extensive ministry, and that is that every man has a hungry heart. There are few indeed who would not like to have a frank conversation with you on what you have found in Jesus Christ if they really believe you have found anything. Perhaps you read of that chap in one of our cities, who after months of fighting financial reverses took his own life. When they cleaned up his desk they found the pitiful note, "I have been through hell. All these tragic days I have been wishing that some man would ask me to become a Christian." Jesus won men one by one. No better way has been invented through the years. Too often outsiders are absenting themselves from our services. They will never come seeking us. If they are won we must seek them. To evangelize then is to tell the good news through life and lips especially to youth but to all eager souls that come our way.

IV.

Why should we take this seriously?
1. We ought to take it seriously because it is only by so doing that we can be individually normal, joyous, growing Christians. It is not speaking disparagingly of the church people of our day to say that many of them are sadly disappointed in their religious lives. Many of us are sickly. Many of us live under skies that have no radiance, shut in by environments that are not roomy and inviting. "I used to think," a woman said sometime ago, "if I should ever become a Christian I would be a good one. But I find that I am like the rest." She was not bitter, she was just a bit disappointed. She just seemed to be looking at the paltry wealth that was hers and then at Christ with sad-eyed, wondering if that was the best the Master could do for her.

What lies back of this disappointment? There may be positive sin, but I believe that the most fruitful cause of ill health in our religious lives is our failure to live up to this command. Why did Jesus come? He tells us in a single sentence. "I am come to seek and to save that which is lost." Many men are like the coin that the woman lost. They still have value, but they are out of circulation. They are like the sheep that didn't come to the fold, a perfectly good sheep, but away from his fellows and away from his shepherd. Our business is to bring men and women into right relationship with his fellows and with God. That is what our Lord is working at every day. As we share that task with him, as we walk the road that he is walking, it is just plain common sense that sooner or later we will run into Him. I put to you this challenge, when your skies are leaden, when you feel your religion wants utter reality, go out in a spirit of love to minister to human need and see that if you do not find your winter changed to spring. Stop looking for Heartsease and lift the other man's burden and you will come upon it as a great surprise. It is only by doing the work of an evangelist, living your religion, and serving your fellows that you can be a wholesome, growing Christian.

2. It is only by doing the work of an evangelist as a church that we can be
an attractive and growing church. You had in your Sunday-school the story of
the church at Laodicea. It was a very decent and respectable church. Here is
what it thought of itself, "Thou saeest I am rich and increased in goods and
have need of nothing." But to the mind of the Master it was merely nauseating.
It had no passion, no earnestness. Such a church is nauseating still. The
most interesting something in this world, the most gripping something in the
world, is a church possessed of the spirit and passion of its Saviour. About
the most dead something in this world is a church that has lost that spirit.

We can see the difference, compare the church at Laodicea with the church
at Jerusalem after Pentecost. It soon became dangerous to belong to this church
and yet it was impossible to shut people out of it. The church at Laodicea had
arrived. There was nothing for it to do but to dig in and stand the siege. The
church at Jerusalem was aggressive. It was carrying the ball. No church, how-
ever good, can make a touchdown if the other side has the ball. The only way
for a church to be gripping, fascinating, useful is to be evangelistic.

3. Finally, it is only as we are loyal to this commandment that we can hope
for a better world. I am aware of something of the desperateness of the situa-
tion that we face as a nation and as a world today. I am aware that millions of
earnest minded people have lost heart and hope. Maybe Christ does not have the
answer. Personally, I believe He has it. He did remake the ancient world, he
did remake the world of Wesley. He can remake ours, and none other can. "There
is none other name in heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." But if
in our own places, in our home, in our daily living, in our Church, we do the
work of an evangelist, just a few of us, we shall come to vigorous spiritual
health. We shall add to the health and power of our Church. We can help toward
the making of a new world. This is our hope and there is no other. May God help
us to believe it.
OUR THRILLING TASK

"Do the work of an evangelist."
II Timothy 4:5

This is an impressive word for more than one reason. It is a word of an old man to a younger man. It is December speaking to June. It is eventide giving morning the benefit of its accumulated wisdom. The man who uttered these words has lived much and thought much and accomplished much. He has learned the best way to use life. He has learned where to invest himself to bring the largest possible returns.

Not only is this the word of a man of vast intellect and of vast experience, but it is the word of one who is now close upon the sunset and the evening star. Paul has reached the end of his journey and he knows it. He is speaking with that solemnity that characterizes even the most flippant when they come to the parting of the ways. Speaking in the conscious presence of the executioner, this earnest man naturally speaks of matters that lie closest to his heart. He is all the more bent on doing this because the one to whom he is speaking is his own son in the Gospel. Paul has a roomy heart. He has loved many. But he doubtless loves this young minister Timothy more than he loves any other man in all the world. For this reason he is the more eager to give him his best. Therefore, when this wise and aged man delivers his parting charge to the one that he loves the best, what does he say? This—"Do the work of an evangelist."

I

But in spite of the fact that evangelism held such a high place in the mind and heart of Paul, many of us moderns do not think so much of it.
Evangelism is a musical word that has lost much of its winsomeness. Some-
how in its journey from the Jerusalem of that day down to the Jericho of
today it has fallen among thieves that have stripped it and wounded it and
have left it half-dead. It, therefore, takes a rather rash Samaritan to
dare to stop and administer first aid. This is all the more the case because
so many cultured and respectable priests and Levites are passing by, not only
refusing to lend a hand but even chuckling inwardly in their mirth that they
have seen the last of the poor chap.

How has this come about? Of course, it is not universally true, but in
many churches evangelism is a rather frightening word. In the language of
our youngsters, how did we get that way? I know one easy and familiar answer.
We love to lay it on the professional evangelist. But of course this is a
very inadequate and unfair answer. We cannot group all these men in one
company of condemnation. Some of them were the salt of the earth. They as
ourselves are a bit like William Trimbletoe's hens—"Some lay eggs and some
lay none."

For instance, in the good old days there were professional evangelists
that did some very shoddy work. You can remember how they used to come with
their high-powered and sensational methods. You can remember their sermons—
veterans they were that had done service on many a field. You can remember
how these evangelists often reigned as kings for a few days. Then they folded
their tents like the Arabs and as silently stole away. After they were gone,
we often found ourselves on four flat tires spiritually with our spares stolen.
Often their spurious results could not be conserved. Too often the last state
of the church where they served was worse than the first.

But when this happened the failure was by no means solely the fault of
the evangelist; it was even more the fault of the pastor and of his people.
When we secured his services in the first place, it was often not because we were seeking a real refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Too often it was because we were seeking a smooth road out of a rough situation. We were eager for a million dollar return on a penny's investment. We thought we could raise a bumper crop without giving ourselves the trouble of turning the soil, sowing the seed, cultivating the crop, and reaping the harvest. But it so happens there is no easy way to get great things done.

But while some lost their zeal for evangelism because the type that they had witnessed did not seem sufficiently rewarding, others ceased to be evangelistic because they were not willing to pay the price of doing the work of an evangelist. "When Zion travailleth," the prophet said, "she brings forth sons and daughters." The work of evangelism is always work. It is always expensive work. It is so expensive that it can best be compared to the sufferings of a mother as she passes through the valley of the shadow of death to lift into the light a new life. Naturally an ease-loving church does not like to do the work of an evangelist.

Then perhaps the supreme reason for our lost zeal for doing the work of an evangelist was our lost sense of God. Here, for instance, is a man who is eager to do the work of an evangelist: "Then said I, Here am I; send me." How did Isaiah come to be possessed by such a passion? The "Then" of the text is a backward-looking word. It looks back to an experience that had come to this brilliant young prophet. To what does it look? Listen: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord........Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of
the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me." Having seen God and having been cleansed by the power of God, he is eager to share his experience with others. Every such man has a passion for doing the work of an evangelist.

II

What do we mean by the work of an evangelist? I am not here arguing for one type of evangelism against another. We evangelize in many ways, but all seek the same end. The meaning of evangelism in its simplest form is telling good news. When we want to see evangelism at its best, of course we see it in terms of personality. Suppose we turn to the supreme Evangelist, our Saviour and Lord. Listen to His story as told in that gripping and aggressive Gospel of Mark. "And Jesus came unto Galilee telling the good news about God."

What was the content of that good news? Jesus told men that they were all sons of God; that the only difference between men was that some took the position of sonship while the others tried to be independent. He told them that since they were sons they were also brothers. Since they were brothers, they need not live in a lonely and unfriendly world. They need not glare at each other across frozen chasms of indifference or across fiery chasms of hate, that they might all be brought into one great family—the Family of God.

Not only did Jesus preach this gospel of a Loving Father and of brotherhood, but He practiced it. He threw Himself under every man's burden. He bridged the chasms between Himself and the hopeless outcast. He sat down with harlots and talked to them with the same gracious and tender courtesy that He would have shown to the sweetest flowers of womanhood. One day when He went for a visit to Jericho, He ignored the courtesies of the reception committee to spend the night with the best hated man in Jericho, a ratty
little tax-gatherer by the name of Zacchaeus. So passionately did He evangelize that while some loved Him, others hated Him so intensely that they hung Him on a cross.

But death could not hold Him. After His resurrection came Pentecost. From this experience, men baptized into His spirit want out over the hard Roman Empire to do the work of an evangelist. Some of them were great preachers. The vast majority were ordinary people—ex-slaves, artisans, and what-not. But through their preaching and testimony, they established "little colonies of heaven", little groups of brotherly people. Astonished pagans who longed to love and to be loved were drawn into these little groups, for they had a strange power to make every beautiful thing flourish and grow and to make every ugly thing wither and die. That hard Roman world was re-made by them. In three short centuries the Roman eagle had been displaced by the Cross.

Then, came days of compromise and complacency. Slowly the sun set and the darkness gathered, a darkness that lasted for long centuries. By and by the morning broke for a while because a certain man named Martin Luther did the work of an evangelist. Then in the eighteenth century when religion in England had grown so stale that that little island was spiritually like the valley of dry bones in the prophecy of Ezekiel, something else happened. A brilliant Oxford don who claimed that his heart had been strongly warmed mounted his horse one day and started on an evangelistic tour that took him literally through the century. He and his followers breathed on the frozen life of that day like a warm gulf stream. Historians generally agree that the greatest event of that crowded century was the work of evangelism done by Wesley and his followers.

Today we find ourselves in a situation that bristles with difficulties. We find ourselves engaged in a war whose far-flung dimensions make every other
never seen small and inconsequential. Judging the future by the past, this
war will not minister to our growth in grace. We are going to come out of
it with a civilization torn, bleeding, and depressed. The one institution
whose supreme purpose it is to hold up the light of vital Godliness is
the church. She can only do this by doing the work of an evangelist.

III

How shall we do the work of an evangelist?

1. Our first and vastly important field is the church. We are to
evangelize our own members. That is a prime need of every local congre-
gation. One of the greatest handicaps of the church is the vast number
of its own membership who let all its services and its activities severely
alone. These are far more dangerous than any foes on the outside. Enemies
without the church can never do vast harm, but those within the church can
do immeasurable harm. There are hundreds who belong to this church who
never attend. What is their testimony to their world? It is this: "I
have been on the inside. I know what the church has to offer. I rate the
worth of those offerings at naked nothing."

What are we to do about this large company of men and women whose
names are on our church roll but who never attend? We can continue to do
what we have done in the past and that is let them severally alone. But if
we are willing to pay the price, we can bring some of them back again. Once
many of them were active and earnest. As a rule they did not break with the
church all at once. They drifted into their present position. Little by
little they lost interest. Little by little they fell into the habit of
utter neglect. Neglecting the cultivation of their religious lives, they
are backslidden, but in spite of this they can still be reached. They afford
one of the most hopeful fields for our evangelistic effort.
Of course, another field is the community in which we live. There are always those who attend our Sunday School who are not definitely committed to Christ and to His church. We all have friends who might be interested if we would interest ourselves in them. But always the most fruitful field of evangelism is childhood and youth. I know that there are those who sometimes fling at any sort of evangelistic effort that results only in the bringing in of a company of boys and girls. But to take such a position is to be guilty of the grossest misunderstanding.

This is true for the following reasons:

1. A child can be a Christian. Not only can a child be a Christian, but Jesus makes the child the model Christian. "Except ye be converted and become as this little child, ye cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Not only can a child be a Christian, but he can become a Christian easier than anybody else. This is the case because those characteristics necessary to becoming a Christian belong to the child by nature. It is a truism, for instance, that we are saved by faith. When is it easier to believe? In childhood or when one has reached forty? A child believes naturally. A child will believe anything you tell him until by deceiving him you teach him to believe otherwise. Then, a child naturally leans on a higher power. A child is naturally loyal to what it loves. We are to take these qualities that are inherent in the life of a child and direct them out towards God. A child can be a Christian and can become one easier in childhood than ever again.

