

# The PREACHER'S MAGAZINE

## THE BIBLE

**W**E have now before us the Holy Bible, or Book, for so Bible signifies. We call it the Book, by way of eminency; for it is incomparably the best book that ever was written, the Book of books shining like the sun in the firmament of learning; other valuable and useful books, like the moon and stars, borrowing their light from it. We call it the Holy Book, because it was written by holy men, and indited by the Holy Ghost; it is perfectly pure from all falsehood and corrupt intention; and the manifest tendency of it is to promote holiness among men. The great things of God's law and gospel are here written to us, that they might be reduced to a greater certainty, might spread farther, remain longer, and be transmitted to distant places and ages more pure and entire than possibly they could be by report and tradition; and we shall have a great deal to answer for if these things which belong to our peace, being thus committed to us in black and white, be neglected by us as a strange and foreign thing.—MATTHEW HENRY in his Bible Commentary.

## The Preacher's Magazine

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### *The Flame and the Fuel*

By the EDITOR

IN Hebrews 1:7 it is said that God makes His ministers a flame of fire. We make no contention for exposition of the text, but we think none will question our application. There is no higher compliment than to say of a certain preacher, "He is a fiery preacher," unless the term is used as an apology. Used as an apology it implies that he really does not say very much, but that he says what he does say with considerable show of zeal and small regard for the feelings of his hearers. In other words, the fire may be all flame, the heat may be all human zeal, or even the sort of fire of which James speaks which sets so many things to burning.

But we all know the genuine fire when we meet it. We are perhaps like the young man who asked the banker how he could learn to know counterfeit money when it was offered to him. The banker replied, "Become familiar with good money and then you will know the bad." That is, we would have an endless task if we were to attempt to define the substitutes for the sort of fire we know is essential in the making of a good preacher. But we know the real kind and then we know that certain other is not the real kind.

There are two essential factors in the making of good and useful fire: one factor is flame and the other is fuel. In the case of the preacher, inspiration is the flame and information is the fuel. We do not contend for the order. It may be that information calls for inspiration or that inspiration reaches out and demands information, as flame hungers after fuel. At any rate, both these factors must be present before there can be good preaching.

Inspiration comes through prayer, information comes through study. So prayer and study immediately take their places at the fore of the preacher's occupation. Among the qualifications required of the candidate for the eldership, our Manual makes one mandatory, "He must be an example of prayer." From both experience and observation I have been convinced that the maintenance of the spirit of prayer is of more consequence than the time actually spent on one's knees. To "shut to the door" one does not always require a literal prayer room or isola-

tion from people and from labor. Distractions of the mind often hinder more when one makes an effort to be quiet than when he goes on with seeming usual occupations. I have often been tortured with drowsiness at the time of prayer and have overcome it by pacing the room. I have even been forced to take up some form of service or labor in order to collect my mind and drive away indifference. And in the midst of what might appear to be preoccupation, I have been enabled to pray and to touch God and to exercise faith for things quite removed from the apparent interests of the moment.

It is no plan of mine in the present instance to tell anyone how to pray. Rather my thought is to say there is no formal way to do it. But pray we must, and we must pray until we touch God. We must pray until our daily lives breathe the spirit of devotion. We must push against the hindrances until we can fairly live in the audience room of the King. The big job is not to ask for favors. The big task is to "know that he heareth us." I have thought it is like getting a petition to a great man of affairs. It is all a simple matter once you can get an appointment and get into the great one's presence and gain his interest.

The preacher's life is largely one of distractions and interferences. Just at the critical moment someone rings the doorbell or calls over the telephone. Kindly people bother with their offers of service and inquiries about comforts. Even members of the family are often slow to sense the importance of long periods of isolation for the preacher. But these are things that cannot always be remedied. We must learn to make the best of what we have. This is why I think it is so important to develop the ability to pray on your feet, to pray in company—to pray any and everywhere. "Every breath a prayer," was the early Methodist's endeavor.

In my own experience it frequently happens that right while I am fighting against the temptation to be "triflingly employed" on account of the presence of someone who is inclined to be liberal with my time, a flash of light and inspiration comes to my mind and heart that is with small effort developed into a sermon or address. And often addresses so found become the most useful of any I ever get.

On the side of information I think the procedure is not largely different from that which I have mentioned regarding inspiration. What I have said must not be interpreted to mean that the desultory method of prayer is to be allowed to substitute for the time and place and formal effort at prayer. Rather I mean that it is to be supplementary and complementary. Likewise with study. There must be the time for definite and undistracted attachment to books. There must be the formal study. But I believe these can be supplemented by an atmosphere of observation, meditation, application and analysis that is of untold value. Rightly speaking, the preacher should never be "out of his study."

I have found it useful to have a book at a convenient place for ready use. By this method I am frequently reading as many as a half dozen books

at the same time. One I read when I must wait a few minutes for the meal to be called. One I read when my wife goes into the grocery and leaves me to wait in the car. One I read when I take a walk or am en route to some place of service, etc. In these odd moments I think I read on the average of a book a week. I train myself to take up right where I left off at the last reading. I use no book mark, but depend on knowing the place from familiarity with the matter itself. I make no marks on the pages of the book, file no cuttings, use no plan for memorizing. And yet I think I get considerable benefit. And I use only that which had sufficient force to stick to me. I reason this way: If I do not read an author's book, and thus fail to get the profit offered, I blame myself. If I read it and there is nothing new enough and forceful enough to stick to me, I blame the author for wasting my time.

But again I disclaim any idea of telling preachers how to study. I believe they will have to learn the how of it by practice. But I believe they will learn this if they are constant in their application. I believe in vacations for the preacher. I believe the church is benefited by the preacher's vacations quite as much as the preacher is benefited. But I do not

believe the preacher should develop a mania for vacations and for holidays and learn to chafe under the regular order.

*Life is just one long vacation, to the man who loves his work;  
But it's constant dodging duty to the everlasting shirk.*

A man's work can also be his diversion, and happy is the man who can make it so.

They used to tell me about a preacher who was a good preacher but for two faults: one fault was that he had a poor delivery. The other was that he had very little to deliver. Two faults are not many, but if they are as serious as these they spoil the preacher. If a man is really a "fiery preacher" he has and must have two things: flame and fuel—inspiration and information. These are just other words for delivery and something to deliver. To have something to say and then to say it forcefully and under the unction of the Holy Spirit—perhaps that is all there is to it. To your knees, then, O preacher! And to your study, too! And may you, by full co-operation with God in the processes, become a true minister of God, "a flame of fire."

## Thoughts on Holiness from the Old Writers

Olive M. Winchester

### DEPRAVITY AS LAWLESSNESS

*For sin is the transgression of the law* (1 John 43:4b).

WE COME to another aspect of the in-being of sin. This time we may wonder just how the text we have chosen expresses the thought of the topic. But if we turn to the revised version, we note it reads, "and sin is lawlessness." Then if we go to our Greek text we find that it is best translated by the revised version; this depicts to us thus not an act of sin as would appear from the authorized version but a state and condition of sin. If we try to paraphrase the statement, we would say, the sin principle is a lawless element within the soul bringing about chaos and disorder. Consequently we have the concept of the depraved state as lawlessness.

### LAW IN ITS FUNDAMENTAL NATURE

When we use the term law our minds at once revert to some enactment, some rule that has been laid down, some regulation stipulated, but there arises the question whether this is law in its primary sense. The Apostle Paul speaks of the Gentiles as having a "law written in their hearts," that is, there is a law of being; there is a law which expresses the "ideal for man's constitution" as one writer has put it. Law then in its fundamental nature as used in connection with sin, that is, the sin principle in the heart, denotes this ideal that is established for man's constitution.

Carrying this concept on and analyzing it, we are told the "law which expresses the divine ideal of man's constitution and growth has three chief applications. There is the 'law' of each man's personal being: there is the 'law' of his relation to things without him: there is the 'law' of his relation to God."

From these three applications of the law for man's constitution comes the various individual laws that we know and recognize as laws, but they are rather the specific and particular than the fundamental and the general. An act of sin violates some specific enactment, but the sin principle violates the fundamental law, the ideal for man.

### SIN AS LAWLESSNESS

When we come to consider sin as lawlessness, then we would view it in the three applications of the law. First among these is the law of personal being. Let us listen to Bishop Foster whose book, "Christian Purity," has ever been one of the standard works on the subject of holiness. "What, then," he asks, "is that depravity of which regeneration is the incipient cure?" The term stands for a state of man's soul which ensued upon the first sin as its effect. Not a physical effect, such as the addition or subtraction of some entity or faculty to or from it, but rather a change wrought in the order and harmony of its faculties and in their relations to each other. It is that derangement of man's moral nature,

induced by his transgression, whereby the harmonious acting of all the attributes of his soul has become warped and perverted; so that they no longer cheerfully and implicitly obey the divine requirements, but rise up in opposition to that which is holy, just, and good.

Let us illustrate: The soul possesses two classes of faculties which may be defined superior and inferior. The superior are the intellectual and moral powers, as judgment, conscience, will; the inferior are propensities and appetites of the body. In the holy, unfallen soul, the superior ruled and regulated the inferior; and it is this order which constitutes that soul a holy soul. An effect of its sin consisted in this, that it became immediately conscious of the withdrawal of God from its fellowship. As when the lights are extinguished the temple becomes dark, so when God withdrew His presence the soul became darkened; the regulator being removed the powers of the soul became confused, the inferior faculties usurped the place of the superior, the blinded and revolutionized soul called good evil and evil good, sense became supreme, and with a mad sway held reason and conscience subject. Harmony with God was broken, and everything was the reverse of right. That is depravity or the carnal mind."

Thus sin violates the law of our personal being, it disrupts the order and throws our inner nature into a disturbed, restive state in which the lower faculties usurp the control; it darkens the understanding, perverts the emotions and leads the will into bondage; it becomes a usurper and a tyrant ruling from and upon the basis of self-will.

But sin has its influence upon the second application of the law, that is, in relation to things about. All the maladjustments in life, the lack of harmony and accord, the hatred, envy, anger, jealousy, and all other manifestations of like kin have their root in this lawlessness within the heart. The daily tragedies of which we read in our papers the broken homes, and evil murders, come from a state of lawlessness within. Can there be any more descriptive designation of this sin principle than lawlessness when it is applied in relation to others? If the principle of love dominated instead of the principle of sin what a different world would this be?

Then there is the third application of the law which has to do this time with our relation to God. Instead of obedience and a filial relation expressed in love, there is the tendency toward selfishness. Man is ego-centric not theocentric. He was created to be theocentric, but when this perverting force entered the life, then with the revolution within, self took the throne of man's being, and the dominion of God ceased, thus in relation to God sin is lawlessness.

#### THE CONSEQUENT RESULTS

When we note the consequent results of such a state and condition in the heart of man, we find that some of them have been inherent in the very nature of the case and thus have been mentioned as we have defined sin as lawlessness, but despite this fact sin is so ramified that further results may be noted.

This state of lawlessness within the soul when it

is dominant breaks all communion and fellowship with God. Thus mankind becomes alienated from the life of God, a stranger to holiness of heart and life. Light and darkness cannot commune so the human heart finds no joy in the presence of God; on the other hand there are fear and defiance.

Further, the atoning work of Christ is disannulled in the heart that allows this condition to prevail. The atoning work is provisional, conditional upon our acceptance, but when we fail to avail ourselves of its mercies, then so far as we are concerned, it is as though it were not.

With another picture of the inbeing of sin, we are led to conclude that its evil is so varied and extensive that it stands forth as man's worst foe bringing in its train all forms of sin and iniquity. Should we not with the hymn writer pray:

*Answer that gracious end in me  
For which Thy precious life was given;  
Redeem from all iniquity,  
Restore, and make me meet for heaven.  
Unless Thou purge my every stain,  
Thy suffering and my faith is vain.*

—J. WESLEY.

### My Debt

Mildred Bangs Wynkoop

THE church owes me nothing. If I fail for lack of a job or lack of means or opportunity I can lay no charge against the Church of the Nazarene. The church has laid at my feet all the intrinsic values of life and opportunity, enough to stagger the stoutest in heart and the most gifted.

I am in debt to the Church of the Nazarene for a church and pastor and evangelist, who covenanted together to present the claims of God to my soul so convincingly and so persuasively and so convictingly that I found it impossible to long refuse Christ.

I am in debt to the Church of the Nazarene for providing at heroic sacrifice, a college where my hungry mind could find satisfaction in safety and where taste and discrimination could be built into my character, as a bulwark against the flood of the varying experiences of life. Where, also, could be found a life-companion of like caliber, who would not tempt me away from the "faith of our fathers."

I am in debt to the Church of the Nazarene for opening her doors of service in response to my claim to a divine "call." There was no resentment that I was a woman. The vast opportunities of unrestricted Christian service were laid at my disposal, provided only that I proved my fitness by a reasonable display of ability and grace and courageous effort, to fill the place provided.

I am in debt to the Church of the Nazarene for a challenge for service that is bigger than the faith and talent of any mortal. There are no easy paths nor pampered pets. Whatever comes to us of fame or fortune or position comes as a result of fighting until we win. When we have ceased to be worthy of our place, our robes of honor fail to hide our poverty of spirit.

I am in debt for the frontiers provided where we may sharpen the tools of our ability against the roughness of experience. Only at the frontiers of life can be found the stimulus for greatness and nobility and majestic character. The unworthy in spirit are eliminated automatically by their own unworthiness.

I collect what I earn. If I am poor it is because I am deficient in inner resources. I would be foolish to accuse the church of partiality and embitter my

spirit with resentments because my brother is preferred before me or because I am unnoticed. There is plenty of "room at the top" for me if I have paid the price for bigness of spirit. No one can take my place, if in the quietness of my own soul, I have prepared myself for whatever may come.

After I have devoted a lifetime to Christ through the Church of the Nazarene, with all of life's capacities and talents, I shall still be hopelessly in debt. Would God I could ever pay it fully.

## Three Fundamental Religious Errors

Paul S. Hill

THE three errors that are basic in all false religious systems are (1) failure to identify God as a Being separate and distinct from His creation, (2) failure to recognize Him as the Supreme Person, and (3) failure to ascribe to Him absolute holiness in moral character.

All truth is related, and so also is all error. A fundamental truth embraced and believed affords a foundation for clear and lasting thinking. Error received as a fundamental thing leads most surely to confusion and wrong thinking.

The failure to identify God as a Being separate and distinct from His creation is error, and has in it the foundation for the two other errors mentioned, for this error is basic in pantheism; in all the ramifications of pantheism as taught by the pagan religious systems and also in the more modern cults that embrace the same philosophy. Pantheism stands for the belief that everything is God. Everything created whether matter or spirit is God. Those who hold that every material thing is God are called materialistic pantheists. Those who hold that all that we call nature is only an idea in the divine mind are called idealistic pantheists. This system of religious error places everything everywhere and all the time as belonging to and part of God.

There is no thing apart from nor distinct from God. Good and evil, right and wrong, sin and holiness are equally considered as belonging within the nature of God. Every contrary element and principle is mingled in God who is the All. Thus sin is not sin but a part of God registered in the human thought as an error. The teaching of the Bible in reference to Christ and the atonement for sin through His death are to be considered only as divine ideals or ideas thrust out toward us, while we ourselves are a part of the All and therefore have no separate personality but only a bit of the All into whose allness we lose our identity. This failure to identify God as a Being separate and distinct from His creation is a basic error and leads to pantheism in all its forms. Indeed pantheism is the only conclusion that can be reached when this error becomes fundamental in the thinking.

The second error is related to the first, for of course if God is not separate and distinct from His creation then He is not a person, but a force of materialistic

causation. Materialism is the logical conclusion of this error. The fact of human personalism must, according to this system, be denied and explained away while some grotesque shaping up of human powers so that they think, feel and pray, is blended into the rigid laws of materialism. With the denial of Divine Personality goes also the existence of human personality. The denial of human personality carries with it a denial of human personal responsibility. With the passing of both divine and human personality passes also the possibility of right or wrong as such, and consequently no future bar of justice where the human and divine persons meet again. The value of right is entirely gone from this erroneous system.

The two errors mentioned lead logically to the third, the failure to ascribe to God absolute holiness of moral character. The best that pantheism and materialism can do is to carry the notion that God is not absolute in holiness, but a mixture of good and evil. This is always the pagan idea of God. With them there is not a vice nor a virtue but what is deified. Gods of evil are always a part of the heathen thought. There is not, nor can there be, any worship of love out of a pure heart, but always a superstitious fear that seeks to appease the wrath of a god that is not good. Superstition takes the place of Christian faith while fear takes the place of Christian love.

The Christian doctrine regarding God is true. God is a Person, He is distinct and separate from His created worlds, and He is absolute in holiness. Any doctrine that departs from these three principles of truth become just so much pagan.

The Exodus of God's people from Egypt stands for all time as establishing clear religious truth in the world. For forty years God taught His people that He was a Person separate and distinct from His creation, that He was the Supreme Person and that He was absolute in holiness. As a Person he was eternal, almighty, just and good. In His relation to creation He was the Creator, and in His moral character He was absolute in holiness. These three truths lead logically toward the wickedness of sin, the responsibility of human personality, the need and realization of the atonement for sin through the death of Christ.

## The Bible and a Preacher's Filing System

E. Wayne Stahl

IN a preceding issue of this magazine (August, 1939) I detailed a filing system I had devised which, I found, had worked out most satisfactorily. Limitations of space prevented my showing how such a system can be linked up with Scripture. As great a satisfaction and effectiveness, I have realized is to be found in its connection with Bible passages as in relation to topics.

