THE TEMPTATION QUESTION

James 1:2

"Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations."

Temptation as used by James in this sense means a trial or testing. It, therefore, includes the more narrow meaning of temptation as we conceive of it, which is a solicitation toward evil. Temptation is an invitation to do wrong or refusal to do right. When that temptation carries an appeal, of course, it is impossible for one to be tempted by that which makes no appeal. What tempts me would not necessarily tempt you. What tempts you would not necessarily tempt me. An invitation to take a drink might tax your resisting power to the utmost. It would not tax mine in the least. I would simply not be tempted at all.

Now the first fact that strikes us about this word of James is that it seems refreshingly unique. We are accustomed to look upon temptation as something altogether harmful. It is the grim fact of life that we face only because we must. But James takes the opposite view. He does not look upon temptation as a foe at all. It is rather a friend. It is not a liability, it is an asset. It is not to weaken us, it is to make us strong. Its purpose is not to impoverish, but to enrich. James is sure of it. He is downright enthusiastic about it. Therefore, he flings out this heartening cry to all tempted souls, "Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations."

And mark you, James is talking the language of sanity and good common sense. James is always practical, therefore; he has a real reason for counting temptation as a friend rather than a foe. Of course, he realizes that we may meet it in such a fashion as to make it a foe. But so we may do with any other blessing that comes
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from God. We may take our choicest gifts and so misuse them as to work our hurt rather than our help. James rejoices in our capacity for temptation. He rejoices that this is a world of conflict. He does so for the following reasons.

1. Our capacity for temptation is the badge of our freedom. If we are mere machines we cannot be tempted. If we belong to the lower orders of life, temptation would also be impossible. You cannot tempt an oyster. You cannot tempt an angleworm. You cannot even tempt a dog or horse. They are incapable of choice. Therefore, they are incapable of sin. They cannot be tempted because they are not free. Our capacity for temptation proclaims our freedom.

2. Our capacity for temptation proclaims also our capacity for growth. Temptation yielded to brings about moral decline. Temptation resists brings about moral advancement. Growth is only possible in a world where we have the capacity to refuse the wrong and to choose the right, or to refuse the right and choose the wrong. Without this temptation we might have remained forever innocent, but Christlikeness, genuine goodness, true holiness would have been impossible. We may be born with innocence but character must be achieved.

James, therefore, regarded this world as the best possible world for achieving the ends that God had it made. We can easily conceive of a world where there would be less heartache and less conflict than the one in which we live. We could easily conceive of a world where men would bark their shins less and suffer less than they do in this world. The Persian poet was not the only one that has felt that this world might have been far better than it is. Most of us have felt at once like saying with him,
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"O could we but grasp this sorry scheme of things entire, we would wreck it and mold it nearer to the heart's desire."

So many have felt and so many feel today.

But in spite of all this, I maintain that this is the best possible world for the accomplishment of the plan and purpose of God. What is our Lord after? He is not seeking our innocence. That would mean that we should always remain babies. He is not come to give us an easy time. His first purpose is not to deliver us from conflict. He is come that we might have life. He is come that we might be strong and brave and Christlike. He is seeking not an easy time for us. He is seeking that we should have character. And I know of no better place for the growing of a soul than in a world like this where there is a constant capacity to go either to the right or to the left, to go up or down, to choose the highest or the lowest, or the second best.

You may remind me that this involves suffering. I grant it. But a capacity to suffer carries with it also a capacity for joy. If our faces are sometimes wet with tears, that means also that we may be songful and full of laughter. The capacity to endure the pangs of hell is compensated for by the capacity to enjoy the bliss of heaven, and we cannot have one without the other. An angleworm never breaks its heart. It never cries out, or tries to cleanse its blood-stained hands. But neither does it cry, "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sins are covered." The hog that the prodigal son fed in the far country was quite content, while he was wretched. But his very wretchedness is the badge of his superiority, his pain the gateway to a larger life. The hogs remain in the far country while he was scourged by the loneliness of his heart back
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to the peace of his father's house. A world, therefore, that is full of temptation is the only kind of world in which God can grow a man.

Now since this is true we are not surprised when we find that temptation is universal. No one is exempt, no one can hide from it, no one can dodge it. You may be overcome by it, you may fight it by the grace of God and conquer, but one thing is sure you will never avoid it.

1. Temptation comes in spite of our environment. I believe we ought to put ourselves in the best environment possible. I certainly think we ought to give our children the cleanest possible environment. A good environment is a help but it does not exempt temptation altogether. The Bible opens with a story of temptation. This temptation came to one who lived in a garden. It was an environment all but perfect. But that fact did not keep out the tempter.

2. Temptation comes in spite of the fact of our good breeding. It is fine to be well born. Pure blood is a great asset. There are some children that are half damned in their birth because of their impure blood. But the one to whom the first temptation came was entirely innocent. She was well born. She had come fresh from the hand of God, but that fact did not save her from temptation.

3. Not even spiritual attainment exempts from temptation. This is true of the very highest attainment. Of course, it lessens the fear about temptations. There are many things to which a genuinely spiritual man is not tempted, yet no achievement of holiness makes one absolutely exempt. Jesus was perfect yet He was tempted. He had to struggle with temptation again and again. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.
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In the face of these facts is it not strange that Jesus taught us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation." What did He mean by this petition. He did not mean that in answer to our prayer He was going to exempt us from temptation altogether. The petition rather indicates the spirit in which we are to face temptation. We are not to face it with a feeling of flipancy. We are not to go out of our way to seek it. We are to avoid it as far as possible. And we are to count on victory over it, not in our strength but in the strength of God.

III

How does temptation make its attack?

Of course, temptation comes in many ways, but the old Genesis story throws some real light on its method.

1. It was in the guise of the serpent that the tempter came to Eve. That is, temptation is tricky, it is subtle. Temptation takes us by surprise. It makes its attack when we are least prepared. The snake is a strange creature. As another has said, it lies as if dead half the year but when it wakes up it can out climb the monkey, it can out swim the fish, it can out leap the zebra, it can out wrestle the athlete, it can crush the tiger.

2. The tempter seeks to becloud the issue. In this old story, he asks a question. "Hath God said?" The one who is being tempted knows that God has thus spoken, but the insinuation is that there must be some mistake. This thing cannot really be wrong. When temptation first comes, I think as a rule we see clearly what we ought to do. It is only as we dally with it, as we trifle that we become bewildered. Balaam saw clearly at first, but having tampered with his oracle his
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3. Then temptation is always an attack on faith in God. It was so in the temptation of Eve. God had said that sin meant death. The devil said it meant a larger life. Eve at once began to feel that God was trying to cheat her out of something, that to obey Him was to lead a rather meager and mean and starved existence.

The same is true of the temptation of Jesus. "Since you are the Son of God," said the tempter, "command that these stones be made into bread. You are in the wilderness at the call of God, but if you do not look after yourself He is going to let you starve. Therefore, take your life out of His hands. Look out for number one."