3. A third fact that we need to bear in mind is that not only can a child become a Christian easier in childhood than at any other time, but by coming to Christ in childhood they make the best Christians. We need not be surprised at that. Who make the best baseball players? Who make the best tennis players? Who make the best musicians, the best artists in every field?
Certainly not those who begin when they are fifty, but those who begin in childhood. The work of the church is being done today by those who come into the church as boys and girls. If we were to take out of the active work of the church all who joined after twenty, the church would be a wreck.

Finally, not only can a child be a Christian and become a Christian easier in childhood than ever again; not only do such make the best Christians, but if they fail to come in childhood the chances are that they will never come. I am speaking to parents who still have their children about them.

The privilege of leading your children into the church is going to be offered to you at this Easter time. Let me urge you to take this opportunity seriously. It is a question of now or never. If your boys and girls reach the age of twenty without being committed to Christ and the church, the chances are overwhelmingly great that they will go through life and on beyond life without such commitment.

Let us witness then before the great congregation, let us witness to the church members that have lost their way, let us bear our testimony to the community, but above all, let us evangelize our own children. This we can do if we will. We can do it in part by direct appeal, by formal teaching, but far more we can do it by what we are. More impressive than anything that we say is the atmosphere that we carry with us, the atmosphere that we create in the home. I cannot remind you too often that while religion can be taught far more often it is caught. Here then is a field to our hand, a field for which we are definitely responsible.

IV

Why should we seek under God to measure up to this responsibility? And mark you that it is not the responsibility of the minister, it is not the responsibility of the official board, it is not simply the responsibility of the teachers in the Church School, it is not even the responsibility solely
of those who already belong to the church. A young man today is not free from loyalty to the government simply because he does not wear a uniform. If he were to claim such exemption on that grounds, we would answer that he ought to wear a uniform. If you claim that the work of the evangelist is no work of yours because you do not belong to the church, then we would answer you ought to belong. The only difference in point of obligation between the church member and the non-church member is that one has accepted his obligation while the other has not.

Why then, I repeat, should we take this command seriously?

1. Because it is a command! It comes not only from the inspired lips of Paul, but it is the fundamental marching order of Jesus Himself. He made it definitely clear that it is our business to make disciples. We cannot refuse obedience to this command and enjoy His fellowship. What is our Lord about today? Why is He here? He has come as in the long ago to seek and to save that which is lost. He is out after the sheep that has gone astray or the lamb that might go astray unless brought into the fold. You and I must walk that road if we are to enjoy His fellowship. The refusal to do this accounts for much of the spiritual sickness and weariness and boredom that characterizes a great many in the church today. Set out on the road that your Lord is walking and sooner or later you will meet. It is only as we do the work of an evangelist that we can enjoy a vigorous spiritual life.

2. This is the only way to have a growing and thrilling church. One danger of the church always is to become complacent and self-satisfied. We read of such a church in the New Testament. Once it had been all aglow with enthusiasm. But now it has grown large and strong and influential. Listen to the resolution passed by its efficient board. Here is what it thought of itself. "Thou sayest I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing." There you have it. Don't you need a deeper spiritual life? More consecrated
teachers in your Church School? No. A more vigorous membership? No.

What happens to a church like this? It ceases to be aggressive. It seeks merely to hold its own. It tries to dig in and stand the siege. What is the saddest handicap of the allied nations in the present world conflict? It is just this: We are on the defensive. No team can make a touchdown if the other side has the ball. A nation on the defensive is headed for defeat unless it can take the offensive. The same is true of the church. The church that seeks to hold its own is already headed for the cemetery. But the church that is aggressively going to the attack becomes for that very reason the most alive and thrilling institution in all the world. It is only as we do the work of an evangelist that we can be a live and growing church.

3. It is only as we do the work of an evangelist that we can hope to save the world. At this moment the outlook is unspeakably dark. As the sun set in the long ago and the night we called the Dark Ages settled over the world, so we are threatened today. What is our hope in changing this possible night into a new and better day? It is in the right kind of evangelism. Jesus is still the Way, the Truth, and the Life. It is still true that there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. If He has not the answer, then there is no answer. I believe that the answer is with Him. Therefore, I am fully persuaded that as we do the work of an evangelist, we save ourselves. We enrich our church. We remake our fellows and help to remake our broken and bleeding world. Therefore, I can do nothing better than pass on this great word from the fiery lips of St. Paul: "Do the work of an evangelist."
EVANGELM M

Do the work of an evangelist. (2 Tim.4-6)

My subject is far from having a universal appeal. Once, it was as musical as the song of a mocking-bird. Today to some ears it is as jarring as aless instruments played out of tune. Somehow in its journey from the Jerusalem of yesterday to the Jericho of today it has fallen among thieves who have wounded it and stripped it and departed leaving it half dead. Once the announcement of a revival called the people together in larger numbers and with greater expectation. Today in many churches it sends them scampering as if frightened sheep set upon by wolves. (more than one way)

Part I

How has this come about?

It has not come about by a wise reading of church history. We have not discovered that the revival has done more harm than good. The greatest day in the history of the primitive church was Pentecost. That day was a day of triumphant mass evangelism.

As the primitive saints won on this day so they preached to crowds through the coming days. This was the case of Peter in the house of Cornelius. It was the case of Phillip in Samara. It was the case of Paul over a large part of the Roman empire. Evangelist preaching even antidates Pentecost. When the brilliant prophet, Ezekiel, faced a congregation of dry bones what was he commanded to do. He was not commanded to polish them, organize them, but to preach to them. As he preached this valley of death became
a parade ground for the army of the king of kings.

Of all people who should not look ascante at evangelism we Methodists are first. Our church was born evangelist. Of course, the early Methodist practiced more than one type of evangelist. There was personal evangelism, but more revolutionary still was mass evangelism. The Wesleys and Whitfieldes preached to crowds. Did this credit evangelist is to ignore one of the brightest facts of history.

Why then do so many shy away? One reason is that these are keenly mindful of the abuses of evangelist. That there have been such abuses no one can deny. There has been a type of evangelism that has left the church and community in a worse state than it found it. Sometimes people have been relieved of little except of intelligent conviction and money.

Then there are those who look with suspicion on evangelism through sheer ignorance. They have never seen it work. This is especially true of mass evangelism. There are vast numbers in our church who never saw a real revival. No Christian who has witnessed a real revival could be antagonistic. A revival simply means the coming of new life. Through such an experience a spiritual springtime comes to the individual, to the church, and to the community.

Perhaps the greatest reason for our shying at evangelism is its costliness. Paul calls it work, and work it is. A real revival is never an easy way out of a hard situation. It is such difficult work that it can only be compared to the pains of a mother as she goes through the valley of the shadow to lift a new life to the light. It is only the church that is willing to believe that is able in this sense to bless
We shy around evangelism because it is very costly, costly in consecration, costly in effort. Every minister would like to have a real revival that is also true of almost every church. But they do not desire it deeply enough to pay the price. There is no unconditional revival, no unconditional evangelism.

But we need to bear in mind that at any cost we must be evangelistic. Without it there is nothing ahead but death and disaster. Christianity is simply an aggressor. When it ceases to be aggressive it ceases to be Christian. Too many churches are seeking to make a touchdown while the other side carries the ball. In almost every contact between the free world and the world behind the iron curtain, the latter wins. Why? We are trying to hold our own. They are out for world conquest. For communism is more than a political theory, it is a religion with sacrificial evangelistic programs. "By the sea means" said Peter, "I will come to you." (John 21:17) But the people who make sacrifices are handed defeat by the other team. So they say, "We can't afford to lose."

Now what is evangelism? Its simplest meaning is telling the good news. Good news is at once a thrill and a joy. Among the drab jokes that the devil has got across to many a modern church people is that preaching, especially evangelistic preaching, is drab and dead. In one of our leading journals of religion, I read an article with this caption, "Sermon shot to be enjoyed." Well, if that is the ideal, many of us have reached it. I told a company of ministers the other day that the greatest thrill many of us give our congregations is when we quit.

Now the assertion that the sermon is not to be enjoyed is emphatically false. They are to be enjoyed. The first Christian sermon begins like this "Behold I bring you glad tidings and great joy." We have far and ahead the most gladsome and thrilling story ever told. Why in heaven's name go about reporting it as if you were reporting a polio
epidemic.

Not only is the evangelist the teller of good news. He is telling a type of good news that is of infinite importance. He is telling good news about God. This kind of good news appeals to every human soul. This is the case because God has put into every human heart a hunger and a thirst for himself. When the Psalmist said "As the hart panteth after the waterbrook, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." He was voicing a universal longing. The big difference between the saint and the sinners in this respect is that the saints know something of that for which they thirst, while the sinners are often thirsty without knowing why.

This longing that belongs to everybody is often intense. Once while at work in a field skirted by the Buffalo river I saw an all-but-spent deer coming toward me. He was closely pursued by a pack of hounds. Why was the hunted creature coming toward me? Not for my help, he was coming in my direction because just beyond me was the river that offered the slaking of his burning thirst. After fifty years in the ministry I am increasingly sure of this, that when even the shoddiest of sinners comes to church, he wants to hear good news about God.

Now to tell such good news is to preach an evangelist sermon. If the sermon has no good news about God, it is not evangelistic. Furthermore, it is not in reality a sermon at all. All real preaching is essentially evangelistic. It used to be that some would say pridefully, I am evangelical, but not evangelistic. But such a statement is never true. To be evangelical, one has to be evangelistic.

I might add further that since the evangelist tells good news and since to fail to tell good news is to fail to preach, not every evangelistic sermon gives hope and courage. The preacher who takes the heart out of people in reality is not a preacher at all. He is simply delivering a wicked address. But are we not to face the facts, you ask?
Indeed, we are. But we are to face all the facts and not simply those that are drab. Two words go together like Siamese twins across the pages of the Bible. They are these “But God”. No other book faces up to the worst in human nature as does the Bible. But no other book is quite so heartening. This is the case because always over against the worst that man can be or do is the best that God is and does.

Part III

What is this good news about God that every true creature has to tell?

What is this news? Without the telling of which no man can be a real minister, with which every man must be an evangelist.

Let us bear in mind that it has to do not with emotional moonshine but with solid historic facts. The facts with which the real evangelist deals are just as substantial as the facts of the two world wars that have recently gutted our world. They are facts as undeniable as gravity.

1. We can begin with this world shaking fact. God has broken into human history in a unique way through his coming in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord. The Word has become flesh and has really dwelt among us. His footsteps have marked our commonplace world. His voice has been heard by human ears. His hands have touched men and women such as ourselves. In the coming of Jesus Christ God has come in his love on a mission to men.

2. This good news contains the amazing story of the cross. It shows us our suffering savior, praying "Father, forgive them," The forgiveness that he then offers, even to those who were murdering him he offers to all men. We can tell our sinful fellows what Simon told him
by his wounds. By his wounds we have been healed. Healing has already been put within the reach of our hands. All anybody has to do is to claim it. "Wounded because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities; he was oppressed and he was overcome; with injustice and fraud he was dealt; and yet he一点都不 complaint; opened not his mouth; was taken like a sheep and led like a lamb to the slaughter. And he to death." - Is. 53:7

3. This good news affirms that this Jesus who came to reveal God, and who died on a cross for our sins, was also raised from the dead. It affirms that men and women who had known him in the days of his flesh knew him yet more intimately after his death because he had risen. Through his rising he came to be both with and within and among those of that distant day. He is the risen Lord who was experienced by men and women of the long ago may be experienced by you and me. We can tell every man however good or bad, forgiveness is for you. We can tell him that this forgiveness not merely mean being let off from a penalty, it means rather the restoration of a friendship. It means that the living Christ will walk with you and me through all the changing years. No wonder that when his friends of the long ago saw him risen, they did not sob but sang. He had not gone away, he had drawn all the nearer.

4. Finally, we have the good news that this divine crucified and risen Lord who was experienced by men and women of the long ago may be experienced by you and me. We can tell every man however good or bad, forgiveness is for you. We can tell him that this forgiveness not merely mean being let off from a penalty, it means rather the restoration of a friendship. It means that the living Christ will walk with you and me through all the changing years. No wonder that when his friends of the long ago saw him risen, they did not sob but sang. He had not gone away, he had drawn all the nearer.

Part IV

Now how are we to tell this good news?