The only additional requirement, in order to experience this double helpfulness, is a different set of filing cards having to do not with subjects, but with scripture verses exclusively. These cards are the same size, three by five inches, as are those used for keeping track of the topics; they will be in cases separate from the others.

At the upper left hand corner of the card is the Bible reference. Following this are written the filing data informing me where the various clippings in scrap books and large envelopes, notations or in commonplace books, bearing directly on this particular portion from the Word are to be found.

Very often filable matter of this kind is so intimately connected with certain scriptures that it will be almost incalculably precious if the preacher can refer to it at once in studying this particular biblical passage in preparation for delivering a public discourse, for teaching a Sunday school lesson or for giving a Bible talk at prayermeeting.

In a general way, the use of the topic filing cards would give one access to the stored up matter, as the Bible passage in being studied. But I have found that the additional file, such as I am specifying, is by no means superfluous, and will often enable the preacher to "rejoice as one that findeth great spoil," in furnishing exquisitely appropriate material, either in anecdotal form, or more abstractly. The same reference system would be used with the Bible cards as is used with the topics, as outlined in my article of last August.

By means of these scripture filing cards I have been able to index in their case the texts of books of sermons and of daily Bible devotional meditations, as well scripture as in other books.

One of my treasured volumes is J. H. Jowett's "My Daily Meditation." For every day of the year it has a page of wonderfully illuminating exposition of a Bible passage, as one would expect from the pen of this princely preacher. This book is listed in my catalog of books as m6. If on the filing card having 1 John 4:17 at the top I find the notation m6. 127, and then turn to page 127 of this book by the great English pulpiteer, I will read a valuable and spiritual exegesis of this particular verse under the heading, "The Perfecting of Love."

Similarly if I would find on a card headed Matt. 9:9 the notation m6. 196, I would, by turning to the page of the book having this number, find Jowett's characteristically precious treatment of a scripture

portion, under the suggestive caption, "The Possibilities of the Unlikely."

And so with books of sermons, as well as with devotional meditations. The beauty of the plan is that it makes almost instantly available some of the finest things that have been uttered which bear directly on particular Bible passages. Working it out, a preacher is constantly making his own commentary. When he comes down to the real work of preparing a sermon or Bible talk he finds that he has equipped himself with homiletical material that is more precious than rubies, *in its suggestiveness, not for copying purposes.*

In my library are eighteen volumes of "Notes on the Sunday School Lessons." Their dates are those of many years back; they consist of Peloubet's great comments on the Sunday school lessons or of the writings on these scriptures from the press of the Methodist Church, before this denomination capitulated to Modernism. These "Notes" I picked up in a second-hand store at a nominal price. I have indexed them by means of my scripture filing cards. The value of these dozen and a half books for sermonic purposes is inestimable.

I referred a moment ago to indexing books of sermons, by means of the cards. Just now I picked up a book near my typewriter table. Its title is "Thirty-one Revival Sermons" (Louis Albert Banks). On a blank page in its front I find the notation t6. Suppose I were preparing a sermon with 1 Kings 21:20 as my text. I would turn to my scripture filing card having this reference. I would learn that t6 means Banks' book of sermons. Turning to page 129 of it I would find one of his stimulating messages based on this verse, under the theme, "The Nemesis Which Follows the Sinner."

Suppose I wanted to index passages in a religious paper which I was preserving in its entirety. Suppose this periodical is the PREACHER'S MAGAZINE of August, 1939.

In a large cardboard box, sufficiently spacious to receive this paper without the necessity of its being folded, I place it. Outside this box is the number 14. I have written on the first page of this particular PREACHER'S MAGAZINE the following: 14.61. There were already sixty religious papers in this container.

Reading in this particular copy of the MAGAZINE Dr. Chapman's superb article, "A Peerless Preacher—E. F. Walker," I say to myself, "This is a fine illustration of Paul's words in 1 Cor. 2:4." So, turning to my scripture card file, I write on the card having this verse 14:61 (2). The number 61, of course, specifies the number of the paper in this large, cardboard container, which container's number is 14, while the number 2 in parenthesis particularizes the page of the PREACHER'S MAGAZINE on which Dr. Chapman's contribution is found.

Turning to page three of this copy of the August issue I find the offering by Olive M. Winchester, "A Deceitful Heart." This begins with the Bible verse, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9). The article in my scripture card file would be 14.61 (3).

On page five, in the first column of W. P. Jay's article, "The Federated Forces of the Great Tribulation," I find a reference to Ezekiel 39. Therefore in my scripture card file I can make the notation 14.61 (5a). the "a" refers to the first column, in which the reference to this scripture is made.

E. E. Wordsworth's appealing contribution, "Especially the Parchments," page nine, would be classified thus on the filing card, 14.61 (9), the top of which would have 2 Tim. 4:13.

In the "Illustrations" section, the various anecdotes would be referred to in connection with the different scriptures which most of them contain. In the "Homiletical" department the various sermon

texts which J. Glenn Gould uses as the bases of his offerings would be filed away on their separate cards.

And so with much of the other valuable matter in this issue of the *MAGAZINE*.

I have been thus detailed that there may be no doubt as to the simplicity of the plan. Its effectiveness will be evident when, days later, the preacher will have occasion to refer to any one or more of these various verses in preparing a talk or a sermon.

He will not necessarily imitate in all its particulars the plan as specified by this writer. But he will surely find an arrangement somewhat along this line an ultimate saver of time and an increaser of homiletic effectiveness. I have had such a delight in making Scripture references on my filing cards, knowing I was accumulating an invaluable store of sermonic aids, that the work could almost be called recreation. For the sermons of some overworked preachers it may prove re-creation.

## What the Ministry Needs

A. S. London

**A** PASTOR in a large southern city writes as follows: "Brother London, you have had a lot to do with ministers. It is my belief that you could help a fellow like me if you could feel free to say what you would like. It is my desire to be as great a success as possible, and I am trying to correct my faults and failures, and build up the weak points. Could you give me five or more points that, if worked out, would help me to succeed?"

Preaching is big business. It was said of Savonarola of Florence, that it would be better for a state to go out of the Union than for him to quit the ministry. Gladstone, that Grand Old Man of England, said to his son, "If God calls you to preach, do not stoop to be a king." The Apostle Paul thanked God that He counted him worthy, "putting me into the ministry."

The first thought relative to the ministry is that we need a great crowd to preach to if we are to succeed. And it does look like a tragedy to preach to empty benches when there are seventy millions of our population out of our services on the Sabbath. But numbers may become a snare. When Gideon enlisted an army to battle against the Midianites, he had to reduce the number to comparative insignificance before God sent him out to rout the enemy. David took a census of Israel to determine national strength, and suffered dire penalty.

Doctor Drummond once said that what we need is not more preachers, but a better brand. Christ cannot command big situations with little ministers.

The second thought relative to preachers is that they need more money. It is true that the average salary paid the ministry in this country is less than one thousand dollars a year. But money is not a

chief essential in making a good preacher. It might be a misfortune for him to have money as it was for the church at Laodicea.

The third thought relative to our ministry is that we need "church union," both for the laity and the good of our preachers. A national leader said a few days ago that within twenty-five years sixty per cent of the church people of this nation will be in one organization. But what will this have to do with making better preachers? Jesus did not attempt to unite the Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees and Essenes into one great body. But He did emphasize some great, underlying principles which every minister needs in building the Church of the living God.

I said to my brother in answering his letter, Guard against idleness. A preacher practically makes his own hours. Woe to the preacher who becomes at "ease in Zion." A lazy preacher is both hopeless and helpless. He is a menace to the Church of Jesus Christ. It is not a happen-so that a man stays with one church for thirty and forty years. One of these types of preachers said to me that he averages visiting eight hours a day. He also says that it is a crime for any preacher to fail to give his people two good sermons every Sunday. To do this one must fight idleness as he would a loathsome disease.

A preacher must live what he preaches. A shoemaker's wife may go without shoes, or a carpenter's wife may live out-of-doors; but a preacher must have at home what he professes in the pulpit. A preacher must have a good disposition. He cannot be a grouch at home with his own wife and family, and think he can cover it up by being kind and tender with other people in the church. A man preaches

what he is. Lincoln once said that he would not sign a questionable paper for fear he would unconsciously speak out some time in public and say, "Lincoln, you are a liar." What you are at heart will come out. A preacher must be a joyful Christian. Paul uses this term "joy" twenty-eight times in his writings. It is used sixty-two times in the New Testament.

A preacher must guard against impatience, unworthy motives and habits. He must realize that he is a servant of the people. He is called like an Italian general said, "to come and suffer." He must constantly be on the lookout for opportunities to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Whitefield preached 18,000 times before he was 56 years old. Preaching cannot become professional and at the same time be effective. Preachers must speak out of a burning heart. A preacher cannot afford to become impatient. He speaks out of a burning heart to dying men. God will take care of results.

Every preacher needs a conviction in respect to sin. Men must be convinced and convicted of sin before they realize their need of a Savior. The minister who does not know that the people are ill, will be but little interested in a remedy. There is too often a compromising attitude in the pulpit toward the sin question. As a result the whole church becomes weak. The minister needs a genuine conviction respecting God's warnings. He must declare that those who have not Christ have not life and that the devil goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

A preacher must guard against envy. He must refrain from envying those who are his superiors and feeling that he could fill their place much better than they. A leading pastor said to us some years ago, just after he had returned from a great gathering, that he would love to have an opportunity of filling the pulpit as those who filled it did such a poor job of it. That man has been out of the ministry for years and the last time I saw him he was selling potatoes on the public square. You eye a man like Saul did David, and soon your heart is green with hatred. Better look out, brother preacher!

A minister must be a consistent man. He must not only have a knowledge of what is right and give that to his audience, but there must be on his part a willingness to carry out his own preaching. He must take his own medicine. Ezra, the scribe, was convinced that he should lead a migration from Babylon to Jerusalem. He thought of the dangers along the way. It was a journey of four months. It was a rough, unbroken wilderness. The country was infested with bands of marauders. He knew that Artaxerxes would give ample protection if he wanted an escort of soldiers. Now the question comes and the test. He remembered how he had preached to the people about God's defense and protection. Will he put his trust in God or soldiers? He halted for three days and through prayer and fasting placed everything into God's hands. He was not a fatalist. He was conscious of his weakness, but believed that God wanted him to do what he had undertaken.

This story ends with this testimony: "The hand of our God was upon us and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy and of such as lay in wait by the way. And we came to Jerusalem."

Preacher, are you consistent in your own trust and faith life with what you give out to the people? God's ministers cannot be consistent and effective in their own endeavors in building the church of Jesus Christ unless they "practice what they preach."

## God's Cure for Worry

If there is a cure for "nerves," this fast-moving generation certainly needs to find it. In addition to the natural longings and yearnings of the heart, the restlessness and perplexity of this present world, the very rush of the twentieth century and complexity of our civilization greatly increase the strain on the nervous system. Many have "shell shock" who were never in the army, but whose nerves have gone to pieces under the strain of daily living. A great number of our ills are caused by worry, and here is God's cure for it:

"In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God that passeth all understanding shall guard your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6, 7).

"In nothing be anxious." But how can I help it? Take it to God. But can I take everything to Him? I know I can take some of my troubles to Him, but can I worry Him with everything? "But in all things"; thank God that "all" is there. God is concerned about anything that is worrying me.

"By prayer and supplication." Let Him know about it. He does not answer because of our much asking, but does want us to be in earnest about it, and certainly we cannot expect Him to answer unless we are in earnest.

"With thanksgiving." This is the part most frequently missed. We usually are so worried at those times we do not realize that we ought to be thankful. Thank God that we can take our troubles to Him! Praise His name because He is concerned about our trials. Be grateful for all the blessings we are enjoying. Glorifying His name because we know He hears and will answer, in His own way, and for our eternal good. It is time for songs of thanksgiving then because it is in the hand of One who can and will help.

"And the peace of God will guard your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus." After the crucifixion of Christ the Pharisees went to Pilate and had him make the grave as safe as Rome could make it, lest the disciples come and steal the body. The Highest brushed away the guard as a man might brush away a fly. It is the power of God that keeps the citadel of our hearts and no power will ever storm it.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation; be of good cheer I have overcome the world."—S. BROWNE HOYT, in *Christian Observer*.

# GENERAL CHURCH PROGRAM

## STEWARDSHIP

### *Using What We Have*

C. Warren Jones, Stewardship Secretary

**A** FEW men have wealth and do not know what to do with it. It is a burden. They do not know how to use it. On the other hand, many people do not have wealth, but the most of them can tell you exactly what they would do, providing they had riches.

Many people are rich and do not know it. They do not know how to cash in what they have. A great number have a college education but never use it. We have seen young people with great musical talent, real ability, but they could not sell it to anyone. They possessed something they could not use. On the other hand we have seen men and women with limited education, but they used all they had. They were seemingly able to do big business on a small capital. They were able to use what they had and make it count. The same is true with music. Degrees in music avail but little if one is not able to sell his wares.

What we have said is applicable to the ministry. Some use what they have, though it be little, and succeed. Others possess great riches, degrees, a library, personality and yet they have trouble. They do but little and seemingly get nowhere. Unable to use what they have, that which is in their hand. God said to Moses, "What is that in thine hand?" Moses told God that it was a rod and then God told him to use it.

#### FAILING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE

As ministers of the gospel, there are so many doors we never enter; so many opportunities we never grasp; so many assets of which we make no use.

We call your attention to just one thing and that is religious literature, the printed page. We could name two or three religious organizations that are aggressive and growing rapidly. How do they do it? We cannot answer in full, but we do know that they major on the printed page. They sow the country down with their literature. We might, if we only would, profit by their example.

#### OUR LITERATURE

Our literature has to a large degree been a great factor in building the Church of the Nazarene. It has proved a real asset. Our church papers, Sunday school periodicals, books, tracts and pamphlets have gone to the ends of the earth. However we are wondering if all our pastors place a proper value on our literature. There are 100,000 homes in America where our literature—the *Herald of Holiness*, *The Other Sheep* and the *Young People's Journal*—

could be placed. There is no way to calculate the good that might come from the carrying out of such a plan.

#### STEWARDSHIP LITERATURE

We want to call your attention again to the stewardship pamphlets which are mailed out free. Of these we have a fine assortment. Last year we printed eight different pamphlets, known as 1939 series. They are all good, but one we want to especially call to your attention: "What Is Stewardship?" by Dr. J. B. Chapman. Mentioning the author is enough. Fifty thousand copies of this tract alone should be given out to our people and friends. It will inspire, enlighten and thus prove a blessing. Send for a sample package of the stewardship pamphlets.

## CHURCH SCHOOLS

Orval J. Nease

### *A Summons to Spiritual Advancement*

**T**HE ultimate and final purpose of the presentation of the gospel and the work of the church is ever the "salvation of men for whom the Savior died." Every department is necessarily and vitally tied up in this all-consuming goal of the church. With the growing tide of worldliness and unbelief something more must be done than is being done to reach these wide areas of men and women on this continent who are as yet unreached by the gospel. Some feel they are gospel hardened. This may be true in instances and with the passing generation but on the whole and large this generation of Americans has never adequately been reached by the gospel. Raised in the homes of a generation which has rejected the family altar and the means of grace, they have entered life prejudiced against the church and the gospel before they have ever heard its message or been moved by its power.

Something must be done about the millions of America who are as yet untouched by the gospel even though they are under the very eaves of the church. Experience as well as statistics indicates that the overwhelming majority of those who find God are those who in childhood and youth have been subjected to the influence and teaching of the Word of God. This must be done either in the home or in the Sunday school. These are the agencies designated by God and the church to this responsibility. With the alarming majority of young America outside the church and with no family altar in the homes, what chance has the oncoming generation to

know God in any vital measure? There is no point of contact, no connecting agency, if the home and church fail. The work of implanting the seed of the gospel and the revival harvest are as inseparably and vitally connected as is sowing and reaping in nature. We believe we are right when we insist that the promotion of the Sunday school is, in the ultimate, the work of evangelism.

The Department of Church Schools, under the authority and approval of the Board of General Superintendents and with the co-operation of the District Superintendents, District Church School Boards, pastors and evangelists, is summoning the forces of the Sunday schools of the church, continent wide in a campaign for 25,000 new pupils for the classes of the Sunday school. Plans and information have been forwarded to district officers and local pastors and through them to the workers of the Sunday school for a *Forward Program* in every church and Sunday school. This advance is planned to cover a twelve-Sunday period, *New Year's through Easter, 1940*.

This must not exhaust itself in merely a numerical increase. This must be in the truest sense a spiritual advance for the salvation of souls as the final goal. This end must motivate every plan, program and activity. This must be *advancement upon the knees* for the glory of our Christ and the upbuilding of His kingdom. We believe that the awakening to action of the church in a concerted *Forward Program* through the channels of the Sunday school will inspire vision and passion for the *world-wide challenge of the church* which climaxes in the *Easter Self-denial Offering for Missions*.

"Speak unto Israel that they go forward."

N. Y. P. S.  
S. T. Ludwig

**Special Announcement**

JANUARY 1, 1940, marks the beginning of the fifteenth year of publication for *The Young People's Journal*. The January issue will have special features celebrating this event. The entire year 1940 will be marked with outstanding devotional themes, challenging articles for young people, missionary programs and plans, and a wide variety of helpful ideas and suggestions for leaders of youth.

We have already secured some of the best writers in the church to give us material for this *anniversary year*. We are asking each N. Y. P. S. to bring up their subscription list to at least one-fifth of their total membership. Many are doing much more than that. Certainly it is not too optimistic to expect that a copy of *The Journal* should be in every home where there are young people.

