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THE POWER TO SEE IT THROUGH

Twenty-five Sermons on Christianity To-day

By

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

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THE POWER TO SEE IT THROUGH*

CONCERNING one character in the New Testament, mentioned only three times, one suspects that many Christians have not even heard—Demas. He illustrates one of the most familiar tragedies in human life—a fine beginning and a poor ending. He lacked the power to see it through. First, in Paul's letter to Philemon, we read, "Demas, Luke, my fellow-workers." So Demas, along with Luke, and named first at that, was standing by Paul in his Roman imprisonment, a devoted and promising disciple. Second, in Paul's letter to the Colossians, we read, "Luke the beloved Physician, and Demas." Reading that, one wonders why Demas and Luke, who were praised together at the first, were separated in this passage as though Luke indeed retained Paul's confidence as "the beloved physician" but Demas had become merely "Demas." Third, in the second letter to Timothy, incorporating, we suppose, one of the last messages Paul ever wrote, we read, "Demas forsook me, having loved this present age." Three points on a curve, that enable us to plot its graph! For here is the story of a man who made an excellent beginning and a wretched ending: Demas, my fellow-worker; Demas; Demas forsook me.

Intimate companions of Paul in the Roman circle, Luke and Demas must have known each other very well. Now, Luke is the only narrator of Jesus' life whose Gospel records the parable about the man who started to build a tower and was not able to finish. Matthew did not refer to that, nor Mark, nor John—

*A New Year's Sermon.

only Luke. One wonders if he remembered it because of Demas. Demas was slipping, let us say. Through Paul's little group in Rome anxious apprehension ran that Demas was not holding out, and one imagines Luke pleading with his friend. The Master himself, he might have said, warned his first disciples about the peril which is besetting you. For once he said, "Which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it? Lest haply, when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." So one thinks of Luke pleading with his friend. At least Luke, alone among the evangelists, put the parable into his Gospel. He had seen its truth too vividly illustrated ever to forget it: Demas, my fellow-worker; Demas; Demas forsook me.

Obviously the qualities which make a good start possible are not identical with the qualities which see life through to the end. In no realm are starting power and staying power the same thing. A ship can make a grand getaway at the launching only to make a poor stand later against the fury of the waves and winds when the north-easters are unleashed. So one sees in Demas a character—how familiar!—capable of fine impulses, generous responses, idealistic loyalties, and eager loves; only he lacked staying power.

One thinks of this not simply because of the New Year season, which is naturally a festival of fresh beginnings, but because our generation has so emphatically stressed the gospel of a good start. How strongly we feel the importance of childhood and of the influences that play on childhood! To give a child a good start, we say, is the most essential benediction that can be bestowed upon him. That emphasis is

profoundly important and it represents truth, only not the whole truth. Many of us here had a good start. We have no complaints about that. In family and church, in school and early Christian training, we had a fine beginning. But for all that, some of us are Demas and all of us know we could have been. Over what thin ice have we skated! How easily we could have broken through! How many of us here have already fallen far from a faith that once was strong and a character that once was clean! We know Demas. The mirror shows him to us. Introspection reveals the process of his downfall. Nearly two thousand years ago he lived and died, his very name barely preserved, as though by accident, and yet how vivid he is in our imaginations! Demas, my fellow-worker; Demas; Demas forsook me, having loved this present age.

However beautiful one's beginning, nothing matters much in human life without a good end. One does not mean that we may demand an outwardly successful and fortunate conclusion, as in old sentimental novels where everything had to come out happily. But without a *good* end, without morale and staying power and steady character to see a man through to a worthy conclusion, what else in life can be much worth while? Jesus could have spoiled everything in the Garden of Gethsemane and, had he done that, all for nothing would have gone his unremembered Sermon on the Mount and his unselfish months of ministry. The career of Jesus was like splitting a log. Every previous blow of the axe is indispensable but it is the last blow that splits it. So we know there was a Christ, and the rich meanings of his ministry have come to us because he had staying power to go through to the end, where he could say, "It is finished."

What is the most lamentable tragedy in human life? To face suffering, to be cruelly handicapped? Surely not! For we have seen some terribly handicapped people who had such moral staying power that they came through to a great conclusion, all their flags flying when they came into port. But there is a tragedy so appalling that, when one has seen it, the very reminiscence of it makes one's blood run cold—to be fortunately born, to have a glorious boyhood, to rise to responsible position, to be loved and trusted, and then to crack as though all the time the shining metal had had a flaw in it, to betray one's trust, deceive one's friends, blow out one's brains! You see, whether it be in dramatic fashion like that or in homelier wise, where a fine beginning lapses by slow degrees into a dishevelled ending, Demas is the tragedy.

In this regard life is like marriage. How beautifully love begins! With what romantic launchings it can get its start! But we elders, who watch the young folks at their love-making and their weddings, habitually ask a deeper question. They have qualities that can start a home; have they the qualities that keep one—the deep fidelity, the long-term loyalty, the steady and abiding love that keep a home? For in marriage, as in all life, a good beginning only makes more tragic an unhappy end.

On this first Sunday of the New Year, therefore, let us not talk together about starting power—every soul here has more than once made a fine beginning—but about staying power, I celebrate the qualities of faith and character that enable a man to see life through.

For one thing, staying power is always associated with a certain central integrity of conscience. Whatever else life may give or may deny, one thing is absolutely indispensable—that a man should not break faith

with himself, that he should keep his honour bright in his own eyes, that whatever else may fail he should not inwardly be a failure. Such quality of conscience, making it indispensable that, whatever happens, a man live on high terms with himself, is of the essence of staying power, and it is the glory of great artists that commonly in their art they have exhibited it. Elsner was a teacher of music in Warsaw to whom came, one day, a young man for music lessons, and at the end of the first term one finds this in Elsner's record: "Lessons in musical composition: Chopin, Fryderyk, third year student—amazing capabilities, musical genius." That was a fine start. But to finish that career was costly. It cost hard work—one would take that for granted. It cost discouraged hours—one would expect that. But, deeper yet, Chopin's career cost conscience. He would not, for popularity's sake, write music that violated his own interior standards. One thing was absolutely indispensable, no matter what happened: he had to keep faith musically with himself. So Chopin became *Chopin*. As another put it, "The artist's conscience is a fearful thing."

As we see Paul and Demas in Rome, it is obvious Paul had *that*. He would have liked outward good fortune and success could he have had them on honourable terms—of course he would! But whether fortune or misfortune befell, one thing was absolutely indispensable—he had to keep faith with himself and the Christ within him. Not simply as a matter of duty but as a matter of happiness, that was indispensable. Demas, however, was of another sort. He soon found something else indispensable. "Demas forsook me," wrote Paul, "having loved this present age." So that was it! Roman civilization was brilliant like our own. It had ugly aspects, but for agile minds and grasping

hands there were prizes to be gained. All around Paul's poor prison house was Rome. So Demas, no Chopin in his character, cheapened his music. He did not have an artist's conscience. Christ had never dug so deep as that into Demas. To be loyal to the royal in himself was not absolutely indispensable. He loved this present age.

You see, I am not really talking about Demas now, but about us. One would not minimize the sacrifices that such a conscience as we are speaking of often costs in a world like this, but the great souls who have most possessed such conscience have commonly thought of it not as a burden of duty, but as a gospel of liberty. Listen! No man ever needs to be a failure. Trouble, outward breakdown of hopes, may come, but a man who cares most that he should not be a failure can capitalize trouble. "All sunshine," say the Arabs, "makes Sahara." Men may give the hemlock to Socrates, nail Jesus to the cross, behead Paul outside the gates of Rome. Livingstone may die in the heart of Africa, his work unfinished, and Lincoln may be shot by a crazy man. All such souls have known an inner liberty. Whatever happened, they did not need to *be* failures. That was within their control. Still they could be loyal to the royal in themselves and come to their last port with their flags flying.

That is the final difference between people. Paul faced many kinds of failure but he himself was no failure. If, however, the old legend is correct, Demas went back to Thessalonica and became a priest of idols in a pagan temple. He himself was a failure.

In the second place, staying power is always associated with the experience of being captured by a cause, laid hold on by something greater than oneself to which one gives one's loyalty—an art, a science, a vocation, a social reform, an object of

devotion which one conceives to be more important than oneself. This was the common property of those to whom we have turned as illustrations of persistent character—Chopin in music, Socrates in philosophy, Livingstone as a missionary, Lincoln as a statesman with a cause. They all cared for something superior to themselves to which they gave their long-term loyalty, so that they stood the gaff, as we say, in their individual fortunes, and followed through to a strong conclusion for their causes' sake. All staying power in character is associated with that.

Christ had never gotten so deep as that into Demas. Demas had laid hold on some of the more comfortable aspects of the Christian gospel, but the Christian gospel had never laid hold on Demas. Demas had possessed himself of this or that detail of Christ's message, but Christ had not possessed himself of Demas. So the man's Christianity was a superstructure easily put up, easily taken down—jerry-building on slim foundations. For the foundation of enduring character is always laid in something greater than oneself which one will serve through life and death.

A fascinating contrast exists between two phrases in the New Testament: the first, Paul's description of Demas—"having loved this present age"; the second, the description of an apostate in the Epistle to the Hebrews as one who, having "tasted the . . . powers of the age to come," falls away. So, *that* is the gist of the matter as the New Testament sees it. An apostate is a man who loves the *status quo*—this present age; a Christian is a man who tastes the powers, is laid hold on by the hopes of the age to come.

When some one tries to tell you that the Christian social gospel is a modern innovation, not in the New Testament, face him with that. The Christian social gospel is in the very heart of the New Testament—

set, to be sure, in mental frameworks appropriate to the first century and different from ours but indubitably there. The primary emphasis on the kingdom of God in Jesus' teaching and in the first church was so dominant that they tested Christian discipleship by it. A man who loved this present age was an apostate; a man who tasted the powers of the age to come was a Christian. Whenever we see a New Testament Christian carrying through to the finish, one fact is always apparent: he had set his devotion on a coming kingdom of God on earth for which he was willing to live or die.

The upshot is that one often sees to-day outside the church, men who seem closer akin to New Testament Christianity than many inside the churches. Sometimes a downright unbelieving scientist who gives himself to his science and for the sake of humanity stands by it, serving it through thick and thin to the end, seems closer to a New Testament Christian than many of us in the churches. At any rate, he is tasting the powers of the age to come.

Or consider a man who puts his conscience above narrow nationalism, who not simply on Sunday, as in the navy, but every day runs the white flag of the gospel to the top of the mast with the Stars and Stripes under it. He will no longer subjugate his conscience before God to the mad paganism of nationalistic policies which even now, by old familiar steps, are leading mankind to another holocaust. Such a man may be, and often is, very disturbing but he is closer akin to a New Testament Christian than many in our churches. At least he has tasted the powers of the age to come.

Or here is a man who is not beguiled by the present pick-up in business. He knows it is here. Millions of

our people are better off than they were, and he, of course, is glad of improved conditions for any one. But he knows that not by a long way does that mean we have solved our economic problem. He is aware that in this city, in prosperous days, 1,800,000 people were living in old-law tenements not fit for human occupation. He knows that in the Southern cotton fields are share-croppers living under a kind of peonage which by comparison makes preferable the lot of many a serf in the medieval age. He knows that in so wealthy a city as Chicago, in the hey-day of our prosperity, an investigation by the organized philanthropies revealed that city charities were giving to families on their poor list a stipend larger than two-thirds of the unskilled labourers investigated could possibly earn for their families when they were fully employed. He knows the estimate that, in 1929, of our American families one-tenth of one per cent at the upper end of the economic scale was getting a combined income equal to that of forty-two per cent at the other end of the scale, a condition in the face of which words like "democracy," "liberty," "equality," lose their meaning. He knows that whereas we have been ploughing under cotton, killing off livestock, reducing wheat acreage and all the rest, an interesting study recently made reveals that if American families maintained a good standard of health diet it would require 41,000,000 more acres under cultivation, not less. A man who keeps hammering on such facts, who will not let them drop, who keeps saying with Jesus, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me," who insists that we must go deeper, think harder, face changes more profound than the alleviations we are tinkering with now, may be

disturbing, but once more he is closer to New Testament Christianity than many of us are. He has tasted the powers of the age to come.

This is the outstanding challenge to us in the churches—our attitude not on theological questions but on practical, ethical, social questions. We find it easy to love this present age. We make fine beginnings, especially at New Year's time, but then some comfortable corner of this present age invites us and we nestle down. So our Christian profession lapses, our faith grows formal, and we do not amount to much in the end as Christians. If I should accuse some of you of being Judas Iscariot you would be indignant. You would never deliberately sell anybody out. But Demas—how many of us have been that!

Finally, staying power is commonly associated with profound resources of interior strength replenished by great faiths. "I had fainted, unless I had believed" is a sentence in the Bible that is true of life. We do faint, peter out, go flat, lose our morale, unless our interior resources are replenished by faith in something. We may be sure that Demas, before he left Paul, had lost some of his first convictions about Christ and the God whom Christ revealed.

Suppose that someone should ask us what our faith in the Christian God does for us. What would we say? For one thing, I should say that when a man believes in God he need not worry about the universe any more. That is off our hands if God has it on his. If I imagined the universe as without any God, aimless, purposeless, an accidental dance of atoms, spiritually meaningless, then I would worry about it. As Carlyle said, a cosmos like that is "one huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling on, in its dead indifference to grind me from limb to limb." But if a man believes

in God, that is off his mind. He can concentrate upon the task in hand, get on with his moral business here on earth with some high hopes about its outcome, and not be haunted by a huge, cosmic apprehension.

Deeper yet, a vital faith in God means a faith in an eternal moral purpose in the light of which a thousand years are as yesterday when it is past and as a watch in the night. That gives a man wide horizons, long outlooks, steady hopes, so that, instead of losing heart over the disappointment of some immediate expectation, one still has standing ground for faith and carries on. Of all mad things in history can we think of anything madder, with Nero upon his throne and Paul in his prison, than to have believed that the gospel for which Paul stood would outlast and wear down the Empire? That is probably what "got" Demas—the tremendous power of Rome compared with the seeming weakness of Christ's gospel. Who in a sober and realistic hour could have supposed that Paul would outwear Nero? But that, you see, is exactly what happened. A man who has faith in God always expects that to happen, though it take a thousand years. So, of course, he carries on.

Deeper yet, a vital faith in God gives a man available resources of interior power. We do not so much produce power as appropriate it. That is true from the harnessing of Niagara to eating a dinner or taking a walk in the fresh air. So, a man with real faith in God senses around his spiritual life a spiritual Presence as truly as the physical world is around his body, and as truly from that divine companionship he draws replenished strength. He knows the deep wells of staying power.

I celebrate the resources of a Christian faith to see a man through.

If faith in God means such things, how do men live without it? How do they meet the shocks of fate, the ugliness of evil, the shame of man's inhumanity to man, the disheartenment of moral failure, the impact of personal sorrow, and still keep their morale? I celebrate the resources of Christian faith.

Technically I know little or nothing about music. I venture this comment, however, about the difference between the best of the old music and the ordinary run of the new. The trouble with much of the new music, as an older man at least sees it, is not its noisy cacophony but something deeper: it never seems to believe in anything enough so that it thinks it worth while to say it over and over again. It picks up a trivial theme and drops it. It never goes through with anything. It lacks sustained convictions. It is filled with unimportant discontinuities. When, however, one hears a great symphony by Tschaiikowsky, let us say, or Beethoven, *there* are convictions so profoundly believed that the music goes through with them to the very end. The hearer says to himself, Surely that theme has been said as beautifully as ever it can be said. Yet that theme returns again and again, elevated and resplendent beyond our dream. One says to oneself, Now, surely, all the possibilities have been exhausted, and, lo! at last the theme marches back once more into the music, glorious as an army with banners. Whatever may be our judgment about music, great living is like that. Is there anything a man could wish for his friends at New Year's time better than such a life—great convictions which life develops, expands, elevates, and glorifies, fine at the beginning, loveliest of all at the last? Is there anything a man would better pray to avoid than the opposite? Demas, my fellow-worker; Demas; Demas forsook me.

CHRISTIANS IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING

MANY find it difficult, if not impossible, to be Christians because, as they see it, they are living in so powerfully unchristian a world. They might make a success of the Christian life if the social environment would only give them a decent chance, but how can one be Christian, they think, in a world like this? Even Jesus got himself crucified for trying it.

The mail from the radio audience often expresses this mood. In a world of war and economic injustice, amid the down-drag of pagan customs, why torment our individual consciences with urgent appeals to be Christian, when we can never get good Christians until we have a good world? So they write, and much of what they say has so much truth in it, and yet is so inadequate to cover the case, that I invite your consideration of the matter.

First, let us put it biographically. Paul in his Roman prison writing to his Philippian friends, ended his letter saying: "All the saints salute you, especially they that are of Cæsar's household." Saints in Cæsar's household! That was a strange place in which to try to be a Christian—in the imperial retinue of Nero among the lesser nobility, it may be, but especially among the freemen and the slaves. We continually complain at having our fine ideals of brotherhood knocked about and battered by militant nationalism, but think of trying to be a Christian in Cæsar's household! We lament the grossness of our commercialized amusements which vulgarize and sometimes brutalize the public taste but, recollecting only the frescoes of

Pompeii, think of trying to be a saint at Nero's court! We complain against the greed and cruelty of our social order and the nonchalance and carelessness with which our life proceeds in the face of it, but think of Nero's palace and the Colosseum as a background against which to try to be a Christian! When we have allowed all the justifiable excuses we can muster from our social environment, there still remains something more to say about people who have been Christians in spite of everything.

In other realms than Christian faith and character—the Arts, for example—this same truth holds. Creative genius has risen into splendour in many places outside the areas we would have thought fortunate for its emergence. There are times, to be sure, like Elizabethan England, when a confluence of factors creates a culture out of which artists rise with prolific prodigality. But that does not cover the case or remotely suggest the infinite diversity of circumstance, often fiercely antagonistic, where great art has risen in spite of everything.

Mozart was so poor that all his life was a heart-breaking struggle and he was buried in a pauper's grave, while Mendelssohn was so well-to-do he never had to think of self-support. John Keats was so crippled by poverty that it is an agony to read his life, while Browning from his youth up was amply cared for by his patrimony. Infinite has been the diversity of circumstance within which creative genius has burned like fire. We commonly think of art as beautiful. Of course it is, but behind the beauty and indispensable to it, is this tougher, harder matter—a man who has the stuff of creative genius in him will be an artist in spite of everything.

Abstract that spirit from Christian faith and char-

acter and we have emasculated it. Surely, someone here to-day needs to hear that said.

For one thing, if we are to stop blaming spiritual failure on outward circumstance and are to achieve a spiritual victory in the midst of hostile environment, it will be in part because we take antagonistic circumstance for granted as a natural, inevitable part of the problem. Christianity essentially means winning a spiritual victory in the face of hostile circumstance; that is what being a Christian is about. From a rocky farm in Connecticut, across which one could almost walk on the stones without touching the ground, comes a story which, though seemingly irreverent, voices a healthy philosophy. A minister visited one of his parishioners on a farm which, hitherto a failure, was now, by dint of tireless labour, being made a success. "So," said the minister: "God and you are getting on very well here." "Yes," said the farmer, "but you should have seen this place before, when God was trying to handle it alone." Exactly! To start thus with a difficult situation as a place to begin being what Paul called a fellow-worker with God, is the very stuff of robust Christianity.

