A MAN'S CREED
Romans 1:14
"I am a debtor."

I like these great words. There is a ring of superb manliness about them that touches our hearts. They throb with a deathless enthusiasm that quickens our pulse beat to this hour. This man confesses his obligation, but he does not do so reluctantly. He does not do so with a sob and a whine. His is not the spirit of a galley slave being seafarer to his dungeon, but freely, gladly, he declares is obligation to share his wealth with all his needy brothers throughout the world.

New what Paul declares of himself is true of every man born into the world. Here is one confession that everyone of us can make. Here is a declaration that has a place in all our hearts and upon all our lips—"I am a debtor." Even a piece of machinery must give an account of itself in terms of service or we fling it upon the junk heap. The lower orders of life must make some contribution or we call them parasites and pests and go as far as we can toward exterminating them. Every flower that blooms must bloom for another; every bird that sings must sing for another; and every star that tonight will cast its anchor of pearl in ocean, sea and river, must shine for another. We expect of every creature and every thing that it give account of itself in terms of service.

This fact of obligation is one from which there is no escape. I can refuse to acknowledge it. I can refuse to meet it. But the obligation is there just the same. That truth is strikingly
enforced in the wonderful story found in the Old Testament. Unfortunately this story has been at times grossly misunderstood. It has been ridiculed by its enemies and wounded in the house of its friends. But the book of Jonah still remains a spiritual masterpiece shot through with the light of genius and fragrant with the breath of inspiration.

This story begins by saying that the word of the Lord came to Jonah to arise and go to Nineveh and cry against it. Now Jonah belonged to an exclusive race. He was cradled in an exclusive creed. He believed that his God was the God of the Hebrews only. He believed further that a calamity to a nation other than his own was a blessing to Israel, and that a blessing to a foreign country was little less than a curse to his own. Therefore he did not wish to preach to the people of Nineveh. They might repent and God might become their friend as he was the friend of his own people. That, he thought, would be the height of calamity.

But here is the insistent call of God ringing in his soul. He feels under obligations to go, and yet he is determined not to go. How will he get away from his obligation. He chose, according to his faith, the sanest way possible. He will get away from God. He will go to a distant land where God does not reign. Getting beyond the domain of God he will get beyond his obligations, because the people that he meets over there where God is not, will be no brothers of his. Therefore he will be under no obligation whatsoever. And his course is the only one open to us. The only way to avoid the fact of your indebtedness is to get in a universe where God does not reign, and where there are no fellow beings to be helped. That means that your obligation is inescapable.

Of course, this does not imply that we all owe the same.
"IN DEBT"
Romans 1:14

PART I.

"I am debtor both to the Greek, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise."

Here is one of the great men of the centuries. Once he belonged to a narrow and exclusive sect, but he has been converted. He has the life of God in his soul. He is now looking out upon a world gone wrong. He sees something of its tragedy of its tears. But he sees more. He sees its capacities. He believes that it is a salvageable world. He believes that it can be remade. He is perfectly confident that he has in his possession a remedy for all its ills. He believes that it is his duty to apply that remedy. Therefore, he says not in sadness but in eager conviction, "I am debtor." Now what Paul says of himself is true of every one of us. In fact we recognize obligations as belonging in a sense to every creature and to every thing. Even a machine that is not saved is thrown away. The parasite that takes without giving is looked upon as a common enemy. That is true unless that parasite happens to be a human being. Then we often give them honor, provided they have sufficient means to enable them to continue to do naked nothing. It is our conviction that everything must give. Every flower that blooms must bloom for another. Every bird that sings must sing for another. Even God must bear his broad shoulders under the burdens and needs of the universe. Therefore, service is certainly expected of you and me.

To fail to recognize this fact is to mark yourself as a moral dwarf; a spiritual imbecile. You are yet an infant even though you may be a giant physically and intellectually. A young baby is a lovely something, but it has absolutely no sense of obligation. If you cannot
say with conviction, "I am a debtor" you are still in your moral infancy. You have never grown up.

In fact, you can distinguish the pigmy from the giant in large measure by this sense of obligation. You remember that old story in mythology. A baby was born. The mother had the choice of its growing up to a long life of inglorious uselessness, or a short life of battle and service. She mistaken chose the first and hid him away on an island where nobody loved but girls. He was discovered at last, because he chose weapons instead of toys. That is, he chose that with which he could serve instead of that with which he could merely amuse himself. This is what revealed him as a hero.

I must work, said Jesus. He came into the world weighted with tremendous obligations. Back of every great life there is always this driving force. Every life that has really blessed the world has had back of it a compelling "must." There was a sense of obligation that could not be shunned. "I must speak said these heroes." "I must be true." "I must serve." "I must give." "I must be loyal even to death."

A sense of obligation is the most reasonable something in the world. You are under obligation for the gift of life. You are under obligation for the gift of every material possession that is yours for nothing really belongs to you. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." But this gift of life and this gift of possessions, all these are put in your hands because you are trusted. They are put in your hands to be used for the bringing in of the Kingdom of God and for the transforming of the world.
In Debt.

Above all else you are in debt because of redemption that has been brought you thru the Cross of Christ. "You are not your own, you are bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits which are God's." I do not belong to myself. You do not belong to yourself. You belong to Him who loved us and saved us by His grace. (Cecil Hotel) (Buckingham Palace.)

The reason we are Christians, if we are such, is just this. Somebody has recognized his obligation. Christianity would have died in its cradle but for the fact there were those who felt it was too good to keep and that they must pass it on to others. That obligation must be ours or the Christianity of tomorrow will be a declining and a dying religion. If the saints of God who are alive today fail in their obligation, then God has no other way of reaching and regenerating the world. It is up to us because we have in our keeping the world's one chance, the world's one hope.

PART II.

To whom do we owe this gospel? What is the extent of our parish?

1. We are under obligation to those of our own homes. We are indebted to our children. We are indebted to our loved ones. We cannot shift this responsibility. We would be ashamed to leave to the community the feeding and the clothing of our children. We should be ashamed to leave to the community the task of giving our children the bread of life. Is your home Christian? Is it a place of prayer? If not, why not? If I should ask you why you do not pray with your children though I should give you a century to answer the question, you could not give a single plausible reason.
In Debt.

2. Then you are indebted to your own community. You are indebted to your own Church. Every man in Memphis owes an obligation to the Church whether he recognizes it or not. It is the Church that makes for his physical and spiritual safety. Every man owes something to the institution that enriches life. This is true for those both in the Church and out of it.

And let me say with emphasis, that no amount of interest in those in the distance will excuse you from your obligation at home. When Jesus gave his program for the Church, He said begin at Jerusalem. I would never vote for anybody to go as a missionary who took no interest in the needs of those with whom they are associated day by day. We are to be interested vitally and personally interested in those of our own homes and of our own communities, but that is not enough.

3. We are to be interested in the world. The program of Jesus Christ is a world program. God so loved the world and not simply a little fraction of it. He told those who knew Him to go to the uttermost parts of the world. He told them and us to disciple the nations.

Of course, I am aware that there are still those who want to dictate to the Son of God as to who He is to save. They tell us that the religion of the heathen is good enough for him, as if Jesus Christ were a back number and knew nothing of the merits of the various non-Christian religions. He tells us that we must save the heathen at home before we undertake to do anything abroad.

But to listen to such presumptuous blasphemy is to live in open rebellion of the expressed command of our Lord. There are heathen at home, plenty of them. Some of them belong to our churches and the
church says impudently, "What is the matter?" Our Lord has promised
to be with us to the end of the age. But He cannot be with us when we
refuse to obey. The self-centered church slams the door in the face of
her Lord. To refuse to give is to refuse to live. Where ever you find a
church that has a live missionary program, you will find a church that
is being blessed in its home program. Where ever there is a church
without missionary passion, there is also a church without passion for
the lost at its own doors or even among its own membership. It is not
a matter for us to argue over. Christ does not need our advice, He
needs our obedience.

PART III.
How are we to pay this debt?

We are not all to make the same contribution, but all are to
make some contribution.

1. Some of us are to pay our debt by going. Every really spirit-
ual church will have valiant young lives who are willing to put them-
selves on God's altar for war in the far away places of the earth. And
I could think of no more worthy investment than that. Some will pay their
debt by entering into the ministry. There are some who would give all
their time to the dischaging of their obligation to bring the gospel to
the wide world.

2. We can help to pay our debt by prayer. Prayer is a means of
personal enrichment. It brings us the consciousness of God. Prayer is a
means of enlisting workers in the cause of Christ. When Jesus looked
one day at a pathetic multitude that was like sheep without a shepherd,
He said, "The harvest is plenteous but the laborers are few." Then
what remedy did He suggest. "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest." It is
In Debt.

out of praying homes and praying churches that laborers go who are to help save the world.

3. We are to help in this task by our giving. There are those of us that are not gifted as preachers or as teachers, but there is not one of us that cannot pray and I doubt if there is one that cannot in some measure give. God is able to take our money and use it for the remaking of the world. He is able to take our gifts and change them into transformed characters that will shine as the stars for ever and ever.

During the Centenary it was our Church that instituted that great forward movement that was taken up by all the great Protestant churches. It laid millions of dollars upon the altar of our Lord and induced others to give millions more. New mission fields were opened. Great advances were made throughout the whole world. But with the passing of this five year period, the missionary offerings declined. Many churches were left half built. Others that were built had to be closed. The young Christian world looked on, some sadly and some in derision while we retreated. But I rejoice to say that our own Church has led all the others in the meeting of this emergency. It could not do so by levying assessments. It had to call for volunteer offerings. Last year we gave $787,000 in our voluntary offerings. To date this year we have given $700,000. It seems we are going to fall short, but there is still hope. There are places where $100 would keep a church open for a whole year that would have to be closed unless somebody loves the cause well enough to come forward with the offering.

We acknowledge our obligation. I think, but to acknowledge is not enough. We must meet it. That was Paul's way. He said "I owe," but he passed on to say; "I am ready to pay." I have seen people that
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were perfectly willing to acknowledge a debt, but the always wanted to postpone payment. I trust that there are hundreds of you that can not only say, "I owe something to my brother who has not had my chance. Above all else I owe something to the Christ who has loved me and saved me by His grace. And since I owe I am ready to pay."

PART IV.

How far was Paul willing to go in the effort of paying his debt? That is a testing question. There are times when to be in debt is a positive dishonesty and disgrace. That is the case when you are making no real effort to pay. It has been well said that nobody spends money more freely than those who are hopelessly and comfortably in debt. If you owed me and were doing your best to pay but could not, I think I could have greater patience than if you were riding in a better car than I and dressing better than I can afford, and spending money lavishly on your own pleasure. Then I think my patience would grow threadbare. A man who refuses to pay his debts and claims his inability when he is spending money lavishly on himself is simply not honest.

But how about a man who holds out on God? "Would a man rob God?" "Yes, there are men all over our land that are robbing God." There are men in this Church that are holding out on God. There are those who are giving heroically and sacrificially. I am not forgetting that. But there are others that are spending more on movies than they are spending to help bring in the Kingdom, both in Memphis and around the world.

How much, I repeat, was Paul willing to put into this business of debt paying? Here is the answer. "As much as in me is, I am ready
In Debt.

to do my best. I am ready to bring all that I am and all that I have and put them in God's hands for His service." That does not mean, of course, that you are of necessity to give away every dollar. It does mean that you will put at least a tenth on God's altar, and use the remainder as His steward. God expects every one of us to do our best. That is what He required of Himself. That is what He is going to require of you and me.

Those of us who have read the Prospectus will remember how Shook, the rugged football player volunteered for the missionary field. He was the only son of his mother and she was a widow. She was a fine gentle, tender, courageous Scotch saint. The superintendent of the missionary field went over to see her to congratulate her on the fact that her son had volunteered. "The sacrifice was little," said the mother, "besides the sacrifice of our Lord." And then as she remembered how utterly alone she would be with her son gone, and how alone he would be. She said, "yes, the sacrifice was little beside His own, yet it was all I had." And that was the glory of it, as it was the glory of the widow's gift, as it will be your glory and mine. I am a debtor, and I stand ready to the extent of my ability to pay my debt to humanity and to Him who loved me and gave Himself for me.
THE CHURCH—ITS MESSAGE.

Romans 1:16—"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."

Here is a man who is an aristocrat both by birth and intellectually. He is a member of a sect that is almost universally despised. This sect boasts no aristocracy either of wealth or of culture. This writer recognized the fact that not many mighty men and not many noble were called. Yet this despised group is in possession of a treasure so priceless that Paul counts it a privilege to be one of their number.

Today he is writing a letter. This letter is addressed to the imperial city of the world—Rome, where pride and pomp and splendour abound to a superlative degree. There sin has wrought ravage and ruin. But he writes to this capital city without embarrassment. Rather he declares almost with a prideful swagger of holy boldness, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. Therefore as much as in me is I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are in Rome."

Now Paul was a bit of a giant both intellectually and morally. Yet he looked upon this Gospel that had been committed to his trust as a treasure of unspeakable value. He was confident that the message that had been committed to the Church of Jesus Christ was one that was pre-eminently worth while. There have been numberless others who have shared his conviction. There are multitudes that share that conviction today. I, for one, believe with all my heart that this Gospel that has been committed to the Church, is the one hope of our struggling and sinning world.
The church--its message.

The first great service that the Church renders us through its message is to give us a correct diagnosis of our disease. That something is wrong everybody agrees. Transportation has improved almost infinitely since that far off day, yet we are not making much quicker progress toward happiness. Means of communication have been especially transformed. Yet we have found no improved method of establishing communication between the soul and God. Today, just as then, many a weary and restless and wretched; today, as then, heart hunger and disappointment look out from a million tired eyes.

What is wrong? That is an important question. Before the physician can hope to give successful treatment to any disease, he must first make a successful diagnosis. All that he does before doing this he does in the dark. If he does not know what the matter is his efforts at cure may even do more harm than good.

Therefore, it is greatly to the interest of the patient to have a proper diagnosis made. I have seen sick people who were actually afraid to consult a competent physician. They feared what the decision might be but nothing could be more foolish. You might as well smell smoke and refuse to locate its source for fear your house should prove to be on fire. No one is thrown off the track merely by our putting our heads in the sand. The only wise thing is to face the facts about ourselves both physically and morally.

Now this Gospel of ours, like a wise and tender and frank physician, tells us what is wrong. It does not spend its time
treatment of symptoms. It goes to the very root of the disease. It
drags into the light the source of all our trouble. It tells us
frankly that the one thing wrong with the individual, the one thing
wrong with society, the one thing wrong with the world, is sin.
It tells us that this sin is absolutely universal. That all have
sinned and come short of the glory of God. It lets us know also
that sin is deadly.

Now mark you that this Gospel of ours does not
create the disease that we call sin. It merely points it out.
There seem to be those that are foolish enough to believe that
if we could only get rid of the Bible; that if we could only look
up our churches, then our days of restlessness and wretchedness and
disappointments and disillusionments will be over. But when your
physician broke your heart by telling you that you had cancer, he
was not responsible for your having that deadly disease. He might
have called it by a very harmless name but it would have done its
deadly work just the same. So you might call sin by what pleasant
name you may. You may look upon it as merely a mistake. But what-
ever you name it it is disasterous and deadly.

Sin is disasterous because it separates from God.
"Art thou he that troubleth Israel?", asked the prophet
Elijah. And the answer came quick and strong, "I have not troubled
Israel, but thy and thy fathers house in that you have made Israel
to sin." Sin is the one disturbing element in our human life.
It means trouble yesterday, today and forever. This is true
because it means separation from God and all trouble has its
The church--its message.

source there.

Now it is a good day for man when he realizes with heart breaking certainty that he is a sinner in the sight of God. Till that realization comes he is not likely to seek God. As long as he can say "Oh thou, who man of baser earth didst make and even in paradise devise the snake; for all the sin wherewith man's face is blackened, man's forgiveness give and take." So long as he talks in that strain, he will never turn his face toward the light. But when he begins to say, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned"--then he is nearer the dawning of a new day.

II.

But this Gospel of ours does more than diagnose our disease. It also offers a remedy. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel because it is the power of God unto salvation for everyone that believeth". Paul faced Rome with all its sin with confidence. He knew something of her terrible might but he believed more in the might of his Gospel. Rome represented human power, compactly organized and tremendously great, but Paul's Gospel represented the power of God unto salvation.

Paul counted that this salvation as completely adequate. The Gospel is adequate:

1. Because it meets every human need. There are those who look upon it as merely an escape from the penalty of sin but it is infinitely more than this. It not only offers salvation from sin's penalty but also from the deep damnation of
The church--its message.

its power. It gives to man a new nature. It enables him to put his foot upon the neck of his foe. It brings pardon. It enables man to stand before God as if he had never sinned.

Because this salvation means pardon, it means restoration to the divine favor. It means that fellowship between God and man has been restored. And because this has taken place; that every need has been or can be met, he is able to have strength for your weakness. He is able to have light for your darkness. If you are lonely he is able to be your companion. If your heart is broken, he is able to be your comforter. He is the answer to all your questions and there is no need that he cannot meet. "My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in Glory by Christ Jesus."

Then this Gospel is adequate not only because it meets all our needs, but it meets them at all times. God's Grace was no more sufficient for Paul than it is for you and me. He is able to keep us at all times and under all circumstances. He is able to keep in life's green spring. He is able to keep in the stir and stress of the middle passage. He is able to keep during the weakness of old age, when you are nearing the place where the clouds are homing for the night.