We will greatly appreciate your co-operation with the local N. Y. P. S. president in securing the quota for your church. Special announcements will appear in the January number concerning further details and plans. Thank you for your kind co-operation.

WE GREET YOU

The members of the General N. Y. P. S. Council wish to take this opportunity of extending the SEASON'S GREETINGS to all pastors in the Church of the Nazarene. May the changeless message of that first Christmas morn, heralded by angelic choir, bring you increasing joy and peace amid the bewildering times in which we live.

THE GENERAL COUNCIL

- DR. R. T. WILLIAMS
- S. T. LUDWIG
- J. G. TAYLORSON
- MILTON SMITH
- G. B. WILLIAMSON
- D. S. CORLETT
- O. J. FINCH
- M. K. MOULTON

BOOK CHAT



P. H. Lunn

I WAS IN PRISON is the intriguing title of a book by Charles S. Macfarland (Revell—\$1.00). This volume contains suppressed letters from German pastors also a thorough review of all the events which led up to the present crisis in Germany. It also contains the open letter which Dr. Macfarland wrote to Chancellor Hitler in June, 1937, and the plea that Chaplains of Germany's armed forces made to Hitler in November of that same year.

STORIES OF POPULAR HYMNS by Kathleen Blanchard (Zondervan—\$1.00), contains the inspiring and touching stories of sixty-seven hymns. Some of the best known and loved older hymns are included in this list. The newer gospel songs are left out. Some of the hymn titles are: "Abide with Me," "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," "Blest Be the Tie that Binds," "God Be with You Till We Meet Again," "How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds," "In the Sweet Bye and Bye," "I Need Thee Every Hour," "Jesus Lover of My Soul," "Just As I Am," "My Faith Looks up to Thee," "Nearer My God to Thee," "Onward Christian Soldiers," "Rock of Ages," "There Were Ninety and Nine," "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," etc. One fine feature of this book is the fact that the words of all the hymns mentioned are printed in full. The stories are terse but well told. This seems to be one of the very best books of hymn stories that has yet appeared. And so reasonably priced.

JERICHO'S JUDGMENT by Walter J. Beasley (Zondervan—\$1.50) gives the fascinating story of modern discoveries in biblical archeology told in a popular form by a series of letters to a friend. It gathers up the results of recent research and gives in a clear and simple form an idea of the wonderful voices that are coming from the stones as "the spade confirms the Word."

A very interesting and unusual volume is PAY DAY SOME DAY by C. B. Hedstrom (Evangelical Beacon—75c). The author is a business man and these messages and sketches are based on incidents and circumstances in his own life.

For ministers who are called upon to talk to business organizations or for pointed illustrations for sermons, here is some excellent source material.

There comes from the author, Warren D. Bowman, his book, *HOME BUILDERS OF TOMORROW* (\$1.00). This is a book for young people dealing with problems of forming friendships, choosing a mate, courtship, the engagement and entering upon marriage. It is written from a sane, wholesome, Christian point of view. A book of this kind should be valuable to any minister, not only to give him the information it contains but that he might pass it about among his young people.

Early arrivals in the Sunday school lesson commentary field are *THE TEACHER'S GUIDE* and *PELOUBET'S SELECT NOTES*. The former (Dickson Pub. Co.—\$1.50) edited by Dr. James R. Kaye, has some excellent material but we recommend it for discriminating readers only. In a previous volume we found unnecessary emphasis placed upon the teaching of Eternal Security, a doctrine which is unscriptural. It seems a pity that a book which is prepared for distribution among all denominations should enter into a discussion of any moot question.

The latter volume (W. A. Wilde Co.—\$2.00) is now written by Dr. Wilbur M. Smith. It presents a thorough discussion of the lessons and is noticeably free from controversial argument. With this Commentary and our own *Bible School Journal* any pastor or teacher is well equipped for the teaching task.

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**ILLUSTRATIONS**  
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Basil Miller

**Saved from Death**

"Lord, as we kneel around this family altar, we pray that Thy protecting hand will be over Father as he goes to work today. Watch over him in this dangerous job where he will be placed. Care for the children, and grant Thy mercy to me," prayed a mother around a family altar just before her husband went to a dangerous job on a river bridge.

"Goodby and God bless you. I'll be praying today that no harm will come to you," were the mother's parting words.

During the day Mrs. Mary Gregg went about her home duties feeling a peculiar restraint. Near one o'clock she felt divinely led to her secret place of prayer and to repeat the petition of the morning altar.

"Dr. Miller," she said later, "I could not get John out of my mind. I felt he needed my prayers more than ever before, and I could hardly get off of my knees."

During the afternoon one of the men on the job brought her husband home. As the mother ran to the car she could see he did not seem quite natural.

"What is the matter?"

"Nothing much, Mary. Nothing to worry about at least," the driver said.

"Tell me what happened."

"A twenty-pound weight fell from the bridge and struck me on the top of my head this afternoon," the husband told her. "I felt all afternoon that someone was watching over me."

That night Mrs. Gregg came to the revival which we were conducting and testified:

"I have so much to be thankful for. This morning I prayed for husband to be protected by the Spirit, and God guarded his life against that twenty-pound weight. It was

God and nothing else that kept the weight from crushing his skull."

There were no serious effects from the blow, and to date the man is perfectly normal.

God will protect if we will ask Him.

**Healed of Stomach Ulcers**

"You have the clearest case of stomach ulcers that I have ever treated," said the specialist, but you must take my medicine and do as I say. Otherwise I will not guarantee the results."

L. E. Hoover, then Sunday school superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene at Rockford, Illinois, went home seriously thinking about his condition. For weeks he had been unable to keep anything on his stomach. He was so weak that he could barely do his work as a salesman, now he faced the inevitable outcome of a serious operation.

"Lord, thou dost know that I have said you could heal others. I have helped the pastor pray for healing among the sick scholars of our school. Why can't you heal me right now?" he prayed on returning home.

"Come to dinner, Daddy," one of the children called at nighttime.

"Take your healing, like you take your salvation, by faith," an inner impression struck him.

"Thank you, Lord. I do take my healing right now by faith," he said arising from his knees. "I'm coming," he called down the stairs.

The doctor had given him a bottle of medicine and some powders to take before eating. He walked to the kitchen sink with the medicine in his hand.

A gurgling sound struck Mrs. Hoover's ears and she turned around in time to see the medicine flowing from the bottle.

"What are you doing? That's your medicine."

"I'm taking my healing by faith," he said and he began to tear the package containing the powders and to throw them in the garbage. "I believe God can heal me right now."

"But—"

"No buts about it. Pass the potatoes," he said, sitting down to the table.

God heard his prayer and healed him instantly. He felt no more distress from the trouble, and the specialist could not locate any evidence of the complaint.

**Hugging the Mourner's Bench**

Dr. H. C. Morrison, mighty holiness preacher of the Methodist Church, was to conduct a campmeeting in Kentucky. He arrived at the grounds late the evening the camp was to begin. While the crowd was gathering the preacher walked under the tent and went directly to the mourner's bench where he knelt down.

"I love you, mourner's bench. It was at such a place I found God, and when the church grows too proud to use you for saint or sinner alike, she will drive God from her borders," he said stroking the lowly penitent form where multiplied thousands had been transformed from lives of sin to holiness.

"You have been put out of many of our churches," he went on, "but I pray God to raise up a people who will love and cherish you. Without this lowly bench the world is doomed to destruction. We need you to bring the glory down upon our poor lost souls."

When he arose tears streamed from his eyes and a radiancy shone upon his face which bespoke the glory of the Almighty upon his soul.

The mourner's bench people are scarce these days, and it behooves us as preachers to keep our benches well stained with tears of sinners seeking God and saints pleading for the glory upon them,

During that camp the great preacher, whom William Jennings Bryan declared to be one of the most eloquent men of his generation, thundered against sin, denounced evil and with a holy pathos wooed sinners to God. Scores responded to his pleadings for mourners to seek the Lord.

#### Dr. H. C. Morrison Is Sanctified

"You can't leave this room until you are sanctified, Brother Morrison."

"But I must catch my train, Sister Kirk. I begin a meeting shortly and I cannot afford to be late," responded Dr. H. C. Morrison, then a young Methodist preacher.

"That meeting will be a failure unless you find this purifying power in your soul. You will preach with your eloquent voice, but your heart will not be cleansed of carnality. You will be powerless," pleaded Mrs. Anna Kirk, then a humble Methodist sister of Columbus, Ohio. "I obtained this blessing and it changed my entire life, and it will do the same for you."

"But—" began the minister.

"Now is the time. The promise is, 'If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship . . . and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin.' This promise and experience of cleansing is for you. Let's get down here in my front room and pray."

They fell to their knees, the humble sister and the youthful minister, and called upon God to sanctify the preacher. Sister Kirk agonized in prayer, while the minister consecrated his all unto God. The glory broke upon the scene. The pleading turned to shouting.

"I know I am sanctified by the blood of Jesus Christ," the preacher affirmed.

"God go with you, and make you a mighty winner of souls, is my prayer," Mrs. Anna Kirk said as the young preacher arose to make his train.

We do not have to be mighty ourselves to woo another soul for Christ. First, have the experience and the task of leading others into it is simplified. This humble saint was my wife's grandmother, whose voice never sounded before large audiences, but who knew how to wrestle with one soul alone.

#### Receiving Church Members

"Go on to holiness, I plead with you, young man. You have been wondrously converted at this altar, and before I take you into membership of this mother church of the denomination, I want to urge you to go on to holiness. This is the establishing grace," said Dr. H. B. Wallin, pastor of the First Church of the Nazarene of Los Angeles, the mother church of the denomination.

"There is no better time than now. Do not put off your 'going on to holiness,'" the preacher went on, noticing tears streaming from the candidate's eyes.

"Could—could I be sanctified before you take me in?" the youth inquired.

"Right now kneel at this altar and you can be sanctified."

The membership receiving meeting was turned into an altar service and the power of God broke upon the congregation as others joined the young man at the altar. He was sanctified and then received into membership.

Could Dr. Phineas Bresee, founder of that local church and sire of the denomination, have looked upon that scene, he would have said:

"The denomination is safe in the hands of such leaders—men who are more anxious to see a soul sanctified than a member added to the church rolls."

We must be concerned about sanctification being a necessary condition of entering heaven. Let us urge it upon our members as we receive them. There will be less drifting in the future from the standards of the church's founders.

#### Remembering Mercy Amid Wrath

"The circumstantial evidence points to the fact that John [calling a criminal by name] committed that double murder last week," a detective reported to his superior officer. "I have checked the clues carefully and all we have to do is find the man."

"Find that man if it takes you five years," came the order. "There is also a matter of \$5,000 reward for catching him."

The detective started out on a search that took him five years to end. He covered the southern states, located a trace of the fugitive in Tennessee, trailed him to New Orleans, and then located a hide-out in the West. He arrived in the western town just a week after the criminal had left without a trace.

Three more years passed, and finally he unearthed a clue in another western state. It was reported that the criminal had reformed and was now in a legitimate business, a respected member of the community.

The detective became a salesman, traveling for a reputable wholesale house, and went to the reformed criminal's place of business. He sold himself to the business man through every scheme known to salesmanship. He played golf with him at the country club. On the links the business man said:

"You are the kind of a fellow I like. If I had a brother I'd like for him to be just as you are. Upright. Strong. You're a man after my own heart. Come out to the house tonight and meet my wife and baby."

"I'd be happy to take dinner at your home, John. I came here to sell you on my line, but I've taken a liking to you as well."

The detective was met by a charming woman, and when a three-year-old child raced into the room, it was more than his stony heart could endure. Those little arms entwined around his neck, and touched some loose chords in his heart.

He went to his hotel room that night and fought a battle of decision. He needed that \$5,000 to cure his daughter of a dread malady, which required the services of the nation's outstanding specialist. He had already mortgaged his home and was about to lose it.

Mercy won and tempered the wrath and justice that had driven him for five years. He never went back to the man's place of business again.

"Unable to find the man, I hereby resign from the force," he wrote his final report.

How could I, he reasoned with himself, do this injustice to a man who has remade his life? I am not so cruel as to break a pure woman's heart, and stain the future of a harmless little baby.

God spoke to that detective, "If you are thus merciful, will not I in my wrath remember mercy?"

That was his turning point. He found God as his Redeemer.

Now he is God's detective, looking for sinners he can lead to the Savior. He is a gospel preacher who has conducted revivals in practically every state in the nation, and has organized scores of churches through home mission endeavors.

Fourteen years later he returned to the western city and again checked on the reformed criminal. He found him a member of a church in good standing, and faithful to his vows. His charming wife is a leader in the community, and the daughter that spring graduated from high school as one of the most popular young women of the city.

That \$5,000 reward is still standing and is unclaimed. "I'd rather lose my right arm than earn the reward money, as much as I need it, by turning that man over to the law," the preacher told me this spring.

Will not God in wrath remember mercy, if we thus show mercy to our fellowmen?

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**THE PREACHER'S WORKSHOP**  
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An exchange of methods, plans and seasonal suggestions. If you have discovered an idea that has proved successful in your church, send it in.

Roy E. Swim

**Sermon Seed**

*Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas!* "Fear not for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10).

*The Star of Hope.* "When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy" (Matthew 2:10).

*A Preferred Shopping List.* Revelation 3:18; Proverbs 23:23; Isaiah 55:1; Jeremiah 15:16.

*What to Do with Trouble.* "And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out" (2 Kings 4:21).

*Spiritual Astigmatism.* "How can ye believe who seek honour one of another, and not the honour which cometh from God only?" (John 5:44). The dominant life motive which energizes a man's thinking has as much significance in determining what is truth for him as have the facts which he has collected.—H. P. SLOAN in *Christian Advocate*.

**The Savior's Birth**

Oh, that birth forever blessed!  
 When the Virgin, full of grace,  
 By the Holy Ghost conceiving,  
 Bore the Savior of our race,  
 And the Babe, the world's Redeemer,  
 First revealed His sacred face  
 Evermore and evermore.  
 (From PRUDENTIUS: "Of the Father's Son Begotten")

**Peace on Earth**

From wartorn China came a message of peace and good-will. Hard pressed Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and his valiant wife relayed through a Lutheran missionary and the Southern Methodist church a message to the people of the United States for Christmas. Said the message, A holocaust of raging violence and horror has enveloped a great part of our country, a country where for thousands of years our statesmen, philosophers and artists have all cherished and expressed the ideal of 'peace and prosperity under heaven.'

"Nor should we be ashamed that our people are unwarlike, unwilling, and to that degree unprepared, to wage war. We have not racked our brains for thirty years to obtain the sharpest weapons and the craftiest tricks of warfare, and we do not regret it,

"Our self-knowledge gives us a strength over which a tissue of wiles and lies cannot eventually triumph. When high moral standards become an accomplished fact there will be no more war."

**A Call to Worship**

The harp of a thousand strings comes to glorious music in hours of worship on the Lord's day. The touch of God's presence as the organ calls us to silence and worship, is wonderful. Sensing God in worship with assembled fellow travelers, mingling voices with them in prayer and praise, singing the stately hymns and waiting serenely in His holy presence is a high privilege which great souls cherish.

Let us worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

—*Bulletin*, Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene.

**The Bible**

Most wondrous Book, bright candle of the Lord,  
 Star of eternity! the only star  
 By which the bark of man could navigate  
 The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss  
 Securely; only star which rose on time,  
 And, on its dark and troubled billows still,  
 As generation, drifting swiftly by,  
 Succeeded generation, threw a ray  
 Of heaven's own light, and to the hills of God,  
 The everlasting hills, pointed the sinner's eye.  
 This Book, this glorious Book, on every line  
 Marked with the seal of high divinity;  
 On every leaf bedewed with drops of love  
 Divine, and with eternal heraldry  
 And signature of God Almighty stamp'd  
 From first to last, this ray of sacred light,  
 This lamp from off the everlasting throne,  
 Mercy took down, and in light of time  
 Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow;  
 And even now beseeching men, with tears,  
 And earnest sighs, to read, believe, and live.

—POLLOCK in *The Free Methodist*.

**A Strong Man and His Bible**

After his captivity in Sian, Chiang Kai-shek wrote, "From my captors I asked but one thing—a copy of the Bible. In my solitude I had ample time for reading and meditation. The greatness and love of Christ burst upon me with new inspiration, increasing my strength to struggle against evil, to overcome temptation, and to uphold righteousness."

**At Home in the Bible**

"All I know of good, truth, honesty and idealism I have learned from the Bible. In school I listened each morning as a chapter was read before classes started, and it was then that I came to know and respect the Holy Book. I never have lost my regard for the Word of God, and if I had my way about it, a chapter of the Bible would be read every single morning in every school-room in this country I feel at home in the pages of the Bible, for that Book speaks my language?"—HENRY FORD.

**Give It to the People**

"Give the Bible to the people, unadulterated, pure, unaltered, unexplained, uncheaped, and then see it work through the whole nature. It is very difficult indeed for a man or for a boy who knows the Scripture ever to get away from it. It follows him like the memory of his mother. It haunts him like an old song. It reminds him like the word of an old and revered teacher. It forms a part of the warp and woof of his life."—WOODROW WILSON.

**Symbols of the Word**

- A mirror to show us ourselves (James 1:23).
- A hammer to break the will (Jeremiah 23:29).
- A fire to melt the heart (Malachi 3:2).
- A sword to pierce the conscience (Hebrews 4:2).
- A seed to quicken the soul (1 Peter 1:23).
- A laver to cleanse the way (Ephesians 5:26).
- A light to show the path (Psalm 119:105).