Many in our time, however, are powerfully tempted to another and a softer attitude, in part because attributing inward failure to outward circumstance is always popular and in part because social pessimism is now in the ascendancy and we think we have a dreadfully bad external situation on which to blame spiritual collapse. When my generation was young we were optimistic. We came at the climax of an amazing accumulation of social encouragements crowned by the doctrine of evolution, which to our young and kindled eyes made the whole cosmos seem a going and growing concern. Social optimism was

then in the ascendancy but it is not so now. The catastrophe of the war broke through the thin veneer of our civilization and revealed the savagery beneath, and the succeeding economic disaster has deepened the pessimistic mood. Some of our contemporary pessimism is healthy. The optimism was pleasanter but much of it was unjustified and cheap. We have a chance now to be more soundly realistic than we used to be. But some of our current pessimism works a disastrous consequence in that it gives multitudes of people, who are glad enough to take it, a chance to say that in so crazy and dishevelled a world they see no use in trying to be Christians at all. I want another slogan to sound in the consciences of some here to-day tempted to take that attitude—Saints in Cæsar's household. A spiritual victory won in the face of hostile environment—that is what being a Christian is all about.

Of course, I understand the protest which is already rising in some minds. Some may be saying:

This is a high-sounding exhortation, telling us to be Christians in spite of everything, but, so far as millions of our population are concerned, it is nonsense. To be a Christian in spite of being born and reared in the depth of some city slum, to be a Christian in spite of being a child in a share-cropper's family with never a decent thing to civilize and elevate the soul, to be a Christian despite the fact that, like multitudes of young people, one finds it economically impossible to marry and found a home, or despite the insanity of nations periodically plunging their youth into the hell of war—what absurdity is this! Far from saying that we should be Christian in spite of everything, it would be fairer

to say that we must change pretty nearly everything in order to get Christians at all.

To all of this I should answer, That is handsomely said, but you have forgotten one thing. Make that kind of excuse for everybody else but not for yourself. Never! For yourself no default! Go out, indeed, to help change circumstance, which so crucially needs to be changed. Strength and courage to you as you try to lift the handicaps that so cruelly rest on human souls! But for yourself, no excuses, no defence mechanisms, no passing of the buck! A clean conscience whatever happens, a saint even in Cæsar's household, a spiritual victory despite circumstance—that is every man's business *with himself*.

Cannot we imagine John Keats lamenting the lost poetry of young and kindled souls in whom beauty might have sung its way to immortal fame but who, crushed by poverty, found their songs quenched before they started? So Keats might have lamented and one can imagine his labouring sympathetically and indignantly to change circumstance so as to make poets possible. But for himself, though he was so poor that often his days were misery, he took no leave from that to stop his singing. For himself, no default. "I think," he said once, in one of the most wretched periods of his life, "I shall be among the English poets after my death."

So, wherever one looks—in science, the arts, music, Christian character, practical success even—one finds this basic duty: endless sympathy for any one else crushed by external circumstance, but for oneself no blame of inward failure on outward environment!

Consider, again, that if a man is to make a high success of his spiritual life in the midst of hostile

environment, it will be in part because he centres his attention not so much upon his outward pressures as upon his interior resources. Whenever in any realm you find a saint in Cæsar's household, you may be sure that deep within him this thing has happened: he has cultivated a keen awareness of his spiritual resources so that in the orientation of his thinking they have become most real to him and his consciousness of the outward environment has been secondary. *That* constitutes one of the profoundest differences between people.

How many great books, for example, have been written in prison! Paul wrote his letter to the Philipians in prison, Cervantes started *Don Quixote* there, and John Bunyan worked on *The Pilgrim's Progress* in Bedford jail. When one considers how they could do that, it is evident that they must have concentrated their attention on their interior resources rather than on their outward circumstances. Like all the rest of us, they lived in two worlds: first, the external system of circumstances alien to their wishes, antagonistic to their finest aspirations, a veritable prison house; but, on the other side, the inner world where a man's mind may be his kingdom, where there are doors of the spirit which a man can open and which then no man or circumstance can shut—realms, principalities, and dominions of the soul where one walks at liberty. As between these two, they so minimized the outer and maximized the inner that they proved to themselves and to mankind that

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage.

Granting that this illustration is drawn from extraordinary experience, it is still true to our ordinary life.

For it is our externalism that commonly ruins us, our absorption with things, our obsessed attention habitually given to the setting of our lives, so that were we to be in Bedford jail it would be a long time before we thought of anything except the jail; not readily would it occur to us that even there the soul might walk the Delectable Mountains. So, because we take our cue for everything from circumstance, when we face circumstance hostile to such character we blame moral failure on that. We take our moral cue also from environment. One hates to think what some of us would have been in Nero's court. We would have gone native with a vengeance, and the excuse would have been ready, What else do you expect in Cæsar's household?

As a matter of fact, as I understand my own soul, that is an illegitimate excuse. The worst foes of my spiritual life have never been hostile circumstance. Upon the contrary, sometimes hostile circumstance has been like a strong wind on a flying field, a grand force to take off against for a flight, if one knows how to do it. The deepest foes of my spiritual life have had their origin far down within the soul. There is no situation into which life ever put me that I could not have handled better than I did if I could have gotten my eyes more on, and made more out of, the interior resources of the soul, until *that* was the realest world to me.

Does someone say that it is hard work being a Christian if one is very poor? Of course it is. But imagine yourself very rich. Do you think it would be easier then? You know who said it was easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is hard to be a Christian if one is very poor, and, if anything,

it is harder if one is very rich. That is to say, it is hard to be a Christian anywhere in a world like this and, whether rich or poor, in whatever environment life may be set, there is no such thing as triumphant living save as one learns the secret which Mrs. Browning once put into four simple but profound words: "Life develops from within." So! Show us any great soul that has risen triumphant out of trouble. That is the secret—life develops from within. If a man lets his life develop from without, if he takes the moral dent of circumstance, drinks intemperately because everybody drinks, is sensual because this is a sensual generation, copies Nero in Nero's court, then he belongs truly to the congregation of the damned, who have literally lost their souls. But to have life develop from within, to have the origin and fountain-head of one's living come from deep resources in the soul, that *is* living. And obviously it is only out of such living that one ever becomes a saint in Cæsar's household.

Consider once more these saints in Cæsar's household. Not only did they take difficult situations for granted and have lives that developed from within, but they allied themselves with whatever saving elements they could find in their environment. Hitherto we have talked about their experience as though it were merely individualistic. No! Saints in Cæsar's household—they were plural. They were a group; they stood together. They had a strong fellowship harnessed to the help of their souls, else how could they have stood their ground in Nero's court?

A great teacher of ethics, T. H. Green, said once: "No individual can make a conscience for himself. He always needs a society to make it for him." Surely

that proves its truth in our experience. A man's conscience never is merely or mainly individual. It is always socially created and sustained. In Cæsar's household both the Christians on one side and Nero's cronies in debauchery upon the other had consciences socially produced—the debauchees' conscience created by the general society they lived in, the Christians' conscience created by a special society they had deliberately picked out to live in.

How many people do you think are here this morning, accustomed vaguely to talk about being Christian, who need powerfully to be laid hold on by this truth? An individual cannot make a conscience for himself but always needs a society to make it for him. Behind our artificial and highly organized churches one wishes we could get back to the original idea of a church. *Ecclesia* is the Greek word used in the New Testament for 'church,' and it means 'called out,' 'selected.' It suggests that a man can have a world of his own to live in within the larger world. Out of the hodge-podge and potpourri of the social mass, with its down-drag upon life, a man can choose those saving elements that elevate, purify, and empower the soul. In the fellowship of such selected elements he finds his ecclesia, his church, where his conscience is rekindled and from which he goes out again to face the wrath of devils and the scorn of men. No man ever yet lived a great life without having in that sense of the word a 'church.'

My soul, think what your ecclesia has done for you! For out of the general mass of the world you have selected some special things for your intimate companionship—the beauty of the green earth by day and the stars by night, great books, great music, great friends, the noblest traditions of the race, its finest

faiths, its most illustrious souls, Christ over all. See how out of the mass of life you have chosen your ecclesia. No one can ever live a great life without such a church.

If someone asks what all this has to do with the actual churches, the answer is that the meaning of the actual churches lies in the endeavour to make this experience easy of access, available to all who want it, real, and effective. All organizations fall short of their ideal significance, as courts fall short of ideal justice, but the meaning of a church is this: it tries to help people to have a society within society, a world within the world, an ecclesia of ideas and ideals, of faiths and purposes, of great souls, the noble living and the noble dead, and Christ over all, in whose fellowship they will have some chance of being saints in Cæsar's household.

I beg of you, do not let your idea of the church grow stiff and formal. Keep it plastic and vital. Paul did. In prison, where he needed, if ever a man needed it, a world within the world which so dragged him down, he had an ecclesia. He wrote to one friend who was coming from the East, "Bring when thou comest . . . the books, especially the parchments." So the great books of his race were part of his ecclesia. And his friends were part of it, not simply those whom he could see and touch, like "Luke, the beloved physician," but that larger body of Christians across the Empire who kept reminding him that he was not alone but a member of a beloved community to whose ideas the future belonged. And his interior world of thought was part of his ecclesia also. Listen to him there in prison: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things

are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." What an ecclesia!

This is too tough a world to try to be Christian in, without that. The whole consequence of what we are trying to say this morning will in many lives depend on just this point. If you go out vaguely expecting as an individual to be a Christian, Cæsar's household will get you. You need an ecclesia.

Finally, let us try to satisfy some here who have been discontented. For probably some have been troubled by the fact that what we have been saying seems to leave this wicked world unchanged with merely a few people trying to be Christian within it. That, however, is not the end of the story. Cæsar's household was not unchanged. Cæsar's household was abolished. As one of the leading scholars of our times has analysed it, the early Christian movement gradually undermined and destroyed the old order of the ancient world by withdrawing the spiritual allegiance of millions of souls from it and giving that allegiance to another set of values altogether. What consequence came out of those saints in Cæsar's household almost passes belief.

Two young sisters were disputing about which was the last book of the Bible and one was heard to exclaim to the other, "Barbara, I tell you the Bible does *not* end in Timothy; it ends in Revolutions." History validates the truth thus unwittingly stated, so that none should leave this sanctuary saying that the conclusion of the matter is a few individuals lifted out of the wicked world. Rather, this is the conclusion of the matter, that if this desperately needy world is ever to be saved, with not souls only but the societies of men redeemed to a kingdom of peace and

righteousness, there is one indispensable prerequisite for which no substitute will ever be discovered: men and women, namely, who do not wait for Cæsar's household to be redeemed before they begin living redeemed lives within it—Christians in spite of everything!

WHEN CHRISTIANITY GETS US INTO TROUBLE

IN an interesting and sometimes astonishing fashion, Jesus habitually stated both sides of an issue. He said that we should not, like the hypocrites, do our good deeds before men to be seen of them, but he also said that we should let our light shine so that men could see our good deeds. He said that when we pray we should go into a closet and shut the door to pray in solitude, but he also said that when two or three are gathered together in his name, there he is in the midst of them. He felt so keenly the obstructive nuisance of inherited ideas and customs that he denounced "making void the word of God by your tradition," but he also felt so deeply the incalculable value of a great heritage that he said: "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil." The Christian movement as a whole, and we as individual members of it, would have been much less one-sided than has been the case could we have shared this balance of the Master.

Similarly, Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you," but he also said, "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." That, surely, seems a flat contradiction. The Christian gospel is to bring such serenity that it is the very "peace of God, which passeth all understanding," but, on the other hand, it is to do the opposite—disturb people, upset and discompose people, be a source of agitation and division, with Christ himself saying that he came not to bring peace but a sword.

Let us at once dispose of the idea that, because the Master used the symbolism of a sword, he literally

meant war. One grows heart-sick and indignant to hear Jesus, of all people, quoted on behalf of war; yet how often the words of our text are used in advocacy of international conflict! Certainly, it is not too much to expect that a man who quotes the Bible will take pains to read it. Listen, then, to what Jesus said: "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law: and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." So! Jesus was not talking about war, but about family life and about the gospel as breaking up households, leaving some members Jews while others became Christians, and so presenting to reluctant souls that most disturbing choice between an old home tradition and a new discipleship.

Indeed, if we read this passage not in Matthew's Gospel but in Luke's, we discover that there he did not use the word "sword" at all, but spoke quite literally: "Think ye that I am come to give peace in the earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division." Perhaps Luke feared the misinterpretation of the Master's meaning and so dropped the symbol 'sword,' putting the plain word 'division' there instead. Jesus, therefore, never said that he came to send war on the earth. When he used the word 'sword' literally, as he did once, he said a significant thing about war: "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword." What he said here, however, is that he came to disturb people. His gospel would disrupt families, break up friendships, plunge men into controversy, and at last a great historian would write, "Christianity shattered the ancient world."

How commonly we have forgotten that aspect of the Gospel! It was intended to get people into trouble. If someone insists instead that Christ came to get people out of trouble, of course he did! A fanatic would never have seen both sides of that question, but Jesus did. In a law-abiding world sin means trouble; he came to get men out of that. Fear means trouble; he came to get us out of that. Aimlessness is trouble, and he has taken innumerable futile lives and run purpose through them so they have been grateful with endless thanksgiving for escape from a meaningless existence. And hopelessness is trouble as anybody knows who

. . . lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play.

And Christ has lifted multitudes out of that.

This is the common emphasis of our preaching. This is the substance of our thought and prayer and singing—Christ came to get us out of trouble.

Christ himself, however, was not thus one-sided. He could not be. His religion got him into trouble. He knew that every true religion must do that. Before he was through with the paragraph in which our text occurs, he said, "He that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me." He would say to-day that he came not to send peace on earth but to get us into trouble.

As a matter of fact, we are habitually disturbed by two very different factors in our experience. The evils of life disturb us terribly. Many of us here to-day are harassed by difficulty, baffled by circumstance, broken-hearted with bereavement; we are in trouble. And so obtrusive is this way of being upset and so naturally

does a man wish to escape it, that we commonly forget the companion truth that it is not simply evil which upsets us, but the supremely good disturbs us too; and some of us deeply need to be disturbed.

Two things agitate a good musician. Bad music: cacophony, wretched technique—they dreadfully upset him. But, on the other hand, let him hear some perfect exemplar of the art and that will agitate him too. He will love it but he will be challenged by it, discontented with himself because of it, disturbed by interior standards of self-judgment on account of it. So, in his realm, Jesus was one of the most disturbing people who ever visited the earth.

Indeed, I venture the sweeping statement that he spent most of his ministry getting people into trouble. Zacchæus was a tax-gatherer who was apparently content with his ill-gotten gains until he dined with Jesus, and then he found himself in trouble, penetrated in his conscience by that searching personality, having to renovate his life, confess his wrongs, pay fourfold back to those whom he had robbed, and give half his goods to feed the poor. The woman of Samaria was apparently at ease that day when, with water-jug upon her head, she came to the well at Sychar, but when she returned from talking with Jesus she was not at ease. With four husbands in her record and the man she now had not her husband, and she having to clear up that domestic mess or never know a peaceful moment more, she was in trouble. Nicodemus was a pedant, all of whose interests lay with the orthodoxies of the ecclesiastical *status quo*, but after that night's talk with Jesus he was upset and we hear of him afterwards in company with Joseph of Arimathæa, a disciple of Jesus secretly because of the Jews. Unhappy man, apparently endeavouring to be born from

above without letting anybody know! The rich young man was a complacent youth. He told Jesus that from his boyhood he had kept all the Commandments, but when Jesus challenged him to a daring venture, to part with his property and join the spiritual movement which was to remake the world, "he went away," we read, "sorrowful."

Many people picture Jesus as a pacific soul dispensing sweetness and benignity. Read the Gospels! He never got a grip on any man without getting him into difficulty. Moreover, in deliberate words, he stated that specific intention: "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." That is to say, Happy are you if you let me get you into trouble.

Contrast that with the most damning charge against religion made in our time and still familiarly passed from the lips of one sophisticate to another, that religion is the opiate of the people. Well, wherever Christianity becomes an opiate it has gotten a long way from Christ himself. I hope that fact will lay hold on some of us to-day. We may have come to church to find peace. Perhaps we may receive it. The Master may say to the turbulent waters of some soul here, Peace, be still. He can say that. But as I try to imagine him walking back and forth among these pews and coming up into the chancel, I know that at the doorsill of many a life he would stand with another word altogether: Think not that I came to send peace on the earth; I came not to send peace but to get you into difficulty.

Consider further that, this world being what it is and the basic principles of Christ being what they are and the contrast between the two being quite un-

mistakable, any genuine adherence to Christ is bound to get us into trouble. To be sure, with most of us this does not reach to outward martyrdom, and perhaps it never will, but as the world is drifting now I am not so certain.

Where, for example, would you look to-day for the outstanding illustration of a genuine Christian conscience getting men and women into trouble? Germany. I have before me a first-hand report of what is going on inside German Christianity as seen by a personal friend. Here, for example, is a great church filled to the doors with two thousand representatives of local congregations, gathered by personal couriers because the use of post or telegraph or telephone would be too dangerous. They are about a perilous business in that church, collectively defying the Government to invade the rights of the Christian conscience. My friend saw them rise in support of a resolution which said, "Obedience to the Reich Church government is disobedience to God," and then they sang as only Germans can sing, "A mighty fortress is our God." There is the real Germany rising within Germany to great heights, and nothing in Christendom at large to-day is much more important than that Christians everywhere should make evident their boundless admiration and their strong support. Some months ago the pastors of Germany were faced with a demand for an unqualified oath of allegiance, not to God but to Hitler, and seven thousand of them signed their names to this brave declaration: "We will go to prison or suffer any punishment before we sign this oath." Nothing else in Germany has stood so strong except the unconsenting Christian conscience. Organized labour fell flat before Hitler. Organized socialism capitulated to Hitler. The most powerful

capitalists of Germany are financially supporting Hitler. The pressure has been so terrific that nothing could resist it—nothing except this one thing which for years the sophisticates have been despising, calling it an opiate of the people, a flight from reality, and all that. No, those courageous German Christians are committed to-day, at cost of heavy hazard, not to an opiate but to the disturbing Christ, who across many centuries has been accustomed to get men into trouble.

Someone here is sure to be saying to himself, Such risk in following a Christian conscience is present in Germany but not among us. To which I answer: Do we really mean that there is no place in our lives where a genuine loyalty to Christ would make us stand out from the crowd? This issue rises with most of us on those occasions, and they are many, when all we have to do to keep out of trouble is to do nothing, remain quiet, acquiesce, shirk the issue. Put yourself in the place of a German pastor and consider what he has to do to keep out of trouble—follow the crowd. That is the pinch of his temptation. To keep still, acquiescently to take a neutral shade, is the easy path to comfort. When that German situation is reduced to its elemental principle, every one here knows he is comprehended.

The most powerful temptations in my life have been not to do something positively criminal and wrong, but to do nothing, to acquiesce, to be still when I ought to speak, take a neutral shade when I ought to stand out. All my boyhood I was warned against outbreking sin. Quite right. But why are we not warned more against an even worse allurements, the fascination of easy comfort, which undoes more souls, I suspect, than outbreking sin can ever do? At any rate, Jesus seemed to think so.

What was the trouble with the priest and Levite in his parable of the Good Samaritan? They went by on the other side and left the victim unhelped. What did they do? Nothing. That was their temptation; they did not want to be disturbed. What was the trouble with the damned in Jesus' most terrific parable of the Judgment? What did they do to be damned? Nothing. The only charge against them was that they did nothing. They did not feed the hungry; they did not clothe the naked; they did not care for the sick or the imprisoned. What most quickly would have despoiled Christ himself of all his glory? To have loved ease a little more, to have shirked the issue, not to have gotten into trouble.