Then, too, he is able to keep under all conditions. In sickness and in health. In times of prosperity and in times when we are finding it hard to keep the wolf from the door. He is able to keep when folks despitefully use us and persecute us. He is also able to keep when they flatter and fawn upon us.
The church—its message.

Then this salvation is adequate because it meets the needs of every man. We hear of folks now and then who have a genius for religion. A woman with considerable pretenses at culture, asked me sometime ago if I did not think that being a Christian depended upon the slant of the head. I said, "No—it depends upon the slant of your heart." There are some for whom the religious life is easier than for others. There are some who have sterner conflicts than others, but God never made a human soul that he could not save to the uttermost of his being and to the uttermost of eternity. His is a fully adequate salvation.

2. Then it is adequate because it is available for every man. Poverty is no hindrance here. I saw a little girl trying to mail a letter to Santa Claus but she was too small to reach the mail box. Doubtless her letter never arrived. But no one is too small or insignificant to get their case before the supreme physician.

This does not mean that the remedy is cheap. The business of saving the world is an expensive business. Your salvation and mine is infinitely costly. "He was wounded for our transgressions—He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed."

Now, since Jesus paid the price, we can come singing, "Jesus paid it all; all to him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow." Salvation may be had for the taking. "His Gospel is the power of God unto salvation for everyone that believeth."
The church--its message.

III.

The possession on the part of the church of the message involves the highest possible privileges and the weightiest possible obligations.

1. Since we are in possession of this message, it becomes at once our privilege and duty to see that we enter into the richness of it ourselves. We must see to it that we possess our possessions. This is our most effective way of commending our Gospel to others. No amount of effort divorced from right living will avail. But there is no testimony so great as the testimony of the Christ-like life.

A few years ago a young man was employed to teach in a Japanese school. Those who employed him knew that he was a Christian, but they did not want him to teach his religion. Therefore they bound him by a solemn promise that he would not even mention the subject of religion in the course of his teaching. But his life was preaching every day, and it was not long before forty of those boys met on their own responsibility for prayer. Later they came for instruction and became open followers of Christ.

Then, we are to declare our message by word of mouth. This is a service that everybody can render, who is willing to pay the price. The command to be a witness is appointed to every single one of us. We urge to this task a personal testimony for two weighty reasons:

1. If we fail, we stand guilty before God. He declares that he has set us as watchmen and if we fail to give
The church--its message.

warning, the blood of those who suffer will be required at our hands. The judge sentenced two young boys the other day and in passing sentence he declared that he was sorry that he could not put the penalty on the father and mother instead of the boys, for theirs was the deepest guilt. God is going to put the penalty where it belongs.

2. This is the only method by which we are to save others. It is tremendously difficult oftentimes to speak personally to a friend or to a loved one about his relationship to Jesus Christ. Preaching this kind of personal Gospel is often very taxing. But just remember this--it is the only chance for that salvation. Do you believe men are lost without Christ? Do you believe Christ is able to save men? Do you believe that there is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved? If you do, you will not keep your conviction in secret. (Oh, if he only had.)
"The wish to do right is there but not the power." (Weymouth) Romans 7-18

Here is a word that comes fresh and warm out of human experience. This man is not theorizing. He is not speaking out of a fertile imagination. He is speaking out of bitter conflict. He has felt the beauty of goodness and has struggled to meet it. He has seen the ugliness of evil and has sought to avoid it. But in spite of his struggles, he is conscious of failure. "The very thing," he declares, "that I have vowed I would not do, I caught myself doing." The beautiful thing that I proposed to do I never quite put through. The wish to do good is within me but not the power." This, I say, comes up out of life.

What does it mean? It means that in every man there are two conflicting selves. There is the higher and lower self.

1. This fact runs all through the Bible. When Luke traces the genealogy of Jesus, he finishes with this word: "Son of Adam, Son of God." There you have it. It is the story told in Genesis, "God formed man out of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul." He is at once the son of Adam and the son of God. That means that he is a creature of the heights and of the depths - stardust and mud.

Years ago a young writer told of certain scientists who brought into being what they called the "diabolical fad". They took certain insects in their early stages and grafted them together. For instance, they grafted a spider with a butterfly. The thing lived for awhile, a monstrous creature that loved sunlight and also black shadows. He delighted in the perfume of flowers and also in the stench of dead flies. It is in a measure so with ourselves. We are not altogether good nor are we al-
together bad. We are a bewildering mixture.

Here, for instance, is a psalmist at prayer. Listen to him. "Unite my heart to fear thy name." Why wush a petition? He is conscious of fearing the Lord, but he does not fear him sufficiently to commit himself wholly to him. He is divided in his allegiance, iHe prays after this fashion. "My soul cleavest unto the dust, quicken thou me." If his soul cleavest to the dust, why not let the heights go and be content with the dust? Simply because he cannot. If the depths appeal to him, so do the heights.

Did you ever stand on the seashore and watch its restlessness? It is never entirely calm, never completely at peace. What is the matter? The sea is played upon by two forces. The voices of the winds calls to it but when it would respond, the earth thrusts its motherly arms around it and says, "Stay with me." Like ourselves, it is divided in its allegiance, it is played upon by two opposite forces.

2. This division in man is recognized by modern science. Nobody has seen this more clearly than the modern psychologist. He recognizes the fact that all of us do not have an integrated personality. In many this division is so sharp that it falls little short of insanity. It is the exception rather than the rule to find a really integrated personality.

3. This consciousness of a higher and lower self is also a fact of experience. What Paul said of himself, that he failed in the thing he desired to do and did that which he did not desire is true of almost every one of us. It is easy to remember soiled chapters in our yesterdays of which we may be sorry and ashamed. Yet that is no guarantee that we are not going to do the same thing again. Oftentimes we resolve and re-resolve, only to continue to sin.
4. This fact of higher and lower selves that are in conflict is so pronounced that it has crept into the literature of the world. In the Scandinavian great/playright Ibson's Peer Gentz, Peer is a lover of money. He is engaged in the opium and drug traffic. He sells his ruinous wares to China. The harm that he is doing by his traffic weighs heavily upon his conscience. Therefore, to atone for the evil that he is doing he becomes a heavy contributor to missions. Thus he eases his outraged conscience by saying, "For every drunkard I make I make A Christian well baptized."

Jack London teaches this same lesson in the finest dog story ever written, "The Call of the Wild". A magnificent Newfoundland dog named Buck is stolen from his owner and shipped to Alaska where he learns to adapt himself to the law of the club and fang. Here he becomes a husky, the finest in the territory.

But his master falls ill with a lingering sickness. At first Buck stays close by. Then, with too much leisure on his hands he begins to roam through the forest. One night he meets a wolf. Instead of fighting him to the death, they touch noses and sat upon their haunches and howled to the distant stars. Buck then went back to his master. At last his master died and Buck ends by running at the head of the wolf pack, the most savage wolf of them all.

Thus there were two dogs in one, the loyal, faithful Buck, who was attentive to his master's voice; there was the wolf, fierce, savage, untamed. In this case the wolf got the victory, yet I daresay that to the end of his days Buck never quite forgot his master's voice.

The supreme classic in this field is Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Jekyll, you remember, was a brilliant London physician who liked to find his recreation in dissipation. That he visit the swine pen in safety he contrived a drug that would change him from the magnificent man that he was into the monstrosity that he named Hyde. Then one night, as Hyde, he committed a crime. He
resolved never to become Hyde again. But he had gone so far that he now
became Hyde without his drug. The monster thus gained the victory over the
man, and according to the story, killed the man. In actual life things never
get quite that bad. The lower self does often gain the mastery, but the
finer self is never entirely destroyed.

II

What are the consequences of this ? division?

1. Conflict. As a result of the appeal of goodness and the correspond-
ing appeal of evil, man comes to fight with himself. The worst of all wars
is the Civil War. H. G. Wells says of one of his characters that he was not
so much a personality as a civil war. There are thousands that crack up
every hour, not because of their outward circumstances but because they are
at war with themselves.

Thus fighting, they have no peace. It is perfectly amazing how much of
outward conflict the average individual can bear if he only has peace within.
The truth is that nothing can defeat us as long as we are at peace with God
and with ourselves. It is this fighting on two fronts, this inward conflict,
that is the supreme foe of our peace.

2. This conflict with ourselves makes for weakness. It is perfectly
amazing what an ordinary man can do if he is united, if he can say "this one
thing I do." It is equally amazing how the powers of genius can dis-
charge themselves and accomplish little less than nothing if those powers
are not united.

"Divided and conquered" was the slogan of Hitler. But he did not
originate it. It has been the theme song of the despots through centuries.
It is the supreme strategy of evil. In the fight for goodness we can accomp-
lish but little if we are divided against ourselves. To have an integra-
personality spells power, even if by nature we are not greatly gifted, but no gifts will save us from weakness if we are divided among ourselves.

3. Finally, this inward conflict makes for tragedy. If you think back over your yesterdays, you will realize that the most trials of your life have come when you were undecided. Even the making of a wrong decision brings a larger peace than no decision at all. An undecided man is a wretched man.

This wretchedness depends somewhat on the sensitivity of the man who is at war with himself. To find fault, writes Paul, is to suffer the very pangs of hell. It so tortured him as to wring from him this bitter cry, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of the death?"

Look at the picture: This body of death refers to a ghastly form of punishment practiced by certain of the ancients. When a man killed another, instead of executing the murderer they simply bound the dead body of his victim on his back. Thus he became stenchful with the stench of the dead body. He rotted as the dead body rotted. The bitterness of this man who could not separate himself from his victim crept into Paul's heart as he sought for deliverance.

III

Now, is there an answer to Paul's long and to yours and mine? Is there a way to become an integrated personality? Is there an escape from this torturing inner conflict?

Both science and the Bible affirm that there is a way of escape. William James, perhaps the greatest of the psychologists, tells us that a man can pass from an experience of being consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy to an experience of being consciously right, superior and happy. That is, he can escape from the wretchedness of division to inward peace.
Paul affirmed the possibility of this. It was his own experience.

What, then, I repeat, is the answer? We do not find the answer by yielding to our lower selves. It would seem that we could resolve this conflict by ceasing to struggle. We can go far in the direction of evil but no man ever becomes so utterly evil that goodness altogether loses its appeal. The truth of the matter is that God's spirit, who is present even before our mother's lips have kissed us, never gives us up. For this reason no man can ever become wholly bad.

When the Prodigal found himself an outcast among the swine, why did he not make the best of it? The hogs were perfectly satisfied. No unrealized ideal made them restless. Why could not the Prodigal share their contentment? He could not because he was constantly tortured by the beauty of home memories and by the call of home voices.

We are prone to think that Judas having become so utterly wretched that he betrayed his Lord with a kiss, had no good left alive in him. But had Judas become wholly bad he might have rejoiced in his crime. But there was so much of good still in him that he could not live in it. Instead, it broke his heart. His better self became so enraged against his baser self that he became his own executioner. Feeling that he deserved nothing better than to be hanged, he hanged himself. That would never have happened had Judas been wholly bad. This old book says "there is no peace to the wicked." That is true because God never leaves us alone.

How, then, shall we find peace? "Who shall deliver me?" shouted Paul in his agony. "God will," came the answer. Therefore, he continued, being justified by faith we have peace with God. Having peace with God we have peace within. This is our Lord's special legacy to everyone of us who will receive. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto
THE CALL OF THE WILD

"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." Romans 7:19

This is evidently a very honest and very human confession. It is not the confession of a trifler. It is the confession of a man who is deeply in earnest. It is the confession of a man who has been too lazy and too cowardly to try. It is rather the confession of one who has made a wholehearted effort at right living. Not only has this man tried but he has put at once his best effort and his best thought into the struggle. We are here considering then a deeply earnest man who has undertaken the good life with serious effort.

Not only is this the word of a earnest battling man but it is the word of a man who has fought without any impressive victory. The ugly thing upon which he looked with horror and disgust and vowed in his soul he would not do, that very thing he did. Not only so but the beautiful something that he admired and longed to accomplish, at that he failed miserably. While looking wishfully toward the heights, he had a way of gravitating toward the depths. Therefore, with a sense of defeat and frustration he cries out in utter bitterness, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" It is easy to see the trouble with this man. He is divided against himself.

I.

Paul had a dual personality, even as you and I. He had various names for the two men that lived within himself. Sometimes he called one the old man and the other the new. Here he calls one the flesh and the other the spirit.
The psychologists recognize this dual personality. They sometimes call them the better and baser self. The demoniac whom Jesus cured regarded himself not as one but as many. "We are legion", he said. The fact that we are divided personalities is indicated in many ways.

1. First this division is taught again and again in the Bible. Here for instance we find a certain psalmist at prayer. Listen to him: "My soul cleaveth unto the dust, quicken thou me according to the word." Notice that he confesses his longing for the worst instead of the best. His soul is cleaving to the dust. Why then does he not hug the dust to himself and leave the heights alone? Simply because he cannot. Even while he fingers with one hand for the mud, with the other he reaches for the stars. Why is the sea constantly restless? Because it is played upon by two worlds. When our muddy world throws its arms around it and says, "Stay with me", the heights call and say, "Come to me." Therefore the sea as this psalmist is divided within itself.

Here is another prayer to the same purpose: "Unite my heart to fear thy name." This psalmist has some bit of fear of God in his heart, but he cannot shut his eyes to the fact that he is not wholehearted in his fear. He is possessed of some loyalty to God, but he is divided in his loyalty. His experience is the experience of practically all of us. His prayer would be at home in all our hearts and upon all our lips. We need to pray, "Unite my heart to fear thy name", because so few of us are wholehearted in our devotion to God.

One day when Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem a magnificent young chap braved the scorn of the crowd to run down the road and fall at the feet of Jesus with this question on his lips: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered his question frankly and honestly. "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me." Then what? While Jesus lured him, while he felt the mighty magnetism of that personality, he felt also the magnetism of his wealth. So we read of him that he went away sorrowfully. There was that in him that loved Jesus and all for which He stands. There
was also that in him that loved the world. According to the Bible therefore we are divided within ourselves.

2. This division is also a fact of literature. Some of the greatest masters have portrayed it for us in gripping stories. Ibsen, the playwright, shows us such a man in Peer Gynt. Peer is a man of business. He is engaged in trade with the Chinese. His chief wares are idols, opium and liquor. It goes against his conscience to engage in this sorry business so he seeks to atone for it by making impressive contributions to the missionary enterprise. Therefore, when his better self rises to rebuke him he seeks to quiet his clamors by saying, "I know, but for every drunkard I make, I also make a Christian well baptized."

Of course the more classical example of dual personality is Robert Louis Stevenson's gripping story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Dr. Jekyll, you remember, was a brilliant young physician whose life was dedicated to the high task of healing. He loved his profession. He was a cultivated idealist. But there was another side to his nature. There was that in him that loved the depths. This lead him to break away at times from his decent upright life to one that is indecent and morally rotten.

Now in order to protect himself he devised a powerful drug that would change him in a few moments from the splendid up-standing scholar Jekyll to a fiendish demoniaca man that he named Hyde. In the person of Hyde he could indulge his baser self to his will, then change back into Jekyll and fancy himself none the worse for his dirty experience.

But as time went on it required less and less of the drug to change Jekyll into Hyde. It required more and more to change Hyde into Jekyll. Then one day in the person of Hyde, he committed a ghastly crime. He resolved that he would never be Hyde again. He was through with that monster forever. But while Jekyll thought himself through with Hyde, Hyde was not through with Jekyll. One day, sitting out in a public park, he looked down at his beautiful and shapely hands to see them
slowly change into the claw-like hands of Hyde. In utter terror he hurried to his laboratory to find that the drug would not work any more. Dr. Jekyll was dead. Then he himself committed suicide thus putting an end to Hyde.

3. Not only is the fact that we are divided within ourselves taught in scripture and literature but it is a part of our own experience. A certain English writer says that years ago some scientists brought into existence what they called the diabolical fad. They took parts of a butterfly and of a spider in their early stages of development and so grafted them together that a hideous creature was the result. The creature was a mixture of butterfly and spider. Therefore it loved the sunshine and also the black shadows. It loved a banquet of flowers. It loved also a banquet of dead flies.

Now you have not yet got adequately acquainted with your own soul if you have not discovered something of this tragic division in your own heart. There is that in all of us to which the highest and best makes a strong appeal. As the heart panteth after the water brook, so our souls panteth after God. Every man is athirst after the water of life. Every man is hungry for the bread of life. But along with this high hunger, there is the lower hunger. Carlyle was right when he said, "It is not to taste sweet things but to do true and noble things and to vindicate ourselves unto God even as God made man, and man is that after which every son of Adam dimly longs." But along with this desire to do the noble and heroic, there is also a desire to take the cowardly easy road. No man lives who does not have this kind of fight with himself. When Paul declares, therefore, that the evil he hated, he did and that somehow he fumbled the good that he longed to accomplish, he is speaking the universal language. 

II.

Now the fact that we are divided within ourselves makes for tragedy. This is true for at least three reasons:

1. First it makes for conflict. Of all wars, the most tragic is civil war.
Of all the painful battles that we have to fight perhaps the most painful and devastating are those we fight with ourselves. H. G. Wells has a character in one of his books that he declares is not so much a personality as a civil war. There are people all about us who are literally wearing themselves out by fighting with themselves. Their lower and higher nature are constantly at war.