Now in saying that temptation is always fundamentally an attack on faith, the attach is not always so open and plain as in the cases just cited. For instance, when Jesus refused to doubt God, the tempter invited him to leap from the penacle of the temple and depend on God to take care of him. This was to destroy faith in another direction by substituting presumption in its place. It looked like a larger faith but it was not faith at all but sheer presumption. To do a foolish thing and depend on God to see you thru is to fail. There are many who count greatly on the love of God, claim strongly that they believe in Him, yet are engaging in positive sin or neglecting their known duty. Such conduct is not faith it is sheer presumption and must end in disaster.

The tempter next tried to destroy the faith of Jesus by enticing Him to put compromise in its place. He showed Him the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and said, "all this will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." That is, you are to win the
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world not by obeying God, you are to win it by going over to it, you are to win it by compromise. But Jesus replied, "I will not win it by compromise of evil but by the destruction of evil. Get thee hence satan."

IV

How are we to meet temptation?

1. Realize it is a part of God's plan. In so doing you will not be discouraged when it comes. Remember that no spiritual experience gives you exemption from this conflict. There are those who set out to lead the Christian life, become discouraged because they find they are tempted. That is to be expected. That is hopeful rather than otherwise.

2. Be true to your oracle. Your first impressions are usually the best. Be ware especially of the questioning. If there is a doubt, stay on the safe side. Avoid letting your selfishness cover your convictions. Many folks find it easy to persuade themselves that what they want to do is right. To take that position is to surely rot down spiritually.

3. Remember that while temptation is inevitable, sin is not. God has put resources at our disposal by which we may overcome. One of them is prayer. "Watch and pray," said Jesus to His disciples in the garden. But they went to sleep. Therefore, temptation came upon them and they were shamefully defeated when they might have gloriously conquered.

Then God has put a weapon in our hands. It is a wonderful sword. It is the one with which He fought the enemy and conquered. Out at Mount Vernon I was interested in seeing a sword with which Washington fought his battles during the Revolution. But there is a sword far more interesting and far more important. It is the sword
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that Jesus used. It is the sword that you may use. It is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Learn how to wield it and you will find it a mighty power against the foe.

When Jesus had overcome, angels came and ministered to Him. There is always this ministry for the conquerers. Every foe we meet makes us stronger if we overcome it. Samson found honey in the carcass of his slain foe. So we may find to this day. Nourished on this strengthful food we shall become stronger and stronger till we sit down among the overcomers in that miracle country where are gathered those who have fought life's battles manfully and who have come up out of great tribulations and washed their robes and made them white in the blood we of the Lamb. Therefore, do not whine that/live in a world of choices and, therefore, a world of temptation, but "Count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations," knowing that this is the roadway to life that is life indeed.
The text of the sentence is not clear due to the handwriting and the quality of the image. It appears to be a quote from James 4:2, but the context is not entirely legible.

Here are the translations of the text: I am going to use that from Moffatt. I think it best gives the sense of what James has said. This word that he is giving us is revolutionary. The only reason that we can keep it without getting tremendously excited over it is because we have heard something a bit like it so often that we do not really believe it. Our fancied satisfactions leave us a bit cold. Yet if what this man says is really true, then the door is open to the highest for every single one of us. If what he says is true, then there is not a soul here present that should not go away with the thrill of a great discovery in his heart. Of course we can refuse to believe James, but he has a right to be hearing from God. Reasons:

1. Because of who he is. He is the brother of our Lord. He is an exceedingly practical man. He does not believe in anything except as it is found of worth. "Pure faith," he declares, "is vain unless it gets something done." He always writes with his feet firmly fixed on the ground. Not one of the Apostles was a visionary, but James was; if possible, the most practically practical man among them.

2. Then, he has a right to a hearing because he has tested the matter of which he speaks. When Admiral Bird returns from the North Pole, what he says about conditions in the far South will command respect. He has a right to speak because he has had experience.
When a scientific comes from his laboratory telling of his findings, we listen to him. Here is a man, coming from the laboratory of prayer. He has tested the efficacy of prayer so thoroughly that he has earned a nickname. This great Apostle, the brother of Jesus, actually had a nickname. It was 'Camel-liness.' He had earned that by his persistent practice of prayer. And he tells us that prayer opens the door to the room of our heart's desire. "You miss what you want because you do not ask God for it."

I

Now, even if you differ with James as to the remedy he suggests for these ills, for the truthfulness of the first part of his statement, I think most of us will agree, "You miss what you want." That is certainly true of a vast multitude. The multitude of whom it is true is not made up simply of those who have failed in business, or failed in their profession, or who have experienced some tragic failure in domestic life. It is true of not a few who seem to have made good in every way. "What lack we yet?" is a question in many a heart. There is a sense of want that is exceedingly widespread. In fact, the face of our humanity today is often one lean, gaunt wistfulness.

And mark you, this sense of want is not confined to those outside the Church. Sometimes it is more pronounced within the Church. "I used to think," a woman said the other day, "that if ever I should become a Christian, I would be the right kind of Christian, but I find that I am about like the rest." She was not angry. She was not bitter. She was not trying to wound anybody. She was not threatening to quit the Church. She was simply looking at the thin slice of bread that she held in her hand, and wondering if that was the best
that the Infinite Christ could do for a human soul. She was just tasting a few drops of brackish water that were here and wondering if that was the most satisfying draught that He could give, who promised a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. How many there are who have not found what they expected to find, who have not done what they expected to do, and who have not become what they expected to become? They are frankly disappointed in their religious lives.

II.

Is there a way out? James says there is. "You miss what you want," he says, "but why?

It is not because of any lack of ability on the part of God. When you turn the pages of the New Testament you come upon whole groups of eager and excited men and women who tell you, with hot enthusiasm, of the amazing adequacy that they have found in God. "He is able to save unto the uttermost," one shouts, "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus," cries another. "God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work," is the song of another. Their language breaks down in an effort to tell us of God's amazing ability to meet our every need.

No more is our lack born of any unwillingness on the part of God. Here again the saints agree. They cannot put into words His unending willingness. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" They are perfectly sure that our Lord is constantly offering us His very best with both His eager hands. The trouble, then, is not with Him, but with our
What is the matter with us? Just this: we do not pray as we ought. By this James does not mean to tell us that prayer is a means of wringing blessings from the grudging hands of God. He does not mean to leave the impression that it is the purpose of prayer to change the will of God. We are not after moving the arm that moves the world, as our fathers used to say. Prayer is a means of allowing God to move us and to do for us what He cannot do under any other conditions. Prayer does make possible for the infinitely able and infinitely willing Christ to do for us what He simply cannot do if we fail to pray.

III

What are some of the things that prayer will accomplish?

1. Prayer, if it is real, is a means of realizing the presence of God. I put this first, because it is first. It is fundamental. It includes all other blessings. Even when God answers our prayers, better than any answer is the revelation that He makes of Himself. Prayer makes it possible for us to realize the presence of God.