I am a minister, but I do not live in a hothouse. I know this city up and down and in and out, and I am under no illusions about the background against which a man here must try to be a Christian. I know that I am speaking to the consciences of some of you when I say that if Christ were to bring to us his most personal word it would not be peace. O, son of man, he would say, how you sink to the level of the mob and take your moral colour from the multitude! Your salvation is in no talk of peace, when there is no peace, but in an inward revolution; I came not to send peace on such as you, but to get you into trouble.

Nevertheless, while all this, I think, is significantly true, the balance and symmetry of our thought would be lost if we left it there. So stated, the truth may seem merely grim and demanding, whereas only by this approach do we come to the most thrilling aspects of Christ himself and of his Gospel.

What, for example, is the main fault of the Church's appeal to young people? Surely the appeal has been too soft. Come, the Church seems to say to youth,

you will get into trouble without religion; keep out of trouble; come to us; accept our discipline and be morally safe; in this turbulent world, where temptations are so powerful, we offer you a haven of refuge and security. Safety first!—so to multitudes of youth the Church seems to speak.

There is no use talking to the best of youth like that. In the stimulating world outside the Church they hear and answer a far different call. Did you ever know a difficulty too hard for a fine youth to tackle if once the difficulty had challenged him? Young men go into aviation, not to get out of peril surely, but because it is one of the most perilous things that they can undertake. Recall Emerson's words about "men who rise refreshed on hearing a threat," and to whom a crisis "comes graceful and beloved as a bride." In every high-minded youth some of that spirit resides which finds in danger and difficulty a stimulus.

An outstanding man in this state said recently, "I shall never forget a sermon I heard long ago in college days in which the preacher repeated again and again the sentence, 'Jesus Christ did not come into the world to make life easy; he came to make men great.'" So, long ago, in that college chapel sat a boy listening with all his ears, and this is what captured him, and a generation afterwards still echoes in his mind, "Jesus Christ did not come into the world to make life easy; he came to make men great."

I should say so! He got a grip on a man named David Livingstone. He did not make life easy for him, but he made him great. There, in a nutshell, is the essential appeal of Jesus Christ.

Now, that is not dour and grim, but stimulating, like a trumpet call. That reaches past the superficial lure of ease, indulging which men grow soft and

cynical, and plays upon the major chords of life. I know areas of youth to-day where Christianity is utterly despised. They turn even to communism as a substitute because it seems to offer them a challenging and revolutionary cause to which to give their lives. I also know other areas of youth where Christianity is tingling and alive. But it is no dry-as-dust affair, no playing safe and keeping out of trouble. The vital Christian areas of youth are turbulent. Come within range of them and you feel not peace but turmoil. They are all upset about the problems of war, of poverty, of our appalling economic inequality which condemns so many of them to lost opportunity, about the ineptitude of governments, about the loss of spiritual culture and moral character, and they are saying, If in a world like this one chooses Christ, one chooses trouble. Do not these youths, then, in such a time, need inner stability and peace? Indeed they do, and often acknowledge it. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"—they need that Christ. But they need him all the more because they constantly and sometimes terribly hear the other Christ saying, Think not that I came to send peace upon a generation which so persistently clings to its ancient evils; I came not to send peace but my sword.

Finally, consider that deep beneath what we have been saying is a matter, both historic and contemporary, of profound significance. Nothing in human history is more revolutionary than to release into it a great idea. Four hundred years ago and more, Leonardo da Vinci drew the designs and plans of an air machine and even planned a flight with what he called "the great bird." During four long centuries that idea fermented. It worked like yeast. It permeated the

inventive imaginations of men. Nothing in history is more revolutionary than a great idea.

Much of Jesus' effect on history has been of that sort. Professor Whitehead, of Harvard, for example, has notably traced the economic and social revolutions caused by the adventures of one idea let loose into Western civilization from the combined influence of Greek philosophy and the Christian religion—the essential and eternal dignity and value of the human soul. Jesus exalted that. How innocent and harmless it sounds! Many people praise the idea as beautiful who do not see it as revolutionary. But, as a matter of historic fact, it was not long before that vision of the dignity, worth, and endless possibility of the human soul came into collision with slavery, and then with imperial tyranny, and then with economic inequality, and it still is a ferment, an interior standard of revolution, which keeps multitudes of us from being content with the *status quo*, or able, calling ourselves Christian, to be at peace with the world. The consequence is that the Christian religion has been most revolutionary in its effects when it did not intend to be at all. It was simply believing in and rejoicing over a great idea which seemed true and beautiful, like the dignity of the human soul, and lo! it woke up, surprised to discover that, as James Russell Lowell put it about the New Testament, there is enough dynamite there, if illegitimately applied, to blow all our existing institutions to atoms.

During the Great War the secretary of one of our peace societies with headquarters in Boston undertook to secure the printing of the Sermon on the Mount in small pamphlet form for free distribution. The intention was to have it printed without notes or comments—simply the Sermon on the Mount in a pamphlet to

be distributed in war time. In the end, the proposed publishers threw up the undertaking on the ground that they had been advised by the Federal authorities in Boston not to print the pamphlet since it might be considered pro-German propaganda. Is not the Sermon on the Mount the charter of Christianity's most beautiful ideas? It is, but the Federal authorities were quite correct—when it comes to occasions in the social order such as those introduced by war, the ideas there are absolutely revolutionary.

I wonder if Jesus knew that his teaching would behave like that. Socrates called himself the "gadfly," the provocative liberator of stinging ideas that disturbed people. Did Jesus foresee that his teaching would be like that? Who said, "I came to cast fire upon the earth"? You are an educated company of intelligent people who ought to know the origin of that saying, "I came to cast fire upon the earth." Jesus said that. I cannot remember that I ever heard it publicly quoted. "Peace I leave with you" is quoted, but this other saying, which represents so much the most distinctive influence of Jesus on man's history, is half forgotten: "I came to cast fire upon the earth"—ideas that would burn and destroy, illumine and enlighten, until that should be said of all his followers across the centuries which was said of his early disciples, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also."

Of this I am certain, that if we will not accept this aspect of Christ we cannot have the real Christ at all. On every side one finds people disturbed by doubt. We all understand that, but my personal problem lies elsewhere. I am disturbed by faith. I believe in Christ. Long ago, in a Christian home, his portrait was imprinted upon my imagination, and I cannot

escape it. I believe in Christ, and lo! on every side he is denied, outrageously exiled from the common practices of a social and international order in which we all live. One who believes in him is troubled by him; he is a gadfly that stings a man when he would like to be at peace! Yet, O Christ, keep on disturbing us, for we do need, not Thy peace alone, but Thy sword.

WHEN LIFE GOES ALL TO PIECES

WHAT living in this modern world habitually does to us may be described in many ways, but no description comes closer to the mark than to say that this world keeps tearing us apart so that we deeply need those forces which pull life together again. All profoundly religious souls have discovered in their faith the secret of wholeness as against the fragmentariness of a life distracted by the world. Our fathers, indeed, called their periods of religious meditation and prayer times of "recollection." In our vocabulary that word has been narrowed down to memory—gathering together in reminiscence things else scattered and forgotten—and the old religious usage in some dictionaries is marked "archaic." While, however, we may dispense with the old usage, not so easily can we escape the old meaning—to collect ourselves, to gather together the split and dis severed portions of ourselves, and so make life whole.

Indeed, it is an interesting example of the way we moderns throw things out of the door only to welcome them back through the window that, as the old religious word 'recollection' disappears, the new psychological word 'integration' rises into popularity. Within us and without, say the psychologists, are disintegrating forces which tear us apart and there is no health for us until we discover the secrets of integrated personality. So be it! Language changes but abiding human needs persist. Many centuries ago a psalmist cried, "Unite my heart to fear thy name," and Jesus said to a disabled man, "Wilt thou be made whole?"

Concerning the disintegrating effect of modern living no preacher need speak long. Some aspects of our life are dubious but this is clear: at every point the modern world tempts us or drives us to fragmentariness, scatters us so that our centrality is lost. The old theological idea was that men lost their souls through sin. To be sure they do, but sin is not the only way of losing one's soul. In a congregation such as this there must be many lost souls, not because of wickedness but because we have let the world tear us apart until we have frayed out, have frittered our existence away, and lost an organized, purposeful, meaningful self. Then some day we wake up to discover that *we* are not here. Multitudes of scattered and dis severed tasks are still in process, but our souls are gone. Not by any figment of theological imagination but as a literal and devastating fact, we have lost them. And we have lost them because we have let the world tear us apart and have not put ourselves under the influence of forces which pull life together and make it whole.

Let us make this truth practical by saying that many of us live fragmentary lives because of necessity we are specialists and, as another has put it, a specialist is one who knows more and more about less and less. Under modern conditions specialization cannot be escaped, so that at this point, as at many others, the modern world is more dispersive and distracting than the world our fathers knew. They told time by sundials; we tell time by watches. Now a sundial was a comparatively easy thing to set up and care for, but a watch is a specialty that few comprehend—which thing is a parable of the way our modern tasks are departmentalized until we live and work as the old song had it:

You in your small corner,
And I in mine.

All this would be not only inevitable but valuable, if the decentralizing forces were counterbalanced by forces which pull life together. We never can understand the meaning of any part of anything unless we see some meaning in the whole. Show us an individual wheel out of a machine and it means little or nothing to us, but if you should explain to us what the whole machine is for, what it does, and what part this wheel plays, then we might see sense there. Few things need more to be said in an age of specialization. We do not get meaning into the whole simply by endlessly multiplying information about the separate parts; we never can see meaning in the separate parts until we begin to see meaning in the whole. Tennyson was right about the flower in the crannied wall—to understand even that small item would involve understanding at least something of the cosmos and what God and man are.

This may be practically illustrated in realms where specialization is thoroughly established, as in medicine. Here, let us say, is a man with a broken bone. Caring for that is a specialty; so let us get an expert on fractures to tend it. But in that man's body elsewhere there may be conditions which will impede or prevent the bone's healing; so he had better be in a hospital where other physicians can care for his body as a whole. But he may be psychopathic, with emotional disturbances such that, no matter what is done for his body even as a whole, his mind will interject turmoil which will keep him ill; so a first-rate hospital to-day, to care for the total man, body and mind together as a whole, has added psychiatrists to its staff. But the man may be distracted by such terrifying

anxieties concerning the economic situation of his family that, as in a case reported by Dr. Cabot of Harvard, the fractured bone refuses to heal; so every first-class hospital has social workers who follow out the man's life as a whole into home and neighbourhood. But that man may still be unprepared to get well. His life may be filled with fear—fear of God, fear of the future; he may be haunted by guilt, be cynical, cursing life, thinking all human existence meaningless, footless, purposeless, be maladjusted to the whole meaning of his existence in this universe. So one of the most interesting movements afoot now is that of bringing medicine and religion together in the hospitals, and we who are concerned with that are meeting an amazing welcome from the medical fraternity across the land.

Here is a realm where specialization is thoroughly established but where a counterbalancing movement is afoot. We cannot even heal people in parts. We do not exist in parts. We exist as wholes and only when thought of and treated as wholes can we be helped. And always here, as everywhere else, when the process starts from circumference to centre, from detail to total, we run straight into religion. For religion is the relationship of a man as a whole to the meaning of his life in this universe as a whole.

Carry this truth out from a particular field, like medicine, into our daily living, all split up as it is into parts. How we do need a philosophy that will pull us together and make life whole! Let me tell you my philosophy. I can put it into a few sentences. Every one who follows this ministry will recognize it. All my thinking starts from it and comes back to it. Here it is: *the key to the understanding of all life is the value of personality.* Roger Williams said once that "a

little key may unlock a box wherein lies a bunch of keys." So when a man sees personality—self-conscious being, with powers of intellect, purposefulness, and goodwill—as the supreme value, he has a key that unlocks a box of keys.

First, it is the secret of a man's individual sense of moral obligation. Each of us has been trusted with personality; we must not betray the trust. "Make the most of your best for the sake of others."

Second, it is the test of moral obligation to others. Everything that anywhere helps, enhances, enriches personality is right; everything that crushes, diminishes, and smirches personality is wrong.

Third, it is the standard of judgment on social questions. Our present economic arrangements are wrong; look what they do to personality! War is a hideous crime; it ruins personality. All kinds of class and race prejudice are wrong; they do violence to the universal sacredness of personality.

Fourth, it is the highway to the truth about God. Not that we say he is a person, as though we took personality in ourselves and, using that as a mould, poured into it the idea of God! That is only making a mental idol of him. But we do take personality—creative mind, purposefulness, goodwill—and, lifting that up as far as we can reach, we say, The ultimate truth about eternal God lies not down the low road of matter but up that high road of personal life far beyond anything which we can ask or think.

Finally, it opens the doors of life eternal, because God will not throw away the most priceless thing in his world, personality.

Now, I do not ask you to agree with this philosophy, but I do ask you to see what it does for me. It unifies life. It does for life as a whole what science does for

the physical part of it—saves it from chaos and makes a cosmos of it. It pulls everything together. It gives the mind a total view of life's meaning and drives a highway of unifying sense through it. And, because that is Christ's philosophy and I learned it from him, I should like to share it with you.

In this field also he stands saying to us, "Wilt thou be made whole?"

Again, consider that many people live fragmentary lives because they are obsessed with things, dealing with multitudinous tasks beneath them, and have not learned the secret of gathering themselves together by worshipping something above them. Do not misunderstand me. I do not mean by worship simply what goes on in church. Worship is one of the central activities of all great human living. See what a noble family of words is here: 'worth,' 'worthy,' 'worthiness,' 'worship'! And what that entire family of words would say to us is this: Only as a man finds something greater than himself to which he gives himself, so worshipping something worthy, can he find central meaning in his life or possess a soul.

I have before me an article written by a physician at the Medical Centre, an M.D., a Ph.D., a psychiatrist and what not, speaking to church people and saying in effect that we have become much excited about the new psychological methods of healing people and that some churches are even trying their hands at it in amateurish, untrained ways none too useful, while all the time multitudes of people need more than anything else something which the church has been supposed to know about. Listen to what this physician pleads for—"Worship, or such devotional techniques as prayer and meditation." Thus an M.D. and a Ph.D. has to talk to us because we have so far forgotten

the unifying, organizing, health-restoring consequence of true worship, which lifts a man above the distractions of the world beneath him and pulls his life together.

A man who does not worship lives in a room surrounded by mirrors. Everywhere he looks he sees himself. He cannot escape from himself or get out of himself because he can see nothing beyond himself. He is always thrown back upon himself. Now suppose that there should come into that man's life any attitude belonging to the family of worship—appreciation, admiration, reverence, adoration, love. You see what would happen. This mirror here and that mirror there would become windows through which he would look, not at himself but beyond himself to something other and greater than himself. This difference constitutes one of the most important contrasts between people. What kind of mind have we, a mirror-mind driving us to distraction with self-obsession, or a window-mind through which we look at something, other than ourselves, that draws life together?

Carry this truth out from such symbolism into the practical experience of every day. There are times when beauty pulls us together. We are "shot to pieces," and then we expose our lives to something lovely in nature or in music and come back feeling that we are ourselves again. There are times when friendship pulls us together. "When we have fallen through storey after storey of our vanity and aspiration, and sit rueful among the ruins," says Robert Louis Stevenson, "then it is that we begin to measure the stature of our friends: how they stand between us and our own contempt, believing in our best; how, linking us with others, and still spreading wide the

influential circle, they weave us in and in with the fabric of contemporary life." There are times when even a new idea pulls us together. Our lives become scrambled, like a picture puzzle which will not go together, and then in a quiet hour when we are still, when insight has its chance to have its way with us, a new idea comes which organizes life. There are times when a new purpose pulls us together. Giotto, the shepherd lad, sat by the roadside drawing the picture of a sheep on a smooth rock with a stone for a pencil, when Cimabue, the leading artist of Florence, passed that way and watched him, told him he could be an artist, opened before him his studio in Florence—and all of Giotto's life fell together around that hour.

See how human and how profoundly important is this thing we are trying to say! The hours are not all alike. The days are not democrats; they do not believe in equality. There are special, organizing days when Christ appears to Paul on the Damascus Road. There are hours when in the garden a voice says to Augustine, "Take up and read."

We all have within us the capacity to expose ourselves to the spiritual world, its beauty, its friendship, its insights, its purpose, its God. Only, we use this capacity so haphazardly that, instead of living organized and worthwhile lives, we are cursed by the devastation of fragmentariness.

Too many people, desperately trying to escape the intolerable unhappiness of a fragmentary life, endeavour to solve the problem on low levels. They organize life around drink, for example, until it becomes a centralizing obsession. But in the end life goes to pieces on that. Or for a while they make licentiousness a unifying point of concentration, but

at last life splits up on that. There is no solution to our problem in the effort to unite life on low levels. It will not stay together there.

Others try to solve this problem by engaging themselves with the multitudinous gifts which science offers. But more and more automobiles do not unify life; they distract it. More and more telephones and skyscrapers, aeroplanes, movies and radios do not centralize life; they scatter it. Science has no answer to this problem. The solution lies deep in the essential heart of religion:

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our feverish ways;
Reclothe us in our rightful mind;
In purer lives thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.

Once more, many of us live fragmentary lives for a reason which some of you have been waiting to hear mentioned—we crack up under the shocks of life, go to pieces under its heavy blows and devastating troubles. Its blows *are* heavy and its disasters so ravaging that a preacher who talks, as I am talking now, about the power of individuals to live coherent lives, can save himself from hypocrisy only by adding that, so appalling are the social wrongs of the world at large and of this nation in particular, it is impossible that multitudes of individuals should not crack up and go to pieces. Even in a favoured parish like this, your ministers, sitting at the human end of the economic disaster, would say about many we know here, How do they keep their lives together? One who looks forward to a world of personal living organized, unified, satisfying, must think of that in social terms. It involves, before we are through, a new kind of

economic order and a new kind of international relationship. Nevertheless, despite appalling catastrophes and social wrongs, how amazingly some people do live by means of the powers that pull life together!

In the apple-bearing section of the State of Maine, my friend saw an apple tree so loaded with fruit that, all around, the laden branches were propped to keep them from the ground. When he exclaimed about it, the owner of the orchard said: "Go, look at that tree's trunk near the bottom." Then my friend saw that the tree had been badly wounded with a deep gash. "That is something we have learned about apple trees," said the owner of the orchard. "When the tree tends to run to wood and leaves and not to fruit, we wound it, gash it, and almost always, no one knows why, this is the result: it turns its energies to fruit." We must know wounded apple trees in the human orchard of whom that is a parable.

Some, however, go to pieces. Here is one man who becomes cynical. He curses life, calls it an aimless, footless misadventure into which it is a disaster ever to have been born. As we hear him talking so, we say to ourselves, He is going to pieces. It may be, however, that later we hear him speak again: I made up my mind that cynicism was not getting me anywhere; after all, there are some things in human life to believe in; I have gotten a new grip on faith and it is faith in something that makes life worth living. And we say, He has found something that is pulling him together again.

Or here is a man who becomes hopeless and thinks he is done for, saying, as one person in the twenties said to me only this last week, I am finished—nothing ahead. Noting such hopelessness, one says, He is

going to pieces. But later, it may be, we meet that man again and he says: After all, no man is finally defeated until he thinks he is; it is hope which essentially makes a personality with power to throw an aim ahead and then hurl himself after it; I made up my mind that I would not quit being a person; I actually have recovered hope. And we say, He has found something that is pulling him together again.

Or here is a man who becomes bitter. He blames this person or that for his troubles, hates them, and is compounded of animosity and vindictiveness. Seeing that, we say, He is going all to pieces. But if later he should say to us, I have found out that, after all, vindictiveness does more harm to the one who harbours it than to the one against whom it is directed; animosity tears one's own life to pieces, and the great seers, from Buddha and Jesus on, have been right about this, that, even for one's own sake if for no one else's, the only way to live is with malice toward none and with charity for all, we say, He has found something that pulls life together.