—SELECTED.

**The Bible**

Here paradise is restored, heaven opened and gates of hell disclosed.

Christ is the grand object, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, a river of judgment.

It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and condemns all who trifle with its sacred contents.—SELECTED.

**The Bible and Science**

No explanation of this difference between the Bible and other ancient books can be given except that the former was written by inspiration. It is not that the men who wrote it had knowledge superior to that of their contemporaries, but that, when they wrote this book, intended to be God's message, not to their generation only, but to us also, the guidance of the Holy Spirit was present, to restrain them from writing down anything that would discredit the divine revelation in the twentieth century.

Let it not be said that there is no reason for surprise at the freedom of the New Testament writers from scientific error, seeing they were discussing religion, not nature. So was St. Augustine, four centuries later, discussing religion, and it is precisely for the sake of strengthening his argument in favor of religion that he adduces some of his mistaken illustrations from nature. And Augustine himself had rejected the teaching of the Manicheans because he had found them in error in natural science! Why did not St. Paul make the same mistake as St. Augustine? Suppose St. Paul had adduced the story of the phoenix as a proof of the resurrection! Josephus writes a history—so does St. Luke. The former makes many errors, the latter none. Our Lord uses illustrations from nature constantly; yet not one that today requires the slightest apology or amendment. George Romanes was right. The absence of scientific error from the Holy Scriptures is one of the strongest objective proofs of its divine origin.—SELECTED.

**A Bible Prayermeeting**

Rev. E. D. Messer, pastor of the McAllen, Texas, Church of the Nazarene, reports a plan for a prayermeeting which proved unusually interesting and helpful in his church. At the preceding prayermeeting he asked for volunteers who would promise to read a book of the New Testament assigned to them. Each was to bring to the next prayermeeting

a brief report on the outstanding thought of the book which he read. Enough volunteers responded so that the whole New Testament was read and reported on in the prayermeeting. The Bible reading and the brief reports blessed the people. It was decided to go through the rest of the Bible in the same manner.

**Sanctification Defined**

"Sanctification in the proper sense is an instantaneous deliverance from all sin, and includes an instantaneous power then given always to cleave to God."—JOHN WESLEY.

**Holiness and Security**

"There is no state of grace this side of glory from which the soul may not finally fall, yet permanency is the peculiarity of the anointing in the case of the persevering believer. The presence of the Comforter in the sanctuary of the heart, filling it with light, love and joy strongly inclines the person to persevere so that he may freely determine to persist in faith and obedience."—DANIEL STEELE.

**Evidences of Holiness**

"By what fruit of the Spirit may we know that we are of God, even in the highest sense? By love, by joy, and peace abiding; by longsuffering, patience, resignation; by gentleness triumphing over all provocation; by goodness, mildness, sweetness, tenderness of spirit; by fidelity, simplicity, godly sincerity, meekness, calmness, evenness of spirit; by temperance, not only in food and sleep but in all things, natural and spiritual.

"This involves further total resignation to the will of God without any mixture of self-will; gentleness without any touch of anger, even the moment we are provoked; love to God without the least love to the creature but in and for God, excluding all pride and all envy, all jealousy and rash judging; meekness, keeping the whole inviolable calm, and temperance in all things."—JOHN WESLEY.

**They Said**

"It is not work that kills men—it is worry. Work is healthy. You could hardly put more upon a man than he can bear. But worry is rust upon the blade—it destroys the machinery."—HENRY WARD BEECHER.

**The Way Out of Misery**

"When you find yourself overpowered with melancholy," said a saintly man, "the best way is to go out and do something kind to somebody or other. Thousands who today are sitting daily in the gloom of a self-centered misery would soon lose it if they began to care for others."—SELECTED.

**Briefs!**

**Resources Inexhaustible**

The resources of the Christian life are—just Jesus Christ. Those resources are exhaustless.—R. C. McQUILKIN in *S. S. Times*.

**Mercy, Received and Given**

"We do pray for mercy; and that same prayer doth teach us all to render deeds of mercy."—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

**Let Your Light So Shine**

"A lamp is a very small thing, and it burns calmly, and without noise, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house."—ROBERT MCCHEYNE.

**A Fine Art**

One of the fine arts of living is to learn from people with whom we disagree. Poor indeed are they who cleave only to those who agree with them.—C. IRVING BENSON.

**Courtesy**

Courtesy is like an air cushion; there may be nothing in it, but it eases the jolts wonderfully.

*Wisdom is knowing what to do.  
Skill is knowing how to do it.  
Virtue is doing it well.*

**The Bible and Other Books**

Books of biography tell how man has lived.  
Books of history point out what man has done.  
Books of philosophy teach the science of man's thoughts.  
Books of literature set forth the wisest words of great men.

Books of travel tell of where man has gone to and fro in the earth.  
But the Bible alone tells us clearly and truly just where all men are going—into *eternity*.

And the Bible alone tells men how to "Prepare to meet" God on favorable grounds of salvation and glory.—Selected.

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**HOMILETICAL**

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**A PREACHING PROGRAM FOR DECEMBER, 1939**

J. Glenn Gould  
MORNING SERVICE  
**Faith Versus Flight**

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE LESSON—Psalm 11.

TEXT—*In the Lord put I my trust; how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain? (Psalm 11:1).*

I. The Psalms are the hymn book of the Word of God. They are expressive of every possible mood of the soul; of elation and victory, or hopelessness and despair. David's own experiences cover almost the total range of life's possible happenings. In the Psalms he has recorded in perfect frankness and with transparent sincerity his moods, whether of hope or despair. Some of these poems are marked by a gracious and magnanimous spirit, while others are sinister with a spirit of vengeance. We read them and love them because we find them to be faithful mirrors wherein our own faces are reflected.

1. The exact occasion of this eleventh Psalm must remain in the realm of conjecture. There is no clear mark by which it may be related to some specific event in his life. It is likely, however, that it comes from that period of stress and strain in David's life after his anointing at the hands of Samuel and before his ascension to the throne of Israel.

a. Those were difficult and trying days. As a result of his victory over Goliath, David had married the daughter of Saul and had become a member of the king's household. It created a most delicate situation. Saul, though still king, had been rejected of God and his house denied the succession to the throne at Saul's death. David, on the other hand, was God's choice for the succession, a fact well known to King Saul.

b. There was a certain fondness in the soul of Saul for the youthful David. Ingrate though he was, he could not help being somewhat grateful for David's monumental victory over the gigantic Philistine. Then, too, in Saul's moments of depression, he loved to hear David play upon his harp. On one occasion, however, as David played before the king, Saul's soul was undiverted; and in a fit of jealous anger he seized a javelin at his side and hurled it at the young man in an effort to pin him to the wall. Thanks to youthful agility, David escaped that murderous assault. But from that hour he became a fugitive from Saul's household.

c. It is probable that then the psalmist was admonished to flee to some mountain fastness where he would be safe from the pursuit of Saul. His only security lay in flight, he was told. "Flee as a bird to your mountain." David frequently likens himself to a bird: an eagle, an owl, a partridge, etc. But here he can think of nothing but a frightened bird in mad flight from his enemies.

1. It is then that he utters his heroic cry, "In the Lord put I my trust; how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain." God had wrought miraculous deliverances in his life on many occasions, and he can do it again. This is no hour for flight but for faith. There is no security in a mountain if a man has not God; but there is security anywhere if a man has God.

## II. God versus a mountain.

1. None of our hymn writers has more gravely misapprehended the true meaning of this text than the author of the hymn, "Flee as a bird to your mountain, Ye who are weary of sin." That is the very thing that David is repudiating in this brave cry. "I have God for my defense," he cries. "Why do you bid such an one to flee?"

2. The emphasis here is upon the futility of any earthly haven for the soul. There is no refuge for the soul other than God. He alone can lift the weight of sin's burden. He alone can purge the conscience from its sense of guilt. He alone can transform human personality until it can be said truly, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." And in the hour of life's great distresses—sorrow, adversity, sickness, disappointment—He alone affords a haven for the soul.

3. There is no more courageous and significant word that the soul hard-pressed can utter than this, "In the Lord put I my trust." A man can afford to rest his case with God. In misunderstanding it is God who can vindicate. Amidst the

loss of employment and home and living it is God who can supply every need. In the midst of bereavement, God can wipe our tears away and give confidence and courage to face the future.

## III. Indeed, God is the only defense of His people.

1. It is obvious that they must have a defense. The people of God are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, seeking a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. There is nothing on earth by which spiritual life can be sustained. During the Civil War, General Sheridan announced that he had so systematically ravaged the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia that even a crow flying over it would have to carry his rations with him. In a somewhat similar situation is the Christian living for God in "a dry and barren land where no water is."

2. But God is a glorious hiding place for His saints. He alone can sustain them and uphold them and harbor them. He has given repeated assurance of His ability and willingness to succor. Let us note some of them:

a. In 2 Chron. 16:9, He says, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." God is searching for occasion to make bare His arm in deliverance for His saints. He is in alliance with every man whose heart is right with the heart of God. No matter where such a man is, God will find him and buttress him with His strength.

b. Again, in Psalm 34:7, we are assured that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." That means that God's angel is standing sentry duty for everyone who fears the Lord; watching night and day with unceasing vigilance that no enemy surprise them and no harm befall. Waking or sleeping, the convoy of angels follows a man and protects him from anything that is not in God's will for him.

c. Employing still another metaphor, in Psalm 91:4, we are told that "He [God] shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust." The figure is that of a mother hen who sights a hawk and utters a cry of danger that brings her brood running to the shelter of her wings. There they are secure until the enemy as gone his way. So does God undertake our defense; and under His wings is our security.

d. A more stalwart figure of speech is employed in Psalm 125:2 to express this same ministry of protection: "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever." The psalmist here alludes to the impregnable situation of Jerusalem surrounded by mountains that greatly enhance her security. Similarly is the Lord round about His people. There is no promise calculated to promote greater confidence in the soul than this.

e. A supremely precious assurance is this of Isaiah 41:10: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." There is no promise in the Word more comprehensive than this. God engages Himself to undertake our defense on every front, and to make us victors in the strife. With such a God, why should one flee to a mountain?

## IV. There are two types of divine deliverance, however.

1. God at times delivers us out of the midst of our enemies. And that is the sort of deliverance everyone wants. In fact we are hardly willing to call it a deliverance unless the enemy is in flight and we are no longer beleaguered.

2. But sometimes God chooses to deliver us in the midst of our enemies. The three Hebrew children in Babylon were permitted to go into the fiery furnace and God kept them in

the midst of the flame. God refused Paul deliverance from his thorn, but did something infinitely better: He gave him sufficient grace. However God may choose to send it, the deliverance is divine and unailing to the man who dares put his trust in the Lord. Let us have a faith in God like David's, and choose to trust rather than to flee.

## EVENING SERVICE

### The Water of Life

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE LESSON—John 4:3-26.

**TEXT**—*Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life* (John 4:13, 14).

I. It is a singular fact that many of Jesus' most profound messages were addressed, not to the multitudes, but to individual men and women. In this day of crowds and emphasis upon mass movements and mankind in the aggregate, it might correct our perspective somewhat to recall this fact. We are apt to measure the worth of an opportunity by the number of persons we are able to reach. The big meeting is the meeting largely attended, and vice versa. But for the Master there was no value that could transcend the worth of the individual human spirit; and many of the Savior's most significant messages were delivered to a congregation of one. It was thus on this occasion. Jesus gave this heart-searching, soul-saving discourse to a lone spirit, sinful and broken by a life of shame.

There are a number of notable features that appear in this situation as we examine it closely. (1) The woman was a Samaritan, member of a mongrel race that was regarded by the Jews as beneath contempt. In the Samaritans, Israelite blood had been mingled with the blood of Gentiles and pagans to produce a race as impure religiously as it was racially. The Jews had no dealings with Samaritans and would not risk defilement by so much as setting foot on Samaritan soil. They preferred the longer road from Judea to Galilee through Perea rather than the shorter one through the province of Samaria. But Jesus "must needs go through Samaria." It was not to save time that He chose this route, but to bring His message of hope to the outcast woman at Sychar. So great was the Master's regard for the hunger of an immortal soul.

2. It is striking to note, furthermore, how searching was the presence of the Master. He did not actually tell her "all things that ever she did," as she asserted in her testimony of Him. In fact He placed His finger on only one of the sore places in her life. But so great was her sense of guilt and sorrow of remorse that it seemed He had revealed the whole shameful story of her sin. Many a guilty sinner has experienced a similar sense of exposure, even to asserting that the messenger of God must have been informed about him beforehand and was endeavoring deliberately to reveal his sins. It is the searching presence of the Lord that produces these results.

3. A third notable feature of this arresting incident is the remarkable revelation Christ gives of the essential nature of God. "God is spirit," He declares. The article "a" does not belong there. He is not saying that God is one of the many spirits, but that His essential nature is spiritual; and that men must worship Him "in spirit and in truth." It is not outward form but inward fact that matters most; not a bowed head alone, but a bowed heart as well. There must be, moreover, an absolute sincerity in the heart that would worship God. No mere pretense or make believe can escape His detection.

(4) But the Master's self-revelation is equally notable. After eliciting from the woman a wistful expression of hope

in the coming Messiah, who "will tell us all things," He made that simple yet profound, statement of fact, "I that speak unto thee am he." There is no fanfare such as would announce the presence of a king, and yet the Lord of heaven and earth is here.

**II. It is particularly significant that Jesus used so simple a figure of speech to drive home so mighty a truth.**

Thirst is a universal experience. And in the souls of men there is a burning thirst for God.

1. The assumption throughout the conversation is that of thirst. It was thirst that brought the woman to the well at this unseemly hour of noontide. The shame of her life was such that she could not come to the well in the cooler hours of morning or evening and thus expose herself to the reproaches of her more reputable neighbors. But she must have water; and if the satisfaction for thirst demanded a trip through the menacing heat of midday, the chance must be taken and the discomfort borne. And equally insistent is the craving of a human spirit for God.

2. The physical demand for water is imperious. We cannot live without it. The tissues of the body demand their complement of moisture, and if they become dehydrated are an easy prey of germ diseases of numerous sorts. There is an increasing reliance upon the artificial restoration of water to the body tissues as a specific against the ravages of disease. The thirst of which we are conscious—the dry mouth and in extreme cases the swollen tongue, are only symptoms of the thirst that is present in every tissue of our bodies. Yet after having drunk, as Jesus said, we "thirst again."

3. With equal insistence the soul cries out for God. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks," said David, "so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." The picture is that of a hunted animal fleeing his pursuers, worn and weary, ready to fall with fatigue and perishing with thirst. Just as the hart so spent pants for a draught from the water brook, so does a man's soul cry out for God. It is this universal human longing, present in the soul of the woman of Samaria, and present equally with everyone of us, to which Jesus appeals.

**III. Men have been forever fashioning makeshift wells for themselves to satisfy this universal thirst.**

1. The futility of such an attempt is set forth clearly enough in Jesus' words: "Everyone that drinketh of this water shall thirst again." And that is the best that men can do for themselves. A drink from Jacob's well could relieve thirst only for a season; but shortly this insistent craving would reassert itself and the process must be repeated. It is equally futile to attempt to satisfy the craving of the heart with weak human substitutes for the one thing that will meet our need.

2. The Prophet Jeremiah warned of this futility in these words. "My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me the fountain of living water, and have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13). The best substitute men have for the living springs is broken cisterns; cisterns that can fail them only in the hour of need.

3. We need to learn that spiritual thirst can never be allayed by any carnal draught. Culture that deals with the mind and leaves the soul uncultivated can never satisfy. Sport that develops the body but leaves the soul unrelaxed is a snare. Wine that leaves the soul unexhilarated and carnal diversions that cannot divert the spirit, will never meet our need. Men may have them all and still perish with this thirst of the soul.

**IV. Now, to all thirsty souls Jesus offers the water of eternal life.**

1. What is this living water? It is small wonder that this Samaritan woman, sense-bound as she was, should misunder-

stand. The only thirst of which she had ever become clearly conscious, at least until this moment, was physical thirst; and the only satisfaction was Jacob's well. Could she be so transformed that these daily trips to the well would be no longer necessary?

2. The Master had a clear, certain answer. He could put into the soul a well of living water from which sustenance could be drawn. And some things about this gift of God are clear. It will satisfy the soul when nothing else can. It is the gift of God through Christ to thirsty men. It is an inner fountain, springing up within the heart. It is no stagnant, disease-laden pool, but a flowing, living, life-giving current. And the man who drinks of it will enjoy "life, life, eternal life." Ponce de Leon lost his life in a futile attempt to discover the reputed fountain of youth in the New World. But here is a living current that can satisfy that craving for life.

3. Nothing else is so important as this. Wealth, pleasure, success, the rewards of labor—all must perish, but this remaineth. At any price make it yours.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1939

MORNING SERVICE

### Victory over Environment

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE LESSON—Romans 12:1-21.

TEXT—*And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God (Romans 12:2).*

I. It is a generally accepted doctrine that man is profoundly modified by the environment in which he lives. Sociologists hold the view that the stalwart, sturdy characteristics of the Scandinavian peoples are related intimately to the stern, rigorous climate in which they live, and their rock-bound homeland, broken by majestic fjords. It is equally true that the temperamental, passionate disposition of the people in the south of Europe is the result in part of life in so hospitable a climate as that along the northern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Migration from one climate to another has changed the whole outlook of a race of people in the course of a few generations.