2. Prayer makes possible the spiritual enrichment that comes with this realization. Prayer gives peace, a peace deeper and stronger than any storm that comes that is independent of the storms that blow about us. Prayer gives joy, a joy that is higher than the night, a joy that abides in the midst of all sorrows. Prayer gives poise and courage. The thoroughly courageous men have been men conscious of the presence of God. It is true of Elijah. He was not afraid of Ahab when he stood in his presence because he was conscious of standing in the presence of one infinitely great. "As the Lord God liveth, the same before whom I stand." The same accounts for the courage of Paul, of Luther, of David Livingston. Prayer.
There is a means of usefulness. Every normal
soul desires to be useful. "Usefulness," says
Hume, "is the greatest shock that can come to a living soul." Life grows dull and wretched when we feel that nobody needs us, that we no longer count for anything.

"Make use of me, my God,
Let me not be forgot,
Broken physically, cast aside,
One whom Thou needest not.
All things do serve Thee here,
All creatures, great and small,
Make use of me, my God;
The meanest of them all."

Prayer makes for usefulness for at least three reasons:

(1) It enriches our personalities. The first step in doing more is being more.

(2) Prayer is a means of enlisting laborers in the service of the King. It is a converting power. I dare say that almost every single genuinely converted man or woman here this morning was converted through somebody's prayers and somebody's personal effort. A friend of mine, possibly the best evangelistic preacher living today, told some time ago of the most remarkable single conversion he had ever known.

"I was," he said, "preaching to the settlers of the West. The field is spiritually barren. Many men in attendance were white-haired old grandfathers who had grown gray in sin. But I was no sooner on the ground than they told me about a notorious character called "Big Jim." "Big Jim," they said, would come to meeting once, then he would go away and curse you and curse the Church and curse everybody connected with it, and that would be the end till next year. I was preaching a few nights later, when a great giant of a man stalked in. I recognized
him as Big Jim. I preached my appeal and Big Jim stalked out again, and the folks said, "You will not see him any more."

That night I went to my tent; I heard two men talking. They were not talking to each other, but to God. They were saying:

"Lord, the people say that Big Jim is too much for you. Break his heart and save him." The next night Big Jim was back.

When the invitation was given, he took me by the hand and said, "I put you on your sacred honor, will Jesus Christ save me if I give up to Him?" "On my sacred honor, He will," I answered. "Remember", he said, "I am the meanest man out of hell." "He will save the meanest man out of hell," I replied. "When will He save me if I give up to Him now?" "He will save you now, and you yourself shall be the judge." And that man turned his hard face up to God and said, "Lord, the meanest man in the world gives himself up to you now." And he was instantly remade. I believe there was some connection between the praying of those two men and the conversion of Big Jim.

(3) Prayer makes for helpfulness, because it brings the power of God upon those engaged in Christian work. This has been demonstrated time and time again. Paul never wrote to a single church, except to the backslidden church at Galatia, without asking for the prayers of those to whom he wrote. He believed that the most despised slave in all the Roman Empire could pray for Apostolic lips with grace and power by praying for Him.

When Mr. Moody made his first visit to England, he preached on Sunday morning in the church of J. B. Mayer. He declared that it was a dead and barren service, and that he was haunted, even while he preached, with the vexing thought that he had to preach in the same church that night. A certain
human present went home and said to her invalid sister:

"Mr. Moody from Chicago preached for us today, and that tired invalid face lighted up. ‘Leave me alone,’ she said, ‘for the afternoon. I have been praying for God to send Mr. Moody here, ever since I read of his marvelous work in Chicago. I want to pray for the blessing of God on the services tonight.’ That night it was the testimony of Mr. Moody that the atmosphere was changed. When he called for decisions, 500 went into the inquiry room. I believe there was some connection between the praying of this invalid woman, whose name was Mary Anne Abelard, and tremendous spiritual results were reaped in that service. One of the deepest wells of the human heart is his usefulness. Here is a wide-open door through which any one can pass — the door of prayer.

IV.

But prayer, of course, has certain laws. God cannot accomplish any and all prayer. To do so would be creating anarchy in His Kingdom. If we are to pray effectively, at least three things are necessary.

1. We must be in earnest. This does not mean that God wants us to wrest blessings from His hands by sheer force. It means that He cannot trust us with His best unless we are enough to pray with earnestness.

2. If we pray effectively, we must pray within the will of God. It is unreasonable to ask God to do for us what we can do, and yet be unwilling to do for ourselves. For a farmer to ask God to give him a good crop, without working, would be presumption.

He never can we pray when we are doing what is can-
pray to the will of God. Suppose God had answered the prayer of the Prodigal while he was in the far country. In the far
country he would have starved. God wakened us in the swine trough,
but He feeds us at home.

3. If we pray effectively, we must pray with faith.

Faith is the hand that takes. It is the eye that is fixed
on God. If we pray effectively, we must look to Him, and not
to our difficulties. Some people find their prayers ineffective
because their whole thought is fixed upon their own needs as
they pray instead of upon God. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect
peace, whose heart is stayed on Thee," is the promise. Those
who have prayed effectively have not consulted their difficulties,
they have fixed their whole minds and hearts on the might and
willingness of God.

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to God alone,
laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, 'It shall be done!'"
"You have not, because you do not pray." (Revelation) - James 4:3

"You must pray; you must because you do not ask God for it." (Hoffatt)

The author of this text is no idle dreamer. He is no spinner of vague and worthless theories. He is in a peculiar sense the practical man among a group of men not one of whom was a visionary. He writes with his feet firmly fixed on the ground. He emphasizes the gospel of works. Nothing counts with him that does not get results. He may listen, therefore, with great confidence to what he has to say about the big and often perplexing matters of prayer. Our confidence ought to be increased not more by the fact that he has tested them a long period of years something of what can be accomplished thru prayer. In fact, he has won the name of "camel-knees" by his persistent practice of prayer. He has, therefore, right to speak and it is only reasonable that we should give him our careful attention.

What has he found? Does prayer really help, or does it not? Is it a genuine force, or is it a sheer futility? This same and commonplace question gives us uncertain answers to this question. He is absolutely sure of the efficacy of prayer. No scientist coming from his laboratory could be more certain of his findings than is James as he comes from his place of prayer. And no scientist, I mean he, is bold to say, one can speak with greater authority. For discoveries in the realm of the spiritual are just as valid as discoveries in the realm of the material. What then does he have to say? Armed with a knowledge born of experience, he looks with frank amusement upon our emptiness and spiritual poverty and declares with conviction, "You have not, because you do not pray. Your poverty would be changed into plenty, your want into wealth, your pitiful inadequacy into glorious adequacy if you would only pray."
remedy for our ills, we must agree that those ills exist. There is a sense of lack, of spiritual poverty, among us to which we cannot shut our eyes. We have never before had such splendid material equipment for the doing of the work of the Kingdom as we have today. We have the best of church buildings, the most modern of educational plants. We have never had so many well-trained ministers in our pulpits, nor so many cultured teachers in our Sunday Schools. Yet, there still seems to be something wanting. In spite of all our marvelous improvements, there remains a lack of inner satisfaction, and of outward conquest. Too many are yet fretful and feverish, powerless and ineffective. Many are asking with the Rich Young Ruler, "What lack I yet?" or with the Psalmist, "Who will show us any good?"