2. The second result of this division is restlessness and wretchedness. The divided man can know no peace. Here is a word from the lips of Isaiah that is just as frank and up-to-date as any utterance of the most advanced psychologist: "There is no peace saith my God to the wicked."

If you will thank back over your yesterdays you will find that the most wretched moments of your life have been moments of indecision. Even a wrong decision will often bring more peace than no decision at all. In that amazing Book of Jonah, the prophet was commanded of God to go to Ninevah and cry against it. But Jonah was a narrow provincial Jew. He looked upon Ninevah as a city of enemies. He desired no part in bringing a blessing to those whom he hated. Yet the command of God was too plain and insistent to be misunderstood.

So what? Jonah had to either say yes or no. He had to either obey or disobey. The decision cost him a veritable hell of struggle. His inward conflict was as painful almost as his crucifixion, but at last his baser self won the victory. He declared that cost what it might he would not obey. Therefore we read that he rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of God. Once on board the little merchant vessel bound for that distant port, the wise author tells us that he went down into the hole of the ship and fell fast asleep. He was not at peace with himself but even a wrong decision is a closer approach to peace than the crisis of inner conflict.

To be at war, therefore, with one's self is to miss the joy and peace of life.

3. Finally to be thus divided is not only to be wretched, it is to be weakened. This is the case for a variety of reasons. To be divided in one's mind leads often to inaction. Did you ever see a man start across the street and then some driver sounds
The man makes a move to turn back, then to go forward and ends by standing perfectly still. Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, was just that kind of man. Divided within himself, his division lead to inaction.

Here for instance he is contemplating suicide:

"To be, or not to be -- that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them."

But as he contemplates the gains that might come from death, he thinks also of the risk that he runs. He might find himself in a worse situation than he is.

Thus he concludes:

"Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action."

He was too divided to act at all.

The author gives a consistent picture of him a little later when he has decided to kill the uncle who has murdered his father. When the opportunity comes he finds this uncle upon his knees. Now he says, I could do it pat but he gets to thinking again, "If I kill him while he is on his knees, God might save him. He would then go to Heaven instead of going to hell where he belongs." Therefore, he stands weighing one side against the other until he ends by doing nothing at all. The divided man often ends in inaction. That is bad for, always any action is better than inaction.

But when the divided man acts, he often does so ineffectively. "Divided and conquered" was Hitler's motto in the early days of the war. But this word was not original with him. It has been employed by conquerors through the ages. We cannot do the simplest task well unless we put the whole weight of our desire behind it.
Years ago my brother and I were passing through the fields when we came to a little rivulet that was normally some three feet wide. But now, thanks to spring rains, it was some ten or twelve feet wide. We felt that we must get across it. The only way was to jump it. I was to jump first. I took a good running start and could have made it well enough but just before I made my leap, my brother changed his mind and shouted, "Stop, stop, stop." I became undecided with the result that I landed right in the middle.

A plodder that has his mind made up can often get further than a genius who never decides where he is going. Reuben was a man of this type. He had plenty of ability, plenty of good intentions, but he could never follow through. He could never get himself together like a projector to hurl himself into one given task. Therefore his father said of him this tragic sentence, "Unstable as water, thou shall not excel."

There is a story of a hunter who set out one morning to kill a deer. After hunting for a couple of hours, he came upon the trail of a fox and decided that instead of killing a deer he would kill a fox. For some hours he followed the trail of the fox until it was crossed by the trail of a rabbit. Then he decided a rabbit would do and for another hour he followed the trail of the rabbit until it was crossed by that of a field mouse. When night came he went home empty-handed. He should have learned from the weasel who is _ _ _ _ _ _ as the bloodhound of the hedges. If he sets out on the tract of a rabbit in the morning, a hundred fat rabbits might run under his nose, but he says this one thing I do until he catches his rabbit.

To be undecided then is to be constantly at war with ourselves. Of course fighting ourselves we are more apt to fight others. Much of the outward conflict that we have in our homes is due to the fact that we are fighting with ourselves. When Balaam clubbed his donkey, his fight with the donkey was only incidental. His main fight was with Balaam. To be thus divided means loss of peace. It means wretchedness. It was this division that wrung from the lips of Paul one of the
bitterest cries of literature. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?"
To be divided is to be ineffective.

III

Now since this division is a fact and since it is a great handicap, how are we going to be rid of it? What is the road to salvation? How shall we come to possess the unspeakable peace of a unified personality? How can we give up fighting God and fighting ourselves and find peace?

Well, there is one way that will not work. Here and there men will try to find peace by stopping their ears to the higher call altogether. They believe in self expression. They make up their mind that the self they are going to express is not the better self but the baser self. Now a man may go far in giving reign to his baser self but he can never find peace in that direction. This is the case because God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul. Being thus kinfolk with God, he can never be satisfied without God. It has been well said that no man can be as bad as he sometimes wants to be. Judas became a bad man, but he was not utterly bad or he never would have died by his own hands.

This fact is what distinguishes man from all other creatures. When the prodigal left his father's house to go into a far country, he did not intend to wreck himself. He was simply out to find a larger freedom and a larger life but he ends where the self-willed always end— in hunger and heartache. He was sent into the hogpen to feed hogs. The hogs that he fed were perfectly contented hogs. No memories of a better day made them restless and wretched. The hogpen suited them exactly, therefore they stayed there. But the prodigal was so disturbed by old home voices and old home memories that he said, "I will arise and go to my father."

So far as I know the best dog story ever written is that of Jack London entitled, "The call of the Wild". It is the story of a magnificent dog stolen from his home on the west coast of the United States and shipped north to the wilds of
Alaska. Here he was trained as a husky. He learned to adapt himself to that rugged land of the club and fang. He became the most powerful husky of them all. By and by the master of this great dog, whose name was Buck, became ill. Buck, therefore, became a gentleman of leisure. He began little by little to wander into the dark forest that hemmed in his master's shack. One night as he wandered through the wilds of this forest he heard the blood curdling howls of a timber wolf. At once his bristles went up and his fangs were bared and he was ready for battle. But at last he went back to his master's house without meeting his foe. These excursions kept up night after night until Buck met this timber wolf but he didn't spring upon him to fight to the death as he would have done had the meeting taken place earlier. Instead they touched noses in friendly fashion, galloped through the wilds of the forest together and then set up their home and howled to the distant stars as their ancestors had done before. A little later Buck met the pack and began to feel at home among them. Then a few weeks later his master died. No power held him any longer to civilization and Buck became the fiercest wolf at the head of the pack. But this happened only when Buck's master died.

Now you and I hear the call of the wilds, all of us. For a time we may respond wholeheartedly but we can never shut out the higher voices. That is we never can as long as our Master lives. Not until God is dead will goodness cease to appeal to you and me. We cannot find rest and peace by going our own way. We can only find it through surrender to Him who has made us for Himself.

"O wretched man that I am", sobs Paul, "who shall deliver me?" "God will", comes the prompt answer and a moment later this sob is changed into a song of thanksgiving. I thank God through Jesus Christ that this may take place in your life and mine if we surrender as Paul surrendered.
"For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.

Romans 7:19

It is easy to tell that this is a word out of experience. It was the experience of Paul. It has been the experience of you and me. Paul has realized that there is a difference between right and wrong. He has realized the beauty of right and the ugliness of wrong. Not only so, but he has fought to dethrone the wrong, and enthrone the right. But somehow he has not been adequate to the task. He has fumbled it miserably, even as you and I.

How many fine dreams we have dreamed, all of us, that we have never realized! How often we have looked at goodness incarnated in human life and felt the beauty and power of it! How often we have said, "I would give the world to be like that!" We have even made some fitful and frantic efforts at attainment. But it ended largely in failure, and we told ourselves that we had no genius for goodness; that while those mountain heights were beautiful and desirable, our blundering feet could not climb to them.

Then, how many things we have done that we condemn! We look back on them even now with shame. We stabbed some reputation to death, realizing the cruelty of it, and said, "Never again!" We walked the ways of impurity and vowed in disgust that our feet should never tread those paths any more. We gave way to appetite and waked the next morning with an ill head and an aching heart, and took upon ourselves a solemn vow that such a thing should never happen again. But, the
hour of temptation came round once more and broke our resolutions by gossamer threads, for it has been said that it is easier to find a man that has never sinned than to find one that has never committed the same sin twice. Therefore, when Paul says, "The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do", he is making a confession that is absolutely universal.

I.

Now, why do we behave after this fashion? Why do we so often fail to do that which we approve, and do that which we condemn? Paul accounts for it by saying that we are not unified personalities. In every man, he declares, there is not one man, but two. One of these men, he calls the flesh; the other the spirit. These have opposite desires, and are constantly seeking to go in opposite directions. The flesh is the lower self. It constantly looks out for number one. It says with a certain character in popular fiction, "If I wanted anything I would take it. I cannot be bothered resisting the things that I like." And the things that this lower likes are the baser and meaner things. The spirit, on the other hand, the higher, loves things that are just and pure and honest and lovely and of good report. Not only loves these things, but seeks sacrificially to make them realities.

But, it is well to bear in mind that this idea of a dual personality is not a conception that belongs to Paul alone; it is a fact of experience. It is recognized by the psychologists. It has also been recognized by men of varied types and centuries all through the years. Plato compared these two selves to two winged steeds - the one, wild and un-
manageable, and the other, gentle and docile. Stevenson named them in his immortal classic, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Dr. Jekyll was a cultivated gentleman who had dedicated his life to the service of humanity in the relief of pain. Hyde was a miserable degenerate who had dedicated his life to the creation of pain, and both of them homed in the same heart.

Dr. Watkins says that some years ago certain scientists developed what was known as the diabolical fad. They took parts of a butterfly and of a spider in the early stages of their development and grafted them together. The result was a strange creature that was neither butterfly nor spider, but a mixture of both. It was a queer monstrosity that at once loved the day light and also the black night. It delighted in the perfume of flowers and to drink the nectar of the honeysuckle, but also lusted for a banquet of dead flies. And you and I are in a measure like that, strange mixtures of selfishness and generosity, of devil and angel, of star dust and dust.

II.

Now, that the outcome of this strange mixture should be tragedy is not at all surprising.

1. The first result of my having within me a lower and higher is in conflict. War is always terrible, but it is never so terrible as when it is a Civil war. We have many conflicts. We have to fight at times with an unfriendly environment. We have to battle a thousand outward foes. But our most deadly foe is within. The sternest battles that we fight are the ones that we fight with ourselves.

2. Being at war with ourselves we miss happiness. Inner strife always makes for wretchedness. No man can be happy
who is constantly failing at the task that he longs to accomplish, and constantly doing that which fills him with loathing and inward shame. It was the horror of this conflict that wrung from Paul that cry that comes to us from out the distant years: "wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" Not from the body of this death as it is here translated, but from this body of death. Paul is here referring to an ancient custom of punishing a murderer by binding the victim upon the back of his slayer. Think of the ghastliness of that punishment! The body first grows cold, then stenchful, then disintegration sets in, and the tortured victim tears with frantic hands at this hideous piece of death that he feels to be almost a part of himself. Thus, Paul tore in wretchedness at this lower, that he felt threatened corruption of his whole being.

3. Then, this division makes for weakness. However strong we are, if we are never unified, we can accomplish only a fraction of our possibilities. Goodridge had a genius that was immense, but all he left behind him was a few glittering fragments. He could never say, "This one thing I do." Some years ago, my wife and I were touring in the New England States. We came about two o'clock one afternoon to the Wayside Inn. We thought of remaining there for the night, but as it was so early we drove on. We got lost. Ten o'clock that night we drove up to the door of a hotel to find it was the Wayside Inn. We had been driving hard for eight hours. There was nothing wrong with the car or the gasoline, but we were inconsistent in our direction. So we were constantly bending back on ourselves. Hence we got nowhere. The strangest life that is constantly
at war with itself ends in ineffectiveness. On the other hand, there is no measuring the power of even one of modern strength if he can say: "This one thing I do." Some years ago, I watched a group of men move a mountain. They were doing it by hydraulic pressure. That water, when it fell from the heavens, produced no depressing effect on the mountain at all. It was not unified. But when it said, "This one thing I do," the very mountain itself took to its heels. If your life and mine is to know the richness of their possibilities, if we are to achieve the best for ourselves and for our fellows, we, too, must be able to say, "This one thing I do." You must either live it in tragedy or a divided personality.

III.

But how is this deliverance to come?

It is to come through his realization, is the ready answer. But what are we to realize? There is nothing good or bad that cannot be said of human nature. In fact, when we hear of something especially mean or selfish, we commonly explain it by saying, "Well, that is human nature." Several months ago, for instance, Bernard Shaw was a visitor to this country. The night before he sailed, he made a speech in New York in which he paid tribute to Dr. George as the one man who had influenced him most. The next day, after an interview with newspaper men, a timid little woman came forward and said: "You were kind enough last night to refer to Dr. George, and to express your appreciation of him. I am his only child. I have come all the way from California to see you and to get you to autograph his book." And this gigantic piece of egotism glared at her as if she were some peculiar type of insect, and turned upon his heel and walked away, and that is human nature.
But that is not the whole story. A few years ago a farmer out in the Northwest loaded up his family one morning in winter to go over to spend the day with a neighbor. As they were returning home during the afternoon they were overtaken by a dreadful blizzard. When the father saw that he could not make headway against it, he put his wife and children under the wagon, and he himself took a blanket and stretched out on his back with hands outstretched, and put himself against the wagon on the side next the wind. When the searching party found them a few hours later, the wife and children were safe, but the father, still standing guard, was frozen stiff as any post. That, too, is human nature.

Now, the question is, which represents human nature as God meant it to be? Sickness is a fact in this world, but is a man normal when he is sick or when he is well? Sin is a fact, but is a man most himself when he is in sin, or when he is clean? This is a day in which our psychologists preach self-realization, and they are right in so preaching. Thus far they are in agreement with the scientists. But how are we going to realize? Suppose we realize our baser self. Suppose we abandon all thought of good, all thought of God, all thought of unselfish service. Suppose we spit in the face of conventions till so far as possible we can hear its voice no more—do we find peace? No, Judas tried it, but even after he had betrayed his Lord with a kiss he is still so torn with inward strife that he hurries out to hang himself. Hyde killed Jeckyl. You might look, then, for Hyde to live on in peace, but after killing Jeckyl, his next step is to kill Hyde. The Bible,
therefore, is only saying what is true according to both
human experience and psychology when it says, "There is no
peace, sayeth my God, to the wicked."

The best dog story I have read is the "Call of the
Wild" by Jack London. He tells how a splendid dog was stolen
and carried to Alaska where he became a husky, and learned to
adapt himself to that rugged and cruel life. He became the
best husky of all the North Country.

By and by, his master became ill. The dog had more
leisure on his hands than he knew how to use. He began to wander
in the forest. One night he heard the howl of a \textit{tender} wolf.
His bristles went up, and he at once was ready for battle.
Another night he heard this same voice again. This time he was
not so ready for fight. He rather made his way to this strange
brother, and they put their noses together and wandered into the
wilds of the forest, and sat upon their haunches and howled
to the distant stars, as their ancestors had done thousands of
generations ago. At last the master died, and all contact with
civilization was broken, and he ended at the head of the wolf
pack, the fiercest wolf of them all.

Now, that is, in some measure, the story of multitudes
that live today. We are broken with old loyalties. Old
contacts are no longer binding. We are out on our own. We
are listening to the call of the wild. But there is this
difference - we can never be quite content, however we may
try, to the call of the wolf. I am not sure that old Buck is
not sometimes tormented by the memories of the day when he
\textit{had} a master, but I do know that no man can be as bad.
But, suppose we cast our vote on the side of our higher! Suppose we really accept what the Bible teaches, that the normal man is the Christ-like man, and that sin is an abnormality. Suppose we cast our vote on the side of our memory, by the realization of the better life that he might have lived. For, no man ever comes to self-realization by indulging his baser self.

But, suppose we cast our vote on the side of our higher! Suppose we really accept what the Bible teaches, that the normal man is the Christ-like man, and that sin is an abnormality. Suppose we cast our vote on the side of our memory, by the realization of the better life that he might have lived. For, no man ever comes to self-realization by indulging his baser self.
"Violets and Vipers."

Romans, 7: 24.

"Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." Not in all the literature of the world is there another cry more human than is this of the apostle Paul. It is a wail born in the agony of his own hot heart. But he is not the first man that ever uttered it. Nor was he the last. It was uttered long centuries before it ever became articulate upon the lips of the great apostle. It was uttered before any great civilization flourished upon the banks of the Nile. It was uttered before Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees to journey into the unknown. It is a cry older than the Bible. It is older than literature. It is as old as human sin. It is a cry that has throbbed in the heart of man ever since the tragic quarrel of his soul with God.

What is the source of this cry? What tragic fact gave it birth? It is the cry of a man, first of all, who has been made to realize the reality of right and the reality of wrong. Not only has he realized the reality of right and wrong, but he has realized the vast difference between them. He is not color blind. He has not so blinded himself as to put light for darkness and darkness for light. He has not confused the heights with the depths, nor the depths with the heights. He knows that right is right as God is God. He knows that wrong, sin is real, and that it is separated from right by a chasm as wide as Heaven from hell.

In the second place, the man who uttered this cry has not only realized the difference between right and wrong, he has realized the superiority of right over wrong. He has looked upon the heights and has loved them. He has looked into the depths and hated them. He has realized something of the infinite winsomeness of goodness. For after all, the most fascinating something in this world is goodness, purity, holiness. He has also realized something of the hideous ugliness of sin. And mark you, sin is always monstrous, ghastly, loathsome, devilish when we see it apart from ourselves and view it as it really is. This man has come, I say, to look upon goodness and love it and long for it. He has come to look upon evil and to detest it.