L. We are to tell it to the crowd who are our congregation. We are to tell it to the masses. Human nature hasn't changed. It pulsates to the same great needs, the same great loves and longings. Millions have heard the call and been saved by mass evangelism.

We are to tell it also to the individual. What volumes it speaks
while the sincerity and passion of Simon that having spoken to multitudes he could still give his wholehearted attention to a beggar whose life experience as a pest had come to be accepted both by himself and others. There is no substitute for concern for the individual.

We are to speak this message earnestly, passionately. There is no type of professing Christian who was so offensive to our Lord as the lukewarm. It is true of ourselves. Such one is offensive in himself. He is also exactly the opposite of the one whom he claims to serve. It is impossible merely to believe the good news about God and to be tepid and lukewarm about it.

He is to preach it simply. He is to preach it in such fashion that those who hear cannot help but understand. He is to be mindful in his preaching of his boys and girls. In his sermon that a ten year old child can't get something out of is being wasted on adults.

4. He should preach it with authority. Not simply the authority of the letter, but Bible-centered has been through the century far the most effective. He is to preach with authority of a great certainty of a personal experience. I should never have expected the woman that Jesus met at the well to become a powerful evangelist, yet read her report, it will make many of ours look sick.

Finally, we are to speak definitely and expectantly. Billy Sunday said to a company of preachers once, "The trouble with you is that your congregation will go to hell while they are trying to figure out what you mean." "Dad, what were you trying to get us to do?" questioned an admiring son of his preacher father. the only man in the Bible, as far as I know, who never hit a mark at which he was not shooting was that man who liquidated Ahab.
Having delivered your message, expect results. Many of us have lost our expectancy. There can be no sadder loss than that. We are to expect immediate results. Failing this, we are not to give up. As I grow older I rest increasingly on this promise, "The words that goeth forth out of my mouth shall not return unto me void." No man ever tells the good news about God with authority and loving conviction but that somebody hears.

Hear

1. With authority - intellectually elite
2. Can't tell - must be known - cannot be told
3. Authority - son of God - per a hope (2) Experience, wrong at least half of the time
4.uff...lo...that
5. Expectantly because of your faith - any amount of faith.
WHAT IS SUCCESS
II Timothy 4:7

"I have fought the good fight." (Moffatt)

My subject this evening is, "What is success?" In such a discussion I count with assurance upon your interest. Success is a matter that carries an appeal that is practically universal. Everybody wants to succeed. Nobody is deliberately seeking ways and means of making a failure. It is true that a great many of us do fail. But not one of us sets out at the beginning of the journey with our minds made up that we are going to end in final failure.

To be convinced that success is a matter of great compelling interest it is only necessary to read the advertisements in many of our leading magazines. On this page is a young fellow undertaking to make a speech. He blunders shamefully and sits down at last in utter confusion. A little later he has a second opportunity. This time he sets the stars in their orbits. He makes the eagles squall. He literally lifts the audience to their feet. The explanation is that he has in the meantime enjoyed a three weeks' correspondence course in some school on oratory. Or maybe some friend jestingly or sarcastically asked him to play the piano, sure of the futility of such a request. But he sits down at the instrument and makes Paderewski sound like a grind-organ. When they ask in amazement for the secret of his great achievement he also points to a certain correspondence school that has wrought this revolution.
Then we have the personality experts who promise to remake us if we only pay a nominal fee and attend upon their lectures. I remember one such in Washington. She was indeed a dynamic personality. She proposed to make all and sundry in her own image. Some of my friends entered her personality factory and came out duly remade. I do not know how long she might have continued her miraculous work but for the fact that she happened one day to let her pitiful little husband out of the cloister where she had him secluded. He was about as strong as a cobweb and as magnetic as a mummy. And if they twain shall be as one flesh, it might well be said of her that though saving others, herself she had not saved.

A certain author was telling recently of a pretentious school in our middle west that calls itself, "The Institution of Business Success." It is the work of this great institution to take all sorts of blunderers and misfits and turn them out with the guarantee of success in their hands. After your check has been received your first lesson is this: The postman gives you an envelope containing a card. On this card is written in big letters the word SUCCESS. You are to pin this card on the wall just level with your eyes. You are then to stand back and put the right hand lightly behind your head, then bring it gently over the top of your head, pointing your index finger straight to the card and cry in a determined voice, "Success is mine!" You are to repeat this six times in succession. Of course, if after this you do not beat Mr. Ford at his own game it is because you are simply too stupid to deal with.

2. The keenness of our interest in success is further emphasized by the tremendous price that many are willing to pay in order to win success. Here is a musician, for instance, who declares
that he must practice from six to eight hours every day. If he fails for one day he can tell it. If he fails to practice thus for two days his friends can tell it. If he fails for three days his audience can tell it. Some of you will remember a book written years ago by David Grey Phillips called, "The Price She Paid." It is the story of a young woman who had a voice. She determined that at any cost she would win success in the musical world. She became famous. But the price she paid was endless toil. It was the love of the only man that had ever found a place in her heart, that was almost everything that appeals to woman at her best.

What a price many a business man makes for his success that he measures in dollars and cents. I have known men to pay for it with the loss of their friends. I have known men to pay with the companionship of wife and children. I have known men to pay even with their honor, with their peace of mind, to pay the price of stained hands and a restless and tormented conscience. I know a man who succeeded politically, but as I think of him I think of him with neither envy nor honor. I can only say, "O, the price he paid!" Every day men are paying with broken bodies and broken homes and broken hearts for that something that they consider success. And the tragedy of it all is that so often the thing they buy is not in reality success at all. It is a poor, drab caricature of success.

What are some of the mistaken conceptions of success? When you hear of a successful man what does the word suggest? What kind of picture is brought before your mind? I think it safe to say that the average man, when he speaks of success, generally means one of three things.
1. A successful man is a man who has succeeded beyond the ordinary in winning this world's goods. To most of us success is a word that glitters. It has the crisp rustle of bank notes. It has the musical clank of gold. "He is a great success," we say admiringly, "he is worth so many thousands, or so many millions." We don't bother much to ask how he got it. He may have happened upon oil; he may have inherited it; he may have stolen it. But never mind, if he has money, in the eyes of vast numbers he is a success.

Now of course a rich man may be in the highest sense a successful man. Money is power. Money in the hands of a good man is a great power for good. But while one may be at once rich and successful, it does not follow by any means that he has to be rich in order to be successful, nor does it follow that because he is rich he is successful. Some of the greatest and most ghastly failures that this world has ever known have been men who were vastly successful financially. A man worth many millions died a few years ago. When he was gone his family said of him that he was the most miserable man they had ever known, hard and grasping, and tremendously difficult to live with.

Did you ever read that little play by Barrie called, "The Will?" One morning a young couple comes to the office of a London lawyer and the husband makes out his will. He suggests leaving his very meager estate to his young wife, but she will not hear of it. There are charities that must be remembered. There are some poverty-stricken kinsfolk that cannot be left out. Both the husband and wife are so sweet and generous that when they are gone the lawyer feels as if he had been walking in a flower garden. Ten years pass and they come again. This time they do not come together. The wife comes to see that her husband does not do anything foolish.
She is a bit wizened and faded, and is not so much dressed as upholstered. She will not hear of his leaving anything to charity. Her poor relations are not worth considering. Everything must be left to herself and to her two children. In the final scene the husband is there alone. He takes a piece of paper from his pocket and fingers it nervously. "My wife is dead," he tells his lawyer. "My daughter has run away with the chauffeur and my son is a rotter. On this piece of paper are the names of the six men with whom I have fought most brutally for gold. Leave my fortune to them with my respectful curses." A man of vast wealth he was, but what a failure!

2. Then there are those who believe that success consists in winning fame or position. A successful man is a man who is most in the public eye. He is a man who writes the best seller. He is a man who is elected to office. He is a man who occupies a position of unquestioned superiority in the political and social world. Now, of course one may do all these and be successful in the highest sense. But one may do all these and be a flat failure. One may also miss all these and be a beautiful success.

Byron woke up famous at twenty-three. But he felt himself a wretched failure none the less. I am thinking of two men who in recent years were outstanding political figures. One of them was elected to the highest in the gift of the American people. The other was a candidate for that high position three times and was defeated every time. Yet as we think tonight of Warren G. Harding and William J. Bryan, which of the two, think you, was the more successful man? Success is not a matter of either fame or position.

3. Then there are those who think of the successful man as the go-getter. He is the man who accomplishes what he set out to accomplish. He selects his goal and persists in the pursuit of it till he achieves it. Now persistence is a fine, high quality.
But accomplishing one's purpose is not necessarily success. Naturalists tell us that a weasel will pursue a rabbit all day if necessary. A hundred other rabbits and a multitude of other game may cross his path, but he relentlessly hangs upon the trail of his original victim. At last he succeeds, but when he does he has nothing but a dead rabbit.

Whether to win your goal is real success depends solely upon the worthfulness of your goal. Every man fails in proportion to the greatness of the task that he undertakes. If you set out to drift with the tide you will find success very easy. Any piece of driftwood may float down stream. But if you set out to do something that is worth while, the more worthful your task the more likely you are to fail in its accomplishment. Moses set out to free his people and make of them a great nation. He never succeeded. His task was too great. But the fact that he failed to fully attain does not mark him a failure.

Those of you who have read Ovid will remember the adventure of Phaethon who learned one day that he was the son of Apollo, the god of the sun. He went to see his father that he might verify the story from his father's own lips. Apollo acknowledged him as his son and declared that in proof of it he would grant him any request that he might ask. In reply the son requested that he might be the driver of his father's chariot for one day. Apollo consented reluctantly. The young man took the reins of the fiery steeds in his hands. As they dashed madly across the sky he lost control of them and was flung to his death. But the story says that the nymphs took up his body and buried it, and wrote over it this epitaph, "Here lies Phaethon, driver of his father's chariot, who, though he failed, yet died in a great attempt." Surely it is infinitely better to fail in doing something worth while than to succeed in doing something that is not worth the doing. Success
then, is not a mere matter of putting over your task. We must not turn a blind eye to the suffering of the poor because we are too busy with our own tasks. Diseesty the world needs us, and we must contribute our share to make it a better place.

III

What then is success? Here is a man in a prison cell. He is without money. The winter is coming on and he is not even able to buy a cloak to protect him from the cold. His friends are few. The executioner is near at hand. Soon they are going to take his head. Once this man was the hope of the Jewish church. Now he is their supreme object of hatred. He tells us that he has suffered the loss of all things, yet he is strangely joyful, strangely serene, beautifully at peace. He does not look upon himself as a failure, but with abounding gladness he writes, "I have fought in the good fight." And that is another way for him to say, "My life has been a success." Wherein is this true?

1. All success is supremely a quality of the inner life. He is not a success because of what he has won. He is a success because of what he is. He has succeeded in the achieving of a character that is beautifully Christlike. He has learned how to work joyfully when things go right and when things go wrong. He has learned how to forget himself. He has learned how to love. He has learned how to laugh and sing. He has learned to possess the peace of God that passeth all understanding. That is the supreme success. To be according to Jesus is even more important than to do. One day the disciples came to Him, rejoicing over their victorious service. And Jesus answered, "Rejoice not that the demons are subject unto you, but rejoice rather that your names are written in heaven." (A Man's Life, Peter R. Cutler)

2. Paul has succeeded because he invested himself wholeheartedly in a worth while enterprise. He does not claim that he has won the fight. The task is too big for him. He had
set out to make Christ king throughout the world. He does not claim that he has accomplished that, but he does claim that he has invested his all in it. And to do your best to accomplish something that is worth accomplishing is success. Our Lord is not going to ask us whether we were rich or poor. He is not going to ask us whether we were famous or unknown. He is not going to ask us whether we put over the task or failed at it as the world terms failure. But if we have only done our best, if we have been faithful, He will run to meet us with outstretched hands, crying, "Well done, well done! You have been a great success!"

The fact that this is the case brings success within reach of everyone of us. If one must be rich to be successful then that prize is for the exceedingly few. In 1925 twenty-nine one-hundredths of one per cent of the people of the United States paid ninety-five per cent of the income tax. Eighty-two per cent did not pay anything at all. Their incomes were too small. Few of us will ever be famous. Few of us will likely run past all hindrances to fully achieve our goal. But it is not necessary to do this. All that is necessary is to give our best.