And this sense of want is by no means confined to those outside the Church. Often it is even more pronounced among those within the Church. There are multitudes of professing Christians who are sadly disappointed in their Christian lives. A woman said to me some time ago, "I used to say before I entered the church, 'If ever I become a Christian, I am going to be the right kind of Christian!' Then she added, "But I am about like the rest. It has not really made much difference." She was not bitter, she was not antagonistic, she was not even indifferent or cynical, she was simply disappointed. She seemed to wonder sadly if that she had found was the best that an infinite Christ could do for a human soul.

Along with this widespread lack of inward satisfaction, there is in consequence an equally widespread sense of inadequacy as we face the pressing spiritual needs about us. Many of us know all too well how to sympathize with that empty-handed and embarrassed host of whom the Master tells. Guests have come our way and we have nothing to eat before them. Some of these are very dear to us. Some are our own loved ones. Some are our dearest friends. Some belong to our Sunday School classes. Some are members of our churches. We would gladly help, but too often our sense of emptiness either puts us to silence or makes our words seem little more than an impertinence. Therefore,
we stand baffled with nothing to offer but what we can glean from an empty larder.

Not only does this lack of spiritual adequacy affect us personally, but it has its influence upon those whom we would serve. There are many burdened and battered folk who really long for help. They would come to us, only they are not fully convinced that we have anything of real value to give. Sometimes they do come and go away disappointed. What a tragedy when, "the hungry sheep look up and are not fed." What a tragedy it is when boys and girls sit for years in our Sunday School classes and attend our churches, and this in the most impressionable period of their lives, and at last slip thru our fingers without any definite knowledge of Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. How tragic when colossal evils swagger before us in bold defiance, because they know that we have no mighty weapon with which to strike them dead. Surely Christ can do more for us than many of us are at present making it possible for Him to do.

II.

What is the secret of our lack? What lies back of our spiritual inadequacy?

It is certainly not born of any inadequacy on the part of our Lord. When we turn the pages of our New Testament, we are constantly amazed and thrilled by the fascinating spiritual adequacy of those whom we meet. The characteristic word that is used to describe them is "full." When Peter is introduced he is described as "full of the Holy Spirit." Stephen is a man "full of the Holy Spirit and power." "Barnabas is a good man full of the Holy Spirit and faith." And when John undertakes to account for the marvelous changes that have been wrought in the lives of all that know Jesus, he declares, "Of His fullness have we all received." Emptiness for these seems a sheer impossibility. As the bay is being filled by the sea, so they are being filled by the Infinite Sea, even Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And all these are most emphatic and enthusiastic in declaring that this same gracious opulence is for ourselves. They cannot find words strong enough to express their conviction of the matchless ability of their Lord. "He is able to save unto the
uttermost than that come unto God by Him." "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." "He is able to keep you from falling and present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work."

Neither is our lack born of any unwillingness on the part of our Lord. There was a leper that came to Him once who was in serious doubt as to His willingness to help him. Life had dealt hardly with this leper. He had been rebuffed and repelled so many times that he had ceased to believe in the reality of love. He thought that, so far as he himself was concerned, love was dead. Therefore, he threw his rotting body at the feet of Jesus and said, "Lord if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. I believe in Thy power, but I am afraid Thou wilt not be willing to exercise it on behalf of one so wretched and worthless as I." But Jesus responded to his half-faith. He touched him and said, "I will: be thou clean."

Now there was some excuse for a lack of faith in the willingness of Jesus on the part of this poor wretch, but there is no excuse on the part of ourselves. These same men who speak so gladeningly and confidently of the ability of Christ to meet our needs, speak with no less conviction and enthusiasm of His willingness. To think of Him as grudging, as niggardly, is an utter impossibility. "He that spared not His only Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely forgive all things."

Why then are we in want? The answer is in the text. "You have not, because you do not pray." Real prayer, James declares, would meet all our needs. Not that our praying is to persuade God to be willing to help us, He is already willing. But prayer does make it possible for God to do for us and thru us what He cannot do if we do not pray. This is the testimony of the Word of God. This is the testimony of all the saints. To be convinced of this, all that is necessary is to give prayer a fair and honest trial.

But mark you, James is speaking of real prayer. There is a saying of prayers
that is of little worth. According to James there are three requirements for effective praying.

1. Really to pray we must be in earnest. It is the earnest, energized prayer that avails much. It is impossible for God to answer the prayer of one who does not really desire an answer. That is the reason why those who are without any trouble or perplexity are seldom mighty in prayer. It is only as the hands of a great need seize our shoulders and crush us to our knees that we really pray. It is when we cry in desperate earnestness, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me," that we prevail with God.

2. The prayer that prevails is that of a righteous man. That does not mean, of course, that one must be sinless in order to pray. It does not mean that he must be right in his motives, that he must be willing to be made right. It is useless for a sinner to ask for the forgiveness of his sins if he expects to commit that same sin again as soon as he rises from his knees. To answer such a prayer would be a curse rather than a blessing. "God sent the sinner in the far country by the swine trough, but he feeds him at home."

How can the Christian pray while there is a quarrel between himself and his God. Did you ever try to pray when every time you bowed the knee there came before you a duty that you ought to perform, but that you were unwilling to perform, or a practice that you ought to give up that you did not wish to give up? Prayer under such conditions is an impossibility. The greatest of all poets is here true at once to the Bible and to experience. The king of Denmark has become king thru the murder of his brother. He has stolen his brother's crown and his brother's wife. His guilt tortures him. He feigns would find rest from the lashings of his outraged conscience. Therefore, he betakes him to his knees, but it is a vain effort.

"But, O! What form of prayer
Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder?
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
Of these effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardon'd, and retain the' offence?"
In the corrupted currents of this world,
Offense's gilded hand may shave by justice;
And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law; but 'tis not so above;
There is no shuffling; there the action lies
In his true nature; and we ourselves compass'd
Rymes to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence. What then? What rest? 
Try what repentance can? What can it not?
Yet what can it, when one cannot repent?
O, wretched state! O bosom, black as death!
O, limed soul! that, struggling to be free,
Art more engag'd."

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God."

3. Prayer to be effective must be offered in faith. Faith is the hand that takes. It is that which opens the door for the incoming of the blessing that we ask from the King. "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord."

III.

Now when we pray after this fashion, James tells us, our prayer availeth much. It...
realize our unseen Lord. That is what all these have found who have really prayed. And
that, I may say, is the supreme blessing of prayer. Better than any gift that God can
give is the gift of Himself. Nothing can daunt us, nothing can quench the fires of our
enthusiasm, nothing can destroy our courage, nothing can blast our hopes, if we realize
God. "I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand I shall not
be moved."

3. Prayer makes us effective in the work of the Kingdom. There is power in the
personality, the deeds, and the words of a praying man to which the prayerless man is a
stranger. A cup of cold water given by his hands often becomes the Water of Life to him
who drinks it. A bit of bread given by him becomes the Bread of Life to him who eats it.
A word, a kind word, even a look is often blessed to the salvation of a soul. It is to
the man of prayer that God gives a mouth and wisdom that men cannot gainsay nor resist.