He has not only come to realize something of the beauty of goodness and of the hideousness of sin, but realizing them, he has sought to dethrone sin and enthrone righteousness. He has struggled to make goodness king in his life, but he has struggled in vain. He has been defeated. This is the cry of a man who has failed and realizes that he must continue to fail forever more unless a power apart from himself is imparted that will enable him to triumph.

"Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me" - he means by this, 'I can not deliver myself. I have yearned for deliverance. I have desired it. I have struggled for it. I have battled for it, but I have not attained. In spite of all my fighting, the evil that I hate I continue to practise, and the good that I long to practise I fail to achieve. And thus failing, I have come to realize that it is no more I that doeth, but sin that worketh in me.'

Did you notice that last startling statement of the apostle? "It is no more I, but sin that worketh in me." What does he mean? He does not mean that he himself is not responsible for the wrong that he
Vi~lets and vipers

does. He does not mean that he is in the grip of a horrible fatalism that prevents his having any control over his own conduct. But what he does mean is this, that these baser acts of my life, that these sins of which I am guilty - they are not the sins of my true self, my self as God intended me. They are the acts of my lower and baser self, that self that is an intruder, a burglar in the palace of my soul.

You see here that Paul recognizes the fact of a dual personality. He recognizes the presence of goodness and of sin in every human life. Some people laugh at the idea of the fall. They ridicule what our fathers called original sin. Now, I believe in original goodness, and I believe that man though fallen, still bears upon him the marred image of God. He is not yet wholly bad or it would be useless to preach to him.

But while original goodness is true, original sin is equally true. Sin has put its defiling hand upon all our faculties. There are tendencies toward evil in every one of us. We are all tempted to hear the voices that call into the dust. We are creatures torn between two worlds. We are strange minglings of might and day, of good and evil, of sunshine and shadow.

Now, this Book teaches that when man came from the hand of God he came with singleness of purpose, he came a unified personality. But the entrance of sin divided him. It put him at war with himself. Sin is the one great disentegrating force in this universe. It divides man from man. It sunder and wrecks homes. It divides communities. It divides society. It divides the nations. It divides the heart of man.

That fact is written upon the face of nature itself. The great naturalist, Mr. Jeffers, has an article on vipers. And in his discussion of this reptile he tells us that vipers love especially to sun themselves and to home among violets. He said as you stoop down to pluck one of these delicate flowers you hear a rustle in the leaves and catch a glimpse of the scaly tail of a vanishing viper. Or you might even feel his fangs fixed in your fingers as you reach to lay hold on these lovely flowers.

Now, that is nature all the way through. Art sorts and separates, as Dr. Borham points out. I step down to your store and you have your goods arranged in orderly fashion. The shoes are here. The hardware is there. The druggist uses the same orderly method in the arranging of his drugs.

But not so nature. When I go into the forest I find a delicate flower of a day blooming beside a giant oak. I see roses mingled with thorns. I see nightshade and sour dock rubbing elbows with violets and lilies of the valley.

You have met these gentlemen, I suppose, who do not care to go to church, but go out to worship the god of nature. Such people really do not worship, for the god of nature would be a distressingly difficult god to worship. It might be easy enough to worship nature as she reveals herself in the violet, but how about the fang of the viper? It might be easy to wonder and worship in the presence of a glorious sunset, but how about the earthquake and the tornado? Worship might be easy as we listen to the music of the mocking-bird, but it would be more difficult as we hear the hoot of the owl and the howl of the wolf and the
Vi~lets and vipers

lone scream of the panther. If we worship only the god that nature re­
veals, we must see that god not only in the lustrous plumage of the bird
of paradise, but also in the carrion scented beak and the blood stained
talons of the vulture.

The truth of the matter is, heart, that nature gives no sure
voice about God. It knows no God of forgiveness and of love. That is
the reason that "The depths saith, it is not in me, and the flowers
say, it is not in me, and the skies say, it is not in me." There is
good and evil in the world about us, and the whole creation groaneth
and travaileth in pain.

Now, just as violets and vipers keep house together in the world
about us, so they even home together in our own hearts. If I look over
your garden gate tonight there are violets blooming in your heart. There
is the Violet of Kindness. There is the Violet of Devotion to your
Friend and to those that love you, - Violets of Honesty, Sincerity,
Earnestness, Eagerness to be Right and to Do Right.

But there is more there than violets, there are also vipers. I
can hear the gliding of the Serpent Lust. I can see the slimy trail
of Impurity. I can get a glimpse of the ugly fangs of Envy and Selfish­
ness and JealoulY and Hate. You are not wholly bad. Neither are you
wholly good. You are a strange mixture of the two.

I was reading recently of some scientists who produced what was
known as a diabolical fad. They took some insects in the early stage of
their development and grafted them one with another. For instance, they
took the spider and grafted it with the butterfly, and a strange monster
was the result. Think of a creature part spider and part butterfly.
One part of this creature loved the sunshine; the other part loved the
dark. One part loved the perfume of roses; the other had a lust for
blood. One yearned to spread colorful wings in the sunshine; the other
longed to hide himself in the dingy darkness of rotting cobwebbed walls.

And how like this ugly monstrosity are ourselves. How strangely
we are divided. This truth is one of the facts of revelation. Paul is
not the only one of the inspired writers that brings us face to face with
this awful truth. He is not the only one who makes us to realize this
terrible blight of sin upon our nature. We find the Psalmist praying
this wonderful prayer: "Unite my heart to fear thy name." The man who
prayed that prayer was conscious of his desire to fear God wholly. He
was conscious of a longing to be altogether devoted to his Lord. He
was also conscious of the fact that he was only half-hearted in his de­
votion. It is for this reason that he prayed for a unified heart. It
was for this reason that he plead with God for the gift of a unified
personality, of a personality wholly given up to the Lord.

And another one of the Psalms you find this prayer, "My soul
cleaveth unto the dust. quicken thou me according to thy word." Do you
not see the picture? "My soul cleaveth unto the dust." The downward
voices are calling to this man. The depths are inviting. The terrible
spell of evil is upon him though he knows it to be evil. But under the
spell of evil he also feels the spell of goodness. Hence his prayer.
Yearning to indulge the lusts of the spider, he also longs to enjoy the
privileges of the butterfly. "My soul cleaveth unto the dust." And
there we see in him a picture of your life and mine. With one hand he
clasps the mud and with the other he reaches out after the stars. Strange
and bewildering complexity.
Not only is this fact of a dual self, a divided personality a truth of revelation, it is also a truth of human experience. You have been surprised, no doubt, many times at the baseness of your own heart. You are a Christian, and yet sometimes you are astonished at a sudden revelation of the inner depths of wickedness in your own soul. For mark you, by becoming a Christian we do not end this struggle altogether. But we are enabled to triumph. In our struggles we are enabled to put our foot upon the neck of our foe. We are enabled to be conquerors and more than conquerors through Him that loved us and gave Himself for us. But as you listen to me tonight you know that the teaching of God's Word is true. And it brings home to you the awful fact that sin has divided you against yourself, that sin has put a civil war within your own life. And some of us can say tonight, as the poor demonized man said to Jesus, "My name is legion, for we are many." You are conscious of a thousand discordant motives and purposes and desires.

This is also one of the big lessons of literature. Men of far differing types and beliefs have taught it. Jack London, who was not a Christian tells us the story in his masterpiece, "The Call of the Wild." Hall Caine reads us the same lesson in "The Deemster." And Robert Louis Stevenson enforces the same truth in that supreme classic, "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

Now, what are some of the results of divided personality? One very obvious result is this, ineffectiveness. A divided man is of necessity an ineffective man. The men who have won, the men who will win are those who can say "This one thing I do." No man can do as much with a fraction of himself as he can with the whole of himself.

How is it that the church of Jesus Christ makes such slow progress today? There are enough professing Christians to take the world in a little while, but why do we take it so slowly? There is one big reason: We are divided in our allegiance. We are serving the Lord halfeartedly. We are giving Him only a fraction of our strength. We are partial in our devotion. One man with his mind definitely made up is worth a hundred men who are lukewarm. If you intend to be an effective Christian, if you want to be a useful man you must be a wholehearted man. A double minded man is unstable, unreliable in all his ways.

In the second place, this divided self makes for wretchedness. If the time could ever come when a man could wholly drown the voice of God within his heart, if Mr. Hyde could not only kill Jekyll but forget him, there might come a day when there would be a certain sort of peace in sin. But even by the swine trough in the Far Country the Prodigal is tormented by memories of home. So that the word is true that says, "There is no peace, saith my God to the wicked." And the cry of Paul is the cry of every divided heart, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?"

Is there deliverance? Paul says that there is. And the same man who is here breaking his heart over the sad fact of his divided self says in another place with unbounded joy, "This one thing I do." And the discordant personality has become unified. The soul that was cleaving unto the dust has been quickened by the power of God.

How did Paul achieve? Not through his own strength. He had tried that way and failed. Deliverance he had found. He had found deliverance
from his past sin, and deliverance above all else, from his sinful self. But he had not found it through his own goodness, nor through his own efforts. He had found it through Jesus Christ. "I thank God," he said, "through Jesus Christ." And then with a note whose joy must have thrilled the very Heaven of Heavens he sang, "There is now therefore no condemnation, and the law of the Spirit of life has made me free." And Paul went out from that experience to become a different man. His wretchedness gave way to unwounded peace. He became a man of one purpose, and because a man of one purpose, a man with indomitable and unbounded power.

That same experience, heart, is open to you and me. It all depends upon the way we face. The wreck of Dr. Jekyll was in the fact that he faced down hill. Do you remember Benhadad? Elisha looked at him one day and burst into tears. The young statesman was astonished and asked why he wept. And the prophet replied, "Because I see the evil that you are to do to Israel." And when the prophet told him the terrible deeds of which he was one day to become guilty Benhadad was astonished and said, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this?" He could not believe the possibilities for evil that lurked in his own heart.

Now, there was another man. And Jesus saw him one day and told him that because he was facing in His direction the time would come when he would become a rock of Christlike character. And Peter struck the upward trail and there came a time when he triumphed. And he became whole hearted in his devotion to God.

As I speak to you at this moment my message is being reinforced by the Spirit of God. As I speak to you my appeal is being emphasized and sent home by a thousand tender memories that come to you from the past. But mine is not the only voice. There are voices from the depths. There are the voices of your own cowardice, of your own selfishness, of your own sin. You can hear and obey the higher or the lower. You can respond to the call of God or to the call of sin. If you yield to the call of sin I can promise you nothing but a wasted life and a wretched here and hereafter. If you respond to the call of God I can promise you here and now peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. I can promise you usefulness. I can promise you an abiding place in the Land where we see no longer through a glass darkly, but face to face.
I'D GIVE MYSELF

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." — Romans 12:1

Here is a man of great intellect and of great heart. He is making an appeal to certain men and women of the long ago. He is also appealing to you and me.

Though we are separated from the writing of this letter by seas and centuries and continents, we feel that the author is still standing face to face with every one of us. As he thus faces us, he does not try to coerce or to compel. He rather comes with the threaten word upon his lips. He does not say, "I command you," but rather, "I beseech you." He seems to hold out hands to us, as inviting as the arms of a mother to a trusting child.

What is this great saint asking us to do?

He is not asking us for the trivial and for the secondary. He is not asking for what is superficial but for what is central and essential. He is not asking us for our money, as important as such requests often are. No man can be truly Christian without being Christian in his attitude toward his possessions. But while no man can be genuinely Christian and at the same time greedy and grasping, it is possible for one to be very liberal and yet not be truly Christian. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, it profiteth me nothing.

Since Paul is not asking for our possessions, no more is he asking for our work. Of course, if we are Christians, we will work. It is utterly impossible to be a disciple of our Lord and at the same time a deliberate idler. "Every branch that beareth not fruit is taken away." But while no man can follow Christ and be
I'D GIVE MYSELF - page 2

dile it is still possible to work and to work very diligently and yet be far from Christian. It is possible to be very diligent about holy things and yet a stranger to the Holy Lord.

As Paul is not asking us primarily for our possessions and for our work, no more is he asking for our prayers and tears. He is not even asking that we join the church, as important as that is. He is asking for a greater something that includes all these. He is asking for ourselves. "I beseech you, therefore, that you present your bodies"—that is, your entire personalities, your all. If God really gets me, he gets all that I have. If he gets you, he gets all that you have.

You can readily see that Paul could make no greater request than this. He is asking us to abdicate the throne of our own lives. He is asking us to say in sober sincerity, "Not my will but Thine be done." He is appealing to us to put our very selves, our very all into the Hand of another. That you must agree is a tremendous request. Yet as tremendous as it is, nothing else will do. It is only by the giving of self that we can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

That this is the case is not arbitrary. Our Lord has not deliberately made it hard. This is the case in the very nature of things. This is the case because you cannot be the lord of your own life and have Jesus as Lord at the same time. No man can serve two masters. Therefore, at the door of entrance into His service stands the necessity of self-dedication. God has no plan of salvation for an unsurrendered heart.

The Rich Young Ruler had much in his favor. He had a high courage that sent him in the face of the crowd, patrician that he was, to kneel at the feet of a Carpenter. He had found it impossible to be satisfied with things and was out in quest of eternal life. He was deeply reverent. He knew how to pray. He had kept himself clean. If there was ever a fit subject for the Kingdom, he seems to be the man. Yet when Jesus opened to him the door of life, he refused to enter it. While the Master wooed and invited, he went away. He missed life not because he was bad; he missed it because he would not obey.
Not only is the dedication of self the door of entrance into the Kingdom; it is the life we are to live after we have entered. The giving of self is not only the enlistment; it is the price that we are to pay as we conduct the campaign until we are mustered out at the close of life's today. Not only is self-giving of the very essence of the life of the Kingdom here, but it will continue to be so throughout all eternity. The least we can do and be Christian at all is to give ourselves away. That is also the most we can do either in time or in eternity.

II

Now having asked us to give so tremendously, we naturally expect a great motive for such great conduct. It is less than sane to fling away life for a mere dusty nothing. In these grim days there are fathers and mothers who with breaking hearts are willing to venture the lives of their boys and girls. In these days of blood and tears, there are beautiful youth who are glad to dare everything for the land that they love. It is just this self-giving that is the one bright spot in the red hell of war.

"I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade,
When Spring comes back with rustling shade
And apple-blossoms fill the air--
I have a rendezvous with Death
When Spring brings back blue days and fair."

The young man that wrote that poem kept his rendezvous and his body lies today in an untimely grave. He gave his life, not because he did not value it, but because he valued something else more. He gave it because he loved the land that had given him all that he had and all that he was.

But Paul makes an even higher appeal. "I beseech you," he says, "by the mercies of God." These mercies, of course, include everything—the gift of life with all its opportunities. But Paul is thinking especially of the mercies of God as shown in and through the Cross. As he makes his appeal, he leads us to that grim hill far away without the city wall. He is confident that we cannot survey the wondrous Cross
without responding to his appeal. His confidence is born out of his own experience. It is Christ crucified above all who had won him. "He loved me," he sings, "and gave himself up for me." It was that fact that had taken captive his whole heart. In fixing his faith in the supreme appeal of the Cross, he was merely sharing the faith of his Master. It was to this cross that our Lord Himself looks to win and break the hearts of men. He knew men as none other ever did. Therefore, He said, "And I if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." He knew that love was the mightiest something in the world. He knew that a love that was willing to suffer to the death would be all-but irresistible. So men have found it.

"Love so amazing, so divine
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

It is a tremendously impressive something to have had any creature willingly suffer for you. I read years ago of a hunter in the Rocky Mountains who wounded a bear. But before he had time to recharge his gun, the enraged beast was almost upon him. When he imagined that he could feel the hot breath of his enemy upon the back of his neck, his faithful dog ran in to take his part. The bear made short work of the dog, but it gave the hunter time to recharge his gun and when he had killed the bear, he went and gathered the mangled body of the dog in his arms and carried him home and buried that dog with his tears. It is an arresting thing to have even a dog die for you. But to have had the highest and best to pay the last full measure of devotion—nothing could be more arresting than that!

"I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies." If you answer, "That is my best, my very all," then he replies, "That is exactly what our Lord did for you." "This," he says, "is my body which is given for you." And here, as Browning said, he literally puts himself in the palm of his own hand and offers himself to you and me. If he gives his all for us, it is not too much for him to ask the same full measure of devotion from us.
III

Now suppose we take him seriously. Then what? I am going to mention three results that will surely follow such self-dedication.

1. If you give yourself to Christ, He will accept you. There is nothing more sure than this. He will accept you if you come in life's green spring. Thus coming He can naturally do more with your life than He can if you come when it is largely squandered. But however much has already been wasted, however many precious years the locust may have eaten, if you give him yourself he will accept you. This he will do regardless of your yesterday, regardless of your today, regardless of your tomorrow. This he will do whether you are weak or strong, whether you are brave or full of fear. Whatever we give him, he accepts. This is his own promise: "Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out."

If then, you are not his, if you have never come to say, "My Lord, and my God!" what is the reason? If you are not his, it is not because he is unwilling to receive you but because you have never given him the chance. Even so, now if you will you may become his. Now you may have him as your Master. Now you may be saved from the restlessness and wretchedness of being a master-less soul. If you give him yourself, he will accept you.