Now, Rome, where lived the people to whom this letter was addressed, was a city of paganism, vice and ungodliness. It had not yet become one of the Christian centers of the world, but was still in the grip of the decadent religion of the latter days of the Roman empire. Such a city could not fail to exert a profound influence on its inhabitants. They were as men caught in a whirlpool, sucked into this seething vortex of immorality and iniquity. So imperious were the godless ideals and unholy standards of this ancient city that men were counseled not to defy them. "In Rome, do as the Romans do." That was the popular dictum. And men everywhere were content to yield before this moral tyranny.

The apostle, however, elevates an entirely different standard of conduct. He flings down a challenge to this iniquitous autocracy of custom, and cries, "Be not conformed to this world." Refuse to be dominated and corrupted by the habits and fashions of this age. Dare to be different, even in the atmosphere of ancient Rome. Call a halt to this servile worldly conformity, and live in defiance of the pagan customs of this unholy age.

#### II. "Be not conformed!"

The American Revision renders it: "Be not fashioned according to this age." Weymouth makes it more explicit still: "Do not follow the customs of the present age, but be transformed by the entire renewal of your minds, so that ye may learn by experience what God's will is . . . that will which is good and beautiful and perfect." What is meant by conformity to the world?

1. It is certainly not God's intention to put a man out of relationship and harmony with the physical world, by means

of which his earth life is sustained. Our bodies must be sustained by food and air, must be sheltered by houses and clothing; and our minds must move in the realm of ideas that are common to all men. It is apparent, equally, that God does not wish to put a man at variance with his fellowmen. God himself loves that world of men and gave His only begotten Son for its redemption.

2. A clearer understanding of the apostle's meaning is given us in the expression: "The fashions of the age." It is a warning against conformity to the estimates and ideals of this present evil world. What are the things men esteem most highly? On what level do they find their ideals? It is easily apparent that most men are content to live for material things, forgetful of the fact that Jesus said, "A man's life consisteth not of the abundance of the things that he possesseth." It is apparent, moreover, that the age in which we live is running madly after pleasure, oblivious of the Bible's warning that "she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." Sensualism is the order of the day; and we seem determined to have it even though it must be sought in illicit channels.

But the apostle's word is a challenge to the sins and iniquities of the age. The standards of the world are depraved and ungodly. It matters not at all to men of the world that God has said "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not." If everybody is doing it, regardless of what it is, it is accepted as legitimate. Indulgences that once bore unmistakably the hallmark of sin have been reclassified by the spirit of the times as innocent diversions. The fact that they are destructive of body and soul appears to be a consideration unworthy of serious attention. "On with the dance," is the cry, even though it be the dizzy dance of death.

#### II. Now God demands that we control circumstances rather than be controlled by them, and promises that we may.

But how can it be done? The average man declares it to be impossible, but God affirms that it can be done.

1. "Be ye transformed." This is God's prescription. There is a radical and complete transformation possible to sinful men by the grace of God. It was this change of heart which Jesus sought to inculcate in His new birth message to Nicodemus. To be born again did not mean to re-enter the physical world. It meant, rather, an introduction into the spiritual world; a world as different and distinct from all that unregenerate men now know as is the world into which the human embryo makes its advent at the moment of physical birth. It is this transformation Saint Paul had in mind when he declared, as the result of extensive observation, that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." The same emphasis is made in Col. 1:13: "[God] hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."

2. Biology declares that life is sustained by a harmony with environment. That is still true with the child of God, *with this difference*: The environment is changed. "Behold, all things are become new." A man so changed lives with his feet on the earth and his head in the clouds. He will still traverse the streets of earth, but his conversation will be in heaven. He will still be doing business at the old stand, provided it be a legitimate business; but his chief commerce will be with the skies. He lives and moves and has his being in God. His will is yielded to God's will, and his life on earth is lived for God's glory, and under God's direction. It is not conformity but transformation.

#### IV. But how is this transformation accomplished?

"By the renewing of your minds that ye may prove. . . ." Here is God's plan unfolded. Now what does such a program demand of men?

1. It demands, first of all, a perfect repudiation of allegiance to the world and a turning of the whole heart to God. The sinner must come confessing and truly repenting: The proud-hearted must humble himself under the mighty hand of God. The self-sufficient, self-righteous man must realize how undone he is in God's sight, and discover his only refuge in the riven side of Jesus. A person who becomes a citizen of the United States of America must renounce allegiance to every other nation, and especially Great Britain; and a man who is becoming a citizen of the kingdom of heaven must be equally specific in his renunciation.

2. It demands, furthermore, a perfect surrender to God; a surrender that marks the end of rebellion and the proclamation of peace—"peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." For a soul thus surrendered, God engages to blot out transgressions like a thick cloud, and to cleanse the conscience from its stain of guilt. He engages to change utterly the nature of such a one, making him one of God's dear children, and assuring him inwardly by the witness of the Spirit that the work is done.

3. But it demands, moreover, a perfect acceptance of and yielding to the will of God—an experience to which many a sincerely regenerate soul has not yet come. It is one thing for a man to look backward upon a burden of sin but lately lifted and a perdition so narrowly escaped, and be grateful for such a marvelous salvation. It is quite another to face the unknown future and accept for it all the perfect will of God. There are some who hesitate at such a requirement and draw back. There are others who dare to go forward on these terms and receive a gracious sanctifying fullness of the Holy Spirit. And it is they alone who "prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God," which shall it be? Conformity or transformation? The answer lies with us.

## EVENING SERVICE

### Ladders that Lead to Hell

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE LESSON—2 Kings 8:7-15.

TEXT—*And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?* (2 Kings 8:13).

I. Hazael was the trusted servant of Ben-hadad, the king of Syria. Over years of intimate association with his royal master, he had proved himself, as it seemed, a most reliable man, one who carried the interests of his master at heart. In this hour of Ben-hadad's illness, Hazael was the man entrusted with this mission to Elisha, the prophet of God, to learn what would be the likely outcome of the king's affliction. Elisha's reply was something of an enigma. "Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover; howbeit the Lord hath shewed me that he shall surely die." That sounded like both "yes" and "no." But Hazael was further mystified by the strange conduct of the prophet; for as he uttered these baffling words, he began to weep. Moved with concern, Hazael inquired the reason for his tears, only to hear a most astounding prediction concerning himself. I weep, said the prophet, "because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child." The prediction was so hideous that Hazael revolted from it in the words of this text: "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?"

But, dog or no dog, he did it. Out from this historic meeting with Elisha he went, and back to his royal master. Within twenty-four hours he had murdered Ben-hadad by suffocation, and had himself proclaimed king in his stead. During the years that followed he was guilty of every crime Elisha had envisaged and from which he had recoiled in such horror. There was a demon within his soul whose presence

Hazael little suspected; a demon that, once aroused, drove him on in a career of lust and rapine and murder second to none on the bloody stage of that ancient world.

We have a proverb which runs: "Let sleeping dogs lie." It is a wise and wholesome adage. For there is no way of knowing what hell-bent forces may be unleashed in the soul of an unregenerate man, once a suitable occasion arises.

## II. "Every man has his own ladder down to hell."

Dr. Clarence Edward Macartney tells of hearing a statement like that from the lips of a Scotch preacher in "the lovely Isle of Bute"; a statement that proved the stimulus for a most effective message of his own.

1. But the ancient Romans had observed this same easy tendency in mankind, and expressed it most effectively in their proverb "*Facilis descensus averno*"—"the descent to hell is easy." It is easy because it is a moral downgrade, and the soul who begins the descent becomes the victim of a gathering momentum. Once well started, it is increasingly difficult to stop, to say nothing of reversing direction. And it requires no more moral stamina than the ability to take the way of least resistance for a man to lose his soul.

2. How true it is that every man has his own ladder to hell—a private and personal ladder that is his, and his alone! There is some "weakest place" in every man's life; and, unless fortified by divine grace, an assault at that point can have only one result. I have heard men say, "If I ever lose my soul, it will not be by that route." But by what route will it be? If we were so certain of our points of weakness as of our points of strength, our security would be greatly enhanced. So many crimes of violence are the result of a certain moral surprise. The sleeping dog was suddenly awakened and the dastardly deed performed before the judgment and reason had a chance to intervene. And the remorseful cry is bound to follow, "Oh, why did I ever do it?"

3. But it should be remembered that everyone who makes the descent lands only in hell. God's Word speaks unequivocally at this point. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "The wages of sin is death." "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." These are grim, impartial truths. They apply with equal force to every man on earth. And Jesus made them grimmer still when He said that if a man's foot or hand or eye offend him, he would do better to cut it off or pluck it out than, by retaining it, to be cast into hell, "where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." This is the inevitable end of the man who takes that fatal ladder leading down.

## III. God's Word is full of examples of men who have made that tragic descent.

1. Here is the case of Hazael. For a moment the prophet uncovered the potentialities that lay hidden in his soul; and the sight was so shocking that he drew back in dismay. He little dreamed, and was ready hotly to deny, that such moral degradation lay before him. But Hazael did not know himself and the rotten moral fabric in his life. He made the slippery descent to hell.

2. Esau was a man against whose example God warns men. He played present gratification against future satisfaction and lost. The issue of the birthright—a precious thing, as he well knew—nevertheless seemed something with which he felt he could trifle at the moment. He never intended it should end as it did. God calls him a "profane person"; literally, a man who had nothing in his life too sacred for men to tread upon. He, too, gambled with his soul and lost.

3. Balaam was another such character. He imagined that he had won God over to his view of the matter; that the Almighty had rescinded His first judgment, and had been persuaded by His prophet. And Balaam discovered that in the end he had lost the promised emolument, his life and his soul.

4. David never dreamed that the demon of lust and murder could rise in his soul until the day he looked upon Bath-

sheba. Instantly his good sense and usually clear judgment and moral scruples vanished, and he became the creature of his passion. Not until the dark chapter was fully written and the record of shame complete did he awaken to discover what a beast he had been. He missed hell, but only by a hair's breadth.

5. Simon Peter could not believe himself as weak an ingrate as Jesus' prediction seemed to indicate. Forsake Jesus? Never! And he hotly denied the possibility even when it came on so reliable authority as the word of Christ. But deny his Lord he did, even with profane oaths.

6. Judas Iscariot never intended that his relationship with the Master should end as it did. He certainly was not deliberately placed as the villain in this tragedy of the cross. If anyone had disclosed to him the terrible possibilities that lay ahead, he would have refused them credence. But he became the Lord's betrayer and his name is today a synonym for all that is faithless and false. He took the ladder that led to hell, and lost his soul.

#### IV. But is there no hope for the man who finds himself far down that ladder?

Yes, thank God, there is hope.

1. Satan has two lies by which tempted and sinning men are deceived. One is that "this temptation is so trivial it will not matter." Why be narrow and radical? asks the tempter. You can do this and not suffer in your spirit. Satan said to Eve, "Ye shall not surely die"; and a similar lie is preached to every tempted soul. But once the soul yields and the inevitable condemnation for sin rests upon the conscience, the tempter becomes the accuser, with this lie: this sin is so great there is no forgiveness. Many a remorseful and contrite spirit has been browbeaten into hopelessness and despair by such an assault of the enemy. Satan's one purpose is to get a man down and keep him there.

2. But, thank God, beside every ladder that leads to hell is another that leads to heaven. This is not a hopeless, unredeemed world. There has been a cross uplifted in it; and the Son of God has died thereon in full atonement for human sin. We are members of a ransomed race, for whom the whole price is paid. And there is life for a look at the crucified One.

Pastor Ufford, author of the hymn "Throw Out the Life-line," had his pulpit in Rockland, Maine, constructed like the prow of a sailing ship, with life preservers attached to life-lines on either side of his pulpit while he was preaching. It was a sailor man's way of asserting graphically that there is hope, and men may be saved from the waves of damnation if they will. Look to Christ and be ye saved today.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1939

MORNING SERVICE

#### A Normal New Testament Church

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE LESSON—Acts 19:1-20.

TEXT—*Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?* (Acts 19:2).

1. The group to which Saint Paul addressed this eager, searching question was one which bore every essential identifying mark of a truly Christian Church, save one. They were "disciples"; that is, they were followers after and learners of Christ. They had been baptized according to the practice of John the Baptist. And as the apostle defined John's baptism, it was an essentially Christian thing; for he said, "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus Christ." Hearing from Saint Paul that Christ had come, in fulfillment of promise, they were baptized again in the name of Christ. An eager Christian church they seemed to be.

1. The basic and original meaning of the term "church" is far different from the accommodated meaning it has come to have. As it is employed in the New Testament the term "church" signifies "the called out ones"; those who have heard the call of God and have separated themselves from worldliness and sin at His command. There is ample evidence that these Ephesian believers qualified under this definition of "church." Indeed, the one essential in which they lacked had to do with their understanding of and relationship to the Holy Spirit in His fullness.

2. The church shares equally with the world in the peculiar benefits of Christ's atoning death. It is true, blessedly true, that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here is redemption that is all-embracing, reaching to the last man. But it is equally true that "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Here is life for the sinner, and cleansing for the believer, provided for in the shed blood—the self-giving—of our Lord.

3. Thus the apostle's question was in direct line with one of the central purposes of the cross of Christ. He is inquiring if this second and deeper purpose of the cross of Christ has been accomplished in the hearts of these believers. Are you stopping short of your privileges in Christ? or are you entering in?

#### II. As a matter of fact, no more vital question could be asked of any church.

1. How trivial are the issues that divide Christendom! Many of the major divisions in the Protestant Church are occasioned by differing views on church government, modes of baptism, theories of apostolic succession, the use of musical instruments in public worship, and a host of other and equally secondary matters. These are the questions that have erected barriers between the churches, and have broken organized Christianity up into distinct, and frequently warring, camps.

2. But here Saint Paul is driving straight to the heart of the most crucial issue in New Testament religion. This is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. He is in the world as the agent of God and the interpreter of Christ. Without Him it is impossible that any church will be able to function in a manner acceptable to God. And now: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Here in the full tide of the Holy Spirit dispensation, do you have His cleansing, empowering presence within you?

3. Dr. E. Stanley Jones has declared that "Pentecost is normal Christianity." It is God's expectation and gracious provision that the fullness of the Spirit should be the rule among His people, rather than the exception.

a. It follows that anything less than Pentecost, is sub-normal Christianity; while anything more than Pentecost is abnormal Christianity. As Dr. Jones puts it, some men have become feverish and fanatical at this point and have spoken and acted deliriously; while others have been frightened into anæmia. The best antidote for either extreme is the New Testament baptism with the Holy Spirit.

b. Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst, Presbyterian clergyman in New York a half century ago, as quoted by Dr. Daniel Steele, says, "It takes Christ as a law and the Holy Spirit as a passion both to make of a man a completed Christian. We must learn to realize that in this matter of the Holy Spirit we are dealing with an essential. No matter how perfect a *half* Christian a man may be, you have not secured Christianhood till you have put the other half along with it. There is matter here to be thought upon. It concerns us as Christian men and women, and it concerns us in our collective character as a Christian Church. There were no completed Christians till Pentecost, and there can be no completed Christians with

the cessation of Pentecost. There was no church till Pentecost, and a church without the Holy Spirit is as much a delusion as a church without Christ. . . . We dare never forget that though the disciples were thoroughly converted to Jesus Christ at the time He withdrew from them, yet they remained in a condition of organized helplessness till the work of Jesus had been supplemented by the work of the Spirit."

### III. But what is Pentecost?

1. It was for centuries a Jewish festival; more or less obscure in the place it held in the calendar of God's chosen people. But that day was lifted out of its obscurity forever by reason of the fact that on that first Pentecost after the cross of Christ the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the assembled church in Jerusalem. Amid the excitement and apparent confusion of that day, it stands forth clearly that there were two elements present: the passing and the permanent.

2. The passing elements were, first of all, (a) the ten days of waiting. Whatever dispensational reason there may have been for the ten days of waiting in the first instance, that necessity is now done away. Another is (b) the sound of rushing wind. Never again did God accompany the outpouring of the Spirit with this peculiar manifestation. It was peculiar to the first Pentecost. Still another is (c) the appearance of cloven tongues like as of fire. This was another unique aspect of that first outpouring, and God has not chosen to repeat it. A fourth passing element is (d) the speaking in other languages. It was a manifestation that filled a vital place and rendered a distinct evangelistic service on the Day of Pentecost. It is true that it did appear upon the occasion of other outpourings of the Spirit. But it is equally true that it was not always present, notably in the revival in Samaria (in Acts 8); and so cannot be regarded as a permanent and essential accompaniment of the Spirit's baptism. Indeed all of these peculiar elements can only be classified as passing, and not permanent.

3. There were, however, some permanent elements in this experience that were constant and unailing in the hearts of the one hundred and twenty to whom the Spirit came. Fortunately we have the testimony of the most representative man among them—Simon Peter—given many years after the experience itself. One of those permanent elements was purity of heart. On that occasion in the Upper Room, declares Peter (in Acts 15:8, 9) God purified his heart by faith. The second permanent element was the abiding fullness of the Holy Spirit. He came in at Pentecost, amid striking manifestations. But His presence remained after those manifestations had ceased.

### IV. And now, friends, let me ask you this same question: Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?

1. This is normal New Testament Christianity. It is God's purpose and promise and provision that His Church should enjoy this gracious sanctifying fullness. It would solve a great many problems and ease a great many frictions and avoid a great many personality conflicts if the church enjoyed this fullness. At high tide the Thames is one of the most beautiful streams in the world. But when the tide is out, it is largely mud banks, with a narrow, navigable stream in the center of the channel, so narrow that it is difficult for two small boats to pass. It is not pleasant to see and hear the muddy banks exposed and the profane and coarse speech of the men whose tempers are ruffled by navigation difficulties. But when the tide comes in, the unsightly mud banks are covered and there is ample room for all. So is it with the Church of Christ. It gets on smoothly and gloriously only when it enjoys the Spirit's fullness.