4. Prayer is a means of recruiting for the King. When Jesus looked at the
harassed and bedraggled multitude, His heart went out to them. But He saw in them more
than creatures of need. He saw in them amazing possibilities. He saw that they were a
rich harvest going to waste. I hate to see a harvest left ungathered. Having come from
the farm, it always hurts me to go by a wheat field that is ripe for harvesting and find
no laborers there. And how much greater the tragedy when the harvest is made up of
splendid men and women, of boys and girls, so rich in radiant possibilities.

But how are these to be reached? They can only be reached thru laborers, thru
men and women like ourselves who are willing to spend and be spent in the task. And how
are the laborers to be secured? They are to be secured in answer to prayer. "Pray ye
therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will thrust forth laborers into the harvest."
Our laborers whether they are ministers or laymen, whether they work in the home field
or in the far-away places of the earth, usually come from homes and from churches that
are sweetened by the breath of prayer.

5. Then prayer brings the blessing of God upon the laborers that are sent into
the field. Paul never wrote a letter, except to the back-slidden church of Galatia,
without asking for the prayers of those to whom he wrote. He believed that the humblest of the saints could be the means of anointing his lips with grace and power. How many preachers would preach better if they were being constantly upheld by the prayers of those that sit in the pews. It is my candid conviction that if pastors and people would co-operate in prayer as it is their privilege to do, every church would become a dynamo of spiritual power. Our failures would become successes, and our defeats would be changed into thrilling victories. Then, and only then, every one with an eye to see would be constrained to say of us, "You have because you pray."
WHY PRAY

"You miss what you want because you do not ask God for it." - James 4:3 (Hoffett)

James, the brother of our Lord, is sharing with us his convictions as to the real worth of prayer. He is entitled to a careful hearing for at least two reasons. First, he is an exceedingly practical man. In fact, he is the most practically practical man in the New Testament. Then James is entitled to a hearing because he has tested the efficacy of prayer personally. The manufacturer of a certain well-known make of car advertised it in this same fashion: "Ask the man who owns one." The only way to come to any sane conviction as to the worth of prayer is either to pray yourself or to ask the man who practices prayer. The words of an old black woman who has made a habit of prayer is worth far more than those of the greatest philosopher who has never prayed. James has been a man of prayer. He has been so persistent in prayer that he has earned a nickname. They called him "Boomer Jones" because his knees had grown calloused by his years of prayer.

"You miss what you want because you do not ask God for it."
to agree with him in some measure on the first part—"You miss what you want."

Who does? You, perhaps, the man sitting next to you, vast multitudes, all in fact who have not had their needs met in God. That does not mean that some of us have not realized our ambitions. Perhaps we have captured the prize upon which we set our hearts. But if we have missed God, we are not satisfied with our findings. We have still missed what we want, what life must have to be called life at all.

Jesus told of a restless young man who grew tired of the restraints of his father's presence. One day he said to his father, "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." A few days later this youth gathered all together and took his journey into far country. He was not out to wreck himself. He was not out to wound his father. He was out to live his own life. He was out to do as he pleased. He captured the prize upon which he set his heart, but by so doing he did not find what he wanted. Listen to his confession: "I perish with hunger."

That experience is not unique. It belongs to the human race. All things betray and disappoint the man who betrays and disappoints God. There are times when God seems not only not to be an asset but a positive liability. He gets in our way. That was the case with the fool of whom the Psalmist wrote: "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." His difficulties were not intellectual; they were moral. God was in his way; therefore, he dismissed Him. That was the sentiment of the soldier who sang:

"Ship me somewhere east of Suez
Where the best is like the worst,
And there ain't no Ten Commandments
And a man can raise a thirst."

But east of Suez as well as west of it, man is still face to face with the Ten Commandments. He can't get away from them because he carries them in his own self. They are written into every fiber of his being. To break them is to break himself. To fight them is to fight himself. No man finds what he wants who turns his back on God.
But those who miss what they want are not confined to the men and women who turn their backs on religion and ignore God altogether. There are many within the church who confessedly have missed what they want. They have not found those high satisfactions that are promised in the Scriptures. They have not arrived as they once dreamed they would. An intelligent woman, a member of my church, said to me a few years ago, "You see, I have gotten so little out of trying to be a Christian! Before I united with the church, I used to say, 'If ever I do become a Christian, I am going to have the real thing!'" Then she sighed and said, "But I am about like the rest." She was not bitter. She was not antagonistic against the other members of the church nor against her minister. She was merely looking at the thin slice of bread that she had in her hand and wondering if that was the best that God could do for a hungry soul.

Then there are those who miss what they want in the way of power. They feel that their resources are inadequate to the demands that life makes upon them. They are like the embarrassed host of whom Jesus told. An unexpected guest had come. He had come in the night. He was hungry, but when his host went to look for bread his cupboard was bare. Not only so, but the shops were closed. There was no bread to be bought in the marketplace. Therefore, this embarrassed man hurried out to the house of a friend. His one apology for routing him out of bed in the small hours of the night was this: "A friend of mine in his journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him." That comes very close to voicing our needs.

Children have come into our homes and we feel ourselves inadequate to the business of training them. Boys and girls are in our classes in the Church School, but we have nothing to set before them. I face you this morning with your needs in the realization that without His help I can do nothing. Yes, James was right in part at least. Many who felt both within and without the church are missing what they want.
James is quite sure that God's answer to man's prayer is not due to any unwillingness on the part of God to meet our needs. All the writers of this Holy Book share his conviction.

In fact the very words of the Bible haunt us with the fact of God's infinite eagerness to help. One day a leper threw himself at the feet of Jesus with this imperfect prayer upon his lips: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole." It was a pathetic prayer. Back of it were no telling how many desperate days of bitterness and disillusionment and despair. Life had treated him so harshly that he had ceased to believe in love altogether. He still believed in power, but not in love. So he came to the Master with this very imperfect prayer, "Lord, I think you are that is an acted parable of the attitude of our Lord from century to century.

Constantly He is waiting an opportunity to meet our needs. "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." He does not have to be persuaded to help. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things." "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" Perhaps the greatest heartache of our Lord is just this—that He longs to do so much for us and we permit Him to do so little.

Look at this picture. Jesus is facing a multitude. That multitude is made up of disappointed, needy, defeated men and women such as He would face today were He to come back to us in the flesh. As He looks into their tired eyes, He utters this word, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." There is in that word the sob of a great disappointment. Here is another to the same purpose. He is looking over the city that He loves: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest
the prophets, and stonesth them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." "You have missed what you want," He is saying, "because you would not let me give it to you." "Woe, mighty King, because I was all eagerness to give, but you would not have it."

James is also sure that our failure to get what we want is not due to any inadequacy on the part of God. As these writers of the Bible are unanimous and emphatic in their conviction of our Lord's willingness, so are they convinced of His ability. They fairly beam on us with the bracing fact that God is adequate to every need. "Fear not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee. Yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." "Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

This shout of confidence in God's ability that rings through the Old Testament becomes, if possible, even more joyous in the New. "He is able to save, to the uttermost that come unto God by him." "He is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." "He is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Here then is One who is infinitely eager and infinitely able to meet your needs.