Years ago a vessel was going to pieces off Cape Hatteras. The life saving crew was called out. A heavy storm was blowing seaward. As they were preparing to launch the life-boats one man said to the captain, "Captain, it is useless to go. We can reach the vessel because the wind will be with us. But we can never get back." And the captain answered, "It is not necessary to get back. It is necessary to go." And whoever dares venture his all in the cause of right as God gives him to see the right, is a success though he never wins his goal. It is not necessary to win. It is necessary to try. It is not necessary to conquer. It is necessary to be able to say, "I have fought in the good fight."
"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."
II Timothy 4:10

The most interesting and illuminating biographies of the Bible are those that are brief. Sometimes a single sentence will illuminate a whole life. Take this that we have selected for our text. It contains a tragedy of a soul. We cannot read it with open eyes without seeing it glitter with tears. We cannot listen to it attentively without hearing the rumblings of a life crashing into ruins. Paul is writing a letter. He looks about him to find the place of a friend and fellow-minister vacant, and the sob that is in his heart trickles down to the point of his pen, and he writes this word: "Demas hath forsaken me, having love this present world."

If this is the story of a tragic present, it tells of a great past. This man Demas had been a man rich in privilege to an unusual degree. He had once been a friend and companion of one of the greatest men that ever set foot on this planet. He had known Paul the Evangelist. He had shared his labors. When the foundation of a new church was laid, Demas was there. When the shout of new-born souls was heard, he was there. He had been a companion of Paul the Missionary, Paul with a far view, Paul with a passion to make Christ King throughout the wide world. He had been a friend of Paul the Scholar, Paul the man with a roomy mind, Paul"from whose coat-sleeve he might have brushed enough learning to have made him a Doctor of Philosophy". Best of all, he had been a companion of Paul the Saint. He had been privileged to associate day by day with this man of the radiant face and of the serene heart, with this man who could say, "For me to live is Christ."

Truly, Demas had had a great yesterday, but now he has turned away from it all, poor, foolish Demas!
I

What got the matter with Demas? Why, I wonder, did he quit? Why did he desert his great friend? Why did he not only leave Paul, but Paul's Christ? What got the matter with Demas? Where began the little rift within the lute that changed the music of his life into discord? Where started the little leak that set the waters of desolation to roaring above this sunken ship? Where broke out the little tongue of flame that reduced this fine palace to charred ruins? Why did Demas quit?

Did he commit some crime that made it impossible for him to stay longer in Rome? Did some vile and enslaving habit lay hold of him, squeeze the fine juices from his soul and fling away upon the cinder-pile of worthless things? Did he become offended at his old friend and quit? Did he desert because his pride had been wounded or because he had suffered some real or fancied wrong?

Not a bit of it! The enemy that brought his ruin sounds so harmless that we can hardly believe that we have read his story aright. Listen to what wrecked him: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." There you have it! Demas fell in love with the world. It does not say with this present evil world.

He simply fell in love with the world, and loving the world, he ceased to love Christ.

Now what this text implies is that the one who loves the world no longer loves God, and what is implied here is clearly taught elsewhere in this Holy Book. John says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, for if any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." James, if possible, makes it more emphatic when he says, "The love of the world is enmity against God." That is, when we fall in love with the world we not only cease to love God, but we become positively hostile to him. Paul wrote a letter once that he tells us was somewhat bespattered by tears. "I tell you even weeping," he writes, "that they are enemies of the cross of Christ." Why enemies? Because
they had openly denied the faith? No! But because, he said, "You mind earthly things!" They had become enemies by simply being worldly.

Do you remember the great confession of Simon Peter? "Who do you say that I am?" Jesus asked. And Simon rose to heights that could not be accounted for except in terms of God. He said, "Thou art the Christ." Jesus was all enthusiasm. "Blessed art thou, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee." Then, thinking Simon is far enough along, he discloses to him the cross, but Simon is horrified. "Be it far from thee, Lord," he says with mingled horror and indignation. "This shall never be unto thee. What is the use of having power if you do not use it for yourself?" Then it was that Jesus said about the sharpest word that he ever spoke to any of his friends. "Get thee behind me, Satan. You are not talking the language of God. You are talking the language of men." The trouble with Simon was that he was worldly. The tragedy of Demas joins with the rest of the Scriptures in declaring that to love the world is to cease to love God.

II

But what is this world that we are forbidden to love? I do not take it to be this visible universe of oceans and seas and stars. It was the fashion at one time to look with utter contempt upon the beauties of nature. There were those who delighted to sing,

"This world is but a desert drear,
Heaven is my home."

But that is not a wholesome type of piety. If it so happens that you find some beauty in the world about you, it does not mark you as one of the wicked. God Himself called this world very good, and if you agree with Him He is not going to object. If you happen to see

"In the meanest flower that blows,
Thoughts that often lie too deep for tears,"
do not count yourself as a pagan for that reason. If sometimes you sing with Browning:

"O world as God has made it,
All is beauty, and knowing this is love;
And love is duty."

Or if you sing with Mrs. Browning:

"Earth's crammed with heaven
And every common bush aflame with God."

you are at least as Christian as those that

"Sit round and pick blackberries."

If you sing with Wordsworth, "Heaven lies about us in our infancy," and then pass on to sing with Lowell:

"Not only around our infancy doth heaven with all its splendors lie,
But daily with souls that cringe and plot,
We Sina's climb and know it not.
Over our manhood bend the skies
Against our fallen and traitor lives:
Great winds utter prophecies
And to old age's drowsy blood
Still shouts the inspiring seed."

If you revel in the beauties of nature that is not un-Christian.

But if we are not forbidden to love this visible world, no more are we forbidden to love the world of men. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." The world that He loved was the world of folks. We can certainly let ourselves go when it comes to loving people. The more we love, the more we become like God; the less we love, the less we are like God. I know there are some that fail to see this. Years ago a mother in my church sent her boy away to school in Virginia. One day a wire came saying that he was desperately ill with pneumonia. She had a race with death, but death won, and she brought her son's body home in a casket.

Soon after her arrival she sent for her pastor. I went down with that shrinking and sense of bewilderment from which I have never fully recovered. If you know
always what to do and say under such circumstances, I would be glad to sit at your feet. I confess that I do not. When I was shown into her room, she gripped my hands almost frantically and said, "My boy is gone, and I'm afraid I loved him too well."

"Oh", I answered, "Don't say that! Nobody ever loved anybody too well. You may have loved God too little. Most of us do. But nobody ever loved anybody too well."

Let us bear that in mind. Love won't kill. If you are still not convinced, try it out on me. In the interest of science, I will offer myself.

What, the, I repeat, is the "world"? It is that something in this world that keeps it from being Christ-like. It is that something that keeps the life that now is from being a bit of a heavenly experience. What is it at this moment that is staining our rivers with blood, and billowing our continents with graves. The answer — It is just plain old garden variety of selfishness. There is not a tragedy, individual, national, or international that cannot finally be traced to man's determination to do as he pleases, and the sense of this text might be brought out by saying, "Demas hath forsaken me, having determined to please himself. Demas hath forsaken me, having made this his big question: "Where do I come in?"

Naturally, self-pleasing does not always lead to the same goal, but it always leads away from God. One man can make self-pleasing the law of his life and go to the gutter. Another man can make self-pleasing the law of his life and go to the Senate or even to the Presidency. One man can make self-pleasing his law and end in the penitentiary. Another may act from the same motives and find his way to the platform of a popular pulpit. It is the common motive that lies back of both goals.

Jesus told a marvelous story of two boys. One of them claimed his wealth, went away and squandered it in riotous living. When he came home, he came home not from a palace but from a hog-pen. So low had he gone that his respectable hard-working elder brother refused to claim kin with him. He spoke of him to his father as "thy son", but he was no longer any relation of his respectable self. But when
we see him refusing to go into the feast, we realize that, deny the relationship how he may, they are brothers still because they have acted from a common motive. They have both been out to please themselves.

I can imagine these two — Paul and Demas — going down the streets of Rome. It is night. Beauty is passing, offering her charms for the taking. There are soldiers laden with the spoils of war. A gaily trapped litter is coming. The rabble is being scattered by one who goes ahead shouting, "Make way for the litter of the divine Augustan. Make way! Make way!" Demas himself is pushed out into the street. He looks back to see a bejeweled hand of the one who is being borne past. "Why could not I live like that?" he asks himself. "Paul never cares for such things, but I think one may be wiser to take the cash and let the credit go."

As they pass on their way, the streets become meaner and meaner, and the lights more and more dim. At last these two find themselves in a place as weird and gloomy as a tomb. It is a tomb — one of the catacombs. Here is a little handful of slaves and nobodies gathered for service. Paul begins to speak to them. What is this queer chap saying? "The things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal. This great Rome that seems so abiding is after all only a passing show. A few more years and the trodden grass and a heap of ashes and a few stains of blood will be all that will be left to tell that a caravan called Rome passed this way, stopped for a night, and then went on into the silence." "I wonder," said Demas.

During the following weeks, Demas attends the services only at irregular intervals. By-and-by he does not attend at all. Paul inquires of him and finds that he has gone to Thessalonica. There is always a special train leaving for that city. It only means that the feet of Demas had followed his heart. He had indeed claimed the cash and was letting the credit go! You remember that queer condition that the father of Portia set for the marriage of his daughter. There were three
caskets—gold, silver, and lead. The one who chose the right casket was to be rewarded by having Portia as his wife. Listen to the inscriptions. The gold casket said:

"Who chooses me shall get what many men desire."

The silver:

"Who chooses me shall get as much as he deserves."

The leaden casket had this forbidding inscription:

"Who chooses me must give and hazard all he has."

You can see that the first two are alike. "Who chooses me shall get......"

They appeal to the man whose first thought is of himself—whose supreme passion is not giving but getting. The second appeals to the man whose first thought is of others—to the man whose supreme passion is not getting but giving. No wonder that it was in the leaden casket that the father placed the picture! It was his way of saving his daughter from the deep damnation of marrying a getter. That was the tragedy of Demas. He chose the golden casket.

III

What became of Demas? We do not know. Having loved the world, I am going to assume that he won it. He had the finest banking-house in Thessalonica. He lived in the most palatial home. His entertainments were the most lavish. I was privileged to be present one evening. His house was thronged with the intellectually and socially elite. Demas entertained as "to the manner born". I almost felt it in my heart to envy him. "Here," I said to myself, "is a man in whose roomy lap Fortune has spilled everything that the heart can wish."

But when a little later the guests had gone and I took the privileges of an old friend to linger, I turned to Demas to see his face drawn and lined with care. "Well," he said, "I am glad it is over."

"It was certainly wonderful," I replied. "I congratulate you."

"For what?" Demas asked with a voice so dead and listless as to fill me with amazement. "I am sick and tired of it all."
"You do not mean it. I am astonished. But I have a suggestion. I know a man who has suffered the loss of everything, but he is always cheerful. He is always full of poise and peace and joy. I am sorry to tell you that he is in jail just now. His name is Paul."

Then the soul of Demas stood up in his eyes. "Do you know Paul?" he said wistfully, and his lips quiver as he tries to hide his emotion. "I used to know him. I used to be his friend. I was his companion in the service of the Cross. Oh, what radiant days! God forgive me for having ever left them. The one bright day of my life, the one green oasis in this miserable desert of mine was the time that I walked with him, and walked with his wonderful Lord." Savagely quitted

With a chill at my heart I slip out of this lonely palace, make my way over to Rome, and around to the prison where Paul is shut in. As I look through the bars, he is writing a letter. As he fies the wind comes in from the Alpine Hills with a nip of frost in it and fans the thin hair about his temples, and the old man shivers. But he writes on. Then, the breeze becomes more brisk and insistent. Then, the writer lays down his pen, fumbles behind him as if feeling for a wrap. Then he smiles whimsically to himself and says, "How forgetful!" Then he picks up his pen again and continues: "Dear Timothy, when you come, please bring the old cloak that I left with Carpus. It is a bit cold here. Do your best to come before winter."

"Poor Paul," I say to myself. "Here he is in prison and he has not enough clothing to keep him warm. Being a Christian must be a dreary job." But he rises to look out a window. It is a window that looks back on yesterday. As I follow his line of vision, I see a great fighter who is winning. I see a fleet-footed runner who is outdistancing all competitors. "Look!" I cry, "He is winning. He is going to be crowned."

"Yes," comes the calm answer. "That is myself. I have fought in the good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith." Happy is the old body that has a radiant yesterday in which to stroll now and then. Paul can look back upon the past without a pang.
Then he goes to look out through another window. It is the window that faces on tomorrow. "Look!" I say. "There is a man with his axe. It is going to be the executioner's block for you."

"But you are looking too close," Paul replies. "You are a bit near-sighted. That axe is but a key to unlock my prison-cell. Look on a little further." And as I look, it is coronation day on life's other side. "Hence forth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all of them also that have loved the thought of His appearing."