2. But the church can be filled with the Spirit only as the individuals that compose it have received Him. Has He come to you in cleansing and fullness?

## EVENING SERVICE

### Forbidden Altars

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE LESSON—Galatians 2.

TEXT—*If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor* (Gal. 2:18).

I. The words of this text lie at the very heart of Saint Paul's argument regarding the sufficiency of Christ for salvation. The epistle to the Galatians is a controversial document, concerned to establish two points. It undertakes to establish Saint Paul's apostolic office in the face of those who declared him to be no apostle. And it endeavors to establish the truth that faith in Christ is the one sufficient ground for salvation from sin, without necessity for supplementation by such purely Jewish rites as circumcision, and the like. It is a fortunate thing that the great apostle took his stand here and fought for it so valiantly, for the issue was more far-reaching than a mere Galatian controversy between Jew and Gentile believers. It amounted actually to this question: Is the Christian faith going to be merely a subdivision of Judaism, or will it go forth in the power of the risen Christ to bring its gospel of hope to all men everywhere? We are Christians today, in all probability, because Saint Paul won this victory.

Now, the issue in these concluding verses of chapter two is this: Must a Christian believer depend for his salvation upon anything other than obedience to and faith in Christ? Or must he struggle to perform all the ceremonial rites of the religion of Moses? Paul contends for the former position, and says in substance: "I have torn down my confidence in legal observances, and am putting my faith only in Christ Jesus. Now, if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor."

It may be that, in employing this figure of speech, the apostle is mindful of the situation which frequently prevailed in Israel's history, when a new king, who feared not God, would come to the throne and rebuild the pagan altars that his predecessor had destroyed; thus leading the nation back into idolatry. Somewhat similar would be the backsliding of a man who had destroyed his faith in any saving medium other than the blood of Christ, only to forsake Christ and return to worship at forbidden altars.

### II. But what are "the things that I destroyed"?

Paul names only one in this connection, but intimates that there are many others. Here are some, in the apostle's own words:

1. They include, undoubtedly, all that is meant by "the weak and beggarly elements" of the world. This present evil age is characterized by false ideals, unholy standards, and rotting moral fabric. The ancient sanctities that our fathers knew have all but disappeared and in their places are found every evidence of a tragic moral collapse. We have accepted the cue of the Freudians and made the sex urge to be the most compelling force in the conduct of the modern man. We have a system of legalized adultery that has practically destroyed the sanctity of the American home. We have gone in for gambling and games of chance all the way from jack-pot machines to horse racing with high stakes; and the conscience of the average man is too enfeebled to utter even a whisper of protest. Thousands of generations before us have proved to their sorrow how elusive is the hope of finding peace of soul in these channels; but we are undeterred by such considerations and must learn by tragic experience that there is death in the cup.

Hand-in-hand with this revival of deception has gone a growing sense of godlessness; and inevitably godlessness is accompanied by despair. In fact, one of the most astute of our materialistic thinkers—Mr. Bertram Russell—acknowledges frankly that there is nothing left to men but "unyielding despair." And this is what comes of being a man of the world.

But the only way to keep from being a man of the world is

to be a man of God. The only antidote for worldliness is godliness. To follow Christ is to challenge this false idealism and put in its place the idealism that finds its finest expression in self-sacrifice. It is to reject the moral leprosy of this unholy age and dare to be different. There can be no turning again to the weak and beggarly elements if a man is to go the Christ way. "Be not conformed," cries Saint Paul, "but be ye transformed."

2. Among other things that a man destroys to go with God are unholy alliances. In business, in play, in the sacred bonds of marriage and the intimacies of friendship, a Christian man must find his greatest satisfaction in the company and fellowship of those of like precious faith. The apostle utters a solemn warning along this line in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, a passage which begins with those familiar words: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." It is a warning we sorely need to hear. In business and in the bonds of friendship a man should cultivate alliances with those who know God. Especially in contemplating marriage should a child of God see to it that he is not moving in defiance of this solemn warning. How many a person has ignored this caution, to his sorrow! I do not mean that a marriage should be dissolved when one of a couple, hitherto ungodly, is converted. But as a caution to young men and women who desire to live Christian lives, this warning should be repeated again and again. No man can serve God and at the same time build altars to unholy alliances.

3. Another altar that must be thrown down is that to self-righteousness. We have this illustrated by Saint Paul in Romans 10:3, when, in describing the tragedy of Israel's rejection of Christ, he says, "They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." A warning against such a mistaken attitude is contained in the apostle's second Corinthian letter, chapter ten, verse twelve, in the words: "We dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves; but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." And yet the whole of religion for many a person consists in the comforting assurance that he is as good as someone else. What a deceiving refuge of lies it is! It is only when a man realizes deeply in his soul that he is "all unrighteousness" that the way into God's favor opens before him. Self-righteousness must be left behind.

There are many other things that a man must destroy when he turns to God, of which these we have named are somewhat typical. But the point we should emphasize is that *they must be destroyed*. They will bar the road to grace and mercy completely, and defeat the godly aspirations of the soul for all eternity.

### III. Now, hear the warning the apostle utters.

It is nothing less than sin to build again forbidden altars to worldliness, to ungodly alliances, to self-righteousness, to anything one has destroyed for Jesus' sake.

1. There is a real temptation confronting every one of us to compromise with worldliness in our standards and ideals; a temptation so often veiled under the specious name of tolerance. Why be so narrow in this broadminded age? is the question we hear frequently. Why not be open-minded? as Dr. Stanley Jones puts it, "A man may have his mind so open that he cannot even retain a conviction."

It is not alone in standards and ideals; it is equally in practices and behavior that we are tempted to a less rigorous way of life. Dr. S. Parkes Cadman once defined worldliness as "anything you cannot do to the glory of God." As a rule of thumb no better definition could be found. In the light of it, can a man indulge in worldliness and still retain the smile of God? It is clear as day that *he cannot*.

2. Moreover, in these days of self-sufficiency, it is an easy thing for one to forget that salvation comes only by the

grace of God, made possible to us through the merit of the shed blood of Jesus. There is nothing, even in the field of Christian service, by which I can merit God's favor. For after we have rendered God our best service, we must seem to Him as unprofitable servants; we have done only that which was our duty to do.

3. The result of such rebuilding is tragic—"I make myself a transgressor"—a griever of God. Are we drawing back from a strenuous walk with God, content to ease along through life and hope for heaven in the end? We are deceived and doomed if that is our attitude. "If any man would come after me," said Christ, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Nothing less than this will satisfy the heart of Christ and discharge the solemn obligations He has placed upon us.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1939

MORNING SERVICE

The Word Made Flesh

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE LESSON—Luke 2:8-20; John 1:1-14.

TEXT—*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (John 1:1-14).*

I. The fourth Gospel is unique in many respects; but in none more so than in its account of the origin of Christ.

1. The earliest of our Gospels, that according to Mark, omits entirely the story of Jesus' birth. Its concern was for the active ministry of our Lord; and beginning with the baptism, Jesus is thrust forth upon the stage of action and holds the center of that stage until the resurrection is past. Matthew and Luke both give most engaging accounts of Jesus' birth, and between them present a fairly complete story. But Saint John does not linger about the Bethlehem manger at all. On the contrary, he reaches back into eternity to assert the truth concerning our Lord's pre-existence and equality with God the Father. There is a more-than-chance similarity between the opening words of John's Gospel and those of Genesis. "In the beginning God. . . ." have their echo in "In the beginning was the Word. . . ."

a. John's conception of Christ, therefore, is that of the eternal God incarnate in human flesh. His human conception did not mark the beginning of His existence, but was simply a new and temporary mode of an existence that had its beginning far back in eternity. He was active in creation. He was the moving, active Word of the Old Testament prophets. It is probable that Christ was the person of the Godhead who was presented in the Jehovah revelation in patriarchal days.

b. But Saint John is particularly impressed by the glory that accompanied the revelation of the Incarnate Word. "We beheld his glory," he declares. Perhaps no one enjoyed a greater intimacy with the Lord than did John; and consequently, no one is better qualified to speak of this revelation of divine effulgence.

c. And he finds in that revelation both grace and truth. Israel, too, had a glimpse of God's glory at the Mount of the Law, and was overwhelmed and fearful because of it. But this revelation in Christ ministers grace—unmerited favor of God toward men, and truth—guidance, insight, understanding, a revelation that makes free.

2. It is, all in all, the most amazing and far-reaching conception of the person of Christ to be found in the New Testament. Even the profound insight of Saint Paul does not exceed in daring and faith this presentation of the significance of our Lord in the opening chapter of John's Gospel. Let us consider this illuminating appraisal of Christ.

### II. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

1. The "Word of God" is a very ancient and meaningful conception in our Bible. In the story of Creation it is God's Word that brings order out of chaos, that speaks worlds into

existence, that divides land from sea, and day from night. The psalmist summarizes this power of God's Word (in Psalm 33:9) as follows: "He spake, and it was done! he commanded, and it stood fast." According to Genesis, that is exactly what happened. Saint John concurs in John 1:3: "All things were made by him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." David declares again (Psalm 33:6), "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." And John asserts that in Christ that Word "was made flesh and dwelt among us."

2. The humble birth of Jesus, therefore, was but a new and redemptive revelation of Him. He revealed the power of God in creation. He revealed the will of God in His revelation to the prophets as the eternal Word. But not in His incarnation and subsequent death upon the cross, He revealed the mercy and grace of God.

The assertion that "the Word was made *flesh*" means more than the mere assumption of a human body; it means equally the assumption of a human nature—a nature comingled with the divine nature. This union of divinity and humanity—called by theologians the "hypostatic union," is one of the most difficult and yet essential teachings in our Christology. He is identified with the Father so intimately that He could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Yet He is so closely identified with us that He could suffer and die as a representative man. He was one with us, and yet perfectly acceptable to God. It is this gracious truth that underlies our redemptive gospel.

**III. Now Saint John goes on to assert that "we beheld his glory."**

1. That glory was usually concealed by the veil of His flesh. There were occasions when it shone through, as on the Mount of Transfiguration, when in the presence of three of His disciples "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." There is a strong hint in that description of the vision of the glorified Christ given to John in the Revelation. Peter could never forget that experience, and refers to it in his second letter as one of the most convincing revelations of all Jesus' earthly life. To the mass of men, however, He was a man of marred visage, a root out of dry ground; His glory effectually concealed.

2. Yet there was a strange glory that shone out amid the simplicity of His life. The glory of His birth, announced by angels, accompanied by the choir of heaven, was a glory that had never before been seen on land or sea. There was a glory about his life that made Him the most moving character in that ancient Jewish world. The things that He said, as well as the manner in which He said them, stirred men as they had never before been stirred. "What manner of man is this?" they questioned. "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" By which was meant that He had not had benefit of the rabbinical schools. "Never man spake like this man" was conceded by both friend and foe. Even in the hour of His shameful death there was something about Him that moved a godless centurion to say, "Certainly this was a righteous man."

3. This glory that men dimly recognized—a glory so clearly evident to His followers—was the "glory as of the only begotten of the Father." It was more than the revelation of a masterful personality, a gifted and urbane leader of men. It was a revelation of the only begotten Son of God.

**IV. And, finally, the evangelist declares that this glory was "full of grace and truth."**

1. There was a mighty fullness in Christ, and in this respect He is unique. Probably no man who has ever lived has realized to the full the potentialities that were resident within him. However broad and commanding the scope of his intelligence, there is always something left to be desired. There is no man so great but his greatness is dimmed by some flaw. But of Christ Saint Paul could say, "in him dwelt all the

fulness of the Godhead bodily." And here John found in his fullness a ministry of grace and truth.

2. But this fullness of Christ is to usward who believe. "Of his fulness have all we received," testifies the apostle, "and grace for grace." More specific still is the evangelist's word in verse 12: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." What a marvel of redemption and renewed hope is this!

3. It is, furthermore, a fullness of grace and truth. Grace properly stands first. For grace opens our hearts to the mercy of God, and we come into a loving and vital union with Him. But the grace of God quickens not only the heart, but also the mind. A realm of truth is thrown open to the understanding that has been closed hitherto. It was this illumination that came to Saint Paul, with such conspicuous results. His knowledge of Christ was pitifully meager when he first met the Lord. But once grace had reached his heart, God was able to give him the most amazing grasp of truth; especially, the truth relating to the redeeming death and triumph of the Lord.

It can be true with us all, each in his own measure. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." This is the glorious result of the incarnation of Christ, the Word was made flesh."

#### EVENING SERVICE

##### The Reincarnation of Christ

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE LESSON—Phil. 3:8-15.

TEXT—*Christ liveth in me.* (Gal. 2:20).

I. The Christmas season commemorates an event that has proved to be world-shaking in its power and world-transforming in its influence—the revelation of Jesus Christ in the flesh.

1. The ancient prophets had spoken with one voice of the coming One. His nature was definitely foretold, as well as the character of His redemptive ministry. Even the place of His birth was accurately anticipated by those inspired men of old. Perhaps the most convincing evidence of the uncanny accuracy of their prophetic insight is the entire Gospel according to Matthew. His chief concern was to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was the long-promised Messiah; and he is forever citing some word or deed or circumstance in Christ's earthly career as a fulfillment of "that which was spoken by the prophet."

2. It is a matter of the utmost significance that God chose to reveal His Son in human form, clothed with our flesh; as the writer to the Hebrews puts it, "Verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." There is a wealth of mystery surrounding the unique personality of our Lord, mystery the most astute mind will never be able to fully unfold. But of the fact of that personality and of the certainty that in His incarnation God is revealed in human flesh, there can be no reasonable doubt. He was one of us, this Incarnate One; bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. His identification with us was complete in all respects save one: He did not partake of our depravity and our sins. Yet even here He went farther than one would have believed possible; for He assumed the shame and guilt of our transgressions, and atoned for it all in His fearful death upon the cross. He was able to do it because, while He was identified with us, yet He was essentially different from us. For He never ceased to be what He had been from all eternity, and now is—the only begotten Son of the living God.

**II. We are prone to think of the incarnation as an event of first century significance, but with no vital meaning for men today.**

1. Does the gospel story give the whole account of our Lord's incarnation? Did the matter begin with His birth in

Bethlehem and end with His ascension to the Father? It is true, He was born of the Virgin, making His advent into earth life very much as other men are born. He lived a very human life in Nazareth, assisting Joseph, the village carpenter, and possibly Himself performing the functions of carpenter at Joseph's death. He went from His tools to His pulpit, where He preached the gospel of the kingdom, and performed divers miracles and works of wonder. And at length He was betrayed into the hands of them who hated Him, was condemned and crucified on a Roman cross. He arose on the third day and for the space of forty days moved among His followers; and at length ascended into heaven. This is the story, in sketchy outline, of Christ's incarnation. Is this all there is to it?

2. We recognize that there is a deal of meaning in that story that does not appear on the face of it. That life He lived was an exemplary life—no man had ever lived as He lived. His death was a redemptive one. They jeered Him on His cross with the cry, "He saved others, himself he cannot save." It had been truer to cry, "If He would save others, Himself He must not save." And so He died. And His triumph over the tomb, what of that? His resurrection is the earnest of our resurrection. We are emboldened to believe that God, who suffered not His Holy One to see corruption, will make us victors over the corruption of physical death. His return to the Father was a purposeful return; for there, in the presence of God above, "he ever liveth to make intercession for us." This is a part at least of the hidden meaning in the facts of Jesus' life on earth. Is this the whole story of His incarnation?

**III. The answer is "No"; for here again God's Word is unmistakably clear. It is His purpose to live in His people and become incarnate in them.**

1. There was more than a hint of this in His promise recorded in John 14:18: "I will not leave you [orphans] comfortless: I will come to you." His bodily presence would be removed, and they would be denied the old-time physical intimacy they had enjoyed with Him. But far more intimately than before would He return to them to comfort, strengthen and guide them.

2. There is a practical identity, at least for purposes of devotion, between the Holy Spirit and the spirit of Christ. When our Lord promised that He would send another Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, He did not mean to say that He was leaving them forever, but that in the person of the Holy Spirit He would return to comfort and bless. The New Testament writers do not make any practical distinction between the presence of the Spirit and that of Christ. To have the fullness of Christ within and to be filled with the Spirit are not two experiences but rather two ways of regarding one experience.

(3) Saint Paul frequently seems to prefer the former expression, as when he declared that the "hope of glory" is "Christ in you." And here in the text is his personal testimony: "Christ liveth in me." He has died to self and to sin and lives only unto Christ. "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." It is a similar reincarnation that our Lord desires in the hearts of us all.

**IV. Now what does such a reincarnation demand of men?**

1. It demands, first of all, a crucifixion with Christ. That is strong language; but not too strong to convey the death to sin the apostle has in mind. Nothing less than death to self, to sin, to ungodliness of this present world will meet the demands of God upon us. It is a death that has been provided already in the fact of Jesus' atoning death upon the cross. As Saint Paul puts it in Romans 6:6, "Our old man is crucified with Christ," that is, provisionally; "that the body of sin might be destroyed," that is, actually. Jesus had this same necessity in

mind when He said, "if any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." The provision is complete; but have we entered into the realization of it in our experience?

2. The resultant of such a death is a life lived only unto Christ. It means such a yielding to Him that His will, His work, His purposes can be achieved in me and through me. "The life which I now live in the flesh," says the apostle, "I live by the faith of the Son of God." This is the meaning of the testimony: "Christ liveth in me." Christ's body today is the company of His saints, and He would be incarnate in them. Have we given Him such place within us?