Why, I repeat, does He not meet them? Why are we missing what we want? "You miss what you want," answers James, "because you do not ask God for it." Prayer then is that something by which we can meet life's needs. By this I do not mean that prayer is a power by which we can persuade God to do our will instead of His own. But prayer does make it possible for God to fulfill His will in us and do for us what He could not otherwise. Prayer makes it possible for us to hear the voice
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to which our ears would otherwise be deaf. It makes it possible for us to see where we would otherwise be blind. Whatever else life has brought us, it has not brought the best unless we have learned how to pray.

III

Then this sane, practical man tells us how we are to pray effectively. Not all prayer arrives. That we know quite well. What kind of praying gets results? James says, the earnest, energized prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

1. Prayer to be effective must be in earnest. It must be born of a sense of need. The reason God cannot give to many of us is that He cannot get our interest and attention. We are often off on other quests before we give Him an opportunity to answer. The fact is that we never really pray until we get to the end of ourselves. It is, generally speaking, only when we come face to face with needs that we know we cannot meet, burdens that we know we cannot carry, that we turn to God in prayer.

God cannot give to the half-hearted because such are incapable of receiving. Even God cannot give us what we are not interested enough to take. Do you know how long you are going to be without God in your life? Just so long as you are in any measure content to be without Him. But when you get to the end of yourself, when the weighty hands of a desperate need put themselves on your shoulders and press you in utter weakness to your knees, then you will pray effectively. When you cry with Knox, "Give me, or I die"; when you vow with desperate Jacob, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me"; then you will make it possible for God to answer. Prayer is an earnest business.

2. It is not only the earnest prayer, but the prayer of a righteous man that is a mighty power. Now do not make this more forbidding than it is. James does not mean that in order to pray we must be perfect. He does not mean that only the sinless can pray. What he does mean is this—that prayer to be effective must be offered by one who, if not right, is at least willing to be right. For God to answer the prayer of one who is in rebellion against Him would be to create anarchy
in His own Kingdom. For God to answer the prayer of a prodigal in the far country would not be a blessing for the prodigal, but a curse. It would only encourage the prodigal to stay where he is. God wooed us in the far country, but He feeds us at home. We cannot pray unless we are in the will of God.

Yet how often we undertake just this impossible task! We try to pray when there is a quarrel between us and God. We try to pray when there is a surrender that we are unwilling to make, when there is a task that we are unwilling to perform, when there is a wound that we are unwilling to heal. If there is a controversy between you and God you are going either to give up that controversy or give up prayer—that much is an absolute certainty. It is impossible to pray without the surrender of self. The greatest of the poets is at once true to Scripture and experience in his picture of the blood-stained King of Denmark. This man, having put his brother out of the way and having claimed his brother's crown and wife, is now ready to enjoy his winnings, except that his conscience hurts him. He wants to keep his prices without being bothered. He wants to please himself without displeasing God. Hence he betakes him to prayer. But it is a mad and futile effort.

"But, O! what form of prayer Can serve my turn?—Forgive me my foul murder?— That cannot be; since I am still possess'd Of those effects for which I did the murder, My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen. May one be pardon'd, and retain th' offence? In the corrupted currents of this world, Offence's gilded hand may shoo by justice; And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself Buys out the law; but 'tis not so above; There is no shuffling, there the action lies In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd, Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults, To give in evidence. What then? what rests? Try what repentance can? What can it not? Yet what can it, when one can not repent? O, wretched state! O bosom, black as death! O, lined soul! that, struggling to be free, Art more ensnarr'd."

That is what Jesus meant when He said, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath sought against thee, leave there thy gift; first go
and be reconciled to thy brother, then come and offer thy prayer." That is what
the prophet meant when he said, "God's arm is not shortened that He cannot save,
nor His ear heavy that He cannot hear, but your sins have separated between you and
God so that He will not." To pray effectively we must be right with God or at
least willing to be made right. Prayer under any other conditions is sheer futility.

Finally, prayer to be effective must be in faith. "Let him ask in faith nothing
doubting." Such confidence makes prayer a positive something. So often we under-
take to pray when some heavy need confronts us and, having entered into our closets,
we fix all our attention upon the need and fail altogether to see God. We look at
ourselves with never a look at Him. Such praying aggravates our trouble rather than
help to focus your eyes upon your difficulties, but upon Him who is to all your
difficulties. "Leave all to Him," says the author of the Thirty-Seventh Psalm,
"Leave all to Him, rely on Him, and He will see to it."

"Faith mighty seeth the promise dear,
Sees and looks to God alone,
Laughs at impossibilities
And cries, 'It shall be done!'

IV

What are some of the wants that praying will meet?

1. Prayer is a means of letting God into your life. Prayer is giving hospi-
tality to that Guest who is persistently standing at the door of our hearts, saying,

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Prayer is lifting the blinds so that the
light of His countenance may shine into our lives. Prayer is facing the east so
that the Sun of Righteousness may rise upon us with healing in His beams. He sur-
rounds us as the atmosphere surrounds our bodies, as the water surrounds the ship.

We do not have to persuade Him to enter our lives. He comes to us as a gift. The great word of the New Testament is "receive". Prayer
is a means of receiving God Himself. (This is the biggest, best, the all-inclusive
result of prayer. Whatever answer may come to us as a result of our praying, what-
prayed that God would grant them "a mighty increase of strength by his Spirit." That increase of strength is a natural result of prayer. Many of you have known such an experience. I personally have faced situations that made me afraid. I have faced them with shrinking and dread. Then, I have found myself in the midst of them with a courage that was a surprise to my own heart. Henry Stanley, that keen and hard-boiled newspaper man who found Livingston in Africa and then found Livingston's God, testified that he had a stamina, a courage, a zest for the hard marches through the jungle that those of his companions who did not pray did not possess. Even a one-time agnostic, Lieutenant Jim Whitaker, who shared the raft with Eddie Rickenbacker, found himself doing the impossible according to his own conviction, because he had prayed. When we pray, we cease to carry on alone. Our strength becomes the strength of the infinite God.

3. Then prayer is a means of helping others. It is a means of releasing the power of God on other lives. It is a means of enlisting others in the Kingdom of God. One day when Jesus looked at a great multitude, He was moved with compassion toward them because they were as sheep not having a shepherd. But He saw them not only in their weakness and failure and folly but in their beautiful possibilities. They were a great harvest waiting to be gathered. "The harvest truly is plenteous," He said, "but the laborers are few." What was the remedy? "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." It was His conviction that the right sort of praying could change indifferent men and women into men and women who would care enough to help. He believed that prayer could make those who were a part of the disease to become a part of the remedy.

Then prayer is a means of releasing the power of God upon those who are workers in His Kingdom. Paul never wrote but one letter, and that to the backslidden church of Galatia, without asking for the prayers of that church. He believed that the
meanest slave among them could by prayer anoint his apostolic life with grace and power. Prayer will help to make the work of Christian people effective here and around the world. One church of which I was pastor had a beautiful custom of having an early Christmas morning service. It was not a sunrise service—it was even earlier than that. Naturally, only the choicest and most faithful of the saints were accustomed to attend. But one morning the house was almost filled. The power of God was present in an unusual way. I made an appeal for decisions for Christ and two strong men were converted. Of course, I was glad and a bit surprised as well.