2. If you respond to Paul's appeal and give Christ your life, he will not only accept you but he will remake you. He will give you more and more to share in his own divine Nature. He will make it possible in proportion to the fullness of your dedication for others "to take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus." If you will give Him your entire personality he will accept that personalities and give it back to you unified, transformed, and enriched.

I am aware that some of us find it hard to believe this. We have thought of our holy religion so long as something to be suffered rather than as something to be enjoyed! We have thought of it in terms of what we are to give up rather than in terms of what we are to receive. Paul spoke of himself as separated. But the separation that he experienced was not merely from but unto. His experience was not
the experience of emptiness but of fullness. When he gave his life to his Lord, it was not robbed of its worth and beauty. It was transformed and enriched.

There is a story of a great artist who was spending a few days in the home of her friend. It so happened that this friend had a little girl some six years of age. While the visitor was present, she celebrated her birthday and received among other gifts a very lovely fan. The great artist looked at the fan, and then told the little girl that if she would let him have it for a few days, he would paint a beautiful picture upon it. But she snatched it away from him in utter distrust, saying, "You shan't spoil my beautiful fan." But if she had granted his request, he would not have spoiled it. He would have given it back to her all but infinitely enriched. If you give Christ your life, he will not impoverish it. He will make it rich beyond your dreams.

3. If you give Christ yourself, he will not only accept you and enable you to share his nature, but he will use you for the enrichment of the lives of others. Everybody, I take it, wants to be useful. At our best the longing for usefulness is native to us. God put that longing into our hearts. To receive a blessing is appealing. To be a blessing is the very poetry of living. That poetry may be the rich possession of every one of us if we live dedicated lives. I have met consecrated men and women along the way in all sorts of circumstances. Some were cultured; some were unlearned. Some were rich and some were poor. Some were young and some were coming close to the sunset. Some were vigorous and strong; others were knights of the sick-room. But I have never found one who was not beautifully useful.

In the grim days that are ahead every right thinking youth will desire to do his part. Of course, there are many things you can do and leave God out of your reckoning. But if you want to do the big things, the superb things, you must have Him. "Apart from me you can do nothing." Life comes to its best only when it is dedicated. We reach our highest usefulness only at the price of life laid down. That was true for the Master. It is true for us. Therefore, when we dedicate our lives, we do not waste them. We save them from waste to highest usefulness.
Let me call your attention to an old familiar classic whose truth is still as new as the first violet of spring. King Arthur of great heart and dedicated life is now upon his death-bed. Beside that death-bed stands his last surviving knight. To this knight the King entrusts the sword with which he had fought his many battles, telling the knight to go down to the shores of the lake and fling it out into the dark waters. The knight set out to do his bidding, but before he threw the sword away he decided to take one look at it. Thus he drew it out of the scabbard and as it flashed and sparkled in the moonlight its beauty so took captive his heart that he said, "It is too priceless to throw away." So he hid it among the rushes and went back to the King.

"Did you do my bidding?" asked the dying man. "Yes," came the reply. "What did you see?" And the knight told him a fictitious story. The King knew it was false. So he sent him a second time. But a second time he drew the sword from its scabbard and again that marvelous blade cast its spell on him. Once more he went back to the King. Once more he told him a fictitious story.

Then the King grew angry. "Go," he said with white-heat earnestness, "and do my bidding, or I will arise from my death-bed to slay you." The knight hurried away, and when he reached the margin of the lake he took the sword in both his hands and threw it as far as he could over the lake. Then he watched to see it splash in the dark waters to rust and rot away in the mud at the bottom of the lake. But this did not happen. For ere it touched the waters, a wonderful hand reached out and gripped the hilt, wielded the sword three times, and then disappeared. Then the knight understood that he had not thrown the sword away to rust in uselessness in the bottom of the lake. He had only passed it to a mightier hand than his own. This I take it is akin to what Paul has in mind when he said, "I beseech you by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God."
THE GIVING OF SELF

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God."

---Romans 12:1

This man of vast intellect and vaster spiritual power is making to us a tremendous appeal. His approach is not that of the desperate. He is not pounding the pulpit. He is not shouting commands. He is not trying to jar us into activity. He is rather appealing to us—"I beseech you." He leans wistfully toward us across the far spaces of the years, beseeching us to do something that is of supreme importance. All eagerness, he says, "I beseech you."

I

What is the great apostle asking us to do? He is not trying to interest us in mere trivialities. He is not sending us to tasks of secondary importance. He is not beseeching us to give up this or that pastime, this or that sin. He is not even inviting us to observe the conventions, to be nominally Christian. He is not inviting us first of all to join the church. He is not asking us for our money. He is not even asking us primarily for our work. He is asking us for something bigger than all these.

For what then, I repeat, is he asking? "I beseech you, therefore, that you present your bodies." What he means by that is our entire selves. He is asking that we simply give ourselves away. He is asking that we submit our will to the will of Another. He is asking that we say to our Lord in sober earnestness, "Not my will but Thine be done." In other words, he is inviting those to whom he writes as well as ourselves to be genuinely Christian. In order that we may do this, he asks that we give ourselves away. That, I repeat, is asking a great deal. Yet nothing short of this can meet our needs. Nothing short of this can satisfy our
Lord. The first step toward being a Christian is the giving of self. That is the very door of entrance. Without self-giving we never come to spiritual certainty. If you have ever reached the place where you can say with 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", this was the door of entrance. I say this because there is no other door. God has no way of revealing Himself to the man who will not obey Him.

Not only is self-giving the door of entrance, not only is this Christianity in its beginning, it is Christianity in its course. There is no fellowship with God without it. Can two walk together and not be agreed? Our Lord longs with infinite eagerness to have fellowship with us. He wants to be with us according to His promise even to the end. But He cannot do this unless we go in His direction. Why is it that God is not real to many of us? The answer is that we are not giving Him a chance. To begin, to be a Christian we must give self. To continue in His fellowship we must give self. There is no other way.

Not only is self-giving Christianity in its beginning and Christianity in its course, it is Christianity in its consummation. We are to give ourselves away. That is the door of entrance. It is the least we can do and be Christians at all. Yet it is the most we can do even in time or eternity. Through the endless ages as we climb one Alpine height after another in His fellowship, the goal to which we are constantly climbing is perfect conformity to the will of God. Therefore, when Paul comes to us with this request, "I beseech you therefore that you give yourselves to God." He is asking of us the very best we can do. He is asking for our very all.

II

Upon what does he base his appeal? He does not here surmise any of the dire tragedy that may result in our failure to do so. He leads us, as he is constantly doing, out to that skull-shaped hill called Calvary. "I beseech you," he said,
"by the mercies of God." In speaking of God's mercies he is thinking especially of that supreme mercy shown upon the Cross. He is saying, "You ought to give yourself wholly to Him because He gave Himself wholly to you." Paul is speaking in this fashion because it is this motive that has dominated him. He had given himself and when we ask the reason, he puts it in this fashion, "He loved me and gave Himself up for me."

It was to this motive that Jesus looked as the supreme appeal. He knew men as none other ever did. Therefore, He was confident that the human heart simply could not resist the appeal of the Cross—"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." This happening on Calvary would scarcely have made a place in the daily papers of Rome had they had such at that time. Yet something took place on that green hill far away that the world will continue to remember when the memory of Rome has utterly rotted.

III

But as a man of plain, practical common sense why should you, separated from that scene by seas and centuries and continents, be influenced by it? Why should you today take seriously this appeal of Paul to give yourself to God? Why should you give up your own selfish plans, the determination to live your own life, the desire to do as you please in order to do the will of God? As I voice the appeal for the giving of self, what reasons are there—sane, solid sensible reasons—that you, especially you in life's green spring, should respond affirmatively?

1. If you give yourself to God today, He will accept you. That is absolutely true. You can count on that with perfect assurance. His own word is, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." If you give Him yourself, He will accept you whether you are old or young, whether you are weak or strong, whether you are a failure as the world terms a failure or whether you are a success. If you give Him yourself, He will accept you regardless of yesterday, regardless of your today, regardless of your tomorrow. No man ever offered himself to God to
have his offer rejected.

Now it is a great privilege to belong. Sometime ago I saw a stray dog. That dog had somehow lost his master. He was a pathetic sight. He would see a man in the distance and run toward him hopefully, but before he had arrived he would discover his mistake, stand uncertainly for a moment, and then go off in another direction. The best advertisement I ever saw was gotten out by the Victrola people where a happy dog was listening to his master's voice. But the most wretched creature in the world is a masterless man.

"I walked life's way with a cheerless tread,
I followed where pleasure and comfort led
Until at last one day in a quiet place
I met my Master face to face.

.................
And I cried aloud, 'Oh, make me meek
To follow the path of Thy bruised feet,'
My care is now for the souls of men.
I have lost my life to find it again
E'er since that day in a quiet place
When I met my Master face to face."

2. If you will give yourself to God, He will remake you. In His fellowship you will be changed into the same image from glory to glory. This also is an absolute certainty. Sometimes that change takes place with the rapidity of the lightning's flash. Sometimes it is like the dawning of the day or the slow coming of springtime. But this is sure—if you will really give yourself to Him you will become increasingly like Him. You will come to share in the divine Nature, to possess in some measure His mind, His character, His disposition. As with those who have followed Him in other centuries men will take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus.

In spite of this we have a strange fear of God. We shrink from making an absolute surrender for fear He will ask more of us than we are willing to give. Somehow we have come to think of Christianity in terms of what we may have to give up instead of the treasures that we will win. Naturally there are many things that a Christian cannot do that a worldling can, but there are so many things that a worldling cannot do that a real Christian can, and these latter are the things
that count. Paul thought of being a Christian as being separated not from something but unto something.

I read a story of a great artist who was spending a few days in the home of a devoted friend. It so happened that that friend had a bright little girl for whom the artist formed a real liking. She celebrated her birthday while he was there. Among the presents that came to her was a beautiful fan. It was her dearest treasure. When she showed it to the artist, he said to her, "If you will lend it to me for a little while, I will paint a picture on it." But she snatched it away from him saying, "You shan't spoil my beautiful fan." What a mistake! If she had only consented, he would have given her fan back to her with its value increased ten-thousand fold.

So often ours is the blunder of this little girl! Our Lord comes asking us for the gift of ourselves. "Dedicate your life to me," He promises, "and I will paint My image upon it. Give Me yourself and I will so remake you that the beauty of the Lord will rest upon you as the sunshine rests upon the hills." But so often we are shy of Him! We turn away saying, "You shan't spoil my life." It is thus we cheat ourselves. It is thus we rob ourselves of life's supreme joy and of its supreme possibilities.

3. If you will give yourself to God, He will use you. Now the desire for usefulness is almost universal. I went to see an old body sometime ago. He had lived richly and sacrificially. His life was a benediction even then, but there were times that he missed the crash of battle as he had known it in other years. The only consideration that ever seemed to mar his joy was the fear that he was not being as useful as he might. The supreme tragedy, I take it, is to have come and grown and gone and never to have known the majesty and mirth of being of some service.

But all dedicated lives are useful. There is not an exception in the wide world. There never has been. It has been my privilege through the years to meet these dedicated souls. Some are young, some are in the full strength of their years,
some are close to the sunset. Some were enjoying the vigor of health; others were being tortured on beds of pain. But all of them have this in common—that they were being useful.

Some years ago there was a brilliant young woman into whose life tragedy came with such devastating effect that for years she threw herself away. By and by in sheer desperation she gave herself to God. Her body was so weakened by disease that she did not live but a few years. During those few years she occupied a back room in the home of a friend. There was a private stairway that led to that little room. Visitors climbed those stairs almost all hours of the day and sometimes far into the night. They went there as a thirsty man would go to a spring. To give yourself to God is to know the supreme secret of usefulness.

That is a striking scene where the good King Arthur, lying upon his death bed, hands his great sword to his last surviving knight. "Go," he commands, "and toss it back into the lake." The knight went in good faith, but, arrived at the margin of the lake, he drew the sword from the scabbard to take one last look at it. It was a marvelous sword. As the moonlight fell upon its sparkling blade and its bejewelled hilt, he decided that it was far too worthful to be thrown away to rust in uselessness at the bottom of the lake. So he hid it among the rushes and went back to the King. "Did you do my bidding?" asked his Majesty. "Yes," came the false answer. "What did you see?" questioned the King. And the knight told him a fictitious story. So he sent him again to do his bidding. A second time the knight dared look at the wonderful hilt and blade. A second time his heart failed him. Then when he returned and told his fictitious story, the King's anger waxed hot. "Go," he said, pointing a ghastly finger, "do my bidding or I will rise from my death bed to slay you." Then the knight hurried down and seized the sword with both his hands and, without giving himself a chance to be caught in the lure of its beauty, he threw it far into the lake. As he watched it disappear a wonderful hand reached out and grasped the hilt and wielded the sword three times and then disappeared.

The amazed knight rubbed his eyes. Then he understood that he had not thrown the
sword away to rust and uselessness in the mud at the bottom of the lake. He had simply passed it to a mightier hand than his own. Thus we are to throw ourselves away on God. He will always take what we give. He will transform it and use it.

"I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God."
ALL AGLOW
Rom. 12: 9-16

"Have your spirits aglow." Last night I listened to an address by a man of whose high character I have not the slightest doubt. He spoke for forty-five minutes without, so far as I could see, the slightest interest in what he was saying. Nor was there, so far as I could see, the slightest interest on the part of his hearers. A small match can light a great fire, but it must do a little burning itself in order to achieve this. No wonder, therefore, that Paul urges that we have our spirits aglow. There is little worthwhile work being done in the world by those on the altars of whose hearts the fires have gone out.

Teach us, O Lord, the secret of the glowing heart. Help us to realize that our hearts may still burn within us if only Thou dost talk with us by the way.

Amen.
"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." - Romans 12: 1

Paul is here coming at once to the heart and center of the meaning of discipleship. What is his appeal? What is he asking as God's ambassador? It is not a trifling something. It is not a gift of secondary importance. He is not dealing with the accidental and the incidental. He is not concerned with the outer fringes of life; he goes at once to what is fundamental, to what is profoundly and eternally essential.

For instance, he is not asking that we, as Christians, refrain from certain ugly vices. He is not asking that we give up certain vigorous and desecrating and disappointing sins. Of course, all this is implied. But he is not seeking our mere decency, he is not seeking that we be morally respectable. We may be as decent as decency and as respectable as respectability, and yet fall infinitely short of that which is essential.

No more is Paul asking for our services first of all. Of course, he desires this work; as a representative of his Lord, he expects it, but this is not his first appeal. Neither is he asking for our money. Of course, this too is to be included. Any real Christian will be willing to work. Any real Christian will be willing to give and to give sacrificially. One may be both energetic and liberal without being vitally Christian, but no man can be a real Christian and be a shirker. No man can be a real Christian and clutch his substances and refuse to share with others.

For what then is Paul asking? He is asking for the giving of ourselves. He is asking that life be set right at its center. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies," your hands, your feet, your intellect, your entire personality - that is the least we can give and be Christians at all. Till we do that, we dwell in the mere suburbs of Christianity, never venturing..."
in to where the lights are bright and where life is vigorous and strong. Standing at the very entrance of this life is this demand, "If any man will come after Me, let him say 'No' to himself."

Now since Paul is asking of us the very greatest that he could possibly ask, since he is expecting the giving of self, he naturally realizes that there must be large motives to adventuring in such big and costly conduct. There is nothing bigger in time and eternity that anyone can do than this. What are the motives that compel us to it?

I.

First, every man ought to give himself unreservedly to God because it is by such self-giving that we find spiritual certainty. Perhaps the greatest weakness of our modern religion is its uncertainty. Our convictions are hazy, our sense of God is wanting in vividness. We are not sure. Too few of us can say with Paul, "I knew Him Whom I have believed." Wanting this certainty, life for us is disappointing, our vision is not clear, our efforts in the building of the Kingdom are correspondingly weak and futile.

Is there a way to spiritual certainty in this scientific age? If we may believe the choices of the saints, if we may trust the word of their Lord and Master, we can say with assurance that there is. How does the scientist discover the truth? From the springboard of a hypothesis, he ventures upon the unknown. In the same way, men discover spiritual truth. "If any man is willing to do His will," said Jesus, "I know." The Psalmist was saying the same thing when he wrote, "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep." We only know as we adventure. Present your bodies, your central self to God and He will disclose Himself and you too can say, "I know." This is the road to spiritual certainty.
II.

We ought to yield ourselves to God because this and this alone is the pathway to highest self-realization. A few years ago, there was zealous preaching of self-expression and there were certain shallow and superficial psychologists who urged the value of giving expression even to our lower selves. But this has been the way of disillusionment and disappointment through all the centuries. The best present-day psychologists tell us that the only way to the achieving of the finest possible self, the road to the best possible personality, is the road of self-surrender.

This is the teaching of the best in modern sciences. It has ever been the teaching of the best religious thinkers. It is the teaching of Jesus. Just so long as life is selfishly used, just so long is it disappointing, and so long are the deepest hungers of the heart left unsatisfied. Just so long are we masterless men, so we are a disappointment to ourselves and a disappointment to others. The only way to find life is to lose it. All the radiant souls are the ones that live sacrificially. The rarest flowers and the most beautiful do not bloom in the lotus land of self-indulgence. They rather bloom in Gethsemane. Or, as another has pointed out, Gethsemane is the real rose-garden of God. Present your bodies therefore as a living sacrifice to God, for it is thus that you will come to the realization of your highest possible self.