As for me I should like the courage and grace to take my stand afresh beside this man Paul and above all beside Paul's Christ.
"Damas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."

II Timothy 4:10

The most interesting and illuminating biographies of the Bible are those that are brief. Sometimes a single sentence will illuminate a whole life. Take this that we have selected for our text. It contains a tragedy of a soul. We cannot read it with open eyes without seeing it glitter with tears. We cannot listen to it attentively without hearing the rumbles of a life crashing into ruins. Paul is writing a letter. He looks about him to find the place of a friend and fellow-minister vacant, and the sob that is in his heart trickles down to the point of his pen, and he writes this word: "Damas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."

If this is the story of a tragic present, it tells of a great past. This man Damas had been a man rich in privilege to an unusual degree. He had once been a friend and companion of one of the greatest men that ever set foot on this planet. He had known Paul the Evangelist. He had shared his labors. When the foundation of a new church was laid, Damas was there. When the shout of new-born souls was heard, he was there. He had been a companion of Paul the Missionary, Paul with a far view, Paul with a passion to make Christ King throughout the wide world. He had been a friend of Paul the Scholar, Paul the man with a roomy mind, Paul "from whose coat-sleeve he might have brushed enough learning to have made him a Doctor of Philosophy." Best of all, he had been a companion of Paul the Saint. He had been privileged to associate day by day with this man of the radiant face and of the serene heart, with this man who could say, "For me to live is Christ." Truly, Damas had had a great yesterday, but now he has turned away from it all, poor, foolish Damas.
What got the matter with Demas? Why, I wonder, did he quit? Why did he desert his great friend? Why did he not only leave Paul by leave Paul's Christ? What got the matter with Demas? Where began the little rift within the lute that changed the music of his life into discord? Where started the little leak that set the waters of desolation to roaring above this sunken ship? Where broke out the little tongue of flame that reduced this fine palace to charred ruins? Why did Demas quit?

Did he commit some crime that made it impossible for him to stay longer in Rome? Did some vile and enslaving habit lay hold of him, squeeze the fine juices from his soul and fling away upon the cinder-pile of worthless things? Did he become offended at his old friend and quit? Did he desert because his pride had been wounded or because he had suffered some real or fancied wrong?

Not a bit of it! The enemy that brought his ruin sounds so harmless that we can hardly believe that we have read his story aright. Listen to what wreaked him: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." There you have it! Demas fell in love with the world. It does not say with this present evil world. He simply fell in love with the world, and loving the world, he ceased to love Christ.

Now what this text implies is that the one who loves the world no longer loves God, and what is implied here is clearly taught elsewhere in this Holy Book. John says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, for if any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." James, if possible, makes it more emphatic when he says, "The love of the world is enmity against God." That is, when we fall in love with the world we not only cease to love God, but we become positively hostile to him. Paul wrote a letter once that he tells us was somewhat bespattered by tears. "I tell you even weeping," he writes, "that they are enemies of the cross of Christ." Why enemies? Because
they had openly denied the faith! Ne! But because, he said, "You mind earthly things!" They had become enemies by simply being worldly.

Do you remember the great confession of Simon Peter? "Who do you say that I am?" Jesus asked. And Simon rose to heights that could not be accounted for except in terms of God. He said, "Thou art the Christ." Jesus was all enthusiasm. "Blessed art thou, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee." Then, thinking Simon is far enough along, he discloses to him the cross, but Simon is horrified. "Be it far from thee, Lord," he says with mingled horror and indignation. "This shall never be unto thee. What is the use of having power if you do not use it for yourself?" Then it was that Jesus said about the sharpest word that he ever spoke to any of his friends. "Get thee behind me, Satan. You are not talking the language of God. You are talking the language of men." The trouble with Simon was that he was worldly. The tragedy of Demas joins with the rest of the Scriptures in declaring that to love the world is to cease to love God.

II

But what is this world that we are forbidden to love? I do not take it to be this visible universe of oceans and seas and stars. It was the fashion at one time to look with utter contempt upon the beauties of nature. There were those who delighted to sing,

"This world is but a desert drear,  
Heaven is my home."

But that is not a wholesome type of piety. If it so happens that you find some beauty in the world about you, it does not mark you as one of the wicked. God Himself called this world very good, and if you agree with Him He is not going to object. If you happen to see

"In the meanest flower that blows,  
Thoughts that often lie too deep for tears,"
do not count yourself as a pagan for that reason. If sometimes you sing with Browning:

"O world as God has made it,  
All is beauty, and knowing this is love;  
And love is duty."

Or if you sing with Mrs. Browning:

"Earth's crammed with heaven  
And every common bush aflame with God."

you are at least as Christian as those that

"Sit round and pick blackberries."

If you sing with Wordsworth, "Heaven lies about us in our infancy," and then pass on to sing with Lowell:

"Not only around our infancy doth heaven with all  
its splendors lie,  
But daily with souls that cringe and plot,  
We Sinai's climb and know it not.  
Over our manhood bend the skies  
Against our fallen and traitor lives;  
Great winds utter prophecies  
And to old age's drowsy blood  
Still shouts the inspiring seed."

If you revel in the beauties of nature that is not un-Christian.

But if we are not forbidden to love this visible world, no more are we forbidden to love the world of men. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." The world that He loved was the world of folks. We can certainly let ourselves go when it comes to loving people. The more we love, the more we become like God; the less we love, the less we are like God. I know there are some that fail to see this. Years ago a mother in my church sent her boy away to school in Virginia. One day a wire came saying that he was desperately ill with pneumonia. She had a race with death; but death won, and she brought her son's body home in a casket.

Soon after her arrival she sent for her pastor. I went down with that shrinking and sense of bewilderment from which I have never fully recovered. If you know
always what to do and say under such circumstances, I would be glad to sit at your
feet. I confess that I do not. When I was shown into her room, she gripped my hands
almost frantically and said, "My boy is gone, and I'm afraid I loved him too well."
"Oh", I answered, "Don't say that! Nobody ever loved anybody too well. You may
have loved God too little. Most of us do. But nobody ever loved anybody too well." Let us bear that in mind. Love won't kill. If you are still not convinced, try it
out on me. In the interest of science, I will offer myself.

What, then, I repeat, is the "world"? It is that something in this world that
keeps it from being Christ-like. It is that something that keeps the life that
now is from being a bit of a heavenly experience. What is it at this moment that
is staining our rivers with blood, and billowing our continents with graves? The
answer -- It is just plain old garden variety of selfishness. There is not a
tragedy, individual, national, or international that cannot finally be traced to
man's determination to do as he pleases, and the sense of this text might be brought
out by saying, "Demas hath forsaken me, having determined to please himself. Demas
hath forsaken me, having made this his big question: Where do I come in?

Naturally, self-pleasing does not always lead to the same goal, but it always
leads away from God. One man can make self-pleasing the law of his life and go to
the gutter. Another man can make self-pleasing the law of his life and go to the
Senate or even to the Presidency. One man can make self-pleasing his law and end in
the penitentiary. Another may act from the same motives and find his way to the
platform of a popular pulpit. It is the common motive that lies back of both goals.

Jesus told a marvelous story of two boys. One of them claimed his wealth,
went away and squandered it in riotous living. When he came home, he came home not from
a palace but from a hog-pen. So low had he gone that his respectable hard-working
elder brother refused to claim him with him. He spoke of him to his father as
"thy son", but he was no longer any relation of his respectable self. But when
we see him refusing to go into the feast, we realize that, deny the relationship
how he may, they are brothers still because they have acted from a common motive.
They have both been out to please themselves.

I can imagine those two - Paul and Demas - going down the streets of Rome.
It is night. Beauty is passing, offering her charms for the taking. There are
soldiers laden with the spoils of war. A gaily trapped litter is coming. The
rabble is being scattered by one who goes ahead shouting, "Make way for the litter
of the divine Augustus. Make way! Make way!" Demas himself is pushed out into
the street. He looks back to see a bejeweled hand of the one who is being borne
past. "Why could not I live like that?" he asks himself. "Paul never cares for
such things, but I think one may be wiser to take the cash and let the credit go."

As they pass on their way, the streets become meaner and meaner, and the
lights more and more dim. At last these two find themselves in a place as weird
and gloomy as a tomb. It is a tomb — one of the catacombs. Here is a little
handful of slaves and nobodies gathered for service. Paul begins to speak to them.
What is this queer chap saying? "The things that are seen are temporal, but the
things that are not seen are eternal. This great Rome that seems so abiding is
after all only a passing show. A few more years and the trodden grass and a heap
of ashes and a few stains of blood will be all that will be left to tell that a
caravan called Rome passed this way, stopped for a night, and then went on into the
silence." "I wonder," said Demas.

During the following weeks, Demas attends the services only at irregular
intervals. By and by he does not attend at all. Paul inquires of him and finds
that he has gone to Thessalonica. There is always a special train leaving for that
city. It only means that the feet of Demas had followed his heart. He had indeed
claimed the cash and was letting the credit go! You remember that queer condition
that the father of Portia set for the marriage of his daughter. There were three
saskets - gold, silver, and lead. The one who chose the right casket was to be regarded by having Fortia as his wife. Listen to the inscriptions. The gold casket said:

"Who chooses me shall get what many men desire."

The silver:

"Who chooses me shall get as much as he deserves."

The leaden casket had this forbidding inscription:

"Who chooses me must give and hazard all he has."

You can see that the first two are alike. "Who chooses me shall get ......"

They appeal to the man whose first thought is of himself — whose supreme passion is not giving but getting. The second appeals to the man whose first thought is of others — to the man whose supreme passion is not getting but giving. No wonder that it was in the leaden casket that the father placed the picture! It was his way of saving his daughter from the deep damnation of marrying a getter. That was the tragedy of Demas. He chose the golden casket.

III

What became of Demas? We do not know. Having loved the world, I am going to assume that he won it. He had the finest banking-house in Thessalonica. He lived in the most palatial home. His entertainments were the most lavish. I was privileged to be present one evening. His house was thronged with the intellectually and socially elite. Demas entertained as "to the manner born". I almost felt it in my heart to envy him. "Here," I said to myself, "is a man in whose roomy lap Fortune has spilled everything that the heart can wish.

But then a little later the guests had gone and I took the privileges of an old friend to linger, I turned to Demas to see his face drawn and lined with care. "Well," he said, "I am glad it is over."

"It was certainly wonderful," I replied. "I congratulate you."

"For what?" Demas asked with a voice so dead and listless as to fill me with amazement. "I am sick and tired of it all."
"You do not mean it, I am astonished. But I have a suggestion. I know a man who has suffered the loss of everything, but he is always cheerful. He is always full of peace and peace and joy. I am sorry to tell you that he is in jail just now. His name is Paul."

Then the soul of Damas stood up in his eyes. "Do you know Paul?" he said wistfully, and his lips quiver as he tries to hide his emotion. "I used to know him. I used to be his friend. I was his companion in the service of the Cross. Oh, what radiant days! God forgive me for having ever left them. The one bright day of my life, the one green oasis in this miserable desert of mine was the time that I walked with him, and walked with his wonderful Lord."

With a chill at my heart I slip out of this lonely palace, make my way over to Rome, and around to the prison where Paul is shut in. As I look through the bars, he is writing a letter. As he rises the wind comes in from the Alpine Hills with a nip of frost in it and fans the thin hair about his temples, and the old man shivers. But he writes on. Then, the breeze becomes more brisk and insistent. Then, the writer lays down his pen, fumbles behind him as if feeling for a wrap. Then he smiles whimsically to himself and says, "How forgetful!" Then he picks up his pen again and continues: "Dear Timothy, when you come, please bring the old cloak that I left with Carpus. It is a bit cold here. Be your best to come before winter."

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As for me I should like the courage and grace to take my stand afresh beside this man Paul and above all beside Paul's Christ.
II Timothy 4:11 "Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry."

These are the words of Simon Peter. As he writes he is in a hard situation. He is in prison in Rome. He is soon to pay the death penalty for his devotion to Jesus Christ. Demas has recently walked out on him. Friends are few. "Only Luke is with me," he writes. "These are days that try men's souls." Paul longs to have about him men of heroic mold.

This being the case, for whom does he ask? To whom does he turn in this hour that taxes the courage of the bravest? For whom does he call? For John Mark. He calls for a man of whom he once had a very low opinion. He calls for a man whom he had once rejected with great sorrow because he knew him to be a quitter. Yet this one-time quitter Paul turns in this hour when only the heroic can be of any value.

I.

Who was John Mark?