You see, these last three paragraphs have been a running commentary on the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians—"Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three." Multitudes of Christians talk about those qualities as visionary ideals. They are not visionary; they are the great, practical, constructive forces which, against the disintegrating influence of cynicism, hopelessness, and bitterness, pull life together and make it whole.

The glory of everything lies in its organization. These windows are made up of bits of coloured glass but, when they are organized, how beautiful! Great music is composed of separate sounds which any one can make, but when they are organized, how glorious!

A home is made up of separate individuals, but when a great mother organizes them, how marvellous! So existence is handed to us a mass of helter-skelter items, but life is created by personalities whose faiths and hopes and loves draw everything together and make a whole.

HANDICAPPED LIVES

OUR subject probably takes us all in. There may be some young, shining Apollo here who never has been aware of limitation, but one suspects not. At least, I never yet knew a man who on intimate acquaintance did not turn out to be dealing with handicaps.

Reading biography confirms the impression that all human beings are handicapped somewhere and that in no small degree the secret of the quality of any one's spiritual life depends on the way he is dealing with these limitations. In some ways, reading biography is disillusioning; we find our heroes far too human, with frailties and foibles like our own; but this compensating service biography does for us, constituting our heroes heroic still—it makes them all our companions in the handling of handicaps.

We thought, perhaps, that a scientist like Pasteur, upon whose titanic work modern medicine rests, must have had lusty health to labour with. We discover that he had a paralytic stroke at forty-six and was handicapped for life. We thought, perhaps, that a man like Henry M. Stanley, acclaimed of the world and buried from Westminster Abbey, must have had a grand heritage. We find he was brought up in an almshouse, and that his real name was not Stanley at all. We find Beethoven writing music although deaf, and Milton writing poetry although blind, and we discover that in general the great work of the world has been done by handicapped people. They may have had faults and foibles like the rest of us, but they had handicaps also, often far more severe than we have faced, and they dealt with them superbly.

How did they do it? What was the inward technique with which they handled limitations? Is there any one of us who does not need to learn that?

Biography in the Bible in no way differs from life stories outside. It confirms the universality of our problem. Take Paul's "thorn in the flesh," for example—"a messenger of Satan to buffet me." "I besought the Lord thrice," he wrote, "that it might depart from me. And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness."

No one knows what Paul's thorn in the flesh was. Epilepsy, eye trouble—many have been the guesses, but no one knows. If Paul had been like some of us, someone would know. Think of writing all those letters and telling nobody the symptoms of his trouble! Ephesus, Colossæ, Thessalonica, Corinth and Rome would have been informed about it had Paul been like some of us. We know nothing, however, about Paul's trouble except that behind the scenes, like the rest of us, Paul had to handle a limitation that he prayed to escape, that he could not evade, that he had to settle down and live with somehow or other. Ah, Paul, handicapped man yet radiant in personality and successful in work, how did you handle it? What was the grace that was sufficient for you?

Often in churches we hear theological, ecclesiastical, and liturgical matters discussed as though the central problem of man's spiritual life somehow lay there. How far that is from the truth! How many of us really have the crux of our spiritual problem in details of theology or theories of church and liturgy? But we may be sure of one place where many of us do have the central problem of our spiritual life, the watershed from which the streams of life may flow to far-

dissevered destinies, and that is in the region of our handicaps.

Here is a boy born a cripple or crippled in early infancy; he has grown up through his first years with no idea of what has happened to him, but some time in childhood it will dawn on him that he is not like other children, that he has a handicap. His spiritual problem will centre in the way he deals with that. Or here is a man whose parents did not understand the critical importance of the emotional experiences of childhood, who now wakes up to discover that something is wrong inside, that all his basic, habitual emotional reactions flow in channels of suspicion, distrust, fear, anxiety and vindictiveness, so that like a stream in endless agitation he looks in envy at smoothly-flowing personalities that can maintain a tranquil, deep, and even course. That man's spiritual problem will centre in the vicinity of his handicap. Or here is a man who in youth had all the natural ambitions of young manhood for success, but who now recognizes that he never will arrive at his desired goal. He will never write the poetry or compose the music or preach the sermons or hold the business positions that he dreamed. Again and again he has stepped on the gas, but the speed is not in him. Nature did not equip him with eight cylinders, or with six—only four, and those none too good. It is a crucial hour in that man's life when he stands open-eyed before his handicap. Or here is a man who was highly endowed and whose promising youth awakened in his friends capacious expectations, but upon whom, like a beast from ambush, an accident leaped, and now he must work with crippled machinery. Again and again he has tried to throw on the old power in the old way, but it only burns out the fuse. Somehow or other he must face his handicap.

Moreover, there are some whose limitations lie in personal relationships—a life that wanted love and missed it, a home where marriage might have been a thing of beauty but was a tragedy, a family where a child was greeted as a blessing and became an inward agony, a household where death has severed a tie that was the support and glory of the home. Among the few things that are true of all of us is the fact that each one has a handicap.

How, then, shall we deal with it? What is the technique? Where is the grace that is sufficient for us?

In the first place, if we are to deal handsomely with our handicaps we must at least have the grace to take, not a negative, but a positive attitude toward them. The first instinctive reaction toward a handicap is a negative attitude—rebellion or self-pity. How we rebel against our limitations! Why, we say, why, wanting to do some hard and honest work in the world and to contribute something worth while to life, should I be thwarted by this extraneous thorn in the flesh? It was a common human failing that caused Job's wife, when the crippling calamities fell on her husband, to advise him to curse God and die. Many a handicapped man has cursed God.

James Thomson, who wrote "The City of Dreadful Night," for example, as a culmination to bereavement and lost health, had insomnia. His life was so clouded in gloom that he, doubtless, was speaking in the words of his characters:

Who is most wretched in this dolorous place?
I think myself; yet I would rather be
My miserable self than He, than He
Who formed such creatures to His own disgrace.
The vilest thing must be less vile than Thou
From whom it had its being, God and Lord!

Creator of all woe and sin! abhorred,
Malignant and implacable! I vow
That not for all Thy power furled and unfurled,
For all the temples to Thy glory built,
Would I assume the ignominious guilt
Of having made such men in such a world.

Well, such an attitude is natural if you have insomnia. But it is a poor technique for dealing with handicaps.

Many people, therefore, less vehement and tumultuous, try self-pity. They stroke their wounded spirits. Poor pussy, they say, poor pussy! If, they cry, I had not this handicap, what a person I would have been! And so, drifting into imaginings of all they would have been and achieved, had not that handicap been there, they become very sorry for themselves that such a miserable thorn in the flesh should have kept them from so glorious a paradise. That is natural, but it is not an efficient technique for dealing with limitations. A man must talk to himself more intelligently and courageously than that if he is to secure the grace that is sufficient for him.

For example, let a man say this to himself: Do you suppose that you are peculiar in having to handle second-bests? Few people get their first choice. To take a second-best and make something out of it is life. Whoever yet had a chance to live his life out under the ideal conditions he would have chosen?

Once when Ole Bull, the great violinist, was giving a concert in Paris, his A string snapped and he transposed the composition and finished it on three strings. That is life—to have your A string snap and finish on three strings. How many here have had to test that out! Some of the finest things in human life have been done that way. Indeed, so much the most thrilling part of the human story on this planet lies in

such capacity victoriously to handle handicaps that, much as I should have liked to hear Ole Bull with all the resources of a perfect instrument at his command, if I could have heard him only once I should have liked to hear him when the A string snapped and, without rebellion or self-pity or surrender, he finished on three strings.

As soon as a man begins to take this positive attitude toward his handicaps, they begin to present themselves to him as opportunities—always challenging, sometimes fascinating. It is a good cook who, after the dinner has been burned, knows how to make a fine meal out of the left-overs, and a good cook will be challenged to try. When a man begins to see a possible technique here for dealing with his limitations, he begins to say to himself this: There are two kinds of elements in every situation, first, the things you cannot help—if the dinner has been burnt it is burnt; if the A string has snapped it has snapped—but, second, the things you can help—your attitude. Rebellion gets you nowhere. Self-pity gets you nowhere. But insight to see that something can be done with the second-bests and adventurous daring to try might be a handle to take hold of.

Some great stories have been told of people who did use that handle. Joseph did not want to be sent to Egypt. Betrayed by his brothers, sold into slavery, lied about by his master's wife and put in prison—that was a bad second-best. But that old story, born beside Bedouin camp fires, now is naturalized beside modern radiators, because thus to face a second-best and make something of it, as Joseph did, is life.

Robinson Crusoe did not want to land on a desert island. Who wants a desert island, even when he is tired of multitudinous New York? But while many

a story rises and falls and passes away, that old tale retains its endless fascination because to be handed thus a second-best and make something of it is life.

Francis Parkman did not want poor eyesight. Who wants that? But one who knows his story reads his superb writings with an added thrill, seeing behind the printed page the manuscript with the wire screen across it where Parkman guided his pencil that he might write legibly.

So Paul did not want a thorn in the flesh. Temperamentally vigorous, active, aggressive—how he must have rebelled against it! "I besought the Lord thrice," he said, "that it might depart from me," and something tells me he lost count after that. But I suspect there are qualities of understanding and sympathy in Paul and a deep and moving music in some of the great passages of his epistles that never would have been there if he had not had to finish on three strings.

In the second place, if we are thus to take a positive attitude toward our handicaps, some of us will have to throw off a false sense of responsibility. The reason why many of us fret so at our limitations is that we keep comparing ourselves with others and wishing to be what they are or do what they do. We habitually measure ourselves by other people and assume a responsibility for being as fortunate, as useful, and as happy as they. Limited as I am, we say, I cannot be like So-and-So. It is a great day in a handicapped man's life when he makes up his mind that he has only one responsibility, not to be like anybody else but to handle his special situation as well as he can.

A consulting psychologist said some time ago that of the many cases of emotional maladjustment with which he deals, a large proportion were due to the fact that people would not accept themselves. Just so!

We will not accept ourselves. We will not say what I am confident Paul in effect said: I, Paul, hereby accept myself with a thorn in my flesh and do hereby throw off all responsibility for dealing with any other Paul than myself, and having thus accepted myself with my handicap, which I cannot help, I will now fall to and see what good thing can be gotten out of myself in my special situation.

There are people here the inner tone of whose spiritual life and the outer result of whose practical endeavours would be transformed, if in that sense they would accept themselves.

Upon the other hand, see what we do. Born to be berry bushes and produce good berries, we lift anxious, envious eyes to apple trees with their larger-sized fruit, or, born to be apple trees and produce good apples, we look with worried jealousy at maple trees with their more capacious shade, or, born to be maple trees, we are anxious because elm trees are taller and more graceful. We will not accept ourselves. Roll off, I beg of you, all responsibility for handling any other self or any other situation than the one you face.

I am well aware that this is not the ordinary tone of the pulpit. The preacher is all for putting responsibility on people. He ordinarily assumes that people are indifferent to their responsibility and proceeds to present to their acceptance the obligations that he thinks they ought to assume. But any man who works in confessional conferences with individuals learns that there are many people who never will get anywhere with their own problem or any one else's until they accept themselves. John Smith, he says, stop feeling responsible for being as fortunate or successful or happy or useful as some other man! That is not

your business. You have been given this special field to till. Accept it. If the soil is thinner and the rocks more numerous and the prospects less promising than another's, that is simply life's problem which, in some degree, we all face. Stop looking over the fence and daydreaming about what you would do with another man's field. Your limitations are also your opportunities. Remember what Emerson's squirrel said to the mountain:

If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut.

That spirit has brought out of small chances some of the most priceless results in human history.

If a man says he does not like himself, that is easily understood. There are millions of people with inside information about themselves who do not like themselves. Thomas Gray did not like himself. He had a melancholic temperament and he wanted a sanguine one. He wrote once to a friend: "Low spirits are my true and faithful companions." But when you read his "Elegy, Written in a Country Churchyard," you feel that a priceless thing has been done with those sombre moods that a merely jocund and hilarious temperament could not have achieved.

Diminutive edition of a man, William Wilberforce probably did not like himself. Boswell went to hear him speak once and said afterward: "I saw what seemed a mere shrimp mount upon the table; but, as I listened, he grew, and grew, until the shrimp became a whale." That shrimp of a man never had good health. For twenty years on doctor's orders he took opium to keep body and soul together and had the courage never to increase the dose. But more than any other Englishman he stopped the British slave trade, and

as one stands in Westminster Abbey beside the grave of "The Attorney-General of the unprotected and of the friendless," one feels that that sensitive, suffering life translated itself into a persistent, unconquerable sympathy with downtrodden people that a lusty hulk of a man in perfect health probably never would have felt.

Do not despise your limitations. They are your opportunities. God will never judge us in masses. Each one of us will have a private examination. What did we do with our special situation? That is all. If you say, I am just as good as So-and-so, you will have missed the point. Perhaps So-and-so had much more severe handicaps. You should have done better. If you say, I am a failure, So-and-so beat me, you will have missed the point. God may say, Well done, good and faithful servant; you had a desperately difficult situation and you handled it superbly.

In the third place, if we are thus to take a positive and hopeful attitude toward our limitations, many of us must clearly perceive that however severely our outward service may be limited, we can always make a spiritual contribution to the world.

Some one has defined influence as the effluence of affluence. The most powerful and permeating influence is the aroma of rich and fragrant spirits, the effluence of affluence.

Now, handicaps, far from preventing the development of this influential quality, are almost the indispensable setting of it. Bring on your strong and shining Apollo who never had a handicap, who with integrated personality, fortunate circumstance, and physical health has lived untroubled by limitations, and, however energetic may be his active service in the world, there are some things he cannot do for us

that Helen Keller can. She is handicapped—blind, deaf, the doors shut on every side except the one door that even her handicaps can never shut, her chance to be a very radiant soul in a difficult situation. Being that, she does something to us which no shining Apollo can do.

The relationship, in this regard, between active and fortunate people on one side and handicapped spirits on the other is a fascinating study. Many of us may not be able to understand the argument or appreciate the antique beauty of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, but one thing we all appreciate, the blind Milton sitting down to write them. That does something to us. Longfellow's translation of Dante may not by itself impress us. But when we learn that Mrs. Longfellow accidentally set her dress on fire, that Longfellow desperately but vainly tried to quench the flames, and that, after it all was over and Mrs. Longfellow had died, he sat down in his wifeless, motherless home to translate Dante to occupy his mind, and, what is more, did it beautifully, that does something to us.

How often we, with the shining sword of fortune and happiness still in our hands, tempted, for all that, to be laggard and cowardly, lift our eyes to see some man who has lost his sword, fighting with the scabbard, undaunted, high-spirited, unafraid—until we grasp our blades afresh and hew ahead! One cannot easily estimate the spiritual stimulus that comes into human life from handicapped people who have found grace sufficient for them.

My friend at a mid-western university tells me that in all his years there he never heard such cheering, not even at a football victory, as greeted a crippled boy carried in the arms of his companions across the

platform on Commencement Day. Four years before, that boy had answered "Present" at the first roll call of his class. "Stand up!" said the professor. "I should like to, sir, but I have not been able to stand up since I was four years old." But, by being what he was in a difficult situation, that boy made such an impression on the university that, when his companions carried him up for his diploma, the great assemblage broke forth into such cheers as that college generation had not heard before.

Never despise your handicaps. They are an opportunity for a kind of spiritual service that lusty Apollos cannot render.

If you say that it takes great faith to live like this, you are right. You will not get this quality of life out of the atheistic cults some are trying to substitute for profound religion. If you say there are hours when you hate your handicaps, quite so! Even Christ prayed against the cross. *That* was a handicap. To die at thirty-three on a cross is a handicap. "If it be possible, let this cup pass away from me." He too prayed three times. But as it turned out in the end, no cross would have meant no Christ. That handicap was his most shining instrument. My friends, it was not the Greek Apollo, charioteer of the victorious sun, who won the world. It was the handicapped and crucified Christ.

NO MAN NEED STAY THE WAY HE IS

CONSCIENCE is one of the most appalling scourges of mankind. To be sure, conscience is indispensable and at its best may be called the voice of God within us but, for all that, it can be and in many lives is an appalling scourge.

Conscience can attach itself to the mint, anise, and cummin of conduct, until its wretched possessor is half insane with scrupulosity about things that do not matter. Or conscience can swing to the negative side of conduct and so inhibit and repress a man, who might have been creatively happy, that he is imprisoned in negative conscientiousness. Or conscience can sanction absurd or cruel customs. So Captain Kemble in old Boston, after a long sea-voyage, was put in the public stocks because on the front steps of their own house he kissed his wife on Sunday, and so still there are social conventions concerning which people become unreasonably conscientious. Or conscience can become hypersensitive until, instead of producing lovely and gracious character, its harried possessor worries about anything done or left undone, so that one would choose a kindly sinner for company rather than so distressing an exhibition of wretched conscientiousness. Indeed, conscience can get completely out of hand and, long after the sin in question has been repented of, turned from, and left behind, can make a man so needlessly remorseful that unless something can be done for his haunted soul he will land under psychiatric care. "Every physician," writes one medical man, "who has much to do with nervous troubles

and emotional disorders, soon comes to recognize that thousands of well-meaning individuals are suffering from mental torture and various nervous disorders as the result of overworking the conscience."

If someone here is underworking his conscience, this sermon is not for him. But I call to witness the experience of the rest of us, that conscience is a powerful and sometimes terrific fact. Having had the good fortune of a fine home in childhood, I am not bothered by obsessing fears but, having experienced one thing, I do fear it in solemn earnest: the inexorable movement of an unworthy deed from expectation through committal into memory, where it settles down, towers up, fills the sky, and begins its deadly reiterated accusation—Shame on you! A man says, But I will not let myself be so afflicted by my conscience; is it not *my* conscience? only to discover that no man's conscience is at the beck and call of his volition. A man says, But I will attend to other things and fill my days with fortunate preoccupation, only to discover that, waiting for every chink of opportunity, that voice haunts him, saying, Shame on you! Such remorse Victor Hugo compared with the tide which, though it ebb, comes ever back to the shore again.

To be sure, so intolerable is conscience when it thus swings into full action, that we all are inwardly equipped with devices to evade it. A consulting psychologist has recently written that in a mixed company of husbands and wives he first asked the husbands to answer a questionnaire about the queernesses of their wives and received, he says, enthusiastic co-operation. Then he asked the wives to fill out a questionnaire about the queernesses of their husbands and once more the response was heartfelt. Then he

asked each individual to fill out a questionnaire about his or her own queernesses and received, he said, mostly a blank stare, not because in theory they doubted that they themselves were queer but because, to their own happiness, they had not thought much about it. So Jesus said long ago that men look for motes in others' eyes and forget the beams in their own. Nevertheless, while each of us is equipped with such devices to alleviate self-accusation, that is not the whole story. One sometimes wishes that it were. For conscience can be terrific, making a man feel, as Coleridge said,

Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round, walks on
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

Even when conscience is not so strenuous, it is bad enough, saying to us, You there with your heritage, your opportunities, your home, your friends, look at yourself, no better than you are! Here is an inexorable fact with which we have to deal one way or another—an inner voice that keeps saying, *You ought not to be the way you are.*

In a world where every normal human being has to listen habitually to that voice, there surely can be no health, nervous, emotional, moral, or spiritual, unless mankind hears another message, *No man need stay the way he is.* It is because every normal human being hears the first voice, demanding moral change, and millions are trying to live without the second voice, promising moral change, that life is so devastated by conscience. If ever we dealt with a real problem, this is one.