III.

Then, if it is by such self-dedication that we achieve our highest usefulness, naturally the first step in doing more is being more. The finer personalities we become the finer service we can render to others. The way of self-surrender then is not only the way to become our best, but it is the way to do our best. If we desire to be useful, if we desire to help heal the world's open sore, if we are eager to help build up the Kingdom of God, there is nothing that we can do that is so important as the making of a full self-surrender of our lives to Christ. This is true
because if we give Him ourselves, He will accept us. If we give Him ourselves, He will transform us and fill us with His own presence. If we give Him ourselves, He will use us in the changing of our moral and spiritual winter into springtime. I am aware that it is hard at times for us to believe this. Some years ago, there was a charming and cultivated woman giving her life to the service of some backward and ignorant people in a certain rural section of our country. "What a pity," one said of her, "for a woman like that to waste her life on these people."

But that was not the way she thought of it. Her cheeks glowed and her eyes sparkled as she felt herself being used by God on behalf of these people. You remember how when King Arthur lay a-dying, he called his last surviving knight to him and commanded him to take his sword and throw it back into the lake from whence he had received it. The knight went in good faith, but the spell and the beauty of the sword so charmed him that he could not bring himself to throw it away. So he went back and told his King a fictitious story. Again his Majesty ordered him to fling it into the lake and again the knight was caught under the spell and was unable to do so. Then the King became angry and said, "Go at once or I will rise from my death bed to slay you." And the knight hurried away and without daring to look at the beautiful sword, he threw it out into the lake. Then as he saw it splash into the water to rust and to rot at the bottom of the lake, something wonderful happened. A mighty hand gripped the hilt and wielded the sword, and the knight realized he had not flung it away to rust in uselessness, but he had only passed it on to a mightier hand than his own. "Give yourself to God," said Paul, "and He will use you."

IV.

But Paul has not yet come to the supreme motive he uses for our self-giving. "I beseech you," he said, "by the mercies of God..." and here Paul leads
us out a narrow street of Jerusalem and up a skull-shaped hill and makes us stand once more under the shadow of the cross. There was possibly never more excellent ethical preaching than being done today in the world, but much of it is ineffective because of this lack of motive power. Paul did not expect to grow the fine flower of consecration except in the deep rich soil of redemption. So he appeals to us by the self-giving of Jesus for us to give ourselves.

That was the motive that had mastered Paul himself. He knew the power of it and the might of it in his own experience. "He loved me," said the dauntless knight, "and gave Himself up for me." Since this was the case, Paul was glad to give himself up for others. His life was a daily dying. "He loved me, therefore, I will gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more I love you the less I be loved."

"Oft when the spell is only too gray, knelt the illusion and the truth lies bare.

Desert of throng, city of the river, knelt in delusion paradise of where
Only like souls I see the folks and under, slaves who should conquer,
Bound who should be kings, hear their one hope with an empty wonder.
Sadly content with the show of things.
Then with the burst of intolerable craving,
Shivers through me like a trumpet call.
Oh, to save them, to perish for their saving,
Die for their life, be offered for them all!"

Thus the Cross was the master motive of the sacrificial life of St. Paul. In responding to its appeal, he had only met the expectations of his Lord. For him, Jesus put His finger on that in Himself that He expected above all else to woe and win the heart of the world. It was not upon His winsome words, nor His mighty deeds, but upon His self-giving on the cross. "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." "I know the human heart," He seems to say. "I know the gallantry of the human soul. I know it cannot resist the appeal of life laid down on its behalf."

Thus today Jesus is looking very wistfully and hopefully at you and me, expecting the giving of ourselves in response to the appeal of His forgiving love.
There is a story of two dear friends who fought side by side for months in the World War. One night there was a charge and one of those friends came back alone. This surviving friend requested of his commanding officer that he be allowed to go into No Man's Land to bring in his wounded comrade. At first the officer refused him and he said it would be suicide. He said further that it would do no good. But the friend persisted till at last the officer gave his consent.

Then this soldier slipped out into the night. He was gone for hours. At last, he came back and laid a bleeding body down on the floor of the trench. "See," said the officer, as he looked into the pale face of his dead friend. "I told you there was no good in your going. You wasted your time and got yourself wounded for nothing."

"No," said the soldier, "it was worth it." "Worth it," repeated the officer hotly. "In what way? He is dead." "Well," said the friend, "he wasn't when I found him. He was able to smile in my face as he died, and the last word he said was this, 'I knew you would come.' I would rather have died than to have destroyed a faith like that." And that is what our Lord is saying. "I know you will come, for I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Therefore, let us not disappoint Him. I beseech you that as you gather about this table to present your bodies as living sacrifices.
A SURE STRATEGY


This text speaks home to a universal longing. Everybody desires to win. When we play games, we play for the fun of it and for the exercise, but we also play to win. I do not think I should care to play any game with anybody if that somebody did not care to win. His indifference to the game would indicate that he did not enjoy it, and his lack of enjoyment would kill mine, also. But this is seldom the case. However trivial the game, as a rule, we all desire to win.

This same deep interest in victory is further indicated by the honor we accord those who are successful. However secondary the game, the one who wins is usually applauded. In spite of a heavy handicap, Joe Lewis has thousands of ardent admirers. This is because he is perhaps the best boxer that ever went into the ring. The baseball star is idolized. A football hero, while making a touchdown, outshines the president of his institution and the whole faculty combined. We are interested in winners and we long to win, ourselves.

This desire for victory, I think, is God-given. Certainly it is encouraged by the whole Bible. Of all the victory books in literature, this amazing Book is certainly outstanding. On its very first page, God is represented as saying to man, "Have dominion." "You", he would seem to say, "are my masterpiece. You are not only the work of my hands, you are the son of my love. I have not made you to be pushed about by the lower orders of life. I have not made you to be the plaything of your circumstances. I have not made you to grovel in self-pity. I have not
made you to be the slave of yourself or of your fellows. I have made you for mastery. Stand upon your feet. Live victoriously. Be a conqueror."

That note of victory runs throughout the Bible, but that note of victory reaches a climax in the New Testament. Here we see a man standing under the shadow of a cross. He is going to die, and he knows it. But he is strangely at peace, magnificently unafraid. Turning to his trembling followers, he uses this majestic word, "In this world, ye shall have tribulations, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world."

As a conqueror, he had lived. As a conqueror, he was going to die. His life was not being wrenched from weak and grudging hands. He was giving it - "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself."

Those who became followers of this victorious Lord came also to share his victory. Paul, who above all others shared His spirit, cried, "Thanks be to God who causes us always to triumph." To the Ephesians he wrote, "Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand in the day of battle and, having fought the battle through to the finish, remain victors on the field." Even in the presence of death, he is still a conqueror. "Thanks be unto God who getteth us the victory," he shouts. Or as Moffatt translates it, "The victory is ours. Thank God." Then in the last book of the Bible, that strange book of Revelation, written in a tempestuous age like our own, we hear promise after promise to the overcomers. We are to overcome because we have a conquering Christ. At last, the book breaks out into that grand finale,
"Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigns", for the contents of this world have passed over to our God and His Christ." There is nothing more sure than that the Bible offers victory to every individual. It proclaims the final victory of righteousness throughout the world.

II.

But over against these wealthy and roomy promises, we face this dismal fact that many of us are not claiming the victory here offered. Multitudes, even in the church, are living rather starved and defeated and frustrated lives. Sometimes we take our poor winnings into our hands and look at them and wonder dismally if this is the best that a risen and reigning Christ can do for a human soul. Sometimes, we must ask ourselves desperately, "Why is it that I am not living the victorious life that is so constantly promised to me on the pages of the Bible?"

In answering this question, I do not think many of us are ready to claim that our failure is the fault of God. Of course, there are some that think He could do far more than He is doing, but all in all, I am persuaded that most of us are honest enough to confess that God has not let us down so much as we have let Him down. I think most of us are wise enough to see that God can do vastly more for us than He is doing if we would only give Him the chance.

Nor can we blame our failure upon our circumstances. Of course, life deals far more harshly with some than with others. I am ready to confess that there are some present who have darkened rooms in their lives of which I know nothing. But even then I say emphatically that
your failure is not born of your hard circumstances. I am sure of this
for at least one good reason. If you will look about you, you will find
others who are in circumstances just as trying as yours but who are not
only living gallantly but are changing their very liabilities into assets.
"It is not in our stars, dear Brutus, but in ourselves that we are under­
lings."

Some of us fail perhaps because we are too soft. We hate discip­
line. We bet on the easy way. When I left St. Luke's Church, I was en­
gaged in preaching a series of sermons on "Decent Devils." I was deal­
ing with those respectable, decent, white collar sins that do not shock
us but that lay waste life quite as tragically as those that we view with
horror. One of these sins I call the devil of the bargain counter. Often
we look at the beautiful prize of Christ-likeness and long to possess it,
but we try to strike a bargain. We haggle about the price till the fair
is over and our day is done.

But for earnest people, a fruitful source of failure is the
use of a wrong strategy. When we set out to conquer evil, we center our
attention upon that evil instead of upon the good that is to take its
place. We do exactly what the Master warned us against doing in his parable
of the tares. He tells of a certain farmer whose laborers came in one
day with the announcement that tares were growing among the wheat. That
is, that his wheat field was not perfect. It was a mixture of good and
evil. That strange mixture belongs to you and me. We are not altogether
good nor are we altogether bad. It belongs to our church. It belongs
to our world. These laborers ask a very practical question, "What are
we to do about it? Shall we go and pull up the tares?" "By no means," was the answer. "Let both grow till the harvest." Why not pull up the tares? Why not set out to demonish evil, let the results be what they may. Such a strategy is a failure for two reasons: First, it is a failure because it does not really get rid of evil. The best it can hope to do is to displace one evil with another. Years ago, I found a little playmate of mine playing with china dolls. As a great he-man, I was outraged. I brought pressure to bear upon this playmate till at last he rose in his dignity and threw the dolls away into the weeds. But I gave him nothing to take their place. Therefore, when I was gone, he went out and searched for them diligently and with tears. Many a man resolves upon being a Christian. He throws the unclean things out of his hands, but he never fills them aggressively with anything that is good. Therefore, the evil that he banished comes back. We cannot get rid of evil by merely driving it out.

Then, this strategy fails in the second place because even though we might thus destroy evil, the results would be purely negative. If, in the process of pulling up the tares these laborers had destroyed the wheat, they would have won no positive good. When I was pastor in Washington, my most intimate friend was a very able physician. He was a man of few words, but one day he told me in confidence, "I am curing cancer now, but I am killing the patient in the process." He did not expect congratulations. He knew that I could have cured cancer in that fashion with a shotgun. "I do not do any harm," a man said to me the other day when I asked him about being a Christian. Well, neither does a
sack of sawdust nor a stuffed pair of pants nor a wax figure in the show window. But they are not, for that reason, saints. Merely to do no harm is only to be "Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null."

III.

How, then, may we hope to win? We must adopt the strategy that is here suggested by Saint Paul. We must realize that the only real remedy for evil is good. The only way to drive out darkness is with light. The only real foe of death is life. Of all the sane words that Paul ever said, nothing is more sane than this: "Overcome evil with good."

This is our only hope of victory. If this will not work, nothing will work. It is our sure strategy in every department of life.

(1) This is true in the matter of physical health. The old way of treating disease was to shut the patient up in a room, deprive him of fresh air, of sunshine, of food and water, and proceed to kill the disease. I can remember having that practiced on me, as a boy. I could not have a drop of water. I could get a little slippery elm. But the modern physician knows a better technique. He seeks to build up the patient in the faith that the health germs will show the disease germs the door. "I bound up his wounds," said Galen, "and God healed him."

(2) This is the one remedy against error. When Paul went out to preach in that pagan world, the very atmosphere was thick with false faiths. It was being rotted by errors. Paul might have spent his entire ministry denouncing polytheism. They worshipped multitudes of gods. But had he done so and succeeded in destroying faith in Jupiter and
Mars and the rest, he would have done little or no good. Even a tallow dip is better than no light at all. But instead of denouncing false gods, he help up for them the living Christ and the grim winter of that day changed into spring.

(3) This is our hope: in our human relationships, the supreme test of religion is this: does it make you easy to live with? I do not care how Christ-like you claim to be, if nobody can live with you, you have missed the way in some fashion. Suppose you have an enemy, what are you going to do about it? There are several methods for dealing with enemies. We can break off diplomatic relations. When I pass him on the street, I simply look at the sun. Another thing I can do is to slap his face and get my own slapped. Then, I might kill him and get rid of him altogether. But we can agree that all these methods are utterly futile. There is another possibility. It will not work every time, but it will go far farther towards working than many of us believe. We can make him into a friend. We can roll against his evil an all but irresistible tide of good.

We have all seen this work. In fact, I have had it worked on me. I am thinking now of a man that I did not like in the least. He simply repelled me. But he changed my dislike into friendship by persistent kindness. There is another instance. One day, a friend said, "I have a compliment for you." Then he tells you of something very generous and lovely that has been said about you. "Who said that?" you ask with glowing heart. And they give you the name of some old skinflint that you hadn't liked in the least, and the whole personality of that man is changed. At once, you say to yourself, "I always did know that
he was a diamond in the rough."

This, too, must be the final answer in our international relationships. We are now engaged in a terrible war. It is one that we fight with a clear conscience because it was forced upon us. But war is an evil. Let us not forget that. In our case, we believe it is the lesser of two evils. Not only is it an evil, but it is a failure so far as establishing an abidingly peaceful world is concerned. "You know what astonishes me most?" asked Napoleon. "It is the impotence of force to organize anything permanently."

Jesus faced that problem and fought it out. Again and again, he told his friends that he was going to have to lay down his life, but they simply could not take it in. It was impossible for them to believe that one so vital should die in such fashion. But at last the fatal day came and they saw he was going to allow himself to be done to death and they were crushed. The heart of Jesus bled for them. Because of this, he said one of the saddest words, I think, that he ever uttered, "Do you not know that I could pray my Father and He would send me twelve legions of angels?" The Lord Almighty could have crossed swords even with Rome and won. That is what Jesus claims, and we are sure He is right.

But suppose he had. Suppose Jesus had refused to die. We would not be celebrating this communion day. There would not be a church in his honor in all the world. There would not be a single saint redeemed by Him. How puny and weak He looks going into the arena against His own nation and against imperial Rome, staking His life on the conviction that the one way to conquer evil is by goodness. How tragically He failed.
His enemies went to their homes that night, dusting off their hands and saying, "We have won." But what of their victories now? Their memories have rotted for centuries. The only reason we know their names is because the light of Christ played upon them for an hour. But how fares it with Jesus? He is still going on conquering and to conquer. We know now that that defeat was the greatest victory ever won. We know that the deadliest blow ever struck against evil was struck on Calvary. As we come to this table, we come committing ourselves to the same strategy in our own lives and in the world. "This, I say, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."
A NEW STRATEGY

"Overcome evil with good."

I.

Overcome, here is a word that appeals to every human heart. Everybody would like to win. If we play a game we play for the fun of playing, but we also play to win. I would not care to play any game with any individual that was not interested in winning. Such a game would only bore him as it would myself. We want to win in our work. We want to be successful at our daily tasks. We have an almost child-like admiration for the man who makes good, even though the enterprise in which he succeeds is secondary. We go wild over a football star, a baseball player. Even Joe Louis has won tens of thousands of admirers simply because he is a victor. If we are wise we naturally want to win most of all in the big business of living. It is my conviction that this desire for victory is God-given. Recently the Allies have set in motion a propaganda movement that they call the "V" for victory campaign. On the surface it looks a bit childish, but it really has a deep meaning. It is an effort to keep hope and courage alive in the hearts of the conquered millions of Europe. As long as men hope, they will struggle. As long as they see light ahead they are not likely to give up in utter despair. This "V" for victory is a way of saying to them, "There is yet a chance for you to win."

But of all the victory books there are none in the class with the Bible. On its very first page we read this bracing word, "Have dominion." God himself is speaking to man. He seems to be saying, "You are the climax of creation. I have made you not to be a plaything of circumstances, I have made you not to grovel nor
to whine nor to be enslaved, I have made you for mastery. You are to have dominion." If victory is emphasized in the first book it reaches a far greater emphasis in the last. The Book of Revelation clashes with battle, but it is a battle that ends in triumph. It is rich in promise to him that overcometh. It reaches its climax in that Hallelujah Chorus where the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our God and his Christ.

In between these two as a connecting link is the victorious Christ. We hear him as he stands under the shadow of the cross with his foot upon the threshold of death say to his disciples and to us, "In this world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer I have overcome the world." Dying, disgraced, and discredited he claims with sublime audacity that he had lived and died a conquerer. Not only so, but the subsequent centuries have had to say Amen to his amazing declaration. This Bible then is a victorious book. It tells a story that we should naturally expect to be depressing. But instead it is the most heartening story ever told because it has at its center the greatest Conquerer that the world has ever known.

This victory that God commands, this victory that Jesus experiences is for everyone of us. It is not for the few, it is for the many. When Paul wrote this bold sentence, "Overcome evil with good," he was not speaking to an elect inner circle. He was not holding out a possibility that was in reach of only a few, he was speaking to high and low, rich and poor. He was speaking to a few that were in favorable circumstances. He was speaking to far more who were in difficult and trying circumstances. To slaves, to freedmen, to folks that we should say had little or no chance. Yet to all of them he offers the promise and possibility of victory.