1. He was the son of a well-to-do widow of Jerusalem. So far as we can find out he was her only son. He was doubtless, therefore, given the best educational opportunities. He was exposed to the best culture of the city. Along with this he was in all probability pampered, petted and spoiled far more than was good for him.

2. Not only did he have the best of educational opportunities because of his wealth, but also because of his Mother's hospitality to the saints of the early church. It was perhaps in his home that Jesus celebrated
the Last Supper with the disciples. It is certain that some of the leaders of the Christian movement made John Mark's home their headquarters. When Peter was released from prison, as recorded in the 12th chapter of the Acts, he went at once to the home of John Mark. Since this apostle called John his son, it was perhaps through his influence especially that he became a Christian. When Barnabas and Paul came to visit Jerusalem to bring an offering for the church, it was in all probability in this roomy home that they stopped. John Mark, therefore, was a young man of great opportunities.

3. But in spite of these opportunities he became a quitter. We know that in one instance he failed miserably and conspicuously. There is strong probability that he failed in another. The one making this failure is a person unnamed. Since Mark is the writer of the story, it is highly probable that he is talking about himself.

This word is found in the gospel of Mark alone. It runs like this: "And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked." You can see the picture. The Roman soldiers with the mob are on their way to Gethsemane to arrest the Master. John Mark, who has just come from the bath and who is preparing for bed, hears the tumult in the street and his curiosity is aroused as to the cause. So he opens the door to a slit and shouts, "What's going on?"
"We are on the way to Gethsemne to arrest a prisoner, Jesus of Nazareth."

Mark waits to hear no more. He knows this Jesus. He has only left their home a little while ago. With the spell of the Master upon him, he determines to do something about this arrest. At least, he will go to his side and share his shame with him. Therefore he grasps the first thing that comes to him, a linen sheet and wraps it about his body and dashes out into the night.

But when he comes within the garden something happens. There is a group of young men there who perhaps recognize him. These young men are not there either as the friends or the foes of Jesus. They are mere spectators. They did not mean any harm by what they do, yet most of the harm that is done is done by those who do not mean any. They laid hold on John Mark perhaps with loud laughter. The young man comes to himself; his courage slips. He forgets the high quest on which he set out and flees into the night, not the heroic friend that he set out to be but a poor shamed quitter.

Now this story may be conjecture, but here is one that is a historical fact. When Barnabas and Paul set out on their first missionary journey, John Mark volunteered to go with them. His was a great opportunity. He was thus associated with two of the greatest saints of the New Testament. He was part of that heroic little band who went out as the first Christian missionaries. Thousands have gone out since then. They have crossed all seas. They have penetrated all forests.
left their consecrated footprints on all shores. But with
the vanguard of this immortal company walked 3 men,
Barnabas, Paul and John Mark. Their first stop was the
island of Cyprus. Here things went well. I have an idea
Mark felt quite at home here. He had doubtless visited
in this section since his cousin Barnabas once lived
in Cyprus. But when they left the island for the city
of Perga on the continent, here Mark came face to face
for the first time with the ugly facts of paganism.
Soon he saw that the life of a missionery was no lark.
It was a stern, strenuous affair involving danger, conflict,
sweat and blood. Therefore he decided to get out while
the getting was good. One morning I imagine, the two
older men found a note telling them that he was on his
way back to his Mother in Jerusalem. Thus the promising
young missionery became a quitter.

II.

Now it was for this man who had cracked up
completely once, even twice, that St. Paul sent because
he now counted him among the heroes. How had he come
back? Of course his reconciliation is due to the tender
mercy of God, our Lord who calls on us to forget until
70 times 7 times will forgive no less Himself. But
Mark's recovery on the human side was due chiefly to three
men.

1. He owed a great debt to Paul. Two years after
setting out on that first missionery journey Paul proposed
to Barnabas to go again. Barnabas was ready, but he came
forward with what to Paul seemed the unreasonable suggestion
that John Mark go with them. This young man had heard the report of his older friends. He had perhaps seen Paul's scars, for on this first journey he had been stoned and left for dead. He was filled with shame and penitence, and was eager for another chance.

But Paul will not hear of it. He is devoted to Barnabas. He owes Barnabas more, I daresay, than any other man. It was Barnabas who had stood by him when nobody else believed in him. Therefore he would have gladly complied with the request of his friend, but he felt that the presence of John Mark would not be an asset but a liability. He doubtless even reminded his friend that "pagans would die for their faith, but Mark shamed the whole enterprise by walking out us."

This argument between these two good men became so sharp that they decided to separate. Paul said, "Rather than take John Mark, I will choose another companion or go alone." John doubtless knew all of this. He knew Paul well enough to know that there was no bitterness in his heart. He knew that the apostle was turning him down simply because he thought him useless and unfit for any high adventure. It was this sharp rebuke that helped to shake John Mark into wakefulness and to make him face himself. The greatest kindness that Paul could have done him at that time was to seem unkind.

The reason, I think, that Paul was so stern about this was that he knew why John Mark had become a quitter. Some argue that he had become offended at Paul for taking the leadership of the enterprise when Barnabas was the leader in the beginning. Of course, quitting
because we get hurt is a very common experience. But Paul was convinced that Mark had quit out of sheer softness and cowardice. He was a petted and spoiled boy who did not have the grit to stand up under difficulties. He therefore needed this rude awakening to make him see himself.

2. Then I think John Mark owed a great deal to his cousin Barnabas. Barnabas was always generous. Perhaps with Mark he had been too generous. His very name signifies "son of encouragement." Therefore when Mark suggested making a second effort, Barnabas was all for it. He doubtless needed that encouragement after Paul's stern and firm rebuke. Those these two good men argued over their position, they were both in a sense right.

3. But I think that John Mark owed more to Simon Peter than to anyone else. Simon calls him a son. After this turndown on the part of Paul, Simon seemed to have taken this young man under his wing. He made him his private secretary. They were a bit like father and son in temperament. They were also quite a bit alike in experience. Simon was therefore especially fitted to deal with this young man because he himself had been a quitter.

I can hear the older man talking to the younger. Mark is covered with shame and confusion. "Our Lord will give you a new chance," Simon tells him. "One day I boasted my loyalty to him. I declared I was ready to go with him to prison and to death. I meant every word of it too, but when the test came I couldn't take it. I crumbled up at the question of the little servant girl and swore that I never knew him. A little later my Master looked at me and that look broke my heart. I went out
and begged for forgiveness and it was given. He could hardly wait to get the door of his tomb open before he said go tell my disciples and Peter. Not only so but he asked me to feed his sheep and to charge his lambs. When he forgives, he takes us back and trusts us as if we have never let him down."

Thus under the influence of these 3 men, John Mark made a new start. Paul who had once thought him little better than a worthless softy had to change his view. He was glad to do this. So completely did his opinion of Mark change that Paul, when he had to call to his side a man who could be a hero, sent for this one time quitter, John Mark.

III.

Here then is a heartening word for all of us. Our Lord has a place in His friendship for those who have failed, for those who have flunked out, for those who have played the coward and quitter. When he had taken his intimate friends into the garden to watch with Him and they fell asleep, he did not throw them away, he said, "Rise, let us be going." Thus our Lord was able to make something out of John Mark. First he made him a useful servant to the church of his day. Paul mentions him more than once. He calls him "my fellow worker." Once he had refused him as an associate. He declares in another letter that "he has been a comfort to me, he has steadied me, he has helped me. He has made it easier for me to play a heroic part." In our text he declares, "He is profitable to me for the ministry." Thus the useless has become useful, and the worthless has been changed
into the worthful.

Not only was John Mark a blessing to the church of his day, but he has been a blessing to the church of all times. The most graphic and vigorous of the gospel is the gospel of St. Mark. It was written especially for the Romans. It tells of what Simon Peter knew at first hand about Jesus. To this day many find it the most dynamic of the gospels. Taking a new start, John Mark left a gospel that has left a track of light through the centuries. According to tradition he died a martyr in Alexandria, Egypt.

When the cup that the potter made was marked, he made it again. Ours is the gospel of a second chance. It is the gospel of a thousand chances if we dare to try it. The real difference between the final defeated and the final victorious is that one failed and the other never did. It is rather that one had the courage to start again while the other gave up the fight.

Did you ever hear of the story of the white feathers? Before the outbreak of the First World War there were three soldiers who belonged to the same British regiment. As the war clouds gathered one of them began to be gripped by a sickening fear that when the test came, he would not stand up. Therefore through political influence, he got himself discharged from the army. The very day his regiment set out for the continent, he himself left England for Ireland where he was engaged to be married to a beautiful Irish girl.

One day when they were preparing to go for a ride, the postman came and handed this one time soldier a package in the presence of his fiance. At first he
thought the box was empty, but when he opened it two white feathers dropped upon the carpet. The girl laughed and asked for an explanation. The young man was honest enough to tell her the facts. "My comrades are sending these in token of the fact that I have shown a white feather." The girl's laughter hushed. She broke a white feather from the plume on her hat and left without a word.

The young fellow stood there with his life shattered, gathered up the feathers and put them back into the box. He went back to England where he joined the army under an assumed name. By and by through the chances of war he found himself once more in his old regiment. One night there was an excursion into No Man's Land led by his once Lieutenant friend who failed to come back. This young man went for him, brought him back and laid him on the floor of the trench. As his friend died he said, "Tom, I knew you would come back." And Tom quickly took a box from his pocket and slipped into the dying man's hand a feather.

Other days went by and there was a charge over the top, then a sharp pain in head and shoulders, and when the young man came to consciousness, he was half on and half under another soldier, who was begging for water. He drained his canteen into the lips of the man and then looked at him with wonder, for he recognized his other Lieutenant friend. When they found him, there was between them one bloodstained white feather.

Then he was invalided home. As he came out one day from receiving the Victoria Cross he passed down
a long receiving line. At the end stood a beautiful Red Cross nurse. As he passed her, he slipped into her had a package stained with the mud and blood of the trenches. When she opened it later in the privacy of her room, there floated out one white feather. The quitter had come back, and the coward had become a hero. So it was with John Mark.
"Only Luke is with me."

II Timothy 4:11

There is an undertone of sadness in this word. Paul is writing from a prison cell. Death is so close that he can almost touch it with his hand. But what is the reason for this undertone of sadness? There are some dearly loved faces that once were present that Paul does not see anymore. Some of these are away on missions of service on which he himself has sent them. They have gone at his request to man difficult positions. Because of the absence of these he is a bit lonely. But his bitterest heartache is that one friend has renounced the Faith. He has turned his back on Paul and Paul's Lord. Therefore, with a sob in his heart, the apostle writes this pathetic sentence, "Demas hath forsaken me having loved this present world." In the vanity fair, called Rome, Demas has forgotten his high quest and has gone away after the world that he loves. Paul cannot think of his going without a sob.

But if there is sadness in this word there is also a great gladness. If there are sobs there are also songs. The picture may be a bit dark but it is not all dark. Some of Paul's friends are afraid of him. He is under the frown of Rome. To be his friend is a bit dangerous. But there is one who in fine self-forgetfulness is standing by. Paul can never be utterly alone as long as he has such a friend. So while his tears flow they flow over a face that is full of light. And he writes, "Luke is with me." Faithful, staunch, watch-dog Luke, he is still standing by.
Who is this man? He is one to whom all the centuries since that far off
day have owed an unpayable debt. Winston Churchill in speaking of the aviators
that have so gallantly fought Britain's battles in recent months said, "Never
did so many owe so much to so few." But that is far more true in the case of
Luke. Countless millions are indebted to this man. In fact, there are very few
men whose names I could call to whom so many owe so much. "Who then, I repeat, is
this man who has brought us so largely into his debt?"

He is an ancient physician who is the friend and traveling companion of St.
Paul. Just how these men came to be friends we are not told except as we read
between the lines. They are not bound by any ties of kinship. They are not even
bound by ties of race. Paul is a Jew. Not only so, he has belonged, at least
till recently, to that most exclusive sect among the Jews, the Pharisees. Luke
on the other hand is not a Jew, but a Gentile. Therefore, there was naturally a
chasm between these two as wide as the spaces between the stars. Yet here we
find Paul, the one time Pharisee, and Luke, the Gentile, bound together in closest
bonds of friendship. How, I repeat, did it come about?