Certainly in the New Testament it is real. It was vivid to Paul. "The good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practise. . . . I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am!" A truer description of a universal human problem it would be hard to imagine. The great seers have consistently said the same, from Plato describing the problem as driving a chariot with two horses, one white and eager, the other dark and obstinate, to Goethe's Faust, saying, "Two souls, alas, are lodg'd within my breast." If Paul stepped out of his seventh chapter of Romans into the triumph of his eighth—"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus"—it is because his Christianity met this human need with a saving message: To be sure, you ought not to be the way you are, but then, no man need stay the way he is.

In every realm this same thing is true for which we are pleading in the spiritual life. It is a universal experience in physical illness to know that we ought not to be as we are, and scientific medicine is trying to lift the answering cry. Men do not need to stay as they are. Lack of education is a universal experience in which people feel the need of change, and not only are all schools trying to say that man does not need to stay as he is, but psychologists, like Dr. Thorndike, are assuring us that even as we grow older, fifty years old, sixty years old, we need not stop learning, that our capacity to acquire new knowledge drops no more than one per cent a year, so that, the old proverb to the contrary notwithstanding, we can teach an old dog new tricks. Everywhere one looks, man's problem

in life is like an unfruitful valley which long has known it ought not to be as it is and now learns that through irrigation it need not stay as it is. While in other realms the sense of need may at times be dim and wavering, in the moral life it is concentrated in conscience, the inseparable companion of our pilgrimage, from whom no divorce can part us, that says, with tireless iteration, You ought not to be the way you are.

In view of this, how can men so easily consent to give up Christianity for themselves and for their generation? For what more devastating thing can we imagine than the whole race having to deal with an inner monitor demanding moral change while throwing away the voice that most has proclaimed its possibility?

In endeavouring to secure light upon this matter, consider first that this Christian gospel is the extension of the personal ministry of Jesus. He found Palestine, like the rest of the world, full of unpromising people—women of Samaria, Prodigal Sons, dishonest public servants like Zacchæus, fishermen like Peter, James, and John, getting nowhere in their lives—and he left them changed so that one would hardly recognize them. Moreover, Jesus always took it for granted that such change is an essential part of human living so that, far from being strange, it is to be expected. At no point is his attitude toward people more strikingly different from ours. We merely size people up. We look them over, take their measure, size them up. Thus and so, we say, they are, and there we leave them.

A long generation ago in London, for example, we might have seen a young man from India, smartly dressed, playing the social game with success and

charm, taking dancing lessons, taking violin lessons. We would have sized him up as quite a young man about town. Why not? says someone; Why not size up a young man? To which I answer that the inadequacy of merely sizing anybody up is made evident by the fact that that young man about town is now Mahatma Gandhi. Surely, not! I can imagine someone saying who knew him in the London days: That young fellow never turned out to be the toothless, half-naked ascetic living on goat's milk, holding in his frail hands the spiritual destinies of India and almost single-handed forcing the British Empire to reverse its policy? Yet that is what happened. Moreover, this which so surprises us would, I suspect, not surprise Jesus at all. He would say, That is quite the kind of thing that does occur in personality.

Have you ever been on a camping trip in the wilds with an engineer who in places where you saw nothing in particular kept saying, Think what could be done with all this power! Have you ever, in company with an educational expert, visited a backward community concerned about its schools, and felt his enthusiasm about what might be done with them? Every man who amounts to anything has at least one realm where nothing is so real to him as the possibilities. Well, Jesus was an expert in personality. When he met anyone like a Prodigal Son he sized him up. Indeed he did! No one could do that better. But he never stopped there. Nothing in that boy was so real to Jesus as what might be done with him.

If this were an argument, I should contend first that on this matter Jesus was right psychologically. It is of the essence of personal life to change. Not only can it change but it cannot stand still; it is always going up or down. And at the heart of personality

is the power to direct change by throwing ahead a chosen goal and working toward it. I should also contend, in the second place, that Jesus is not only psychologically but historically right. The one thing we know that changes most is human life. The sun, moon, and stars, the planet which is our habitation, have not changed much in the race's memory, but human life has changed tremendously and in the realm of personality the possibilities contained in intellect, in creative purposefulness, and in the loves of mankind are quite incalculable. And I should contend, in the third place, that if an hypothesis must be finally tested by its fruits, this attitude of Jesus has had amazing confirmation, for he has become one of the supreme life-changers of history, in part because whenever he met anybody he started by thinking that the most significant fact in that life was what might be done with it.

Is any man here so poor in friendship that he does not know the astonishing change that can come to him when over the horizon of his discouraged soul there rises a friend who believes in his possibilities? You see, one trouble with us is not simply that we size up other people; alas, we size ourselves up! We take our own measure. Thus and so we are—so we catalogue ourselves and then go out to live with that voice which demands moral change. I know I am dealing with someone's need when I remind you of Jesus who, whenever even now he can get a man's attention, says to him, You need not stay the way you are.

Again, consider the method Jesus used when he did change people. He never gave them the impression that he was importing into them something artificial and alien, but rather that he was discovering in them

something they had not known was there, and was bringing it out into the open. James Whitcomb Riley was a notorious failure in his early days at school—to quote a schoolmate, “the most celebrated failure in arithmetic in the country.” Then he came under the influence of a new teacher who appreciated his literary flare and helped develop that for the world. When one contrasts the methods used by the teachers who failed to help Riley and the method used by the teacher who succeeded, there is no mistaking the nature of the difference. The teachers who failed were trying to import into that boy information which seemed to him utterly alien and uninteresting. Then the new teacher came and began at the other end. He appreciated in the boy some things whose value the others had not recognized. Before his eyes the boy saw unveiled, not James Whitcomb Riley the failure he had been told he was, but a James Whitcomb Riley he had merely dreamed of being, until, identifying himself with the newly-discovered person, he went out to be himself indeed. Well, Jesus must have had a magic touch as a teacher.

I understand the objections naturally raised to all this. Our possibilities of choice are not limitless, someone says; it is not true that anybody can become anything; rather, our lives are set within boundaries predetermined by heredity and environment and, furthermore, we are in an economic and social system which keeps many from getting out of themselves all that is there, so that to tell people that they can become anything they will is to beguile their souls with false expectations. Of course that is true. In a nursery group I know, there is now a very little boy whose major problem is to decide whether when he grows up he will be a man or a woman. Day after

day he balances the relative advantages of being the father or the mother of a family and decides now for one and now for the other. Some day he will discover that his possibilities are not so extensive as he had supposed, that there is some truth in predestination and that there are limits to free will.

If someone here is trying to avoid this morning's message by stressing that range of fact, I am inclined to grant you almost anything you want, within reason. But the major truth still holds good. Of course our possibilities are not limitless but, for all that, you need not stay the way you are. No, you need not. There is more in you than ever has been brought out, and one confirmation of that fact is simply to imagine Jesus having a chance to make a voyage of discovery through your soul. What continental things he has discovered in people even like ourselves!

Again, consider the way Jesus, thus believing in man's possibilities and discovering in man the diviner self, went on, with any man he was trying to change, to give him a sense of backing so that he felt, not that he was lifting himself by his own bootstraps, but that he was being lifted. Here is where moralists fall down and only men of religious faith have an adequate gospel for human need. The moralist always has to tell a man in the end that somehow he must change himself, while the success of a high religion in life-changing has lain in the fact that it puts a man in new relationships with eternal spiritual forces so that he feels he is being changed.

Certainly, if that is true, it meets one of our most devastating needs. How many people in this congregation have been saying this morning, I have tried; Heaven knows I have tried, and still I am unchanged! Not only in this realm, however, but in every other,

profound human experience bears witness to the superficiality of individual trying by itself alone. When Robert Louis Stevenson was changed from a purposeless to a purposeful young man, he did not think he had steered himself but that he had been guided by "that unknown steersman whom we call God." When Keats, reading Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, was transformed from a young lad without a vocation to a young lad who knew that his destiny lay in poetry, he did not think he had changed himself but had been changed, born from above by a vision of a world of beauty he had never sensed before. So all profound transformations of character are associated with the experience, not of lifting oneself but of being lifted, not of changing oneself but of being changed.

Indeed, consider the history of civilization as a whole and see how true it is, even in the social realm, that nothing comes merely by trying. What would we say was the first major turning point in the development of civilization on this planet? Few of us would guess that but it is plain. The first major turning point in the development of civilization on this planet came when early man planted a seed in the ground and waited. Never before had man so co-operated with the cosmic forces. He had tried to win his way by his strong right arm and the strenuousness of his will, but now a new era dawned. He planted a seed in the ground and waited. There began agriculture and with it civilization, for there man began to relate himself creatively to the eternal forces and to depend on them.

That is a parable of something everlastingly true in the spiritual life. Of course we cannot blow upon our hands and change ourselves but we can so alter our inner attitude that our whole relationship to the

spiritual world will be changed. Every man instinctively knows that this is true in dealing with trouble. Many of us are not dismayed so much by our sins as by our troubles. We are outwitted and desolated by them. Yet in our best hours we know we need not stay that way. Let a man by ever so little alter his interior attitude toward trouble and the whole experience of trouble is altered. I have seen many people in these days facing tragedy in such noble fashion that what one hard-bested person put into words I have become familiar with in life: "All the water in the world cannot sink a ship unless it gets *inside* the ship. All the sorrow in the world cannot sink a person unless it gets *inside* the mind." What is true of trouble is true of sin. Alter your inner attitude and you have changed your relationships with the whole spiritual world.

Long before this you must have felt how difficult it is to present an intimate and personal matter such as this to a great congregation. Preachers often turn to public subjects because it is simpler to present a public subject to a public crowd, but this message is intimate and personal. Who was it said that preaching is like discharging an eye dropper out of a window into the street below in hope that the eye medicine will hit somebody in the right place? One feels the truth of that now. For all that we have been saying is quite in vain unless it reaches our intimacies. You, there, with a bad temper which is in danger of wrecking your family's happiness, you need not stay the way you are. You, there, with a sorry case of self-pity which is making all your friends miserable, you need not stay the way you are. You, there, with a habit which creeps up into dominance over you, you need not stay the way you are. You can plant the seed of

faith and effort in the right soil and, lo! another era of cosmic co-operation!

Finally, think of the life-changing forces which are released by a personality who not only believes in us, discovers our diviner self and backs us up with a power greater than our own, but who cares enough to suffer for us! For if we are realistic about the life-changing forces which transform us most, we cannot leave out the people who love us into being better. Of all forces which make a man want to be better, nothing is so powerful as love. Imagine a man utterly unloved and you see a life where conscience has no leverage for its lifting power, but, just as soon as love comes in, new dimensions of desire and possibility appear. So Shakespeare made Portia say to Bassanio, when her love answered his,

. . . Though for myself alone
I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better; yet, for you
I would be trebled twenty times myself.

Now, when this experience of personal love is elevated and extended until we stand before great souls who have cared enough about the world to sacrifice themselves, someone perchance who died for man because he thought man was worth dying for, we are facing the most tremendous moral lifting power the race has known.

A monument, so I am told, has been erected on the coast to the officers and crew of a wrecked vessel, who at the cost of their lives kept the high tradition of the sea. The wreck came in a dreadful storm and despite their efforts the life-boats were smashed and every one was drowned. It was noted, however, that the only bodies to reach shore were those of passengers

wearing life-belts. Evidently there had not been enough for all and the officers and crew had gone without them so that their bodies sank and were lost. One day, it is said, a rollicking group of boys on a hike came to the monument, as merry youngsters as one could see, apparently without a serious idea in their heads, until one of them, out of boyish curiosity, asked what the monument was all about. So the leader told them of the officers and crew who tried to save others when they could not save themselves. The boys grew quieter and quieter until one of them took off his cap and then the others took off their caps too, and they stood there mute witnesses to one of the profoundest facts in human nature, that nothing in this world reaches so deep, takes hold so hard, and lifts so long as vicarious self-sacrifice.

If we here to-day could be persuaded how desperately this world needs us at our best and then could be brought face to face with those great souls who have cared enough to suffer for mankind, until we stood before the cross of Christ as those boys stood before the monument, every person here would be saying two things to himself: first, I ought not to be the way I am; and second, No man need stay the way he is.

PREVENTIVE RELIGION

ONE of the most important movements of our time is the gradual shift of emphasis from curative to preventive medicine. A wise family no longer regards its physician as intended primarily to cure its members when they have fallen ill, but to keep them from becoming ill. No necessary conflict exists between these two complementary aspects of medicine, yet one who sees what is afoot as the decades pass can note the changing stress. Public sanitation to prevent epidemics; quarantines, national, local, and domestic, to ward off contagion; inoculations and vaccinations to confer immunity in advance; periodic health examinations to forestall trouble—these are the signs of the times in medicine. In this realm we are taking in earnest the ancient maxim that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

In religion, however, we are not taking it so seriously. How many controlling ideas and methods of work are still back in the age of curative religion, and how few of them have come into the age of preventive religion!

A man once went to Dwight L. Moody, it is said, with a tale of moral disaster and, after having narrated the harrowing facts, said, "Now, Mr. Moody, what would you do if you had gotten into such a situation?" to which Mr. Moody replied, "Man, I never would get into it." That is to say, true religion is not simply an ambulance at the foot of a precipice to pick up those who have fallen over; it is a fence at the top to prevent their falling in the first place. As the fine, familiar

benediction of the Epistle of Jude puts it, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling."

Our temptation to minimize the preventive aspects of religion and maximize its curative aspects springs in part from historical causes. Christianity at first went out into a pagan world and its earliest appeal was directed to prodigals and outcasts, for whom others had no message and no help. When Celsus, the Epicurean, attacked Christianity in the second century, he poured derision on it because its devotees had so largely been, not respectable citizens, but villains and sinners. At the beginning, Christians for the most part were adults who had been converted from pagan degradation, and Paul gave a deplorable picture of their moral antecedents before they were lifted from the mire. That situation presupposes curative religion.

Alongside this historic emphasis in the New Testament one must put the medieval conceptions of heaven and hell as a reason for stress upon the religion of rescue. Hell was a desperate reality to the whole Western world, whether Christian or non-Christian, and as far down in time as 1877 Henry Ward Beecher was thundering against this belief in a Plymouth pulpit, saying: "To tell me that back of Christ there is a God who for unnumbered centuries has gone on creating men and sweeping them like dead flies—nay, like living ones—into hell, is to ask me to worship a being as much worse than the conception of any medieval devil as can be imagined; but I will not worship the devil, though he should come dressed in royal robes and sit on the throne of Jehovah." If religion be conceived chiefly as a means of escape from such a hell, it is inevitably a religion of rescue. In Adam's disobedience we all were submerged in an

abysmal flood of sin and the gospel is the only Ark that can save our hell-bound humanity from eternal perdition—that was the old theology and it inevitably implied a religion of reclamation and recovery.

Even more popularly influential in causing emphasis on curative religion is the simple fact that rescue is dramatic. Few people note the processes by which fires are prevented. They are commonplace, dull and drab. But when a fire is raging and some brave fellow risks his neck in a thrilling rescue, that is dramatic and the papers are full of it. Few people are interested in the routine of inoculation, vaccination, and quarantine restriction, but let a healer come to town and loudly noise abroad that the sick are being cured, and, as in Jesus' day, when all Capernaum filled up the streets, the promise of rescue from distress will thrill the populace. So, in the story of Christianity nothing is so exciting as its moral rescues.

Do not misunderstand me; they are exciting to me, too. A rescue always is thrilling. An American battalion in the Great War is lost and then after a few days is found again, and more excitement is felt over that one than over a thousand battalions never lost at all. A ship goes down at sea, and an heroic tale of hazardous exploits in the lifeboats comes back with the survivors, and in that single incident is more material for tears and heart-throbs than in a hundred ships that sail in safety and need no rescue. So, some men and women, sustained by an integrating faith in God and a fine companionship with Christ, live honourable and useful lives. They are dragged out of no moral hells because they get into none. They are cured of no loathsome habits because they contract none. But one must admit that they are not half so thrilling as a rescue.

From the story, therefore, of the Prodigal Son, recovered from companionship with swine to sit at his father's board again, to the last narrative of a lost life found, of a smirched, dishonoured soul lifted to usefulness and decency again, the most thrilling things in Christian history have been rescues. Here in this church were I to recount to you the moral reclamations that have taken place in the natural course of our work in the last few months, you would think them worth anything they might cost in time and toil. And they are. That university man who came to us morally whipped two years after getting his degree but who went out from his last interview saying, "I am a new man in a new world," does represent one of the abiding and glorious aspects of the gospel. But without in the least belittling the power of God to cure, let me exalt the power of God to prevent. After all, one thing is far better than bringing the Prodigal Son back from the far country, and that is keeping him from going there in the first place—"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling."

How poignantly one feels the truth of this when some life, badly mangled in a devastating crisis of practical trouble or moral disgrace, seeks spiritual recovery as an emergency measure! Why did not he feel the need of sound and healthy faith and character *before* the crisis? One cannot build his house on rock after the storm breaks; that must be done before. Granted the stirring truth in the possibilities of moral rescue through Christ, it is dangerous to expatiate upon and fairly glorify the iniquities of the saved sinner because it is exciting to see him recovered from them. Indeed, from this overdone emphasis of evangelical Christianity has come the widespread impression that only moral failures need the gospel. Plenty

of people, when they see a young man collapsing morally, think that if a genuine religious experience could take hold of him it might save the day. Many parents who have lightly neglected religious training in their homes—Were theirs not dear, wholesome children? What did they need of religion?—now seeing one of these children in manhood beginning to go to pieces, wish that the minister might rescue him. Thus many regard religion as merely an agency of recovery. It is like an ambulance or a fire engine—on ordinary days no one thinks of them; only when something dreadfully amiss has happened does one turn to them.

Upon the contrary, a healthy and victorious spiritual life is something infinitely greater than an emergency measure. To be sure, for all of us life is full of emergencies. The older a man grows the more he expects unforeseen contingencies, as from ambush, to take him by surprise. There are crises of trouble, temptation, opportunity which leap unannounced into every man's experience. Such emergencies, however, cannot be adequately handled by emergency measures. When to any one an important crisis comes, the solemn fact is that either he is ready or not ready—it is too late to get ready. A man must have the resources of a strong spiritual life, grounded in faith, exercised in moral habit, in touch with adequate reserves of power, *before* the emergency. He cannot extemporize spiritual life when, in a crisis, he suddenly needs it.

Even in the external realm of economics, reliance on emergency measures is dangerous, as any one watching our national life can see. When one comes closer home and deals with the physical body, even more obviously are emergency measures a poor substitute for sound health. When, more intimately still, one

enters the realm of mind, it becomes absurd to suppose that an educated intelligence can be extemporized when it is critically needed to rescue a man from failure. To this interior realm a vital religion belongs. If a man is powerfully to possess it in a crisis, he must have possessed it before the crisis. To wait until moral disaster sets one clamouring for a rescuer is a poor substitute for the radiant, healthy, triumphant spiritual life which forestalls disaster. The most important work Christ is doing on earth to-day is not, I think, rescuing the fallen, but producing a quality and strength of character that keeps us from falling.

In the first place, one who takes Christianity in earnest, lives in its climate and atmosphere, deals seriously with the Master's way of living and catches his spirit, does have conferred upon him as the years pass a kind of spiritual immunity. Some moral diseases he is not subject to any more. To see this exhibited one only has to think of the result of Jesus' fellowship with one of his disciples. Give John, for example, one year, two years, three years of close fellowship with the Master and an inevitable consequence ensues. Some temptations to which at the beginning John was responsive—he might even have succumbed to them—pass over into the unthinkable class. He has achieved immunity. As a man who has lived around the marshes where malaria is a real peril moves up now to higher altitudes and recognizes that somewhere along the line of his ascent he has passed the place where malaria is a danger, so a man who genuinely lives with Christ mounts moral levels and finds at last that old temptations have no more appeal. He has passed out of the region of their power. Alas for a man who does not know what that means!