But while this promise is universal, while the Bible fairly haunts us with the richness of our possibilities, when we face the depressing facts we have to confess that not all of us are achieving our possibilities. Not all of us are
living victoriously. There are multitudes even in the church that are frustrated and defeated. As another has said, "They follow along behind their Lord so pitifully run down at the heels that they seem to be trying to make the wealthy promises of Jesus look as ridiculous as possible." Over against this promise then of victory is the fact of widespread defeat.

II.

How are we to explain this defeat?

Let us face the fact at once that we cannot explain it by asserting the inadequacy of God. I think few of us would be willing to take the position that Jesus in making his immense claims was really mistaken in his own powers and in man's capacity. Regardless of how much I have failed I am not yet ready to blame my failure on God. I am still convinced that his grace is sufficient. I am still convinced that 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.

If our failure is not God's fault no more is it the fault of our circumstances. This I say realizing that life has dealt very harshly with some of us. This I say realizing that some of you are in far more desperate situations than I have ever known. I am well aware that there are tragic experiences in your life to which I am a stranger. Yet your failure in so far as you have failed is due to none of these things. This I say with confidence because however desperate your plight, if you will look around you you will find others whose plight is more desperate. But instead of these being defeated by their circumstances, they are even being enriched by them. Their losses have been made into gains, and their poverty has become amazing wealth.

What then, I repeat, is the secret of our failure? Of course there are those who have desired victory, but have desired their own ease more. Those of you who were here last Sunday evening will remember I spoke to you on the Devil
of the Bargain Counter. This is one of the most deadly devils with which our nature has to do. Kipling lays it down as a fundamental fact that if we fail to win the prize upon which we set our hearts, it is either because we did not desire that prize desperately enough or we were not willing to pay the price. We tried to strike a bargain till the night was on and the fair was over and our chance was past. Some of us are defeated, therefore, because we are not willing seriously to fight.

But there is another great and gallant hearted group who failed not from willingness, but because they used the wrong technique. They hate evil, they set out with squared jaws and clinched fists to conquer. But they meet defeat because they focus their attention upon the evil rather than upon the good that is to take its place. They do exactly what our Lord warned us against doing.

You remember his story of the farmer whose servants came to him with the heavy news that tares were growing among his wheat. That was a real problem. "What are we to do," asked the servants. "Shall we pull up the tares?" The wise farmer answered, "No, let both grow together to the harvest. You are not to pull up the tares because if you fix your attention on the tares you might destroy them but you might also destroy the wheat as well."

Hawthorne has a wierd story called, "Birthmark." A man had married a lovely girl. Here beauty almost reached the height of perfection. She had only one blemish and that was a faint birthmark upon one of her cheeks. But some thought this enhanced her beauty rather than detracting from it. But her husband saw nothing but the birthmark so he determined to eradicate it. He succeeded, but in destroying the birthmark he destroyed the girl as well.

Now I am not saying that in our imperfect state of society a certain amount of force is not necessary. There are certain evils upon which we must make a forward attack. But as a rule such attacks are futile, they end in failure. This is true for two very solid reasons. First, to destroy evil is futile because nature abhors
a vacuum. If you drive out a wrong by force, another usually takes its place. When I went fishing this summer I had a leaky boat. I made a feeble attack on the evil by throwing out the water. But when I saw that it was running in as fast as I was throwing it out I learned wisdom and used a different strategy. I stopped up the leak.

Then, merely to destroy evil is a failure because even were it successful it would be only a negative success. While I was pastor in Washington a friend of mine who was a physician and one of the ablest I have ever known said to me one day,—"I am curing cancer," but he continued, "I am killing the patient." Of course he was not proud of his achievement. I could have accomplished the same purpose with a revolver. These servants who wished to pull up the tares might have succeeded, but if they had pulled up the wheat along with the tares they would not have had a wheat field but just a barren waste. Eradication of a vice does not mean the incoming of a virtue. "That is a bad cough you have," said a friend to the keeper of the morgue. "Yes," came the answer, "but any of these fellows lying about here on slabs would be glad to have it." Death cures all disease but such a cure is futile.

III.

What then is this strategy that wins? There are some who criticize the ethics of Jesus saying that he spoke nothing new. This strategy urged by St. Paul is new. He taught a new way of dealing with evil. We were to roll against it a new tide of good. He taught a new way of dealing with enemies. "You have heard it was said of them of old time, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you that you resist not evil. But if a man smite you on the cheek, turn to him the other also. If a man sue you at the law and take away your overcoat, give him the coat you have left." That was something so new that we look askance at it today and are deeply afraid of it.
But what does Jesus really mean? He is meaning what Paul is saying in this simple text, that the only way to destroy evil permanently is to displace it with good. That is true of every foe of which we have to deal.

1. Take the matter of physical health for instance. How do we get rid of sickness? The old method of treating disease was largely negative. Mrs. Edde has a rather aloof passage in one of her books in which she declares, "She found it helpful when she was calling to see a sick person to etherize them." That is make them float out in thin air. This left the pain to stand out like a mountain. Of course there was nothing to do but strike the pain. Of course there was nothing left to do but put the patient back together again. But I can remember as a boy when I was ill I was not allowed any water, any food, any sunshine, any fresh air. The theory was to shut the patient in and heal his sickness. The modern physicians learned a better technique. He builds up the patient and lets the patient take care of the sickness. "I bound up his wounds, said Galen, and God healed him."

2. This is also true in dealing with ignorance. How shall we destroy the errors of the mind? How shall we cope with the false faiths that are stalking the world today? Sometimes we preachers are foolish enough to take them up one by one and show their errors. We almost always stir up more snakes than we kill. What a fine opportunity the early saints had for this sort of preaching. There were many evils that they confronted, -polygamy, polytheism, slavery, But instead of cursing the night they brought in the light. They preached a positive faith. Thus they won. It is the only way we can win anywhere.

3. The same is true in dealing with our own shortcomings, our faults, our vices. What is your besetting sin, and how are you going to be rid of it? If you are morally in earnest you have doubtless tried this way again and again. You have made it a matter of prayer. But as you have gone into the place of prayer to hold this foe up before God you have focused all your attention upon that foe. You have spent all your time looking at yourself with never a glimpse
at God. Thus you came from your prayer hour more weak and defeated than you were before.

There is a better way. Paul wrote a letter once to some vigorous and lusty pagans who were not finding the Christian way easy. But he did not say to them,—“Take your passions between your strong arms and throttle them." He rather uttered this wise word,—“This I say, walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." I am told that when the people of South Africa were vexed by many snakes, they planted red geraniums to drive them out. They found that they were afraid of these flowers. When Silas Marner got rid of the love of gold he did it not by sheer force, but by receiving into his heart a human love. The only way to destroy vice is by bringing in a virtue. The only way to defeat evil is by goodness.

4. This is also true in our every day human relationships. One of the sharpest tests of our religion is this,—are we easy to live with? Some religious people are very hard. How are we to treat the folks that refuse to like us? How are we to deal with our enemies? We can come to open conflict with them, we can also break off diplomatic relations. But there is another possibility. We may change them into friends. I have had that to work on me. I have seen it work on others. Of course there are times that it fails. The friendliest man that ever lived was Jesus, but everybody did not love him. But if good won’t conquer evil in your brother, certainly nothing else will. I have known enemies made into friends by persistent kindness. Therefore in the home where relations often strain between husband and wife, in the social circle, in the church, the only real remedy is not meeting anger with anger or hate with hate, it is overcoming evil with good.

5. This is the one hope between the nations. However much we may believe in the necessity of preparedness, however sure we may be that the present prevalence of gangsters make it necessary for us to oppose force with force, yet if we are thoughtful we must realize that force is not the final answer. Were we to wipe
every enemy off the face of the earth, others would rise up. The only final de-
feat of evil is through goodness. It is upon this that Jesus bet his life. His
disciples hoped to the last that he would oppose force with force. There is some-
thing unspeakably pathetic in these words, "Know ye not that I could pray my father
and he would send me twelve legions of angels?" "I could get out by force," he
said, "If I would. But I believe that the one weapon against evil is good."

Was he right? How utterly sickly and futile goodness looks walking unarmed
into the fight. How utterly it failed at Calvary. Incarnate goodness was hung
on the cross and thousands looked and passed their heedless ways. By the next day
they had forgotten all about it. They were concerned with matters of more importance,
their own business, their own health, the latest news from Home. No man in all
history seems to have gone down in a more utter defeat.

Yet what does the cross mean to you today? As you slip in from the busy rush
of the world to the quietude of this service, as once more you stand face to face
with the tragedy of Calvary, the impression is not one of defeat but of victory.
You know and I know that infinitely the most telling blow that was ever struck
against evil was struck here at the cross. It was struck by a man who refused to
believe that two wrongs could ever make a right. It was struck by a man who bet
his life that in this age-old conflict between good and evil that evil would be
destroyed by the good. It is this faith that we assert as we come to kneel in
this holy service.
THE STRATEGY THAT WINS

"Overcome evil with good."
—Romans 12:21

This is the greatest piece of strategy in the world. When Paul talked about overcoming, he is talking a language that appeals to every single man and woman. Everybody likes to win, no matter how trivial the game. If you do not want to win, there is something wrong with you. I think this desire for victory is God-given. If we want to win the most trivial of games, certainly we want to win the big game of life. Every man wants to walk along the trail of life’s daily tasks with a sense of overcoming. This instinctive longing of the human heart, this God-given longing to win, is encouraged all through the Bible. The Bible is a Book that constantly talks to us in terms of victory. On the very first page, we read "Have dominion." Here God seems to be saying, "I have made you superior to all creation. Don’t go about crawling or whining or groveling. Stand on your feet and play the man." It is perfectly amazing how man has carried that out, at least in the realm of the physical. So completely has he triumphed over his environment that today "he can outrun the antelope, out-swim the fish, outfly the eagle." He has certainly made himself master in the realm of the physical. That same mastery belongs to us in the higher realm of the spiritual and moral.

When Jesus came to the end of His journey, and the grave was casting its grim shadow, He turned to His friends, and, speaking with that engaging frankness of His, said this amazing something: "In this world you are going to have tribulation,
You are not going to get through easy. But be of good cheer! I have overcome the world. I have lived as a conqueror."
What He means to say is, "The same victory that is Mine, you may win, if you will." When we turn to those who are most like Him, we find that they were living victoriously.

Paul lived his life in a storm of opposition. When he went to heaven, I dare say he could be recognized by the scars that were on him. Language fails him when he tells how triumphantly he is living. Other robust saints also speak with the same purpose: "To him that loved us and loosed us from our sins and made us to be kings and priests unto God, and that not only to deliver us from our bondage, but enable us to reign as kings." Not after we get to heaven, but in this present world! We are here to live victoriously.

Even when they came to that last foe, Death, these early saints just laughed at death. They swaggered up to it as if it were a cobweb. "Thanks be unto God Who giveth us the victory." There is nothing like this old Book. It is a victorious Book, claiming that you have the right to expect to live gloriously in the life that now is. Some folks claim that privilege.

But a good many of us are being defeated. We might just as well face that brutal fact. We say, "It just has not worked out in my case. Some way I have missed it." Not long ago, I talked with a young man who said, "My inner defenses are all broken down. I know that I am going from this study to get drunk."
I have nothing to steady me to hold me up." A defeated man!

There is an atmosphere of defeat in many churches. Now, do not misunderstand me. I am a son of the Church. My business is to build it up. I can sing with some of the fervor of Wesley:

"I love Thy Church, O God!
Her walls before Thee stand,
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,
And graven on Thy hand.

For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend,
To her my cares and toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end."

But I face the fact that it is not as victorious as God made it possible for it to be. In many parts of the world, it seems evil is winning the victory over righteousness so that whole nations have turned away from Christianity and are on a trek back toward paganism. How have we missed it?

Just to give one reason, I think the greatest mistake of earnest people, people who are really trying, is a wrong technique. Some people do not try, but not as many as we sometimes suppose. Mighty few people live that do not make some effort after righteousness. I went some years ago to see a man who had made an awful mess of it. I went to tell him how much I blamed him. But when he told me his story, all I could do was to mingle my tears with his tears.

Why do we fail in our conflict with evil in our daily lives? We use the wrong strategy. When we start out, we fix our attention on the evil instead of the good that is to displace evil. That is the very thing that Jesus told us not to do. In a story that He told, He said that the servants came in from the field, saying, "We find some weeds growing in the wheat field. What are we
going to do about it?" Then they offered a suggestion: "Shall we go out and kill out the weeds?" "No, you major on the wheat, and the weeds will be crowded out." We put our emphasis on weeds. It usually gets a lot of applause from the grand-stand. It is so much easier to curse the darkness than to turn on the light. We take a negative attitude.

In one of His parables, Jesus said, "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there. And the last state of that man is worse than the first."

Now to focus our attention on evil fails for two very good reasons among others. First, you can't banish evil in that way. I have a colored friend back in Tennessee. He is the son of one of our old ex-slaves, who is my head-man when I go fishing. He is the best man in that country. He took me down to his boat, and the thing was just about sunk, and he began to bail the water out. But the water came in as fast as he got it out. It reminded me of what preachers often say, "Empty yourself of self." I have tried that, but as fast as I get self out, it comes in the back door. This water kept coming in the boat, but we held our own. Lots of folks pride themselves on that.
It was that way we tried dealing with the liquor traffic. When liquor was outlawed it was done by church people. But after it had gone out, we stopped teaching wholesome sobriety and temperance, and it sneak ed in the back door. Now it is baptized by a social respectability and decency that it has not had before in a hundred years.

It is the way we deal with much crime of the day. Now, there are some repressive measures possible. For instance Southtown is a crime spot in our city. We spend nine cents per capita for education. A great many of the pupils in that section of the city can only go to school half day. The other half they loaf. There are no parks, and they are in idleness—the idleness that breeds crime. We spend nine cents to educate them and two dollars seventy cents to police them. We believe thirty times as much in overcoming evil by repression as we do in overcoming evil by preventing it.

Evil, if you do not put anything in its place, comes back. I went to see a playmate one time who was playing with some China-dolls, and he offered them to me. It outraged me, being a he-man. I said, "I wouldn't play with those dolls. They're silly." We were standing near a weed-patch. I watched him take those dolls and throw them in the weeds, one by one. But I did not give him anything else to play with. When I had gone, his mother told me later, he went out on hands and knees, hunting for those China-dolls. No, you can't get rid of evil by stepping on it. You would still have failure because there is nothing of value in the mere absence of evil. Suppose I should take you to see my garden, and say, "I want you to see my garden. Look,
there is not a weed in it." Yes, but there is nothing else in it. It is not a garden; it is a desert. "You ought to see my church," suppose I were to say to you. "There is not a bad man in it." But you come down to see, and there not anybody in it. I said to a man the other day, "Are you a Christian?"

"No," he said, "I am not, but I am not so bad." Then, he began naming all the things he did not do. He did not steal, he did not swear, he did not smoke, he did not drink, he did not play mumble-peg. But when he got through naming them, I said, "I could say that much about any wax figure or any corpse. Down at the morgue the other day, a visitor was seized with a fit of coughing. "That is a bad cough you have," said the manager. "Yes," came the answer, "but any of these chaps lying here on slabs would be glad to have it." Certainly! I had rather be alive with a cough than dead without one.

One of the best physicians in American told me one day, and he was a man of few words, "I am curing some cancer now, but I am killing every one of the patients." So what? I can do that much with a Winchester. You can cure any disease that way, but it hasn't got you anything but a corpse. A lot of folks think they are good because they do not do any harm. If that is the case you could add up a bunch of ciphers and get a unit. But you can take a list of ciphers as long as from here to Mars and all you have is only one miserable cipher.

Even if you could get rid of evil in a negative way, you would not be anywhere at all. What is the only strategy that can possibly win? The Bible always is the most sane, common sense thing. Paul says, "If you want to get rid of evil,
displace it with good. That is true in the realm of the physical. Years ago, when I was more foolish than I am now, I preached a series of sermons on times where the Bible conflicts with Eddyism. It was a silly thing to do, but I did it. I read all that Mrs. Eddy had to say. One passage seemed most ludicrous of all. She said she sometimes found it helpful to etherize the patient. She meant by that to make him float away in thin air. Then, in the words of Mrs. Eddy, "the pain was left standing out like a mountain." It was an easy thing to swat it, and that was that. I etherized my car one time, but I could not get it back together. Do not misunderstand me. Christian Science does cure some disease. I do not think it is for the reason that they say. But those who take up Christian Science do get cured of certain diseases. They could get as cured in the Methodist or any church at all. Many of them belong to the rich class. The first thing they did when they woke up in the morning was to catch their pulse and look into the mirror. When they stopped that, they got well. The only way to cure sickness is to drive it out with health.

When I was a boy, any one who became ill was shut in a room, the shades were drawn, and they would not give you anything to drink, and very little to eat besides some water in which there had been a chicken gizzard. They killed the disease, but sometimes in the process they killed the patient. That was what Hawthorne meant by the story of the birthmark. He told of a man who had married a very beautiful girl. But she had one flaw; she had a birthmark. Though some said she was more beautiful because
of it, he would be satisfied by nothing but perfection. So
he went to work to remove it, and the birthmark sank down deeper
in her face, and by and by she was a corpse. In the process
of becoming flawless, she became dead. The only way to drive
out your vice is by bringing in vigorous virtues. There is
no other possible way.