This is the answer. The tie that binds them is their common loyalty to the
Lord Jesus Christ. The story of Paul's conversion we know. One day on the way
from Jerusalem to Damascus there was a flash and a fall, and a moment later this
proud Pharisee is dusting desert sands from off his knees and declaring, "It is a
true saying and worthy of universal acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the
world to save sinners." But of the conversion of St. Luke we know nothing. When
did he become a Christian? We do not know. How did he become a Christian? Again
we must answer that we do not know. But of this we may be sure that he is a Christi-
ian now. Now he is living in the fellowship of Paul and in the fellowship of Paul's
Christ. That is the big fact about Luke. It is the big fact about ourselves. Now
and then I meet earnest people who are bewildered and uncertain because they cannot point to the day and the hour in which they were converted. Of course there are many who can tell. If you are one of these, thank God for it. But remember that there are others who are perhaps more conscious of life in Christ than you are who know nothing of dates. These have bloomed into the knowledge of Christ as naturally as the blooming of a flower. It is well to be able to sing, "At the Cross Where I First Saw the Light," but it is far better to be able to sing, "Blessed Assurance Jesus Is Mine." There is always a danger that religion may become only a memory.

Not one of us could tell from experience when we were born physically. We have to take the matter of date and circumstances on the authority of others. But even if we were utterly confused as to the time, such confusion would mean little since we are conscious of physical life in the here and now. At the close of the first World War a young soldier returned to his home town on the very day that the leading daily came out with a full account of how he had died on Flanders Field. The author of this article was evidently honest. He was a good writer. He told his story in a fine straightforward way. But the presence of the living soldier in that newspaper office was more convincing than any argument. How we were converted, therefore, is not the big fact. The matter of fundamental importance is, are we really converted? and are we living in the consciousness of new life in Christ today?

But, though we know nothing of Dr. Luke's conversion, I think it is possible to make a very intelligent guess. Paul carried through life the handicap of certain physical infirmities. He was subject to sick spells of one kind or another. That might have been his thorn in the flesh. His was a mighty soul housed in a frail body. Now and then he would be prostrated by illness. One day at the City of Troas when we was preparing to invade Europe with his gospel he was stricken down. His friends went in search of a physician of his own race. Not finding a
Jew, somebody recommended a young Greek by the name of Luke. Paul sent for him and this brilliant young doctor ministered to his physical needs.

Dr. Luke did much for Paul then and later. But Paul did even more for Dr. Luke. And this keen, young, physician, scientifically trained, with his inquiring mind had not been long in the company of this great soul before he realized that he knew a secret that he himself did not know. Not only so, but he realized that it was a secret that he longed to know above all else. Then Paul, the evangelist, Paul the skilled personal worker introduced this fascinating young man of science to Jesus Christ, and Luke became a Christian. While Luke ministered to Paul's body Paul ministered to Luke's inner life to the mutual joy of them both. It is an old story and yet one of the most abidingly beautiful ever told.

Some of you may have read the hospital experience of that unique genius of the Nazarene Church, Bud Robinson. He is a man without education, but of fine intelligence. One night while going home from a service in Los Angeles he was struck by a high powered car. Both his arms were broken in three places. He also received some internal injuries. An ambulance hurried him to the hospital, and a physician, an atheist, a graduate of the University of Paris, came in to attend him. When the battered bit of preacher told the physician he was praying for him, the physician smiled cynically. But ten days later when he had come really to know his patient he put his face in his hands and sobbed as he asked to be introduced to the Christ that made this unlearned preacher what he is. It was thus, I am sure that Luke came to his experience of Christ.

II.

What difference did this conversion make for Dr. Luke?

It is well to notice at once that it did not change his occupation. Sometimes when a man or woman is converted God calls them into new fields. A young
man who was facing another direction feels he must enter the ministry. A young woman who had other plans becomes a missionary. But the rule is that God calls us to do the same work that we were doing, only we carry on our tasks under roomier skies and with new and finer motives. The lawyer becomes a better lawyer. The business man conducts his business as a good steward of Jesus Christ. Luke on becoming a Christian did not throw away his medicine and his bandages. He rather dedicated them in a more enlightened fashion to the services of humanity.

But while medicine continued to be Luke's vocation, he took on an avocation. He heard the story of Jesus first from the lips of St. Paul. Then he perhaps read a pamphlet. Maybe one written by some Jewish author giving the most important facts in the life of Jesus. But Luke felt that this pamphlet could be improved upon. Therefore, he set out to write one of his own. Being a man of scientific mind he was a careful investigator. In gathering material for his book, the Third Gospel, which Renan calls the most beautiful in literature, he did much investigating. He doubtless talked to all living survivors who had known Jesus Christ in the flesh. His book is still a model of beauty and accuracy. It takes a rash man to disagree with Dr. Luke. In the historic references where he may be checked up, he is rarely ever found at fault. His book gives two emphases.

1. He emphasizes above the other evangelists, our relationship to our possessions. He emphasizes as no other that word of Jesus, "How hard it is for them that have riches to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." It is Luke alone that tells the story of the Rich Farmer who got so busy making a living that he failed utterly to make a life. He alone tells of the man who branded his brow with eternal idiocy because he could not tell the difference between ownership and possession. He alone tells of this Rich Fool who fell into his abundant crops and drowned his soul just as you have seen a bee drown himself in his own honey.

Then he alone tells the story of the Rich Man and the Beggar, Dives, we call
him. To all appearances Dives was kindly beyond the ordinary. Here is the way his story begins. "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and had a banquet every day. And there was a beggar named Lazarus that was laid at his gate." Dives did not stone the beggar. He did not abuse him. He simply failed to see him. There was a gulf between them in point of opportunity. The beggar could not bridge that gulf, Dives would not. Therefore one day this easy living man dreaming of a place in Abraham's bosom hung his silken-sandled foot in the rags of this forgotten beggar and fell flat into hell. This was the case, not so much because he had made a wrong use of his wealth, as because he had refused to make a right use of it.

Then Luke alone tells of a third rich man who had a steward that turned out to be a rascal. One day this rich man called his steward on the carpet and told him frankly that he was going to fire him. This steward did some hard thinking. "I cannot dig," he said, "I cannot get a job and go to work. And to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do. I will use my master's money in such a fashion that I will have a roof over my head when I am put out of employment." At once he put his plan into execution. He took what was not his and used it in such a way as to bring his fellows under obligation to him. So that when he was in need they had to receive him into their houses. And Jesus, with this bit of rascality, as a text said, "Make for yourselves friends with the wise use of money." That is, you can take money and so use it as to change it into personality. You can take temporary values and make them into eternal values. We are indebted to Dr. Luke for the fullest teaching of Jesus on the subject of money.

2. Then Luke emphasizes as none other the universality of the gospel. Mark being secretary to Simon Peter probably wrote his gospel in the city of Rome. He wrote especially for Romans. His is a gospel of action. Matthew wrote for the Jews. He begins his story of the birth of Jesus by having the wise men ask, "Where
is He that is born king of the Jews?" But Luke's gospel is not for Jews or Romans, it is for everybody. His story of the birth is this, "Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." His is a gospel for all mankind. With this as his thesis he proceeds to tell one story after another to prove its universality.

1. Among the Jews were a certain class known as publicans. They were the livery of a foreign power. They were tax collectors for Rome. They were so hated that their oath was not accepted in a court of law, their money was not accepted by the church. They were Fifth Columnists, despised by zealous patriots, as such are always despised. But Luke tells us that one day when Jesus went to the old priestly city of Jerico he ignored the respectable reception committee and invited himself to the home of Zacchaeus who was a publican. So overcome was this outcast that he said then and there, "Behold the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation I restore him four-fold." Luke alone tells that story.

2. There was a second class, lower if possible than the publican. These were the outcast women of the day. But it is Luke alone that tells the story of the feast in the house of Simon the Pharisee. The guests had hardly taken their places at the table when a woman stole in from out the dark. This woman had come to anoint the feet of Jesus with perfume. But before she could accomplish her purpose, the fountains of a great deep were broken in her heart, and she broke into a hot gush of tears. She felt that this was unworthy, and she undid the cascade of her hair and wiped the feet of Jesus. Simon was outraged. "If this man were a prophet," he said to himself, "he would know what manner of woman this is, for she is a sinner." But Jesus said, "Her sins which are many are forgiven her, for she loved much." Luke alone tells that story.

3. There was a third group, not Jews, but poor relations of the Jews, a mongrel race known as Samaritans. These were lower in the mind of a pious Jew
than a street dog. But one day Jesus told a story of a certain man that was making a journey from Jerusalem to Jericho. He was attacked by a bunch of gangsters, robbed and wounded, and left to die. Two zealous churchmen passed by and did nothing but shudder. Then another man came, and though he knew that he was doing so at the risk of his life, he bound up the dying man's wounds, took him to an inn, watched over him, and left money enough for his bills. We have called through the years the man who did this a good man. He was the Good Samaritan. Nobody but Jesus would have told a story like that. Luke alone records it.

4. Finally, we are indebted to Luke for another story, the most beautifully tender, and the most tenderly beautiful ever told. We call it the Parable of the Prodigal Son. It is really the Parable of the Perfect Father. You know how it begins. "A certain man had two sons and the younger of them said unto his father, "Give me the portion of the goods that falleth to me." And he divided unto them his living. When this prodigal had wasted his all in riotous living he came back with nothing to offer but the rags of a wasted life. But his father welcomes him as if he had returned from winning a crown. When the elder son was envious and would not come to the feast that was made in his honor, this father went out and entreated him and said, "Son, thou art ever with me and all that I have is thine." God is like that. He is always trying to give us his very best whether we are decent or indecent, whether we waste our substance in riotous living, or whether we are merely selfishly respectable. We are indebted to Luke as to none other for the great truth that the Gospel is for all men.

III.

What kind of man was Luke?

1. Luke was a man of keen intelligence and of fine training. He had a scientific way of looking at things. He was scholarly and thoughtful. We sometimes think that all the early church was made up of ignorant and unlearned. This is true of the vast majority of its members. Paul was speaking sober truth when he
"The Beloved Physician"

said, "Not many wise and not many noble are called." But there were some exceptions. Among them were at least three men of outstanding scholarship and ability. Paul was one, Apollos was another, and Luke, the beloved physician was a third. These are perhaps the three brightest minds in the early church.

2. Luke was beautifully humble and modest. There are sixty-six books in the Bible, sixty-four of them were written by Jews, two were written by a Gentile. That Gentile was Dr. Luke. But he does not remind us of this fact. You will shake his book in vain in search of his calling card. His name is not even on the fly leaf. I asked Luke's left hand one day what his right hand was doing, and that left hand did not have the slightest idea. Luke was so busy doing the job that he forgot to leave us his autograph. A beautifully modest man was Luke.

3. Luke was loveable. Paul calls him the Beloved Physician. He may have had by nature a charming personality. I have an idea he did. But my guess is that folks loved him because he loved them first. I have an idea that he was abreast of his times and knew the best method of healing that belonged to his day. But I am quite sure that what he carried to his patients in his personality was worth far more than what he carried in his medicine case. That is not only true of Dr. Luke, but it is true of the best physicians that are alive today. The doctor comes to us when we are most humble, most capable of being helped. That he brings in the skill of his hand and the skill of his art is important, what he brings in himself is far more important.

4. Finally, though Luke was as tender in his touch as a mother, he was as courageous and steadfast as any Roman soldier. These were trying times. Weaker men were taking to their heels. But not Luke. Quiet, unassuming, modest, loveable he stood by. Paul could not call out in the dark without having an answer from Dr. Luke. He was dependable. Thank God for folks like that. We find them in almost
everY hoIl. We find them in every church, folks that you can always count on, folks that you know will always stand by.

I used to read a story in McGuffey's Third Reader. I wept over that story as a boy. It tells of a certain English nobleman who went away across the country to collect a large sum of money. Having made his collections all in gold he tied his treasure to the plummet of his saddle and started home. At noon he stopped to eat and rest. But he did not leave his gold tied to his saddle. He untied it and set it down by his side that it might be safe. But having eaten and rested he went his way, leaving the gold by the side of the road.

Now it so happened that he had with him a faithful dog. That dog began to run ahead of his master and bark, then turn back toward the spot where he had rested. But the man failed to understand. By and by the dog began to snap at the horses' heels and then turn and run back. Finally the man decided the dog had gone mad. So very sadly he turned and shot the dog. Then with a heavy heart he went on his way. By and by he missed his gold. He turned back at a run. When he came to the place where he had shot his dog he was not there. He tracked him by his blood back to the place where he had left his gold. There he found him, a paw on each side of the treasure and his chin resting upon it. He had been faithful unto death. I think Luke was like that. Therefore, when this great lonely heart looked about him and missed many that he would like to have seen, he wrote this sentence to the everlasting honor of his friend,—"Luke is with me."
"Only Luke is with me."
---II Timothy 4:11

This word is a mingling of sobs and songs, of shadow and sunshine, of tears and laughter. Paul was generally a glad man. Those that watched with him heard the lilt of his song in the night. But today he is finding it hard to keep back the tears. He is in prison. Death is so close that he could almost have touched the grim specter with his hand. But that is not the chief source of his sorrow. Most of his friends are away. Some of them have gone on errands of service upon which he himself has sent them. They are manning difficult stations. Their absence leaves him a bit lonely; yet there is joy in thinking of the work they are doing. But his supreme heartache is this—a trusted friend has left him not on a mission of service, but on a mission of selfishness. This friend, Demas, by name, has found Rome a bit of vanity fair where he has forgotten his high quest. Therefore, the sob that is in his heart trickles down on the parchment page as he writes, "Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world."