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1939

MORNING SERVICE

**Life's Greatest Ambition**

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE LESSON—2 Corinthians 5.

TEXT—*We are ambitious . . . to be well-pleasing unto him* (2 Cor. 5:9, R.V. mar.).

I. There is a degree of strength brought out in the Revised Version of this text which is more or less obscured in our Authorized Version. We commonly read the passage as "We labor . . . that we may be accepted of him." And the margin adds a little force by suggesting the word "endeavor" for "labor." But the Revised Version says "We make it our aim"; and in a footnote indicates that the Greek reads, "We are ambitious . . . to be well-pleasing unto him." The inspired writer is saying that the desire to please God had become the ambition—the consuming and controlling passion—of his life; the one increasing purpose to which all else must give place.

1. Ambition is a potent force among men. Indeed, the man without ambition is a man without hope. The lack of a high and dominating purpose must make life an aimless and meaningless existence. And life is measured, not by its length in years, but by its richness in achievement. What moots it that a man lives as long as a Methuselah if he does as little worthy of mention as Methuselah and finally dies in a flood, as it would appear Methuselah must have died?

2. Yet ambition may make us or break us forever. An ambition that is noble, and consistent with the will of God for one's life, will produce a Wesley, a Livingstone, a Moody, a Booth. But an ambition that is selfish and ruthless must produce a Cæsar, a Napoleon, or even a Hitler, if one may be pardoned for mentioning so despicable a character in connection with these great names. Ambition is the driving thing in each case; and the direction in which it moves determines whether it shall end in weal or in woe.

3. The thing Paul is saying here is that he has found a way whereby ambition may serve Christ and the purposes of the gospel. This driving energy within him had changed direction; had been converted; had acknowledged a new Master. And from this hour forth it must be consistent with the will of God.

**II. Ambition is a fearful and wonderful thing.**

1. What a controlling force it had been in Paul's career! His earliest ambition was undoubtedly to excel in his preparation for life, and in this he succeeded admirably. He was fortunate that his boyhood home was Tarsus, and that there he had the advantages of the University of Tarsus, an eminent training place for that ancient world. Later his desire for rabbinical training brought him to Jerusalem, where he attended the school of Gamaliel. There was no man of his time better versed in classic lore and in knowledge of the Mosaic law than he.

This ambition easily merged into that which controlled him when we first see him—the ambition for a place of conspicuous honor among the Jews. Already in his youth he was looked upon as a man to be reckoned with. His astute intelligence and his tireless energy were qualities sorely needed in lead-

ers of the Jews against this new Christian heresy, as it was held to be. He never ceased to be legitimately proud of his ancestry and education, at the same time recognizing that they were not enough to merit God's favor. And he never ceased to regret that he had ever devoted his energies to a persecution of the church of Christ.

Yet here in the text this same man, once devoted to selfishness and hatefulness of Christ, is saying that his new ambition, the one now controlling his life is an ambition to please the Lord Christ. The One he hated has now become his Master and Lord.

2. Many a man has been damned by ambition. The man who lives alone for economic success, with no thought of service to God or men, is such a man. The man who lives for political preferment and the acquisition of power over his fellows is such a man. The man who serves God in a worldly minded way is such a man. To live for the praise of men more than the praise of God is fatal. When C. H. Spurgeon was first becoming conscious of the gifts God had given him, he was walking alone one day when a voice seemed to say to him, "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not." It was as the warning voice of God to his soul and led him to a place of deeper consecration than he had ever known.

3. But ambition may be a glorious and transforming thing. There have been numerous occasions where men of dissolute life have abandoned their sins and become sober, dependable men, simply for love of a pure woman. And supremely is the man transformed who gets a glimpse of the face of Christ and loses sight of all beside. This was Paul's experience, and can be the experience of us all; until life's greatest ambition will be the pleasing of God and the doing of His gracious will.

### III. But what does such an ambition necessitate?

1. It requires, first of all, an entire change of inner and outer attitude. There must be a deliverance from self and a centering of one's concerns in Christ. The normal life of men is one of indulgence, without thought as to the mind of Christ. But there must come about within one a new sense of devotion to Christ and His will.

2. But it requires, moreover, a mighty conviction concerning God and His attitude of mercy and redemption; concerning the permanence and importance of spiritual things in contrast with those things that are of the earth earthy. No man can reach the place of this testimony unless there is formed within his soul a mighty, stalwart conviction.

3. But even this is not enough. For the selfish fevers of life cannot be cooled by mere wishful thinking and mental acceptance of the way of Christ. Selfish ambition has a strangle hold on men today and will not yield without a struggle. It is just here that God's grace ministers so richly to men. There is power with Christ to make selfish living seem loathsome, and any ambition inconsistent with the will of God revolting in the extreme.

### IV. We cannot help anticipating the New Year a bit in our thought today. And what sort of lives will we lead during 1940?

Is it going to be the same slight healing of our hurt that has been the story of every earlier year? Or will it be a life submitted to and controlled by the will of God?

I plead for lives during this New Year from which selfishness is cleansed away by the power of Jesus' blood. I plead for lives that are hid with Christ in God. I plead for lives controlled by one ambition—"to be well-pleasing unto him." Others may think our powers are wasted and we have thrown ourselves away on a meaningless enterprise. They thought that of Dr. John Scudder when he left a lucrative medical practice in New York City to serve as a pioneer medical missionary to India. Later on they thought the same thing of Sir Wilfred Grenfell when he gave his talents as a physician to the people of the Labrador coast. But in God's sight, and in

the sight of posterity, these are the noblemen of our world. They were men of ambition—"ambitious to be well-pleasing unto him [God]." Let us make this our ambition, by God's grace, and go forth to the noblest living we have ever known.

## EVENING SERVICE

### The Changeless Record

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE LESSON—John 19:1-22

TEXT—*Pilate answered, What I have written I have written* (John 19:22).

I. There is a solemnity attaching to these words which comes home to my heart with peculiar impressiveness at the turn of the year; a solemnity far greater than anything Pilate intended.

1. They were uttered as a haughty reply of the proud Roman to one who sought to take exception to one of his official acts. It was through fear of the Jews over whom he ruled that he had at last delivered Jesus to be crucified. It was that cry, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend," that appears to have been the decisive word. He lived officially by the grace of Cæsar. But while yielding like a craven coward to this intimidating cry, he could not forbear showing to some extent his real contempt for these Jews over whom he ruled. And he selected this way to do it: he placed a title on the cross of Jesus which read: "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS." Those words were like salt in an open wound, and the chief priests demanded that they be modified; to which Pilate replied in the words of this text.

2. But this title on the cross of Christ was a very small matter in comparison with other parts of the record of that terrible day—a record of unparalleled shame. The vaunted justice of Rome had indeed been brought low and made the object of bitter scorn both then and thereafter. For there was no shadow of justice in the condemnation of Christ. Pilate acknowledged frankly that He was an innocent man and deserved only liberty. Yet despite his own acknowledgment, and weakened by the essential cowardice of his own timorous heart, he yielded to popular clamor and allowed Jesus to go to His death.

3. That was the shameful record of that day, and that record is absolutely changeless. It is as damning an indictment of the character of this Roman today as it was the day it was written. Pontius Pilate has become one of the villains of the universal drama, and his name is a by-word and hissing. No man of intelligence would name his dog Pilate, to say nothing of giving that name to his son. It is an indelible record; and when Pilate so proudly and contemptuously said, "What I have written I have written," he was only pronouncing his own doom.

### II. But all of us are writing records with each passing day, did we but realize it.

1. First of all is the record book above. No deed is done, no word is uttered, no attitude is assumed without the record of it going in that fateful book. John, the Revelator, tells of his vision of the judgment hour in these impressive words, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; . . . and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." The records we are writing will face us one day. There is a great deal of truth in the simple song:

*He sees all I do,  
He hears all I say;  
My Lord is writing all the time.*

And of these records it can be said truly, "What I have written I have written."

2. There are records, furthermore, that are being inscribed on our book of memory; records that will live on to haunt or

hearten us in the days to come. Memory can bless a man or it can blight him. A man shut up with his memory of sin would be in a veritable hell. If Jesus' account of the rich man and the beggar, the most significant word in the picture of the rich man's hell is that of Father Abraham: "Son, remember." If he could only forget! The record in his memory was searing his soul as by a white-hot flame.

3. But, moreover, there are records that are being woven into the fabric of our characters. For character is a composite of our heredity, modified by all that we think, feel, say, and do from our earliest conscious moment down to this very hour. The choices we make are shaping and coloring our destiny. The passions to which we yield and the impulses which control us are weaving their lines into the tapestry of character and determining the details of the picture it will portray forever. And nothing is ever lost from this record. The whole content of our lives is on file in our subconsciousness like the stacks of a great library. It is all making its contribution to what we now are and what we shall be throughout all eternity.

4. Then there are the records we are writing in the lives of others, through our influence, consciously or unconsciously exerted. The impact of our living and example on other men is a part of our solemn responsibility before God. No man lives unto himself. He touches his fellowmen at so many points, and is touched by them, until it seems that every man's life is only part of a common whole. And the record we are writing in other men's lives is something for which we must render account.

**III. Now so far as these records are concerned, what we have written we have written.**

1. The stream of time flows ceaselessly on, and never reverses its flow. There is no way back to yesterday. How many a man has cried, remorsefully, "If I could only live my life over again!" But no man can. The deeds of yesterday are done, and can never be undone. The words of yesterday are said, and can never be recalled; they will hurt or heal forever. Feathers scattered to the winds can be as easily collected again as the words and deeds of yesterday. Time marches on. That is a truism. But when one stops to think about it, how solemn and ominous the thought becomes!

2. How near last year-end seems tonight! Our memories can so easily bridge the gap between then and now, and bring up exceedingly close, as it seems, the event of twelve months ago. Yet in actual fact last year-end is infinitely far away. A gap as great as eternity yawns between then and now.

Indeed, a decade hence is nearer than yesterday; we may reach that, but we can never attain unto yesterday.

3. What we have written during this year so soon to die, we have written, and God himself cannot make it otherwise. As the Poet Fitzgerald has put it:

*The moving finger writes; and, having writ,  
Moves on: nor all thy piety nor wit  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,  
Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it.*

The record of the year must stand, and even the grace of a loving God, backed by infinite power, cannot deny the fact of that record.

**IV. Granting this, what hope have we for today and tomorrow?**

1. There are some things God *can* do for us. He can *forgive*. He can lift from our consciences the guilt of past sins, and assure us that God remembers them against us no more forever. And while, as in Luther's vision, the scroll of our shameful past may be unrolled by our accuser, it will be found to bear from the hand of a merciful God the assurance, "All forgiven!"

2. Moreover, the writing is not done, though how nearly done no man here knows. The book of life is still in the making; and however sinful the past may have been, the record of today and tomorrow may be changed. This New Year can be, by the grace of God, a record of victory over sin, fellowship with Christ, glad submission to the will of God, and holy delight in His service.

He came to my desk with a quivering lip,  
The lesson was done.

"Teacher, I want a new leaf," he said;  
"I've spoiled this one."

In place of the leaf all stained and blotted,  
I gave him a new one, all unspotted;  
And into his tired eyes smiled,  
"Do better now, my child."

I came to the throne with a quivering soul,  
The old year was done.

"Father, hast Thou a new leaf for me?  
I've spoiled this one."

In place of the leaf all stained and blotted,  
He gave me a new one, all unspotted,  
And into my tired eyes smiled,  
"Do better now, my child."

**Wesley's Rules for Congregational Singing**

1. Learn the tunes.
2. Sing them as they are printed.
3. Sing all. "If it is a cross to you, take it up and you will find a blessing."
4. Sing lustily and with a good courage.
5. Sing modestly. Do not bawl.
6. Sing in time. Do not run before or stay behind.
7. Above all, sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself or any other creature. In order to do this, attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually.

**Expository Outlines for December**

Lewis T. Corlett

**The Christian a Reflector**

(Phil. 2:12-16)

**I. THE CHRISTIAN IS PICTURED AGAINST A DARK BACKGROUND (v. 15).**

1. Living in a crooked and perverse nation.
2. Amidst conditions and circumstances that are directly opposed and antagonistic to the Christian.
3. Beset by foes whose deliberate aim is to besmirch and betray the purest character.
4. Christ prayed, not that the Christians should be taken out of these

conditions, but that they should be left in such a world.

**II. GOD IN HIS SALVATION AND GRACE, PROVIDES AMPLE SECURITY AND LIGHT**

1. God works in the hearts of His followers that which is pleasing to Himself and a benefit to the individual (v. 13).
2. God gives light to dispel the darkness. "Among whom ye shine as lights in the world."
3. God gives those who obey Him the assurance that He recognizes them as sons of a divine Father, "sons of God" (v. 15),

4. God provides grace to live free from contamination and condemnation. "That ye may be blameless and harmless" (v. 15).

### III. MAN MUST REFLECT THE MARVELOUS WORK GOD PERFORMS IN HIS INNER NATURE. "WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION."

1. The imperfections of the physical, the shortcomings of the mental, and the limitations of the finite hamper the radiations of the divine light from the souls of men.
2. The Christian must determine to set himself to bringing out the best manifestation of inward grace that is possible.
3. The activities of the Christian help to reveal the purpose life to the world.
4. An optimistic, boosting faith will enable the people to see more of the inner life (v. 14).
5. Man must ever be so obedient as to keep himself blameless and free from rebuke of the divine judge (v. 13).
6. The child of God must tenaciously cling to the Word of life (v. 16).
  - a. The Word of life is the proper Guidebook.
  - b. The Word of life is nourishing and strengthening to the inner life.

### IV. THE REFLECTION OF THE DIVINE INNER WORK WILL DISPEL DARKNESS "Among whom ye shine as lights in the world."

1. The darkness of this world would be awful without the stars of hope of Christian lives.
2. Each Christian is reflecting divine light in his locality.
3. The faithfulness of each one brings joy to other workers.
 

"That I may rejoice in the day of Christ."

#### Preserving Integrity

(Colossians 3:1-17)

#### I. GOD HAS PLACED UPON MAN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF KEEPING IN PROPER RELATION WITH THE DIVINE

1. Based upon the sharing of the resurrected life of Christ (v. 1).
2. The crises of salvation give man a vital, inner, living relationship with God.
3. Man must keep himself in the place where God can keep him.
4. Man must ever practice righteousness both to himself and his fellowmen.

#### II. PAUL MAPS OUT A PLAN OF ACTION WHEREBY THE CHRISTIANS CAN PRESERVE THEIR INTEGRITY

1. Set the aim, purpose, and intent in Christ (v. 1).

- a. A determination to keep the renewed powers centered in Christ.
- b. The cultivation of a normal hunger of the soul risen with Christ.

#### 2. Concentrate the mind on heavenly things (v. 2).

"Give your mind to things that are above" (WEYMOUTH).

- a. This controls the thought life.
  - b. This would shape the attitudes.
  - c. This fortifies the will in right decisions.
- #### 3. Cultivate love one toward another (vs. 13, 14).
- a. Forbearance of one another's peculiarities.
  - b. Forgiveness of mistreatment.
  - c. The cement that is the bond of perfectness, the security against wrong motives.
  - d. Follow the example of Christ in all of this.

#### 4. Maintain a worshipful attitude at all times.

a. Rest in the peace of God (v. 15).

b. Be ever grateful for all blessings. "And be ye thankful."

c. Revel in the rich treasures of the Word of Christ (v. 16).

d. Be an example in public worship, "Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."

e. Deepen the spiritual life in continuous, worshipful moods toward God.

f. This strengthens the worshiper and encourages the onlooker.

#### 5. Have the proper objective for all deeds (v. 17).

a. All words must be seasoned with grace to bring glory to God.

b. A self-forgetfulness in the desire to exalt and promote the glory of God.

c. A life of trust in Jesus in all things.

d. A constructive influence to show forth the glory of God in the whole of life.

### III. A MAINTENANCE OF THESE WILL NOT ONLY PRESERVE CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY BUT WILL ALSO STRENGTHEN CHARACTER AND BLESS OTHERS

#### Divine Relationship

(1 John 3)

#### I. A SUPERIOR SONSHIP

1. Superior to the knowledge of the world. "Therefore the world knoweth us not."
2. Superior because it is a divine sonship. "That ye should be called the sons of God."
3. Superior because it is through a bestowal of love,

- a. So superior that it is astonishing that man has received it. "Behold what manner of love."

b. Superior because the Father bestowed it on those who were naturally unworthy of the love.

c. Glorious because it is without the cost of what the world calls the medium of exchange. "The Father hath bestowed upon us."

4. Superior because man is elevated by it.

a. To live on a plane with God.

b. To live in the assurance of sonship. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God."

c. Because it places man in a position of continual unfolding of grace and light. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

d. Because it gives man the proper perspective. "But we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him."

(1) The conscious assurance of the unfulfilling promise.

(2) The hope of a better and brighter day.

(3) The prospect of being completely like the One who bestows the love.

#### II. BEGETS A DETERMINATION BASED UPON THIS HOPE (v. 3)

1. Every man who has the assurance of divine sonship longs to be pure as He is.

a. Each son of God has a determination to keep himself where God can keep him pure.

b. The One who bestows the sonship and begets the hope, draws the believer on to purity of heart.

2. The ideal and experience of purity is freedom from sin.

a. Sin is contrary to sonship, it is disobedience (vs. 4, 9).

b. Sin is foreign to obedient love (vs. 6, 9).

c. Sin is obedience to the devil and his works, so adverse to God and His love.