You are not getting on in your home. What does the world
say? "What we need is improved methods of divorce." But these
are only improved methods of destroying marriage. We need to
replace misunderstanding with understanding, hate by love.
What are you going to do if you have an enemy? In old days,
you could kill him. Jesus said there is a technique of
changing an enemy into a friend. Paul said, "If you have an
enemy who is hungry, feed him. If you feed him and keep on
feeding him, you will fatten him into a friend."

A man died in the West some years ago, by the name of
Burbank. Isn't it a pity that we have not as much confidence
in people as he had in plants. The only reason the burr-weed
hasn't got its hands full of blossoms, thought Burbank, is because
everybody has regarded it as an enemy, instead of cultivating it.
One day he met the cactus, which, as you know, is one of the
most disagreeable plants in the vegetable kingdom. It believes
in preparedness. It is armed to the teeth. But this believer
in plants did not undertake to exterminate the cactus. He changed
it into the spineless cactus. Today when we meet it, we no
longer gather our garments about us lest it should touch us, but
we should like to wear its colorful beauty over our hearts, or
rub our cheeks against the soft velvet of its petals. He found
a foe and made it a friend.
That is the only adequate method of attack on evil. That was the technique of the early church. Those early saints were put on the defensive again and again. They had sense enough to know that you cannot make a touchdown when the other side has the ball. Look at this picture. Paul is going to be tried before King Agrippa. Agrippa looks down at him when the proceedings are opened, and says, "You may defend yourself." Paul stretches forth his hand, and says, "I count myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews; especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews; wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently." He is defending himself, isn't he? But listen toward the last. "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?" And Agrippa is on the defensive, and we begins to squirm and twist. "Ah, I know that thou believest." Then Agrippa answers back, "With a little persuasion thou wouldst fain make me a Christian."

That was true of all the saints and true of their church. Their attack was not to denounce evil, but for something in its place. We preachers and teachers need to learn this. Did you ever notice when Jesus went out into a world, down-trodden by injustice, where slavery, political slavery, infanticide, and all the evils of today, and far more, neither he nor his disciples sent any time denouncing those evils. They never went out and said, "We are going to blast the social order." They did change it by and by, through the indirect method, not by the direct.
Suppose they had got together and said, "We are going into the Roman world, knowing polytheism rules. There are numerous gods, and the first thing we have got to do is get rid of those gods." I am afraid I would have preached a series of sermons on false gods. I would have preached one Sunday about Jupiter, and another about Mars, and again about Venus. They did not go about it that way at all. They did not even mention Zeus, or Mercury. They said, "Look what a wonderful Saviour we have had. Look at the Lord Jesus Christ Who has come to reveal God to us." I was passing along a road sometime ago. It was a beautiful concrete road. At a certain place, however, I had to turn off and go on a rickety old bridge. They were putting in a new bridge. But it is better to travel the old one until you get the new one. When they got the new one finished, and I was passing that way again, no policeman had to warn me to keep off the old one. I took it of my own accord.

I remember the first time I saw the ocean. They had sent me money to come home. I had a little more than I needed; so I went to see the ocean. When I got back I had a little less than I needed to get home. We pressed over a long body of water. It was the biggest body of water I ever saw in my life. A man sitting near me, said to me, "That is not the ocean. That is just a sound." Well, I could not hear anything much. But though he told me that was not the ocean, I kept looking at it. It was the best thing in sight. By and by I looked up and I saw the ocean in the beauty of the sunset. Nobody had to tell me to look at the ocean. I was so interested in that sea that I forgot the sound. That is the only way we will ever live
victoriously—by getting something better, not holding our own. The loneliest, dreariest way to live is to try to be good when you are not good for anything in particular. It becomes thrilling, when you live aggressively. How is it that there are more than three million people in the South today who were once active in church and are not any more? It is not that they definitely decided to have nothing to do with the church any more. They just quit, that is all.

"Twas not the day of battle that we threw away the sword,
But in the lonely hours of watching at the river
by the ford;
The waters lapped, the night winds blew;
Full armed the fear was born and grew,
And we were flying ere we knew
From specters in the night."

It is only as we live aggressively that we will live as Christians at all. No man can hold his own. We are born on an incline, and we either go up or down. No church can hold its own. It must either go up or be driven back. I read a report of a church not long ago that said: "Number received by profession of faith, none. Number received by transfer, none. Number dismissed, none. Pray for us, brethren, that we may hold our own." I remember my father had an old thrasher to which he hitched a mule. He walked all day and in the evening he was not two inches higher when he quit than he was when he got it. My respect for that mule has increased. It took an hour to get that mule in and ready to go to work. Even a mule knows that if you walk all day, you ought to get somewhere.
How are you going to overcome evil in your own life? Only by rolling against it a tide of good. The old schoolhouse that I attended as a boy was located in a grove of scrubby black oak. There was one characteristic of those oak trees. They could hold their leaves longer than any other tree that was not an evergreen. When other trees turned yellow and lost their leaves, these little old oaks would hold theirs. Then the winter came, and the rain pelted them, and then sleet, and snow and the hard winds, but there they stood and they did not seem to lose a leaf. By and by, the winter passed, and the days got a little warmer, and new life would steal out of the spring-kissed earth, up through the trunk, out to the branches and to the smallest twigs. One day, without the slightest noise and slightest breath of air, a new leaf would whisper and say, "Make room please. I am coming." Death was displaced in the only way possible, and that is by life. The only way to conquer evil is by rolling against it a tide of good.

When they asked Marshal Ney, perhaps the bravest of Napoleon's marshals, what was the secret of his courage, he said, "I am so busy fighting, I have not time to be afraid." I commend it to you.
"Therefore let us aim at...the spiritual upbuilding of one another." Every building that man can construct tends to fall apart. That is equally true of man, the builder. Sometimes we help our fellows to fall apart through our neglect. Sometimes we seek aggressively to tear them down. This we do by our faultfinding and sharp criticism. But always we ought to seek to build each other up. For as we build others we do even more, we build and strengthen ourselves. This is the case because we are members one of another. Whatever hurts you, hurts me. Whatever helps you, helps me.

We thank Thee, our Father, that Thou art engaged in building. Give us the wisdom and the love to be workers together with Thee.

Amen.
"Morning Races."

Romans, 15: 13.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." The text is a prayer. Paul is making request for his friends. He is a man of the finest spiritual discernment. He is an expert in matters of spiritual values. He knows what jewels among the King's treasures are of richest value. He knows those that are to be most highly prized. And remember he is selecting a gift for his friends, for those whom he loves. Some of them he has seen and some he has not seen, but they are all dear to him.

And because this gift for which he is making request is for his friends he is particularly eager that it be of real value. He is deeply desirous that it be a treasure of supreme worth. And so he selects this glittering gem, the jewel called hope. "I pray," he says; "that you may abound in hope." My desire for you is that you may have an abundance of that precious commodity.

Do you think he could have asked for any more precious gift for his friends? That you may abound in hope, - he believed that those Christians at Rome could get on quite well without material wealth. He believed that they could get on without social position. He believed that they could prosper, even in the midst of persecution and shame and seeming defeat if they only were rich in hope. And so he prayed for them that whatever other kind of wealth they might be lacking in, that in this direction they might be rich, that they might have an abundance of hope.

Now, how did Paul expect ourselves to be abundantly hopeful? From what source did he expect this hope to come? From what horizon is this brilliant sun to rise? From what mountain heights is this life giving stream to flow? How did he expect we and all men to have morning races? From whence did he expect this incoming of hope that was to make these people optimists after the divine type?

Well, it is safe to say that the hopefulness of which Paul here speaks and for which he prays is not a hopefulness that is born of temperament. There are some people who laugh easier than others. We know that. We say it is a matter of temperament. There are some people who sob more easily than others. There are some people to whom cheerfulness is a rare harder task than for others. There are some who do not find it easy to face the morning. But the hopefulness for which the apostle prays is a privilege not simply of an enthusiastic son of thunder like John, it is also possible for a child of the night like Thomas.

Neither is this optimism, this hopefulness for which the apostle prayed a child of circumstance. It is not a hot-house plant, this flower of hope. It is not a dainty blossom that is only found in the tropics of success and prosperity and luxury. It may bloom there - it may also bloom amidst the snows of poverty and adversity. It may spill out its fragrance amidst the nipping frosts of persecution and disgrace and death. Many a man has failed to grow this flower even in the soil that looked most promising while others have cultivated it in luxuriant beauty in areas that seemed as barren as a desert.

I am glad to say also that hopefulness for which the Apostle prays is not born of stupidity and deliberate and wilful blindness. There are folks who want to cure the ills of the world by simply shutting their
eyes and stopping their ears and killing their sensitiveness. They nourish their hope in the presence of sin by denying its existence. They keep alive their optimism in the presence of pain by declaring that there is no pain. They dry their tears in the midst of a world billowed with graves by asserting that no one ever dies.

Believe me hearts, Paul was not praying that his friends be inducted into a fool's paradise. He is not asking that God would blind their eyes and stop their ears. He is not seeking that they be made into mere ostrich saints who cure the world's ills by thrusting their heads into the sands of stupidity and fruitless denial of known facts. Christianity has always dared face facts. The Bible never asks any man to stultify his intelligence. It never asks any man to spit in the face of reason nor throw dust in the eyes of common sense. The longer I live, the more I read this book the more I come to realize its absolute reasonableness. Our Lord was an intelligent Lord. And He does not ask you to nullify your own intelligence. He does not ask you to blow out the light within your own brain. If I can not be an optimist without denying what I know to be true, if I can not have hope and at the same time face facts and tell the truth, if I can not laugh without shutting my eyes and stopping my ears, then I would rather not laugh at all. Better far to sob over a known fact than to giggle over a known lie.

But this optimism, I say, is an optimism that dares face facts. It is not born of mere negation. It is not born of mere denial. What then is its source? From what summerland comes this songster that is to make melody in the soul? From what shores is this springtime swept whose warmth is to make our desert into garden? I tell you it comes from God. And when Paul wanted men to be real optimists he turned his face in prayer to God and prayed that the God of hope would make them to abound in hope. 

The one sure source of hope then, according to the Apostle, is God. Without Him men gropes in darkness. Without Him night utter and complete settles down upon the face of the world. It is only from Him that real and abiding hope comes. "They looked unto Him", said the Psalmist, "and were radiant and their faces were not ashamed."

You remember how "Old Born Drunk" went to the mission one night and how he saw a man named Joe who had once been a drunkard like himself. Joe had now the peace of Heaven in his face. And when the invitation was given "Old Born Drunk" kneeled at the altar and rose with his shattered life made over by the power of God. And when they asked him for the secret he said, "All at once it came to me that I might be like Joe." The God of hope had shined out upon him through the face of a transformed man.

God gives hope because He has hope. We can not give hope to others if we do not have hope ourselves. And our God is the God of hope. And that does not mean simply that He inspires hope, it means also that He has hope, infinite hope. That is the reason He is able to give it.

If you want to know something of the infinite nervousness of God look at it as revealed in Jesus Christ. The Bible would naturally be a pessimistic book. It records the grimmest tragedy ever enacted in this world. But instead of being pessimistic it is the sunniest and most optimistic book ever written. It is not a humorous book but it has created more real laughter than all other books combined.
What is the secret? At its heart there lives and battles the world's supreme optimist, Jesus Christ. It was of Him the prophet spoke when he said, "He shall not be discouraged." It is true of Him every moment of His life, we find Him in situations most trying but never for a moment is He overwhelmed with discouragement.

He set out to build a church. Men opposed Him and His enterprise seemed meager to the point of utter hopelessness. But He declared with dauntless optimism, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Then at last He was dogged to death, but He declared that He would "see the travail of His soul and be satisfied." And when they lifted Him upon the cross of shame He declared that that cross would be His throne of power, and if lifted up He would draw all men unto Himself.

So God is the giver of hope because He has infinite hope to give. But how is this hope to become our own? How are we to become possessed of this priceless treasure? The text tells us that it is through the power of the Holy Ghost. To be hopeful men we must be spiritual men. Optimism of the divine type comes in no other way.

How are we made into optimists through the power of the Spirit? In the first place, through the power of the Holy Spirit we are regenerated. We are brought to that blessed state where we can say, "There is therefore now no condemnation." Through the Spirit we can know ourselves as clean and uncondemned, and no worldly court can keep a man long cast down who knows himself pronounced guiltless before the court of Heaven. And no man can be abidingly hopeful who feels himself challenged at every step with the crown of a God who condemns his sin.

We are made hopeful through the power of the Spirit, in the second place, because it is through the Holy Spirit that we are made to realize our position of sonship to God. It is through Him that we receive the spirit of adoption whereby we say, "Abba! Father." No man can be abidingly hopeful who feels himself orphaned. And no man can be without hope who realizes his sonship to the Lord God Almighty.

The Holy Spirit makes us hopeful, in the third place, because it is through Him that Jesus Christ becomes a winsome reality to us. He takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us and no one can be utterly cast down who realizes day by day the presence of Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.

And what are the results of this abounding hope? What is the good of an abundance of hope? It means that we will have abundant hope for ourselves. It means that we shall be optimists in the presence of the defeats and failures of our own inner lives.

Do you ever just fail and fail till it seems that you will never get anywhere? I saw a man sometime ago who had been once a Christian but who had failed so miserably that he said he would never try again. He had lost hope. Does the devil ever lead you to despair of yourself? God gives us an abundance of hope.

How hopeful Paul was of the triumph of Christ within himself. He did not claim for a moment that that triumph was complete. "Not that I have already attained or am already perfect, but this one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind and reaching forth unto the things
that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize."

He believed that Christ would one day conquer him completely. And you and I may have that much hope for ourselves. I do not know just when it will take place, but I do know that "when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." So we are to entertain the highest expectations for the triumph of righteousness in our own lives.

Then we are to be hopeful with regard to others. We are to expect Christ to triumph in the lives of our friends, of our loved ones, of our children. We are to cherish abounding hope for all kinds of men, for the cultured and the uncultured, for the well born and for those who were born with poison blood in their veins. We are to hope for the morally sound and also for the morally shattered and broken.

Then we are to be hopeful for the world. We are to believe always that right is going to be finally victorious. We are to expect the glory of God to really one day cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. We are to look with certainty to that good day when the kingdoms of the world will become the kingdoms of the Lord and His Christ.

And this hope we are to hold not simply when conditions are favorable but when they are unfavorable. Listen to Paul: "I am always confident." Why did Paul always say that? Because everything was constantly coming his way? Not a bit of it. He was one of the most harassed and plagued and annoyed men of whom I have ever read. But he never allowed his cause to become worrier. The responsibility of the churches got much upon his heart but it never got on his nervous.

Look at him in the presence of danger. Yonder on shipboard when every other face has gone white, Paul is confident and shouts with unquenchable hopefulness, "Be of good cheer!"

Look at him in prison. He sings. He prays. He gives thanks. He declares that the Lord stands with him to strengthen him. He is abounding in hope.

Look at him when death is near and when it seems as if his life is going to be taken and his work is going to fail to the ground. Not for a moment does he believe in his ultimate failure. He still sees victory ahead. "According to my request, expectation and my hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but as always so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death." And what effect did this hope have on him? It made him sunny. It made him joyous. Above all else it made him enthusiastically active.

If you are to work successfully, my friends, you must work hopefully. There is no dynamo of greater driving power than hope. We never run more swiftly than when hope goes with us. No task is too hard for the man who has his face to the morning.

Do you see that preacher yonder in the bone yard? Death is before him, death grown old, death without the promise of life. But he preaches to those dry bones. How does he have courage to lift his voice in that dead silence? He is a child of hope. He believes that the dead may live. He believes that a very grave yard may be changed into a parade ground for the soldiers of the King. Believe me, if we are going to do our work in the world we must do it hopefully.
And it is only as we hope that we shall attract others. This old world is short on hope. But if men see the light of this sun in your face they are going to want it for themselves. If they find this lovely flower blooming in your garden they are going to want to know how you learned to cultivate it. If you are a hopeful Christian you will be a winsome Christian.

And this abounding hope is not only to keep us cheerful and optimist as we face sin in ourselves and in the world, it is not only to keep us optimistic in the presence of difficulties and hostilities, - it is to keep us optimistic also in the presence of that last enemy that we call death.

We shall be optimistic with regard to our loved ones that have slipped out from our fellowship. We shall believe that they have not gone into the silence and into the dust, but that "this corruptible has put on corruption and this mortal has been clothed in immortality."

We shall be aflush with a glad optimism as we face the enemy for ourselves. You shall declare that "to me to live is Christ", but also that "to die is gain." We shall never doubt that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

Truly we are saved by hope, saved from that despair that paralyzes our hands in the presence of life's tasks. We are saved from the night that conscious sin and moral failure casts over men. We are saved from the black and blank despair that comes from separation and death.

And now may we not join with Paul for ourselves and for one another in this glorious prayer: "The God of all hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost."

CGC:BR

1. Chaplain on Shipboard
PIOUS TALK
Rom. 16: 17-20
(Moffatt)

"With their...pious talk, they beguile the hearts of unsuspecting people." How strange to hear Paul speak against pious talk! However, such talk may be a curse rather than a blessing. Such it always is when we appeal for a wrong decision in the name of religion. Such it is when we make it a substitute for genuine Christian living. Sometime ago, I visited a parishioner whose conversation fairly dripped with piety. It oozed unction. But when I invited this promising prospect to take part in a crusade, she gave me a velvety refusal. Her one contribution to the important enterprise was pious talk.

Save us, Lord, from the futile effort to make holy tones a substitute for holy living. Let us be as sincere as we sound.