It was one of the greatest days in human history

when the idea of immunity dawned in medicine. Men could be made immune so that the disease in question had no dominion over them. They could walk in its presence unafraid and uncontaminated. That was a revolutionary concept. The idea and the practice of it carry us back to the biography of Louis Pasteur, great scientist and great Christian. "Then," we read, "Pasteur jumped to one of his quick conclusions: 'Once a cow has anthrax, but gets better from it, all the anthrax microbes in the world cannot give her another attack—she is *immune*.'" That hour is comparable with the most significant moments in human history, as when man first thought the earth was round or that it moved about the sun, or that biological species are not static but mutable and evolving. It was a pregnant hour whose multiplying consequences will last as long as humanity does. People can be made immune so that devastating diseases have no dominion over them.

Well, a wholesome religion does that for character. I have before me a letter from one of the great spirits in this nation. You would recognize his name were I to mention it. He has just been going through one of those devastating tragedies which search a man's soul and he has carried it off so splendidly that those of us who know him have seen a fresh revelation of victorious living. This is the sentence with which his letter ends: "After all, religion is worth while when you need it; but you can't have it then, if you haven't had it before!" Aye, to have religion *before*, habitually to live in the fellowship of the Highest until old evils have lost their power, fine things once difficult have become easy, and the soul has grown in healthy-mindedness—that is the major use of religion. May God save us from the necessity of curative religion!

In the second place, a wholesome religion confers on its possessor the prophylactic effects of a positive purpose. Every positive purpose influencing a man's life has a prophylactic effect. Your boy becomes absorbed in some scientific interest such as building a radio set. That means that to some other things his preoccupied attention will turn a deaf ear. What Dr. Chalmers in a resounding phrase called "the expulsive power of a new affection" has come into his life. He is interested in something, and when competitive interests cross his path his instinctive reaction is to call, Gangway! for his major purpose.

A psychologist tells us of a dog absorbed in chasing his master's automobile, and, says the psychologist, so intent was he on this "end motive that he 'passed up' a tempting opportunity of chasing a cat who crossed in front of him. He was observed to hesitate just a trifle but kept to his course." Well, all dogs have cats; we know well, without explanation, the meaning of that parable. And if our lives are not to be random, futile, wicked pursuits of them, it will be because in advance we have achieved the prophylaxis of a positive purpose.

When Colonel Lindbergh landed in Paris from his first transatlantic flight, his associates here sent him the offer of a contract for a million dollars. His brief, explicit, return cable is worthy of a place among the undying utterances of this generation: "You must remember," he said, "this expedition was not organized to make money but to advance aviation." A positive purpose that can make a man immune to such an offer is a spectacle which this generation should dwell upon. It kept him from falling.

Obviously such controlling spiritual purposes cannot be extemporized as emergency measures. They

must have been in the man before. They run far back into his childhood and the training of his home. Consideration of them magnifies the indispensable importance of Christian families and exalts the ideal with which Dr. Bushnell startled the church of his day—that a child should be so reared that he cannot recall when he was not a Christian. Some of us came from such homes. Often, to be sure, we have been unworthy of them, but on every remembrance of them we are grateful that because of them we never needed to be rescued from some of the mires and abysses in which life can be lost. The prophylactic purposes which became ingrained in character long before we knew the perils they would protect us from kept us from falling.

In the third place, this kind of wholesome religion issues at last in the safety of established habit. Why do we commonly talk of habit as though it were a bad thing? He has a habit, we say, almost always meaning something disagreeable. As a matter of fact, habit is our best friend. The essence of character-building is the creating and confirming of such habits as that of industry, of courtesy, of punctuality, of decency, of unselfish thoughtfulness. Now, when such habits have been created and confirmed in a man, one consequence is inevitable—there are some things he simply cannot do; they are morally impossible.

Much nonsense has been talked about free will as though it meant that a man were at liberty to do anything. He could be true to his wife or false to her, he could be drunk or sober, he could be honest or rob a bank—was he not a free moral agent? Could he not do what he would? Moreover, you will find books pleading in the name of morality and religion for such free will as though it were not only a fact,

but a desirable fact. The truth is, there is no such free will, and it would be dreadful if there were. I am not free to forge a cheque—I could not forge a cheque; my mind would not function; my hands would not work. All the accumulated habits of my life would rise in irresistible conspiracy against the idea and the act. If by free will you mean that a man is free to do anything—commit murder, adultery, theft—thank God, the years behind us have not been altogether futile! We are not thus free. The psychologists say that good men even under hypnosis cannot be persuaded to do vile things. The experiments have established that. You cannot so hypnotize high-minded men as to make them do despicable things. The grain is set in such lives; the habits are confirmed, and the result is glorious—a nobly predictable character. We can tell in advance what some of our friends will do. They will be honest, truthful, kindly, unselfish. We say they are dependable. That is to say, we know in advance that we can count on their reactions. Nothing is nobler on this earth than right-minded, predictable character.

Perhaps someone is saying, Then you do not believe in free will; you think we are all predetermined; you are a fatalist. That, of course, is untrue. We are not predetermined and I am not a fatalist. But it is desirable to stop our nonsense about the areas within which free will operates. We are free to have something to say in advance about which habits among all the possibilities shall be formed in our lives. And the time to begin exercising that freedom is the earliest possible moment. God save us from the necessity of curative religion! God give us preventive religion, building right-minded, predictable characters.

This holds good for the Christian experience as a

life of prayer just as truly as it does for the Christian experience as moral habit. Some of the worst superstitions about prayer and perversions of it come from regarding it as an emergency measure. Prayer really is the habitual maintenance of an interior spiritual companionship. Instead of such a life of prayer sustained with radiant and powerful consequence across the years, many use prayer only when in a crisis they want some supernatural *deus ex machina* to crash through the natural order and rescue them. So Shakespeare in *The Tempest* makes the sailors cry in peril of the storm, "All lost! to prayers, to prayers! all lost!" That is the perversion of prayer. Prayer at its deepest is not an emergency measure to which one turns after disaster has fallen; it is rather an habitual spiritual companionship by which one has lived triumphantly before.

If one says that in the crisis of his last week in Jerusalem Jesus turned to prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, the answer is that plainly he did not turn to it as an unaccustomed, emergency measure. Note the brevity of his praying! He faced an emergency indeed; there was no time for long supplication; it was too late for him to have broken an untravelled path to the presence of the Father. He could pray so briefly yet so powerfully in the garden because prayer had been his habit before. When, therefore, the ambush was sprung and the terrific crisis was on him, his feet followed a familiar path and his words were few: "Not my will, but thine, be done." What reorientation of life a moment of prayer can work in one to whom it is habitual! But if one is to have this experience when he critically needs it, he must have known it *before*.

Some of you young people, especially if you have

attended revivalistic campaigns, have heard much about the power of God to save sinners. I, too, have seen some marvellous recoveries, and should not count myself a disciple of Jesus if I did not expect to see them and have part in them. The number of people who have known the fine uses of preventive religion, as the number of people who have known the fine uses of preventive medicine, is so small that curative religion, like curative medicine, has a long run ahead of it. Nevertheless, be sensible! Stop talking about curative religion as though it were glorious! It is dreadful—how dreadful you never will know until you have to walk through hell with people who are trying to get out of their perdition. It would be worth while to have preached this sermon if only to drive home on some youth here this fact: you do not need to go through that experience. Many walk down Jordan most of the way on the wrong side and then cross over after the water is deep and the current strong. It is a thrilling escapade. The company gathers on the bank to celebrate so hazardous a crossing and to see the safe arrival. But this morning I celebrate another kind of experience altogether: a youth crossing Jordan near the source, where it is so narrow he hardly knows when he steps over, and coming down the right bank all the way. In spite of all our historic Christian emphasis, conversion, as it is ordinarily conceived, is not the ideal. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling"!

As for you older people, some of whom have been listening to this sermon somewhat aloof and personally detached, because you have been saying that you have managed your life with fair decency—let me speak to you! No moral ambulance call has ever been sent out for you. You may attribute that not to religion, but

to ordinary stalwart, probably inherited, character without religion. But you are wrong about that; it was religion. That same thing happens here which happens in medicine. If you have not had yellow fever, that is no credit to you. Preventive medicine built dykes against that years ago. If you have not had smallpox, that is no credit to you. Preventive medicine worked out the secret of immunity from that before you were born. You are the inheritor of the accumulating social effects of preventive medicine. So preventive religion, for all our failures, has been at work for centuries, has changed the tone of family life, has made neighbourhood life better, has lifted literature to its best; national ideas have been changed because of it; great social reforms have been born out of its creative spirit. You have been protected from the beginning by the immunities created, the standards lifted, the dykes raised by the accumulating effect of preventive religion. Do you not think it would be fair to recognize that? We have a right to challenge you to the support of preventive religion.

There is an old and suggestive test for imbecility. Turn on the faucet, let the water run into the basin, and then tell somebody to empty the basin by dipping. If he starts dipping out the basin without turning off the faucet he is probably an imbecile. If he knows enough to turn off the faucet and then dip out the basin, the chances are he is normal. Alas, we Christians have not fairly met even that simple test. Too content with a few curative efforts, dipping this sinner up here and that sinner up there, while all the time the general forces of man's life, economic, educational, recreational, international have been pouring out a flood of evil which all our curative methods could not counteract! Let us raise the standard of preventive religion,

individual and social. Let us set up our banners in the name of him who is able to keep us from falling, and this morning let us begin with ourselves. For in our personal lives one ounce of wholesome, healthy-minded, religious prevention is worth a pound of religious cure.

LET'S ALL BE REALISTIC

PRACTICALLY every young person of my acquaintance who makes any pretence of thinking is trying hard to be realistic. By temperament he may be romantic and idealistic but, if he is, he tries not to let any one know it. Realism is the word to-day—clear-eyed, unblinking recognition of life's stern and ugly facts, with no fooling of oneself. Our ancient forefathers feared devils as the cause of evil and every generation dreads its special demons, but ours are of a kind that the mid-Victorians, for example, never would have recognized as devils at all. Pleasing sentimentality, wishful thinking, idealizations, comforting faiths, satisfying optimisms—these are the devils of the new generation. Nothing will do to-day except realism.

In the realm of theology, for example, the liberals are being soundly trounced by a group of men who call themselves realists. The trouble which the realists find with the liberals is serious. Against the background of the old theology, with the wrath of God and the fear of hell in the ascendancy, the liberals reacted to the opposite extreme. They ceased being grim and became sentimental. They streamlined their theology to reduce wind resistance. With God pictured as a very kindly and affectionate father, with evil understood as only the shadow cast by the sunshine of the good, with progress on this evolving earth happily automatic and inevitable, and with hope for everybody in the world to come, liberals retreated into make-believe and, when they thought about the dark side of life, agreed with Tennyson to

"cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt." Well, the realists are fed up with cleaving to the sunnier side of doubt. They say, and I think rightly, that this world is a much wilder, fiercer, profounder place than such superficial liberalism ever took account of, and, in view of the factual conditions existing to-day, they cry, Let us quit this infatuation with the sunnier side of everything and be realistic!

One does not have to live, however, in any special field like theology to feel the pressure of this prevalent demand. No man can escape it. Even when he is unaware of it, it presses on him like the atmosphere, over fourteen pounds to the square inch. Our modern novels and dramas strain after realism, especially in realms like sex, crime, and psychopathic abnormality. In many of our new biographies it is obvious that nothing makes a biographer so happy as to find some forgotten area of his hero's life where he can exploit a hitherto unsuspected sin or psycho-analyse an un-guessed perversion. Even in our new autobiographies the influence of this *Zeitgeist* is manifest in a type of exhibitionism which a generation ago would have been incredible. As for our new music, where are the tunes and melodies and harmonies of our sentimental forbears? Such music, we are told, does not correctly represent the way the world actually sounds. The world is factually full of cacophonies, discontinuities, feverish and raucous noises; let even music be realistic! Everywhere one looks one finds this demand for realism.

Many years ago there sat in the Congress of the United States a North Carolina mountaineer who represented Buncombe County. He was a long-winded, platitudinous speaker, and toward the close of the debate on the Missouri question, when the

House was clamouring for the vote, he insisted on making a verbose address, on the ground that he had to make a speech for Buncombe. Unwittingly he put a new word into our English dictionaries; you will find it there, 'buncombe.' And of late years another word has derived from that, 'debunk,' to deflate sentimentality, strip romantic disguises from ugly facts, and force people to be realistic. That word represents an influence so prevalent in our time that even trying to live a Christian life requires that one should understand it and come to terms with it.

No such movement would have gotten under way had it not been needed. Healthy realism is a great asset. Indeed, is not the Bible one of the most realistic books in the world? There is no need this morning to select a special text. The whole Book is a text. Pick out, if you can, a single area of human life about which the Bible does not talk candidly. Its frankness about sex passion is notorious, from gross stories like that about Judah and Tamar to murderous tragedies like David's love for Bath-sheba. No modern war diary can be much more realistic about the brutalities of battle than the Bible is in many a passage. As for human abnormalities, have you recently read Paul's catalogue of the pagan vices in his letter to the Romans? Or if you have thought that the Bible is a book of wishful thinking, have you read the way the early Christians used to cheer themselves with memories of the heroes of the faith who were stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the sword? Or if any one supposes that the religion of the Bible in its origin is sentimental, let him read the story of the crucifixion. That starting-point and abiding centre of Christianity should assure us that when it comes to realism the Bible overpasses us. No, my friends, these spiritual humming-birds,

who flit about the Bible and suck sweetness here and there from the Twenty-third Psalm or the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, do not understand the Book. If it were only with a view to comprehending the Scriptures, one might cry, Let us all be realistic!

This matter, however, is much more urgent on our lives than that. Here in this Christian sanctuary, where often, I doubt not, our souls are tempted to retreat into vague idealism, let us consider certain areas of life with which as Christians we should be concerned and where there is no chance of getting anywhere if we are not realistic.

For one thing, we never will escape from our breakdown of moral standards in the relationships between men and women unless we achieve realism. After a recent peace sermon, a young man said to me, "I know one major reason why I am against war," and when I asked him what it was, he put his finger on a very realistic fact: war kills off the men—10,000,000 known-dead soldiers, 3,000,000 additional supposed-dead soldiers in the World War. Start with more women than men in a population anyway, and where does that leave us? Will you realistically think through the effect of that fact on personal morals? What is the use of sentimentally lamenting the appalling increase of homosexuality on one side or promiscuous sensuality on the other if we go on with war? Then, after war comes the economic debacle, and among other catastrophes this means millions of young people who dare not marry. We have been listening lately to a series of addresses on Christianity's stake in the economic situation, one of the most stimulating courses we have ever had, but some things I would have thought of saying first no one has thought of saying yet. Christianity's stake in the economic

situation, for one thing, is all tied up with what the economic situation does to millions of young people who love each other and cannot marry.

One young man of unimpeachable character and ability, two years out of college with never a steady job yet, tried to tell me the other day that he was endeavouring to make the best of it, to keep his chin up, not to let the disappointment and the strain break his morale. Then he started another sentence. "I said to my girl," he began. I don't know yet what he said to his girl, for despite his determination to keep his chin up, he broke down when he started on that. Nothing much more arouses one's indignation than elderly sentimentalists who, softly cushioned themselves, shake their heads over the informal liaisons into which young people enter on every side, and ask me whether I do not think it lamentable. Of course I think it lamentable, and I would do anything in my power to keep my young friends from getting into these alleys that lead only into misery. But the more important fact is that the young people themselves think it lamentable. They too want homes. They too want children. Do we elderly headshakers think the young people like this situation? But if we of the older generation are going on with war and with an economic order which gives to youth no opportunity or security, we cannot expect high standards of personal morality except in a selected group. That is the realistic fact.

Again, we will never get rid of war itself unless we stop being sentimental about it. War is supported among the great masses of the population mainly by sentimentality—martial music, gay uniforms, massing of the colours, the romanticizing of what goes on in war and, above all else, by emotional appeals to

patriotism, as though patriotism and war were synonymous. I think some of the pleas for militarism this last Armistice Day—alas, some of them from Christian pulpits!—were about as sentimental slush as a man could listen to. Yes, and a New York newspaper that reported them gave us on the same day an editorial on a most realistic piece of news about war. It said that the War Department now has a proposal before it that henceforth all American soldiers shall be tattooed in four places. The reason for this is that in the last war the soldiers were blown into such small pieces that, poor fellows, their tags were lost so that they could not be identified. Now the hope is that if we tattoo each American boy in four places, on both shoulders and both hips, there may be some chance of finding enough of him so that his family can be told of his death. That is war and if we could get people realistically to see that that *is* war we might get some concerted good sense about it.

Even yet, however, there are lovely ladies who will say sweetly to a man, "Wouldn't you die for your country?" I know the answer to that. Yes, I'd *die* for my country. But that is not the realistic question about war. The realistic question is: Wouldn't you *kill* for your country, screw your bayonet into another man's abdomen, bomb a city and indiscriminately murder mothers and children, let loose poison gas into a population, and so on and so on? To such a realistic question I have a realistic answer: No, I am not willing to do that for my country and, for one reason, because all the evidence points conclusively to the fact that such mass murder does no benefit to my country but only plunges her along with her enemies into irretrievable disaster, so that anybody who realistically loves his country will strive to defend

her, not by war—you cannot defend any good thing by war—but against war. That is the realistic fact.

Again, we certainly need realism in looking on and dealing with the economic situation in this country. If we continue thinking in selfish class terms, being loyal to class interests, fighting for class privileges, owners and white collar workers on one side, mechanics and hand labourers on the other, possessors of our natural resources and our great agglomerations of machines on one side, the disinherited upon the other, we are bound to have two powerful economic groups—alas, one sees their outlines growing clearer now—ready to join in a class war which may ruin our democracy. That is the realistic fact. Here, this morning, practically all of us are naturally allied with one class rather than the other. That is the tragedy in Protestantism. But all the more on that account, we ought to say to our consciences some realistic things. Beware in days like these how we think selfishly in class terms and fight for our class privileges. Beware, for example, how we talk about the glory of the liberties bequeathed us by our sires and about the necessity of retaining them, in a country where to-day millions of our fellow citizens already are convinced that through economic impoverishment all the liberty that amounts to anything has been taken from them.

There was a famous actress once, Charlotte Cushman, who used to greet her friends at her Newport villa by saying, "This is Liberty Hall; every one does as *I* please." So! I speak for the workers, for the poor and the disinherited of this nation. When they hear a preacher in a church like this plead for the retention of our liberties, when they hear of an organization, sponsored by the powerful, going out to

fight for the retention of our liberties, they think they hear the accent of that actress; they think we mean America is to be Liberty Hall, where everybody does as we please.

If we are on the more fortunate side of this economic issue and have any realism, we had better use it now. Of course, we ought to be concerned about liberty. There never was a time in the world's history when eternal vigilance was more surely the price of it. But if we are going to have liberty in this country we must win it, not for a class but for the whole people, and it must be real liberty, based upon ever-increasing equality of condition and distribution of property, without which there is no liberty that is worth the name. That is the realistic fact.

Certainly, we all need realism in dealing with our individual problems. The psychiatrists constantly use the phrase, 'flight from reality.' It describes a process involved in practically every psychopathic abnormality. Think of the most dreadful things that can befall us in mental unbalance and, in so far as they are acquired, all of them happen in personalities escaping into make-believe from some reality that they do not want to face and do not know how to handle.

When one thinks of these many fields where realism is indispensable and then hears a young person say that, as for him, he proposes to be a realist, one prays that he may succeed.