But if there is sadness in the heart of Paul, there is also gladness. Though there are empty places about him, though he does long for the touch of vanished hands and the sound of voices that are still, he is not left entirely desolate. There is one friend that is still standing by. "Only Luke is with me," writes Paul. Fair-weather friends had all gone, but this gallant-hearted, loyal, faithful friend and companion pressed only the closer. Therefore, while Paul grieves over those who are away he rejoices that the faithful watch-dog, Luke, still stands by.

Who is this man? He is Paul's devoted friend and companion. He has been
with this great missionary and evangelist through some of the stormy experiences of his life. Just how they became friends we are not told. As we shall see later, I think we can form a good guess as we read between the lines. But let it be said at once that real friendship does not grow out of the fact that they belong to the same race. Paul is a Jew. Up to the time of his conversion he has been the most exclusive of Jews, a Pharisee. Luke is a Gentile, a Greek, who had in all probability once been a slave.

What then is the bond that holds these two naturally widely sundered souls together? It is their worship of a common Lord. To any careful reader of the book of Acts this fact must stand out as conspicuous—the Christianity of that Book is a bridger of chasms. This new faith bridged all the chasms that separated Jew from Jew. It bridged the chasms that separated race from race. There was not a chasm that existed at that time that Christianity did not bridge. We need to take that to heart in our own day for we have come upon a time when there must be a sufficiency of power in our religion to help settle the tense conflicts that we face at home or abroad, or there is no hope for a permanent peace.

How was Luke converted? We do not know. He himself gives us no hint of it. We know the story of Paul's conversion. Luke himself has seen to that. But how this cultured Greek was led into this new faith we can only guess. But while we are left in the dark as to the time and the method and the manner, we are not left in doubt as to the fact. How Luke was converted we do not know, but of the fact of his conversion we may be sure.

Naturally, this is the matter of supreme importance. Now and then I met earnest-minded souls who are disturbed because they cannot tell the day and the hour when they were converted. They cannot join heartily in singing, "At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light." Now if you know your spiritual birthday, thank God for it, but bear in mind it is altogether possible to be very conscious of life in Christ and yet know nothing of your spiritual birthday. You would not know the day of your physical birth except on the authority of somebody
else. But even if you did not know your birthday, you would not for that reason mistrust the fact of physical life. During the last World War there was a splendid write-up of a certain soldier who reached his home-town the very day the leading paper carried an account of his death on the battle-field. The article was well written. It was written in all honesty and sincerity, but the presence of the living soldier in the editor's office put down all arguments. The big fact about Luke is that whenever and however he was converted he is now a Christian.

But while we cannot be sure of the circumstances of Luke's conversion, I think we can give a fairly sane guess. Luke, you know, was a physician. One day when Paul was stopping in Troas, when he was on the point of invading Europe with his Gospel, he was stricken down. Paul had some sort of tormenting illness. Some have guessed that he was an epileptic, but that is only a guess. This illness was perhaps his "thorn in the flesh". Again and again something laid him low. Thus suddenly stricken his friends went in search of a physician. Not being able to find a Jewish doctor, they came back later, bringing with them a charming young Greek physician who ministered with all the skill of his time to the needs of his patient.

It was thus that Luke, I daresay, came to know Paul. He had not known this amazing man for an hour until he realized that there was something extraordinary about him. Soon the young doctor realized that his patient could minister to him quite as genuinely as he had ministered to his patient. Paul told him his marvelous story. With a skill that amounted to inspired genius he introduced this brilliant and gifted Greek to Jesus Christ. Luke's heart was taken captive. Little by little he gave Paul a love that was only surpassed by his devotion to Paul's Lord. Thus these two became friends and inseparable companions.

II

What did this experience of conversion do for Doctor Luke? It did not give him a new vocation. That was what conversion did for Paul. One day as Paul
journeyed from Jerusalem to Damascus he was armed with a commission that came from the high priest. It was a commission of persecution. Suddenly there was a flash and a fall. Paul brushed the desert sand from his knees, declaring, "It is a true saying and worthy of universal acceptance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." Then and there he threw away the commission from the high priest and accepted a commission from his new-found Lord. Again and again men and women have set out on their self-appointed roads and have encountered Jesus and have felt called to back-track or to take an entirely new road.

But this was not the case with Luke. It is not the case with most of us. When we are really converted, when we truly give ourselves to our Lord, Jesus, He does not lead us into new vocations, but he enables us to pursue our old vocations with new power under roomier skies with larger motives and finer incentives. The lawyer becomes a better lawyer, the businessman conducts his business as a good steward of Jesus Christ. The physician, as Doctor Luke, does not throw away his medicine and his bandages. He goes about his task with a new power to help, being able to minister not simply to sick bodies, but to sick souls as well. So it was with Doctor Luke!

If then, Luke's conversion did not give him a new vocation, what did it do? It gave him a new avocation. Luke continued to be a physician, but as a sideline he became a writer, and what a charming writer he was! There are sixty-six books in the Bible. Sixty-four of them were written by Jews. Only two were written by a Gentile and that Gentile was Luke. We are indebted to Luke for the book of Acts, the history of the Early Church. We are indebted to him for the story of Pentecost. We are indebted to him for the record of Paul's marvelous missionary journeys. Then we are indebted to him for the third Gospel. Renan calls this third Gospel the most beautiful book in the literature of the world. These two books have brought all mankind under obligations to this gracious physician. "Never did so many owe so much to so few," said Winston Churchill, speaking
of the soldiers of the R.A.F. that had saved Britain. A far greater number have been brought into debt by this one man Luke.

As we could not spare the book of Acts, still less could we spare Luke's Gospel. Being a man of scientific mind, Luke was a careful investigator. He tells us that before he wrote his Gospel he took time to make sure of his facts. I daresay that Luke talked to almost every person who had known Jesus intimately during the days of His flesh. In all probability he talked to mother Mary. He wrote with unusual accuracy. In fact, it takes a rash man to this day to question any statement made by Luke. His references to the history of his time can be checked and he is rarely ever found at fault.

Luke's Gospel has two marked emphases. First, we are indebted to Luke for giving us more fully than any other writer the teaching of Jesus with regard to money. It is Luke alone who tells us the story of the Rich Farmer. "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do; I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods......But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." This farmer was a fool not because he was rich and successful. He was a fool because he got so absorbed in his money-making that he forgot God.

Then we are indebted to Luke for the story of a man who in the enjoyment of his wealth forgot his brother. "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes." What was wrong? He did not have the beggar scourged because he was lying at his gate. He merely let him alone. He was so
busy enjoying himself that he did not see the beggar.

Finally, we are indebted to Luke for the story of a third rich man whose manager turned out to be a rascal. "There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses." At once he began to discount the bills of his master's creditors. Thus, he got them under obligations to him. Thus, he was able in later days by blackmail to make them take care of him.

Now Jesus took this bit of shrewd rascality and preached a sermon on it. His lord, not Jesus, the lord of the rascally servant, commended the unjust steward because he had acted shrewdly. Jesus Himself acknowledges his shrewdness. In fact, He said, "The children of this age are in their generation wiser than the children of light." That is, He said, "This steward was a man of the world. He confessedly put material values first. Therefore, when he sought material values he allowed nothing, not even his own honor, to stand in the way. "You," said Jesus, "as the children of light claim to put spiritual values first. Therefore, drive to your goal with the same singleness of purpose. 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.' Change your coin into character. Then by and by those so changed will be ready to welcome you into everlasting habitation." We are indebted to Luke for much of Jesus' teaching on money.

Second, Luke emphasizes especially the universality of his Gospel. Mark was private secretary to Simon Peter. He was probably in Rome when he wrote his Gospel. Therefore, he wrote for the Romans. He makes little reference to the
Jewish Scriptures. His Gospel is a gospel of action. Matthew wrote for the Jews. His book is full of references to the Old Testament. He tells of event after event that happened that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. When he tells the story of the birth of Jesus, he has the wise men asking, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" But Luke wrote neither for Jews nor Romans, but for all men.

Therefore, when he tells the story of the birth of Jesus he does not describe Him as the king of the Jews. "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." There you have it! Luke's Gospel is in a peculiar sense a universal Gospel.

Then he proceeds to illustrate its universality by showing us one individual after another that is beyond the pale in whom Jesus took an interest. One day, for instance, he went down to Jericho. There was evidently considerable preparation for His reception in this priestly city, but He turned aside from all respectable doors that might have been open to Him to spend the night with the worst hated man in all Jericho, a tax-collector by the name of Zaccheus.

A second class of people that were cast beyond all human interest and hope were the fallen women of the time. But one night when Jesus was being entertained in the home of a most respectable Pharisee a woman of the street dared to come to the feast uninvited. Her purpose was to anoint the Master with precious ointment. Before she could accomplish her purpose the fountains of the great deep were broken up in her soul and she wet the Master's feet with a gush of hot tears. Simon was outraged. He made up his mind at once that Jesus was not perfect or He would not let this outcast woman touch Him. But Jesus turned to Simon and said, "Seest thou this woman? When I became your guest, you denied to me the ordinary courtesies, the kiss, water for my feet, the anointing oil, but this woman has washed my feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs
of her head. Therefore, her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much." Luke alone tells that story.

Even lower than the Jewish harlot was the Samaritan. The Samaritans were a mongrel race. They were the poor relations of the Jews and were hated accordingly. But when Jesus told the story of a man who had fallen among thieves and been stripped and wounded, he told of a priest and a Levite who passed by. The man who helped this helpless and forgotten unfortunate and thus made himself immortal was a Samaritan. We know him today as the "Good Samaritan".

Finally, it is Luke who told us the story of the Perfect Father. We usually speak of it as the parable of the Prodigal Son and of the Elder Son. Here are two boys. One of them went into the far country and wasted his substance in riotous living. The other remained at home, hard and harsh and unbrotherly. Both of them were terribly wrong. But the father loved them both. When the younger came back, he made him a feast. The door of the feast was also open to the Elder Son, but he refused to come. When he refused, his father went out and entreated him and said, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." Luke emphasizes that God is the father of all mankind—the outcasts, the disreputable, the prodigal, the decent. We owe an unpayable debt to Luke.

What kind of man was he?

1. He was a man of genuine ability. It is impossible to read his books without realizing that we are reading the writings of a man of intellect and insight. Then, he was a man of culture. He had perhaps the best scientific training that the schools of that day could give him. Many members of the Early Church were ignorant people. Paul was speaking sober truth when he said, "Not many wise and not many noble are called." But that does not mean that no wise and no noble were called. There were three men of outstanding culture and intelligence that were active in the Early Church. Paul was one, and Apollos another, and Luke was the third. These are perhaps the three best trained men
of the Early Church.

2. Luke was beautifully modest. He wrote two of the most charming books of the New Testament. By so writing, he has put his hand in blessing upon all the centuries. Yet he tells us nothing about himself. He was a part of some of the great scenes in Paul's life. He was with this great apostle when he was shipwrecked while on his way to Rome, but he does not tell us so. He was one of those beautifully modest men who got so busy doing his task that he forgot to give us his autograph. A choice and humble-hearted man was Luke.

3. Luke was lovable. Paul called him the beloved physician. Why did folks love him so? Because they could not help it. He cast a spell over them. He forced their hand by loving them first. He was as winsome as sea-music. We feel his charm to this hour. I think one of the privileges of being among the saints on life's other side will be that of meeting and knowing this beloved physician.

4. Finally, he was a man of rare courage. Tender he was, but he was as strong as he was tender. His friend Paul is now in jail. It is no honor to a man to be his friend—it is a danger. But Luke never even thinks of that. It is his joy to stand by. He has that beautiful virtue we call loyalty. Therefore, the greater the danger, the surer Luke is to be on hand. Therefore, hard-pressed Paul half forgot the difficulties that threatened his very life when he looked out through the prison bars to see into the strong and tender eyes of the beloved physician. Thus, he had a smile in his heart as well as upon his lips when he wrote, "Luke is with me."