A few days later I had an explanation. I received a rather poorly written letter from my old friend in Texas. He was a man mighty in prayer. He wrote in this fashion: "Recently I have been remembering you at the throne of grace. I have reason to believe that God will bless your ministry in the near future in a peculiar way." I may be mistaken, but I believe there was a close and intimate connection between the prayer of my friend in Texas and the beneficent results that took place in that service in the city of Washington. Prayer is not an Aladdin's lamp for the satisfaction of your whims; it is a way of winning what life needs. How larger than times what we want because we don't ask God for it!
"How shall we train the lad? What is he to be?"

— Luke 12:13 ( Moffatt)

This question is found in what is perhaps the oldest book of the Bible. It therefore comes out of the long gone past. We should naturally expect it to be dusty with age. We should expect its cutting edge to have been dulled by the long centuries that have passed since it was asked. Yet in spite of its age it is still as fresh and new as when it was uttered. It is as new as the morning buds of spring. It is as new as the high hopes with which you look upon the faces of your own boys and girls.

Not only is this question new, but it is as important as it is new. We are faced today by many perplexing questions, many important questions. But this question is for this age and for every age one of supreme importance.

1. This is certainly true for the lad himself. "How shall we train the lad? What is he to be?" Today he is a bundle of possibilities. Today he is a son of Adam, but also a son of God. He may travel in two opposite directions. He may take a road that will dip down and ever downward until it loses itself in the quagmires of desolation and death. He may take another road that leads upward and ever upward to where the light lingers even when the sun is set. He may become his worst or his best. What he becomes is certainly the most important question for the lad himself.

2. The answer to this question is also of vast importance to his parents. We are bound up in a bundle of life with the lad. If he takes the wrong turn, we cannot be indifferent to it. Taking that turn he will break our hearts. If he takes the right turn, he will teach us one of the deepest and greatest secrets of human blessedness. Some of us fear that we have not made
"FIGURES THAT SPEAK"

In a late edition of the Atlanta Constitution Dr. Thomas M. Elliott published an amazing discussion of the emphasis placed upon moral and religious reading matter in the schools of the country between 1775 and 1940. The figures submitted by Dr. Elliott tell their own story.

Between 1775 and 1786 school readers gave 100 percent emphasis to moral and religious teaching. Between 1786 and 1825 the moral and religious emphasis was given to 50 percent of the reading matter. Between 1825 and 1900 the moral and religious element constituted 21 percent of the reading matter. In the school readers used between 1916 and 1920 only 5 percent of the reading matter was devoted to the moral and religious. At the present time less than 1 percent of the reading found in school readers is devoted to the moral and religious.

At the same time that moral and religious instruction was being reduced to the vanishing point the average age of criminals was reduced from 35 to 18. And now that the moral and religious have been almost eliminated from the accepted course of instruction, juvenile delinquency has attained sufficient proportions to constitute a national scandal, or at least a national problem.

Again we say those figures tell their own story. But what a story they tell! Are we not worrying far more and devoting far more attention to matters that are far less vital to our civilization and to the perpetuity of our institutions?
very great contribution to life. As we stand today with our little handful of years rapidly trickling through our fingers, we feel that our biggest chance will come through the lad. No other can bring tragedy into our lives so fully as he. None other can bring us so much of real joy and triumph. This question then is of vast importance to us who are parents.

3. Finally, this question is vastly important for society as a whole. That fact is most obvious. An army of invasion is marching upon this country. That army is going to take over literally everything that we have. It is going to take over every kindergarten, every grammar school, every high school, every college and every university. It is going to take over every pulpit in every church. It is going to take over every bank, every business house, the office of every doctor and of every lawyer. Nothing that is ours today will be left to us.

Who make up this army? It is made up of our youth. If tomorrow is a darker day than the one in which we live, it will be because we have not given a right answer to this question. If tomorrow is a brighter day than ours, it will be because we have dealt wisely and honestly in the fear of God with this important question. When this father asked this question—"How shall I train the lad? What is he to be?"—he was asking a question of supreme importance to the lad himself, to those bound up in a bundle of life, and to society as a whole. That is our biggest question today.

II

But is the question a sane question? Is it one that we have a right to ask with the expectation of a definite answer? There is little use to ask whether Mars is inhabited or not. Nobody knows. What is the lad to be?
Why ask a question like that? Some seem to believe that there is no sensible reason at all. What is he to be? "God only knows!" is the answer given by many. "I am too busy to be bothered anyway." But it so happens that there is an answer to this question. This father of the long ago was intelligent. He was never talking with greater good sense than when he asked this question. That we can determine the moral and spiritual qualities is one of the best attested facts. Witnesses to this are of the most credible.

1. There is the witness of the Bible. This wise and ancient Book everywhere assumes that parents and teachers can make the child very largely what they will. Over and over it assumes the truth of this tremendous word: "Train up the child in the way he shall go and when he is old he will not depart from it." That stern declaration of Jesus—"It were better to have a great millstone hanged about the neck and be cast into the sea than to offend one of these little ones"—is an assertion that we can guide our youth to right paths or to wrong.

2. To the testimony of the Scriptures, modern science adds its voice. Our psychologists differ on many questions but here is one upon which almost all I think would agree: That what a lad becomes depends upon his training, that children are not so much born as made. Those, therefore, who believe that the Bible is a big antiquated, that it is too far behind the procession to speak to our modern age, might listen to the voice of science which is as emphatic as the Bible in saying, "Train up a child in the way he shall go and when he is old he will not depart from it."

3. To the testimony of the Bible and science is added the testimony of common sense. We recognize that this is an ordered world. We recognize the fact that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." We go on that assumption when we till our fields. We go on that assumption when we
cultivate our gardens. We go on that assumption in dealing with our livestock. Would it not be strange indeed if that same law did not hold in dealing with our most priceless treasures—our boys and girls? If to train the child aright is not to make a right child, then this is the only realm in all the universe where the law of sowing and reaping does not operate.

Now and then I hear some speaker discuss what our youth is thinking. It is generally done on the assumption that youth is thinking something new and original—that he is planting his feet in paths where no pioneer has been before. But the whole assumption is absurd. What is youth thinking? It is thinking just what it is taught to think. What youth thinks in one community is different from what it thinks in another. What the youth is thinking in the United States is different from what it is thinking in The Bible, science, and common sense agree to this word: "Train up a child in the way he shall go and when he is old he will not depart from it."