Nevertheless, it is too much to expect that even so fine a thing as realism, when it becomes a fad, when as a vogue it runs through a whole generation, from novels that grovel in the gutter to philosophies that forget the soul, it is too much to expect, I say, that such a popular fashion should be without its exagger-

ations and aberrations. Every *Zeitgeist* is caricatured. You young people in particular are not in much danger of being sentimentalists. That is not the style. One knows well how cordially you have agreed with what we have been saying about the need of realism in one field after another. That is why one is concerned about you. You are sold on realism. Then watch your step, for realism is doing lamentable things to some people who are not handling it well. Realism is like arsenic—it is a tonic in grains and a poison in ounces.

Let me put it personally. As a Christian preacher I am doing my best to be realistic in this pulpit during these difficult days, but I have an understanding with my soul about what realism means, and that, in brief, I venture to share with you.

For one thing, realism is degraded when it slips down into the idea that only ugly things are real. Some people are so afraid of being sentimental and idealistic that they manage their thinking and their living as some men write their novels, as though sewers were the only real things and mountain streams were not real too. A literary critic, dealing with a book by Mr. H. L. Mencken, said that Mr. Mencken's method seemed to be "to collect every kind of folly, ineptitude, perversion and general idiocy out of the daily, weekly and monthly minor press of America, and then to ask the American public what they think of such horrors and stupidity." Whether or not that is fair to Mr. Mencken I shall not try to say, but any one with half an eye can find plenty of realism of that character.

If someone says that the trouble with that is lack of idealism, I answer, No, the trouble with that is lack of realism. Slums are real but so are humble and

beautiful homes like those from which some of us derived. Sewers are real but so is a brook I know

In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

Judas Iscariot is real but so is Jesus Christ. If a man is there to be a realist, let him go through with it! eternal in Napoleon's dragoons stabled their horses in But if we see Da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper, we must see they thought they were hard-headed realists. people, and good representatives of some present-day increasing equanimity, when Napoleon's dragoons are as property, without and the thing they stood for is the worth the name. Tropic of thoughtful men, the spiritual

Certainly, we all see the Last Supper which Da Vinci painted individual problems. ed reality in the minds of millions. use the phrase, 'flight-idea'.

process involved in degraded when it squeezes the abnormality. Think of situation and so, leaving only can befall us in mental they alone are real, whereas they are acquired, all of the spiritual reality in any situation escaping into make-believe. idea, they do not want to face them a young man went into handle. ble who, and borrowed a

When one thinks of these not real. Lillienthal, who had is indispensable and then r. Orville Wright, that, as for him, he proposed ralled by that book, that he may succeed. the realities in that

Nevertheless, it is too much to expect to see! All the fine a thing as realism, when that realism and as a vogue it runs through what realism and novels that grovel in the ground s in the face of forget the soul, it is too much to expect of our so-called such a popular fashion should be without but actualists.

That is, they squeeze the possibilities out of every situation and call the stark remainder the real, when the stubborn fact is that the most significant factor in any human situation is to be discovered in the possibilities. Who, then, are the true realists? Not the cynics and the pessimists! Rather, scientists who foresee a new idea coming around the corner and head toward it; men of social vision who understand that the most significant fact about to-day is that it is pregnant with unborn things whose time will come; millions of thoughtful people everywhere with their eyes on the possibilities in persons, families, businesses, schools, social causes, giving to them creative faith; and men of the New Testament's faith, saying: "Now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be." If a man is going to be a realist, let him go through with it!

Once more, realism is degraded when it becomes materialistic, physically-minded, as though men were body and not soul, and needed merely or mainly new physical implements to employ instead of deeper faiths and motives to employ them with. I am jealous about that fine word 'realism' and do not like to see it walked off with as it so commonly is to-day by people holding a low view of human nature, as though they said: Come now, be realistic; man is a brute. We who believe profoundly in the supremacy of the spiritual life, who see no hope for the race except in deepening quality there, and who have seen the high meanings of the spiritual life supremely unveiled in Christ, are commonly dismissed as sentimentalists and wishful thinkers. But consider the facts. Can you imagine any wishful thinking more incredible than this, that regarding man as "a peripatetic chemical laboratory driven about by a sex impulse," as another put it, we

should suppose that he could work anything except disaster with the tremendous powers which science confers? A peripatetic chemical laboratory driven about by a sex impulse is not made either happy or useful by being supplied with dynamite.

Yet that idea is no unfair caricature of the programme for humanity which some realists unconsciously hold. One wishes one could ask them a simple question: What are the two realms in which man to-day faces his most difficult and dangerous problems? The answer is clear: The realm of international relationships, involving war, and the realm of economics. Then one would ask another question: What are the two realms where science has put into man's hands the most tremendous power? A similar answer comes: The international realm with its new intercommunications and engines of war, and the realm of economics. That is to say, wherever science gives man the most power, there man faces his gravest problems—problems that science creates but does not solve and for which there is no solution save in qualities of mind and character within man himself. That is the realistic fact. The essence of man's salvation lies not merely in his relations with nature but in his relations with himself—great faiths to impel him, great ideals to allure him, great principles to guide him. That is the realistic fact.

Here, then, is the gist of the matter, that the dominant modern mood is undoubtedly realistic but that realism means different things to different people. Among the saddest sights I know are some men and women, thoroughly cynical, disillusioned and sophisticated, living on a materialistic philosophy of the universe without and of their lives within, who, as another has said, "have become inured to spiritual

despair," and whose pride "has made a pact with desolation." They commonly go about, calling themselves realists. Yet this is a universe which already has produced personality and across the centuries has moved man up a spiral, coming ever back to old problems but on a higher level. It is a universe where the beautiful is as real as the ugly, where the most significant factor in every situation is its potentialities, and where with each new stage in human life the centre of the problem shifts still more to the quality of man's mind and character. Surely, in a universe like that, being realistic leads to deeper levels of thinking and living than our superficial exhibitions of it would suggest. Indeed, for my part, I do not see how one can think realistically in such a world without seeing Spirit to be the ultimate reality and on every side perceiving the unmistakable intimations of the living God.

Carlyle, walking in company with Robert Browning, once stopped before a wayside crucifix in France and, looking at the figure on the cross, addressed him, saying, "Ah, poor fellow, *your* part is played out." Upon the contrary, I suspect that that Man upon the cross was one of the great realists of history and that his day has barely dawned.

THE GHOST OF A CHANCE

A DISTURBING picture haunts the imagination of many thoughtful observers of our time. It is the picture of our children or of their children after them sitting amid the wreckage of our Western civilization vainly wishing that they might get back again the chance we have in our hands now.

If we feel indisposed to entertain that picture, we may at least agree that it is the more intelligent and thoughtful persons of our generation who are most disturbed by it and the careless and thoughtless who fear it least. To say that it is impossible is nonsense. Too many times in history the children of great civilizations—Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece, Rome—have sat amid the wreckage of their power, wishing they could get back again the chance their fathers threw away, for us to suppose that such a fate cannot befall us.

This kind of situation is dramatized for us in one of the most picturesque scenes in the Old Testament—Saul going down to the witch of Endor's cave crying, "Bring me up Samuel." One moonlight night on Mount Tabor I saw the unforgettably impressive setting of that ancient scene. Far across the plain of Esdraelon, shining in the moonlight, one could see Mount Gilboa, where long ago Saul's army had encamped. Here in the foreground, three miles away, the lights of the little village of Endor, still called by the same name, were shining clear. One could vividly picture Saul, perhaps on such a night as this, slipping away from his army in disguise, skirting the hosts of

the Philistines, appearing at the witch of Endor's cave, and there in desperation over his situation pleading with that ancient medium for a chance to speak with the dead prophet again—"Bring me up Samuel."

The impressive point is that Saul had had Samuel. He had had Samuel for many years and had disregarded and humiliated him. Samuel, the prophet, had picked Saul out to be the king of Israel, had tried to stand beside him and counsel him, had offered him his friendship and his wisdom; and Saul had thrown him over, had dropped the old pilot, had floundered on alone with growing folly and misfortune until now, when the final crisis comes and Samuel is dead, he wants the ghost of his old chance back again.

How familiar and how tragic that situation is! To have a great opportunity, to be careless about it and lose it and then want the ghost of it back again—how human that is! How many men, nations, and civilizations have gone down to Endor's cave crying, "Bring me up Samuel!"

Any one who knows human life knows that husbands and wives here this morning are saying that. They had every opportunity for a beautiful marriage and a lovely home but one or the other, or both of them, have tossed aside the sanctities of family life or handled with ill-tempered fingers the fineness of family relationships, and now, in a crisis too imminent to be avoided, we can see them slipping down to the witch of Endor's cave, craving the ghost of their old chance back again.

One knows also that persons here are acquainted with Endor's cave in their moral life. A man thirty years of age is under anxious watch-care in a New York hospital. He started drinking ten years ago. He

is an alcoholic now, desperately trying to keep his footing on the steep and slippery incline whose bottom is a drunkard's grave. It is not pleasant to hear him as he talks about the chance he had a decade since, with a free, unfettered life, and cries, "Bring me up Samuel."

Look far enough and you will find whole nations in Endor's cave. They had their chance. Once they rode high on the saddle of the world, but the insane game of war has been played with disastrous consequence for them, and because they live closer than we do to the ruins of old empires, from Tyre to Rome, which once bestrode the world and fell, they are not so childishly optimistic as we. They are wondering to-day whether they will ever get the ghost of their old chance back again.

The witch of Endor's cave is very populous. How many of us can remember chances lost, even this last year, which we wish we had back again! As to the basic principle which underlies all this we would agree. If any man, nation, or civilization has a fine chance, then let the most be made of it, for it is fairly easy to keep an opportunity but it is desperately difficult to recover one. How one wishes that simple, basic truth could be made plain to individuals, to say nothing of civilizations!

You young men and women from our own families, for example, have a great chance. You have in your hands to-day the heritage of fine opportunity—not so hard to keep, if you will, but desperately difficult to get back again if once you lose it.

This is true about reputation. As I recall my youth, I think the importance of good repute was not adequately stressed. Character is what a man is, they said, and reputation is what people think he is; take

care of the first and the second will care for itself. Now, however, when I see a youth with a clean name, no tarnish on it yet, I think how easily that can be lost and how many would give almost everything they possess to have it back again. So Robert Burns wrote the following epitaph for himself:

The poor Inhabitant below
Was quick to learn and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow
And softer flame;
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stain'd his name.

What is true about reputation is true about character. There are, in general, two types of life story—some start with a heavy handicap and work up, and some start with a great opportunity and throw it away. As for the first, a generation ago you could have seen, washing dishes in a Pittsburgh hotel kitchen, a young Hungarian peasant lad, just over, unable to speak English. What chance had he? Well, some time since I gave the hand of fellowship to that boy, welcoming him into the communion of the Christian Church. He worked by day and studied at night. When he graduated from the night high school, he took as the subject for his oration the opportunities America gives to the boys who come to her shores. He worked his way through one of our colleges and graduated an honour man, worked his way through the Harvard Law School, and into the membership of a New York law firm, and some of you may have cases with him, for all I know, little thinking that once he was a kitchen boy in a Pittsburgh hotel. That is one kind. He had a slim chance but he made the most of it.

Here is the other—a man whose name once was

and see. What are those wrecks beaten to pieces on the rocks? Man after man, nation after nation, civilization after civilization, that had their chance and rose to prominence and power, growing wayward and throwing their opportunity away, are now hulks beaten to pieces on the reefs of history. God does let his children wreck their boats.

Around the nave of this church, on the capitals of the pillars, are carved scenes from the life of Jeremiah. I wish they might break into speech. We need his voice in America to-day. He lived and worked when the Jewish people were on the verge of their great catastrophe, the Exile. Everybody else was optimistic. They would tinker up this political alliance or that; they would trust God, whatever happened, to recover them in the end. As Jeremiah said, "They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." He alone was a realist. For forty years of prophethood he stood among his people, the one man in Judah who saw the facts and courageously declared them. He hated the message he had to deliver as any man hates to be sobering when he would far rather be cheerful. He said it was like a fire in his bones and that he could not contain it. But in the end what he foresaw came to pass and that fatuously optimistic people, throwing its chance away, went into the Endor's cave of the Babylonian Exile, crying, "Bring me up Samuel."

When I say that we in America need Jeremiah's voice, I am no croaking raven, crying, "Nevermore." Our Samuel is not dead yet. That is why it is worth while talking about him. We still have a glorious opportunity. It is in our hands, but now is the time to emphasize that fact. If on this road of foolish optimism we go much further, there is no power in

heaven above or the earth beneath that will keep us, too, from Endor's cave.

Consider, for example, that we still have a chance to stop war. The more one knows about it the slimmer he sees the chance to be, but we still have a chance to stop war. Still the memories of our people can vividly recall the ugly and brutal hell that war is. Still, books and plays keep vividly in the imagination of the populace the obscene abominations that war involves. Still straight-shooting thinkers plead for a pacifism which will refuse in the name of patriotism to support again the unspeakable damnation of a war. Yes, and the international agencies which grew out of our first passionate reaction against the Great War, the League of Nations, the World Court, and disarmament conferences, are still struggling hard to keep the candle of reason burning in a windy world. We have yet a chance to stop war and we had better take it because another world war would rob our children of everything that we have cared for most. But sometimes when I talk with Americans about this, watch their apathetic, indifferent attitude, even to great matters of public policy like the World Court, I am dismayed.

In 1890 the United States appropriated not quite \$25,000,000 for its army; for 1934 the expenditure was over \$243,000,000. In 1890 the appropriation for the navy was barely £22,500,000; for 1934 the expenditure was over \$297,000,000. And that is going on all over this poverty-stricken earth. We are travelling precisely the same road which all the civilizations before us have travelled and with our sentimental optimism we will not believe it. If we are to have peace we must care about peace more than we have been caring, care for it sacrificially as our fathers used to care for causes which they died for. All too commonly we picture

peace as a dove or as a beautiful maiden scattering largess from her ample cornucopia. That is no figure for peace. When peace comes she will not arrive as a dove or as a carefree beauty but as one who has been despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. We have our choice—to care about peace with some serious sense that civilization is in the balance, or else to have our children cry for the ghost of our chance again.

Once more, we still have a chance to build a humane and equitable economic life that will minister to the welfare of all people. I do not see how any one can look across the world to-day without perceiving that it is a narrow chance. For see the picture: communism rising as a prodigious world power and all the capitalistic nations arming themselves to the teeth to fly at each other's throat and tear each other to pieces. Many people think of ministers of religion as visionary idealists and of business men as hard-headed realists. Upon the contrary, I should like nothing better than to help some of my business friends to be hard-headed realists just now. For capitalism is on trial. That is the realistic situation. Our whole capitalistic society is on trial; first within itself, for obviously there is something the matter with the operation of a system which over the Western World leaves millions upon millions of people out of work who want work and millions more in the sinister shadows of poverty. Second, capitalism is on trial with communism for its world competitor. Now, I do not like communism; I love liberty too much. I cannot stomach such suppression of free speech, free assembly, free labour, as communism involves. But this verbal damning of communism now prevalently popular in the United States will get us nowhere. The decision

between communism and capitalism hirtical message point. Can capitalism adjust itself to this new agme Can it move out from its old individualism, dominated by the selfish profit-motive, issuing in highly concentrated wealth and widespread poverty, and can it so create a new co-operative epoch with social planning and social control, that it can serve, better than it has, the welfare of all the people? If it can, it may survive. If it cannot, some form of coercive collectivism will be forced upon our children. Be sure of that! To-day we have our chance to build a fair, democratic economic life but, if we lose it, to-morrow our children will be wanting the ghost of that chance back again.

The issue of all this is a deep need which I urge on my conscience as I urge it on yours. We need a rebirth of citizenship, a rebirth of public spirit, a renaissance of spiritual life and ethical Christianity that will issue in social-mindedness. With prosperity selfish individualism is natural. When wealth is plentiful each one is tempted to struggle for as large a share as possible for himself. But that is not our situation now. Some of you here this morning are suffering cruelly in this depression. Some of you whom I know personally, accustomed to plenty, are in a situation where penury is lurking around the corner. And the factors which caused that are not individual but social; they are not even merely national—they are world-wide.

Selfish individualism for man or nation in this new world is downright insanity. There may have been a time when a man could be the master of his own fate, but now a man's welfare or a man's disaster depends on world-wide conditions, which he cannot handle for himself, so that only social-mindedness,



peace as a .ely handling them together for the good larcaul, can meet the issue. John Wesley said once, "I look upon all the world as my parish." Unless we can achieve that kind of public spirit, with some intelligence to make it effective, nothing can save us.

Bring this truth for a moment down to our individual consciences. Though Jeremiah was trying to save the Jewish people from their fate, his nephew Baruch—the private secretary who preserved the records of his ministry—was tempted to a selfish individualism. Member of a great family, with as good a chance as any one to serve his private ambition, he saw his own brother achieve political prestige and was tempted to a selfish life. Then Jeremiah, seeing how desperately critical the social situation was, challenged him with words that I wish could be burned into the conscience of this country: "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not."

Centuries afterward a boy on the Cornell campus wandered into a religious meeting out of curiosity just as the words were being spoken—"Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not." It was the turning point of that boy's life, as it had been, long before, of Baruch's, and with some importance to Christianity withal, because that boy was John R. Mott. I challenge my conscience and yours with those words to-day. This generation is no flower garden to dally in. To-day our chance to build a more decent world, to-morrow our children wanting the ghost of it back again! Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not.

If this sermon has seemed depressing, I beg of you to notice that our message is a lesson, not in gloom but in appreciation. What it says to every man or nation is: Appreciate your Samuel; while you have

any Samuel, appreciate him! A more practical message could hardly be brought to us. How fortunate some of us are—home, friends, repute, character, opportunity—and for all the criticalness of the social situation, a magnificent chance left yet to build a warless and humane world. How many Samuels stand close beside most of us! God keep us, every one, from throwing the chance away. God save us, every one, from Endor's cave.

HOW MUCH DO WE WANT LIBERTY?

TOSSED to and fro in current discussion, few words appear oftener than 'liberty.' Some voices cry it down as a false god that has betrayed us and must now be dethroned in favour of a coerced collective life. Some cry it up as a priceless treasure for whose possession we might well sacrifice anything beside. And as one listens to the confused debate, the query continually rises, What do we really mean by 'liberty'?

To be sure, were we asked whether in general we believe in liberty and want it, we would answer with a confident affirmative. We would do that as citizens, for if this country is to make any distinctive contribution to the world's life, it will be as a social experiment motivated by what Lincoln called "the spirit which prizes liberty." And we would do that as Christians too, for we recall that the first disciples went out into the Roman world, crying with Paul, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." As citizens and Christians, who here would not say that of course we believe in liberty and want it?

Many of us, however, are tempted to say that far too easily. A young American arrived once in Zermatt, Switzerland, and, seeing the towering peak of the Matterhorn, asked, "What's the name of that big rock?" When told that it was one of the most famous of the Alpine summits, he said, "Do you think I could get up there this afternoon?" Little he knew the story of that peak's costly conquest, of the lives that it had taken, of the hazards still involved in its ascent. So

is liberty a majestic mountain peak. How much do we really want it?

To begin at the beginning, do we want liberty enough to fulfil the primary conditions for being liberated personalities ourselves? Liberty conceived as a public question, difficult though it may be, is simpler than liberty achieved as a spiritual possession. We all know the kind of person Whittier referred to whose "dreary selfishness" becomes "the prison of a soul." And we know other persons who have escaped this interior imprisonment into liberated lives. They are getting out of themselves all there is in them. They are released personalities with their powers aflame. Obviously such liberty is not to be possessed by merely claiming it; it is one of the supreme achievements of the soul. How much do we want it?