3. This purity is right motive toward God and the fellowman.

a. It is aligned with the life of God. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him."

b. It is manifested by the love for the brethren (vs. 14-18).

4. This purity is made possible by the sacrifice of Christ (v. 5).

#### III. THIS DIVINE RELATIONSHIP IS MAINTAINED BY FAITH

1. Arising from a heart free from condemnation (v. 21).

2. Based on a continual obedience (v. 22).

3. Manifested in a loving trust in Christ.

## Suggestions for Prayermeetings

H. O. Fanning

### Making Our Prayermeetings Effective

ONE of our chief objectives in our prayermeetings is the glory of God and the good of men in their effectiveness. That they should be of the greatest possible benefit to the church we are all agreed. We are equally agreed that they should also be made of the greatest possible benefit to the communities in which our churches are located. Our prayermeetings are public meetings. They should have their place in our ministries to the people of our neighborhoods. Somewhat after the fashion of our Sunday schools they should be gathering places for the devout people—and others—of the people to whom we minister. What our prayermeetings are to the people of our communities are pretty good indications of what our churches are to them. If our prayermeetings are a benefit to them, our churches will be a benefit to them. If we cannot help them through our prayermeetings it is not likely that we will do more for them through our other services. Special attention should be given to this matter if success is to be gained in it. Whatever would be unbecoming in other institutions for the benefit of the public is likely to be unbecoming in our prayermeetings. In our present infirm state considerable care should be exercised to keep all that is not for the benefit of our prayermeetings at the minimum. We will lose nothing by consideration for others. We may gain much by it. Not only will we benefit others by such consideration, but we will benefit ourselves. The courtesies due to those who worship with us will benefit both them and us. One of our outstanding needs in many places is that of increased success in reaching the people of our communities. Our prayermeetings should be important factors in the accomplishment of this work.

### Some Things About Patience

*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing (James 1:2-4).*

It is the wisdom of God that life should begin, not in maturity, but in infancy. The greater the possibilities of life, the greater will be the difficulties to be overcome in their realization. Human life is the most improvable form with which we are familiar. Beginning at zero man must go through all of its stages to develop its powers and realize its possibilities. It would be ignoble on our part to desire to have the possibilities of life

reduced, that the difficulties to be overcome in their realization might be lessened. Human life is the crowning work of God's creative power. As beings created in His image and after His likeness, we cannot expect to realize our possibilities with little effort, or in a brief period of time. However we may be affected in our present state of being and development, some day we will be glad that God has created us with such transcendent possibilities of life.

I. *Patience is not a fixed quantity.* Some have gone much farther in its development than others. Some have much more than others. Many of us would like to have the patience of Job. Not so many of us would like to go through all he did to develop that patience. But Job's patience was worth all it cost him. For four thousand years he has stood as a monument to the power of God and the possibilities of human nature for its development. It is not because of limitations on God's part, or of impossibilities on our part, that we are so limited in patience.

II. *Patience is something in which there is room for improvement in all of us.* We are in the beginnings of life. We are all in the making. It is doubtful if there is any other virtue so tried as is human patience. But that is the way of its development.

III. *Patience is not the result of accident, but of trials of faith suited to its development.* God is concerned about this work. Not only does He save us from all sin, but His work of bringing us to the realization of our possibilities will go on throughout eternity. The time is coming when we will see that we were worth saving. Jesus did not shed His blood on Calvary's cross for the redemption of beings of little worth. It doth not yet appear what we shall be.

IV. *Patience is one of the most practical of the virtues.* It is necessary to the living of human life, and the development of its powers. It takes but an instant to become a Christian. It takes a lifetime here, and eternity hereafter to be one. The possibilities of salvation are as exhaustless as the resources of our Savior. All worth while undertakings require patience for their accomplishment. The building of human character, and the development of human personality are among the greatest of all undertakings. Not only are we destined for heaven, but we are destined to grace the place.

V. *Former temptations have begun, and are doing their work.* Others are beginning theirs. We are destined to run the whole course of life. There are two

sides to salvation—what we are saved from, and what we are saved to. God is as much interested in the one as He is in the other. We must meet the conditions of the one, as we are meeting the conditions of the other.

VI. *We owe debts of gratitude to those who, by their patience and perseverance, have given to us so many of the conveniences of life.* And this in the spiritual, as well as in other realms. In no other realm is patience more needed, or more effective. The patient are assets to God, to their fellowmen, to themselves. Never has patience been more needed than it is today.

VII. *Would we have more patience?* We must take the way that leads to its development. We must travel the route that others have traveled in gaining it. It is not a one-sided work. It is something in which God and man are interested, and in which they must work together. The more faithfully we work with Him the more satisfactory will be the results of our work. Not what we now are is to be our goal, but what we may become by the grace of God in cooperation with Him.

### Thanking God and Taking Courage

*He thanked God, and took courage (Acts 28:15).*

Appreciation of the worth while things of life is one of the paramount needs of the hour. The many are allowing themselves to be engulfed by desires for things of little worth, either in time or eternity. Paul had come to a crisis in life. Because of his faithfulness he had been imprisoned. The court of Nero is before him at Rome. What his appearance there may mean to him, he will soon know. How does he prepare himself for the ordeal? He thanks God, and takes courage. He is living a worth while life. Imperial courts and their doings are but incidents in life to him. He thanks God for what life means to him, and meets the issue with courage.

I. *In Paul's attitude here we see two elements of wholesome personality—appreciation and courage.* Without appreciation of the right sort of things one will not rise very high in the scale of character and personality. Large lives are not built on foundations of trivialities. They are built on foundations that will produce them, and sustain them when they are produced. Worth while lives are not the product of attention to worthless things.

II. *Men strive for worth while goals as they appreciate the importance of reaching them.* Men must see the value of reaching goals before they will pay the price of reaching them. In a very real sense, Christianity means to one

just about what he develops in the way of appreciation of it. Reaching the goal was Paul's one objective. He allowed nothing to move him from this. Lack of appreciation, lack of courage are fatal to worthy ambitions.

III. *Paul had not had an easy time.* He had risen high in the spiritual realm. He had paid the price of such rising (2 Cor. 11:1-33). Climbing the heights is not easy, but it is worth all it costs. What a man values enough to secure is an indication of his character and fiber. An easy religion is of little value to God, to man, or to its possessor. The men God has used in blessing others are men who have put themselves in the way of being so used. The church that is doing little has little appreciation of the value of its work.

IV. *Why are not more people climbing the spiritual ladder?* Lack of appreciation of the importance of such climbing; lack of courage to put forth the necessary effort. The road ahead of Paul was not an easy one. It would take courage to travel it. He was giving practical evidence of what Christianity was worth to him. And so are you; and so am I. To expect an easy way to the worth while things of life is folly. There are no easy ways to such things. Christianity is worth little to many, because they are putting so little into it.

V. *It was Paul's appreciation of the value of the gospel that was bringing him to Rome as a prisoner.* Through his greatest trials had come his greatest blessings, his greatest opportunities, his greatest victories. His foes were God's foes. It was because of his faithfulness to God that they were his foes. It was through their opposition that much of work of God through Paul was accomplished. Conflicts were fierce. Victories were glorious. His life was a challenge not only to the forces of light, but to the forces of darkness. The world was being turned upside down through him. It needed this in Paul's day. It needs it today. The God who stirred it then, can stir it now. What He needs is men through whom He can stir it.

VI. *We have had some trials during the year that is drawing to its close.* If we had not had them we would have missed some of our choicest blessings. What have these trials meant to us? What has been their effect upon our lives? In what ways have we benefited by them? We will not go far in Christian experience and service until we learn more of the value of testings and trials, of temptations and troubles, and the blessings that come to us through them. Take from Paul the blessings that came to him through his trials and troubles, and you would rob him of much.

VII. *Paul sounds no note of slackening his pace, or minimizing his efforts.* There

are difficulties in the way. But there are compensations, and the compensations are commensurate with the magnitude of the difficulties to be overcome. Humanly speaking, the outlook was dark enough. Not only did Paul appreciate the power of the gospel, but he appreciated the condition of the world, its need of Christ, its possibilities with Him, in Him, and through Him. Conditions are appalling. But the remedy for them is in Christ. Paul had the courage to face them, and win in the conflict. For nineteen hundred years the world has been blessed. The world of today is rocking and reeling on its way to ruin. Its one hope is in Christ. Humanly speaking, the need of the hour is men who will thank God, take courage, and press on with Christ. He still uses human instrumentality.

### Some Things About Prayer

*And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint (Luke 18:1-8).*

Prayer has many aspects. Our Lord speaks this parable to enforce one of them; that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. We recognize that there are alternatives in many things in our lives. In the matter of prayer, this is often true. It is pray or faint. Prayer makes the difference between man alone, and man with God; between failure and success; between insufficiency and sufficiency; between helplessness and omnipotence. Prayer is not only an institution for emergencies and special occasions, but for all occasions; not only for some subjects, but for all subjects. God is interested in all the affairs of our lives. The one safe thing for us to do is to bring them all before Him.

I. *Here we have a helpless widow; a heartless judge, who feared not God, neither regarded man.* A hopeless case from the human standpoint. There seemed but one thing for the widow to do—faint. But this heartless judge, inconsiderate of God or man, was overcome by a widow who persisted in her appeal, and refused to faint. How much more will our gracious God answer the prayers of His people who cry to Him? People whom He has redeemed by the precious blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

II. *In any and all cases, there is not one reason why we should not pray.* There is every reason why we should. Here our Lord is challenging us—and all men—to prayer. There are no cases where fainting is necessary. There are none where prayer is hopeless. Compassed as we are with infirmity, at the beginning of life, and learning as we live, there are many cases which should be settled negatively, as well as others

which should be settled otherwise. A negative settlement is a settlement as certainly as is a positive. We need God's help to keep us off of wrong roads as certainly as we need it to keep us on the right road.

III. *There are many hindrances to prayer; many things that would make it seem to us to be hopeless.* What is an unjust judge in the hands of a just God? A petition resisting magistrate to a prayer hearing God! Such a judge yielding to unworthy motives, to a God yielding to worthy motives. A judge who is indifferent to a God who is interested. A judge who is indisposed to help, to a God who is seeking to help. A judge who is repellent, to a God who is inviting. A judge with little power, to a God who has all power.

IV. *Many things come into our lives that are staggering to our faith.* They are not beyond the scope of prayer. They are not staggering to our God. They are not to be kept from God, but to be brought to Him. The great lesson our Lord is teaching us here is that we ought always to pray and not to faint. Fainting is an antidote for prayer. Prayer is an antidote for fainting.

V. *Answers to prayer may be long delayed.* Delays are not necessarily denials. There may be many occasions for delay. God deals with us as with human beings, not as inanimate objects. There may be much need of preparation on our part. Answers to prayers in important matters may involve much for their successful coming.

VI. We learn to pray by praying. Faith is increased by exercise. Capacities for vision are increased by use. Great attainments in faith are not easily made. Great victories in prayer are not easily won. Prayer is not so small a matter, that its secrets may be mastered in a day; its possibilities realized by novices. It yields its fruit to those who seek it diligently; who persist in prayer, and refuse to faint.

VII. *We have an infinite God, an open Bible, a bending heaven, a divinely given invitation to avail ourselves of infinite resources.* We are in a world where needs are staggering. Many of us do not realize this because our vision is so meager, our horizon so narrow, and our undertakings so inadequate. Because we pray so little and faint so readily. The needs of the world are challenging, and demand the resources of God for their supply.

### The Birth of Jesus

*Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:8-20).*

The ministry of angels is something of which we know little, but probably have

much. It is a joy to know that there is such a ministry, and this means of communication between earth and heaven; between God and men. It is an evidence of the completeness of God's provision to minister to the needs of men in the fullest possible manner. Sin brought ruin to the world, and fear to the hearts of men. Because of the coming of the Christ, this word, fear not, is possible.

I. *For four thousand years the promise of the coming of the seed of the woman had been known among men.* All this time the promise had been kept alive in the minds of men, as the link that bound them to God, and bridged the chasm between them and the holy and merciful God. During this time forgiveness of sins and purification from sin, and the benefits of redeeming grace had come to them through the shedding of the blood of sacrifices and offerings pointing forward to the shedding of His atoning blood. Men look forward to His coming. God's work and man's redemption move forward.

II. *But the time of the coming of the Christ, arrived, and He was born in the little town of Bethlehem.* Humble in the eyes of men, but great in the eyes of God. He was born of humble people as men saw them, but people of royal blood, and highly honored before God. Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, and Mary his virgin bride, with child by the Holy Spirit. They were after the royal line of David the king, a man after God's heart. On His throne our Lord will reign in Jerusalem in the dispensation to come (Isaiah 24:23; 9:6, 7; Luke 2:20-33).

III. *The birth of Jesus was the most important birth in the history of the world; to God, to men; to heaven, to earth; to the accomplishment of the divine purposes.* Through Him God has saved all from chaos, and has made possible all that has been accomplished. Eternity alone will reveal what has been accomplished through the shedding of His blood. Only as we see the blood-bought, blood-washed throng, sweep on from glory to glory can we know.

IV. *Men slept on in fancied security; the enrolment for taxation went on; the Christ was born in a khan, cradled in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.* But heaven was stirred when this mighty event which made possible all the benefits and glories of the divine purposes was consummated. The angel of the Lord with an angelic host was present to announce the consummation of the event, and reveal to a company of humble, but highly honored shepherds, the fact, and significance of what had taken place. It was especially fitting that the revelation of the birth of the Good Shepherd should be made to a company of men who were themselves shepherds.

V. *Wise Men from the east saw His star, and followed it to the place of His birth.* His birth made prayermeetings possible. Made worship possible. Made everything that is worth while possible for time and eternity. There they found the Christ of God; the Anointed One; God manifest in the flesh, and worshiped Him. He alone by the shedding of His own blood made possible the redemption of the ruined race with all that redemption means.

VI. *The witness of the shepherds at home and the witness of the Wise Men abroad has continued until this good hour and will continue forevermore.* It is not difficult to see how highly honored were these men of long ago. But we who in the providence of God are His witnesses today are highly honored. God could bestow no greater honor upon us than that of numbering us among His children, and sharers in the blessings of His grace with the saints of the ages.

VII. *Down across the ages to come, the significance of this honor will be revealed to us.* Throughout eternity we shall be sharers with Him of His glory, and the benefits of His atoning work. The redemption God has purchased for us at such a fearful price, can be no less than the most glorious possible to Him. He could go no farther than He has gone in the price He has paid. He can go no farther than He will go in the revelations of His grace. Hail, hail, Thou glorious Christ. Emmanuel, God with us. Our Kinsman Redeemer.

#### Divine Provision for Urgent Needs

*And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost; and they spake the word of God with boldness . . . And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them (Acts 4:1-33).*

In considering this matter we may find it helpful to think of our Lord's provision of divine grace for us in our sanctified experiences in terms of provision for us in our personal experiences on the one hand, and of provision for us in our public services on the other. In the one the outstanding emphasis will be upon purity. This is in the nature of a fixed quantity, designed to supply our individual needs, and adapted to meet them as they arise. In the other the emphasis will be more upon power. This will be in variable quantities, as needs may arise. Here emergencies may arise which will demand vast increases, in boldness, grace, and all that is necessary to give us success in our work. The disciples seem to have been in a position of this sort at this time, and we have here an account of how they obtained help in their time of need.

I. *That emergencies do arise that are peculiar to public service in preaching the gospel, and in other services, is certain.* If we have not experienced them, we will not go far in these matters until we do. Such emergencies seem to be upon us on every hand. Staggering difficulties confront us everywhere. Overcoming them is our need if progress is to be made.

II. *That God has provided supplies for these needs is evident from the Word of God, from human history, and from personal experience.* It would be more than passing strange if our Lord should commission His disciples to preach His gospel, without making provision to supply their needs—whatever they may be—in fulfilling their commissions.

III. *The difficulty here is one of intensified ecclesiastical opposition.* It is not due to failure on the part of the disciples in the matter of their personal experiences. They are at their best.

IV. *It is not due to laxity on their part in fulfilling their commission, or to lack of success in the doing of their work.* It is due rather to their personal spiritual fitness on the one hand, and their abundant success in preaching the Word of God, and winning men to Christ. Not to their failures, but to their successes.

V. *The occasion demands in spiritual boldness, power, and grace, quantities beyond their present supply.* And that is not an uncommon situation among us today. Neither has it been down across the ages. These men got what they needed. How well are we following in their footsteps in this matter?

VI. *Their resort is to God in prayer.* They will go forward, or backward. The God who has supplied their needs thus far, and enabled them to go forward so successfully, can still supply their needs, and enable them to overcome in the present difficulty. The power of the Sanhedrin, and of the allied Jewish forces is arrayed against them. But it is also arrayed against the God, whose they are, and whom they serve. In themselves these disciples are helpless before these forces. Doing the work of the Lord is not an easy or insignificant task. It is one of meaning and significance.

#### The God of Force Versus the True God

Are our modern statesmen awakening to the fact of our modern peril, that the spirit of lawlessness is replacing the One True God of righteousness and law with a new concept of devotion to what Daniel described as "the god of forces"? Our own President recently said, "There can be no peace if the reign of law is replaced by a recurrent sanctification of sheer force."

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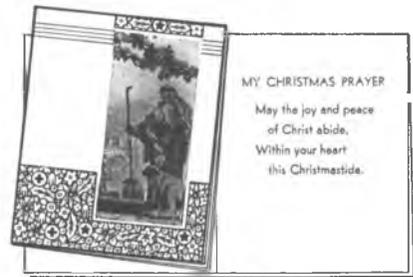
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