4. Finally, the testimony of these three witnesses is born out by experience. It is the experience of the individual. It is the experience of the nation. It is the experience of the race. When then is it that preachers' children are the worst children in the world? I am sure that you have heard that this is the case. What is the answer? The answer is that it is utterly false. Eight hundred per cent more preachers' children make good than the children of any other professional man. There is only one other group that has a higher rating and that is the children of missionaries and these are preachers themselves. I was reading the other day an article written about eight years ago. It was telling of the processes of education being used in the Germany of that day. Boys from ten to eighteen were being taught love for Hitler, hatred of all other nations. The baptism
of blood that is going on around the world today is the outcome of that process of education. The voice of the Bible, the voice of science, the voice of common sense, the voice of experience all declare that there is a logical answer to this question of the long ago.

III

Since we can give a reasonable answer to this question, what do we desire the lad to become? Everybody I suppose wants his lad to have a practical education. But what is a practical education? There are some who think such an education is a capacity to make money. There are those who look upon a diploma as a kind of check that its possessor is to take out into the world and cash in. Now an educated man ought to be able to make a living but that is not enough. When a chap said to Sawney Webb, "I want my boy to have a practical education. I want him to know how to milk a cow," Sawney answered wisely: "So do I desire that my son know how to milk a cow, but I want him to know how to do something else that a calf can't beat him at." What makes life worthwhile?

Some years ago when Harry Lauder, the comedian, was touring this country, he was asked to speak before a certain Rotary Club. Instead of delivering a humorous address as was expected, he told his hearers what had made life worthwhile for himself. He claimed that he had lived and was then living abundantly. What were the factors that had entered into the making of this abundant life? In other words what made life worthwhile for him? He mentioned four factors:

1. His home. He rejoiced in the fact that he had been reared in a good home. But that in which he gloried most was the fact that he himself had been a home-builder. It was there that he had found the foundation of his finest joys. Now inasmuch as home-making is to be the vocation of the vast majority of our youth today, every youth ought to be trained for the
finest and high vocation of home-making. This is one step toward worthwhile living.

2. "A second something," said this great comedian, "that has made life worthwhile for me has been my work." He had been a tireless worker. Not only had he been tireless at a task for which he was fitted, a task that was congenial, but it was a task to which he felt called of God. Now we all agree that no life can be worthwhile without work. Work is a Godlike privilege. There is no real happiness for an idler. "A sense of uselessness," says Huxley, "is the greatest shock that can come to a living organism."

Not only must we work, but if we work joyfully we must work at a task for which we are fitted. So many of us never find our places in the scheme of things. Frank Crane used to describe success as doing what one likes to do and being able to make a living at it. According to that definition I am a success. Our training ought to be of such a kind as to impress upon the lad the sacredness and the importance of work. It ought to be of such a kind as to guide him under God to the finding of the work for which he is fitted. This is not too much to ask since we believe as Christians that God has given to every man his work.

3. The third factor that made life worthwhile for him was his neighbor over the garden wall; that is, he claims that he had found much of the worth of life through his relationship with the other fellow. He had recognized himself as a part of a great brotherhood. He had learned to act on the principle that if one member suffers all members suffer with him. He had found life abundant through the exercise of good will. He had learned to live with others. No lesson can be more important than that. The greatest tragedy of our modern world is that we have not learned to live together. We must train our youth in such fashion as to enable them to see in every man, regardless of race, creed, or color, a brother for whom
Christ died. We must train them for living together in the realization that if they do not they cannot live at all.

4. The final factor this man tells us that made life worthwhile for him was his faith in God. He had been called upon to suffer. His boy had died at the front. It looked for a while as if it were going to wreck him, but he found that grave and knelt by it to dedicate himself anew to God, and that God Who is able to change our losses into gains and our crosses into crowns sent him from this experience not impoverished but enriched. Naturally, we find in this faith the fundamental factor. It was his faith in God that helped him to be the right kind of home-builder. It was his faith in God that enabled him to find his work and do it well. It was his faith in God that helped him to find his fellow man in good will. There is no substitute for this. Education is in itself not necessarily a blessing; it may be an unmeasured curse. When our scientific skill runs past our good will, education becomes a menace. There is no shutting our eyes to the fact that Germany is a brilliant and cultured nation. There is no shutting our eyes to the further fact that both she and the world would be better off if they were a nation of stupid and ignorant barbarians. Education without religion means not power to help but power to destroy. We must train the lad, therefore, for worthwhile living, and this is impossible apart from a vital faith.

IV

To what agencies can we look for the giving of this training for worthwhile living. Roughly speaking, there are only three.

1. We must look to the home. I cannot discuss that now. That will come later. Suffice it to say that there is no substitute for the home. Suffice it to say further that nothing can take the place of consecrated parents who create in the home an atmosphere where the child will bloom into the knowledge of God as naturally as the flowers are blooming this morning.
2. There is the church with its ministry of preaching and teaching. This must also be left to a later sermon. But this needs to be said: that the church is an institution so important that Jesus gave His short span of life to the building of it. The Christ of God knew no better way of building than investing in the Church.

3. The other institution to which we look is the Christian college and university. Mark you the primary motive for the church college is its religion. Failing to be vitally religious, it has lost its primary reason for existence. The secular culture that it offers can be had at the expense of the state. It is to the church college that we must look for the continuation of that process of Christian training that has been begun in the home and is being carried on through the church.

We are exceedingly fortunate in having in our midst a school that is carrying on this type of work. It has been my pleasure and privilege to have personal contact with practically every institution large and small in our church. I have been three times pastor of college churches. But if I were asked to find any institution that has in it a finer morale, a more genuinely Christian atmosphere than the one we have at Millsaps College, I would not know where to find it. Those who teach and demonstrated that the evangelical fervor is not inconsistent with the finest intellectual training. They have also shown that the highest scholastic training need not eventuate in cynicism and intellectual snobbery.

The church college here and throughout the church has no apology to make for its contribution to the church and the nation. I am sure the men who have builded themselves into Millsaps College, the men who help to make it by their labors and by their money for the man who puts his money into such an institution puts himself, will be gratified by the results. This does not mean that the results have been all that we could desire. That is never the case but it does mean that the rewards have been rich and
for after all the most thrilling experience that can come to you is to have some part in the building of a man-who helps, in the slightest way, to build a better world. While I was pastor in Washington, my old teacher, Sawney Webb, came to the capital for a short term in the Senate. On the first Sunday he came to my church. He came about an hour before service. We talked for a little while and then I said, "Mr. Webb, it is ten-thirty. If I get you a seat you will have to go in now." He looked a bit surprised but readily consented. So I led him in and we found him a seat close to the pulpit. A little later when the service began, there was only standing room for the minister.

I suppose the service that day was not greatly out of the ordinary. The preacher preached as usual about the best he could. But a few minutes before the sermon ended, old Sawney put his fine old face down into his two rugged hands and sobbed like a little child. A good sister touched him on the shoulder and said, "Don't you think it was time you were surrendering to the Lord?" "I have been a Christian for over fifty years," came the answer. "But how do you like your preacher?" Sawney questioned. And when the woman expressed approval, he said with the same pride as if I had been his own son, "I raised him." It was not what I was but Sawney had heard me trying to pass on to others some of the values that he had put into my heart. It so thrilled him that he wept for sheer joy. This is the task to which we who preach and teach and to which we who give our engaged. It gives an answer to the supreme question: "How shall we train the lad? What is he to be?"