When Paul, for example, said, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," what did he mean? The religious system in which he had been reared had largely surrendered to legalism. Prohibitions, taboos, restrictions, observances—these irked Paul's restive spirit and he wanted precisely what vigorous modern people want, emancipation. The secret of an emancipated life was the object of Paul's quest. Only, as most moderns would think, he looked for it in a strange place. He found Christ—or, better say, Christ found him. Christ took possession of his life, Paul was more mastered than he had ever been in his experience before. He even called himself a bond-servant of Christ. So, someone says, he fell from one imprisonment into another! To say that, however, betrays ignorance not only of Paul but of the basic laws of man's psychology. Do we really think that in total effect Colonel Lindbergh is enslaved by aviation and that Toscanini is the prisoner of music? Strange,

is it not, that only the things which thus capture us can release us and call all our originality and independence into play! So Christ brought to Paul a cause gloriously worth living for and therefore gloriously liberating, which set him free, all his inward doors wide open, all the metal in him coined for currency.

The other day I heard Toscanini conduct a Brahms symphony. He had in his hands that day the keys to the gates of beauty and enjoyed the freedom of the twelve-doored city. No looseness, however, could have wrought that miracle of emancipation, all his powers expanded and released. He was mastered by something which for many years he had counted it his glory to be mastered by. Here, then, is a profound paradox of the spiritual life: only those things which take possession of us can release us; it is our voluntarily chosen loyalties which liberate us; we are set free only when we are mastered by something we think it worth while being mastered by. But that is a tremendous experience. It goes deep; it reaches high. How much do we want it?

Let us go on to ask a further question. Do we want liberty enough to seek it in those areas where it is most indispensable and correspondingly difficult to get? In some realms freedom might be conceived as a luxury; in others it is an absolute necessity.

Now, those areas of life where liberty is so indispensable that if we lose it we lose everything are essentially spiritual. For one thing, liberty is indispensable in thinking; coerced thought is not really thought; coerced scientific research is not scientific research. In Hitler's Germany, where no anthropologist would be allowed to proclaim a pro-Semitic conclusion, or in Russia, where no economist could combat Stalin's type of communism—that is, wherever

scientific thinking is externally compelled to foregone conclusions—it is not scientific thinking any more. Liberty is the essence of the business.

So coerced religion is not religion, for the genius of religion is personal conviction and experience, and that much of religion which is not voluntary is not real. Hence the folly of all religious persecution, as though Christian faith and life were something which, for fear or force, one could fudge one's sums about and come to foregone conclusions on because compelled to. Liberty is the essence of the matter.

In all such interior, spiritual realms freedom is indispensable. Coercion in art destroys art itself, for the essence of art is interior creativity; and a coerced conscience is no longer a conscience, since the genius of conscientiousness is personal conviction about right. We can endure, as we do, many external political and economic regimentations without feeling too badly our loss of freedom, but in such spiritual realms as these to lose liberty is to lose everything.

Now, I appeal to you. In these realms—freedom to think for oneself, to be Christian for oneself, to love what is lovely and choose what is right for oneself—we are not in this country noticeably inhibited by external regimentations. No, we are not. We lose liberty in these realms because we inwardly surrender to the most dangerous foes of freedom in the land: the tremendous pressures of popular custom, conformity and standardization. How much do we want liberty from them?

Sir Isaac Newton, having discovered the law of gravitation and written the *Principia*, ceased his absorption in scientific pursuits and in later years accepted appointment as Warden of the English Mint. His era was a time of almost universal political

corruption, and one day Newton himself was approached by a man with a bribe of over £6,000, a tidy sum in those days, asking for a personal favour. When Newton refused, the briber announced that he represented a duchess, a powerful figure in England, and this is what Sir Isaac Newton said: "I desire you to tell the lady that if she was here herself and had made me this offer, I would have desired her to go out of my house; and so I desire you, or you shall be turned out." So! Newton, discoverer of the law of gravitation, I admire, but sometimes I think I salute more highly still Newton, gentleman of honour, with a conscience free from the terrific pressures of his day.

Without such freedom of soul from submergence in the crowd, there is no liberty worthy of the name. How we mangle great words! What toboggan slides the tongues of men are, down which noble phrases slip into ignoble meanings! When one observes the great mass of so-called emancipated people in this land, one is filled with derision. They are as alike as peas in a pod; there is no individuality about them. They look alike, think alike, talk alike, act alike. They are all cut from the same mental and moral pattern. Read the advertisements in a popular magazine and you see everything of importance there is to see concerning them. They are not free from the most serious enemy of liberty we daily face—the pressure of conformity. And it costs to be free of that. How much do we want liberty?

Let us ask now another question. Do we want liberty enough to defend it in the world at large and in this nation against those who are too readily surrendering it? For while it is true, as we have said, that the deep fountains of freedom are within the soul,

we are so far on in history that freedom has long since flowed out of men's souls into their social institutions. First in the historic process came free personalities who had discovered the meaning of a liberated life, and then came their instinctive, indignant resentment against social oppressions—legal, political, economic—which handicapped and hindered others in discovering this release.

During the long fight for liberty in our Western tradition, this motive, the emancipation of man's spirit, has been at the centre. It is as though men were saying, We want to be and we want our brothers to be emancipated persons, and in society are terrific oppressions which imprison the personalities of men; open the doors, down with the Bastilles, clear the road for the freedom of the people! So the men of the Renaissance declared their independence of the enslavements of medievalism. So the men of the Reformation won their release from the intellectual and practical oppressions of the Vatican. So the men of the French and English revolutions enlarged the sphere of popular right at the expense of royal right. And so in this country, under Washington and Lincoln and their compeers, we have made an incalculable contribution to the liberal tradition. Let no one belittle that high heritage because it is partial and incomplete. It still remains one of the noblest achievements of man's spirit.

And now, around the world, that liberal tradition is in peril. As a communist, Lenin regarded democracy as a mere *bourgeois* superstition. Speaking for fascism, Mussolini scorns what he calls "the more or less putrescent corpse of the goddess of liberty." And in this country one does not need to listen long to hear people suggesting the short cuts to swift ends

which one finds when one brushes liberty aside and tries coercion.

If some impatient radical is here to-day so tempted, I beg of him at least to read again the life of Robespierre. Early in the French Revolution Robespierre, who was one of the sincerest men that ever lived, made a forthright speech in favour of the freedom of the press, claiming for all the right to publish what they genuinely thought. But two years afterward, when Robespierre was at the height of his power, when his policies were being attacked by the press, when it would be easier and quicker to get done what he wanted done if only he could be free of this irksome liberty he lately had supported, he wrote in his notebook, "Repress these journalistic impostors, and circulate good articles." So always in a difficult and troubled time the temptation to override liberty in the interests of coercion is terrific. But still that figure of Robespierre, with his progressive deterioration of character as he did it and his ultimate catastrophe, is historically typical.

Do not misunderstand this. If I am addressing myself now especially to the radicals, I shall in a minute be addressing myself especially to the reactionaries. As for the radicals, I should say this: You have made a strange change of front. Throughout the noblest areas of our Western tradition, every person who could call himself a liberal, a progressive, a radical, has fought for liberty, and now, under the ægis of communistic collectivism, many of you are surrendering liberty. Friends, you will yet wake up to discover that you are playing off-side.

To be sure, any thoughtful man can understand and should sympathize with what Russian communism, with all its coercions, is ultimately driving at. What

the communists want more than anything beside is economic equality, and society will never rest until it achieves a far higher degree of that than we have now. So, wanting above all else economic equality, communism rightly sees that men are so unequally endowed by nature that, if you grant them *laissez-faire* freedom to fight it out among themselves, the result will be, as it has been, every kind of inequality there is. Therefore, the basic strategy of communism is to sacrifice liberty for the sake of equality, whereas the basic strategy of capitalism has been to sacrifice equality for the sake of liberty. What painful dilemmas life confronts us with!

Now, granting that in any society one of the most puzzling and unescapable problems is somehow to strike a fair balance between these two, liberty and equality, I propose for our country, with our traditions, a test for public policies. We shall surely have more collectivism. Widespread machine processes, weaving us together, force us willy-nilly to increased social planning and control. But I propose this standard for all of it: only that much collectivism and that kind of it whose total effect is to increase liberty.

Why is it in this city that we readily submit to traffic regulations? Because the total effect is to increase our liberty. To be sure, regarded in detail, they mean the abridgement of our *laissez-faire* freedom to do anything we please, but the total effect is to release our freedom. Without traffic regulations it would take us all day to go downtown, but with them we are free to go downtown with fair speed. And because that is what we want, we submit to the necessary social planning.

Were I to say one thing especially to you as fellow citizens, it would be this: Keep your eyes on that test.

We have in this country too priceless a tradition, a heritage with which a country like Russia never has been trusted, to surrender it lightly because in this war-shaken world the trend is toward new forms of old tyrannies. Keep your eyes on that test—no more collectivism than increases liberty. It may not always be easy to be sure. In this case or in that we may differ about the total effect of a policy. But, as a whole, this nation cannot go far wrong if we watch whatever goes on with that test in mind: anything whose total effect enlarges the freedom of the people is right; anything that destroys it is wrong.

If, however, this test is to be safe, we must ask one more question, this one addressed to the conservative mind, as the last was to the radical. Do we want liberty enough to keep rethinking its meaning in terms of the new forms which it must take in a new generation? The most serious enemy of any living thing is commonly not its aggressive foes but its reactionary friends who stubbornly cling to its obsolete formulations. That is true of religion. If Christianity did not have so many friends who insist on its antiquated forms, Christianity could deal much better with its aggressive enemies. Now, liberty is a living thing that passes from one incarnation to another.

In New York City, for example, a man who tried to provide the family drinking water from a well in his yard, supposing that he had a yard, would get into trouble with the city authorities. Once for a man to be denied the right of a well on his own property would have been an intolerable invasion of freedom but, strangely enough, we do not feel ourselves wronged. Through collective action we now have liberty to turn a faucet on and we like that better. That is to say, in that realm liberty has changed its form.

Few things are more important than the recognition of this fact that liberty, being a living thing, keeps running into new expressions so that we must continually rethink it. Do not imagine that the most serious enemies of liberty in this country are the communists. American communists are only a handful anyway, divided into three organized political parties that hate each other vehemently. American communists are about the least communal group in the country. Far more serious in their antagonism to liberty are the reactionary friends of liberty who keep pleading for its outgrown shells and defending its abandoned forts.

A *laissez-faire* economy, for example—every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost—is as obsolete a kind of liberty as wells in the yards of a metropolis or a city's streets without traffic regulations. Once the principle of *laissez-faire* was liberating; it worked a magnificent emancipation for the mercantile and industrial classes against the oppressions of a land-holding aristocracy. It is a tragic sight, however, to see the loyal friends of liberty, having in one generation won a victory for their cause with weapons suited to their time, now in a later generation insisting on fighting their battle with the same weapons, forgetting that they are in another age, which has made those instruments as obsolete as bows and arrows at Verdun. So to us privileged people, whose natural interests are not with revolution but with the *status quo*, not in the least tempted, therefore, to be radical, tempted perhaps to be reactionary, I propose another test of judgment for our public policies. When we talk about liberty, what is it that we really want to be free from?

Try with me to answer that, not simply as citizens

but as Christians. Suppose we say that when as Christian citizens we talk of liberty we are hoping that the whole nation, the entire body of the people, may somehow be freed from those appalling social and economic inequalities which make a united, fortunate, and powerful national life impossible. For there are extremes which every parish minister must daily come upon, as though he passed from the holy city, Jerusalem, upon its noble hills, to the stench and sterility of the Dead Sea, thirteen hundred feet below sea-level. If, as Jesus said, personality is sacred everywhere, there is something deeply wrong with a society which produces such cruel contrasts of privilege and under-privilege. We blame the radicals because they turn to coercion. What they say is, There is coercion now, terrific coercion in our society, that presses men down and will not let them up.

Suppose, then, we say as Christian citizens that when we talk of liberty we mean that the whole nation must be freed *from* such inequality, that it may be freed *for* a united, powerful, national life. Friends, if that is what we mean by liberty, then the achievement of it will mean the abridgement of our smaller, *laissez-faire* individual freedoms, just as our total liberty on the streets means that. I lay this matter on my conscience and on yours. Do we mean by liberty simply that as individuals or as a privileged class we want to escape all the infringements on our private whims we can be rid of, or do we mean that we want the whole body of the nation to be emancipated from the common ills that weigh upon us all? Our ultimate liberty is simply our freedom to choose the kind of social structure which best will open doors of opportunity to all the people.

If some rightly note in this the demand for profound

social change devoutly longed and prayed for, I rise to defend that in the name of patriotism. For this thing we are pleading for *is* patriotism, the only spiritually significant kind of patriotism. To love one's people and want them all set free is patriotism. There is altogether too little of it in this country, for all our talk. Enough and to spare of individual and class loyalty! Enough and to spare of perverted nationalisms which plunge the nations into suicidal war! Far too much patriotism of a type which, brought into a sanctuary such as this, before the high altar of the one God and Father of mankind, is sacrilege! But to love one's people, to be devoted to their great traditions, to be glad to sacrifice the lesser, lower freedoms of individual and class for the larger freedom of the whole—that is Christian patriotism. For it is as true of societies as souls, that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

THE ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF PROSPERITY

THIS morning we consider a saying of Jesus familiar to us all and yet so difficult to make sense of that in over thirty years of preaching I have never handled it before: "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." By "all these things" Jesus meant enough to eat and enough to drink and wherewithal to be clothed. It was as though he said, Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and ye shall have prosperity.

That sounds as though ideally it should be true, but when applied to individuals it commonly is not true. It did not turn out to be true even about Jesus. If ever anyone sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, Jesus did, and yet life handed him at last not material comfort but the bitter bread of pain to eat and vinegar to drink, and at the foot of his cross men cast lots for the garment wherewith he was clothed. The fact that a man who seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness has no sure guarantee of material prosperity is made plain in our present depression, where the impact of catastrophe has so indiscriminately fallen on the evil and the good. No wonder this saying of Jesus has been regarded even by preachers as belonging to the Bible's poetry, lovely to quote but too visionary to be relied on!

Imagine my interest, then, at hearing Mr. Norman Thomas, the Socialist leader, say that the more he pondered one verse in the New Testament the more

literally true it seemed—"Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." How can that be?

This morning I share with you the conviction not only that this insight of Jesus is literally true but that its understanding and application to-day are indispensable. For, while we may not say to individuals that if they, one by one, seek the kingdom of God, to them, one by one, prosperity will come, think what would happen if a whole society, a nation, the human family on this planet, should put first spiritual and ethical ideals! Apply this saying of Jesus to society as a whole and no truth needs more to be shouted from the housetops. For this is the gist of the matter: there are basic ethical conditions which must be met first or, no matter what else we do, we never can have general and lasting prosperity. The foundations of a fortunate economy are laid deep in the moral attitudes of men. We must seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, or we never will solve the problem of what to eat and what to drink and wherewithal to be clothed.

As an obvious illustration of this truth, consider war. It would be unfair to ascribe to war all our economic dislocation, but who can easily overestimate the influence of the Great War on our material condition? Ever since our new machine-economy began, a long-drawn-out aftermath of disaster has followed international conflict. Yet the sentimental romanticizing of war has steadily gone on. The glory of Waterloo—who has not felt *that*? Who does not recall Tennyson's acclaim to the victor:

Bury the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation.

But do you, who are an intelligent audience, know what happened the year after Waterloo—not to defeated France but to victorious England? The year after Waterloo was one of unprecedented distress in England. Industry, no longer stimulated by the demand for munitions, collapsed; the labour market was flooded by the returning soldiers and unemployment was appalling; the nations of Europe which had been England's customers could no longer buy; and then the harvest failed. Not in a century had England been plunged in such deep distress. Hardly had the shouts of triumph ceased in Whitehall when the cries of wretchedness rose. Said one workingman's manifesto: "The climax of misery is complete, it can go no further. Death would now be a relief to millions." That always happens—the year after Waterloo.

Obviously, there is no merely economic solution for that economic problem. That problem can never be prevented in the first place or permanently solved afterwards until mankind achieves enough ethical insight and courage to stop war. If someone says that not only does war cause economic disaster but economic imperialism causes war, that is true. The two make a vicious circle. War plays into the hands of economic imperialism because war demands the distant control of raw materials for munitions, and in turn economic imperialism plays into the hands of war because the struggle for raw materials is one of war's chief causes. Underline this: *So long as we have war we will have economic imperialism; so long as we have economic imperialism we will have war; and so long as we have both we cannot possibly have prosperity.*

Here, despite ourselves, we stand face to face with Jesus. Visionary, men have called him, but in the end they will discover that he is no more visionary,

in stating a moral law whose conditions must be fulfilled for good consequence to come, than the scientist who does the same thing in the physical realm. And this is the law: Seek first peace, righteousness, brotherhood, or no prosperity.

Though you may be rich as Cræsus, in a world where war is rampant, you still are economically insecure, living on the slopes of a volcano which at any moment may blow off its head and ruin everything. There is no economic safety or prosperity for anybody any more until we can establish peace. I am ashamed that after thirty years of preaching I see now for the first time the deep truth in Jesus' saying; that I have left it, as so many others have, as poetry, failing to see how prodigious is the fact it states. For it literally bestrides this war-mad, modern world, crying above the din of clashing politics and economics, Seek ye first the righteousness of the kingdom of God or no prosperity!

Turning from this obvious illustration of our truth to the more specifically economic realm, Jesus' statement would mean that there can be no prosperity without social justice—not enough to eat or drink, not wherewithal to be clothed, without righteousness first. Is that true?

For one thing, we have been unjust in the distribution of the income from our economic processes. Civilization has always been cruel to its disinherited classes. Greco-Roman civilization was founded upon slavery and while we are rightly glad to be rid of that, we would do well to take in earnest Professor Whitehead's summary of the situation. The ancient world, he says in effect, took slavery for granted with many qualms of conscience about it on the part of the high-minded, whereas the modern world takes liberty for

granted with many qualms of conscience on the part of the high-minded about how very little our boasted liberty means to millions of our people. The fact of appalling impoverishment to-day in the midst of actual and potential plenty can no more be kept in the dark than slavery could be in the ancient world. Were we, for example, to take a vote here about the immediate payment of the soldiers' bonus, is there any doubt that an overwhelming majority of us would vote against the payment? With that conclusion I cordially agree. Yet I was with those men in France and know how some of them feel. Twenty-one thousand brand new millionaires were made in this country during the war while those men received a dollar a day for fighting and dying in the trenches of France. Do you wonder they feel a stinging sense of injustice? Mark it! it is in terms of such maldistribution of income that millions of our people are to-day thinking of the economic order.

For our purposes, however, the gist of the matter lies in the next step. How little we foresaw that step! How stunned we have been now that it is here! We had often talked about the moral regrettableness of our inequality of income, but now maldistribution has become one of the chief economic problems of mankind. For the crucial matter with us economically is that we need consumers—we need them tremendously. Under our capitalistic system we have wrought one of the most amazing miracles in history, the creation of a productive system capable of supplying anything that mankind may need. But we need consumers who can buy what can be produced and there are not enough of them. So maldistribution rises up to confound us. We had supposed it was only an ethical question, but Jesus was right: ethical

questions precede, underlie, dominate economic questions. Seek first righteousness, justice, humanity, or you never can be prosperous.

We used to say that we were punished for our sins, as though God were a judge on a bench who passed on the case and meted out penalty. The truth goes far deeper than that. We are not so much punished *for* our sins as *by* them. It is our sins themselves that rise up to slay us. So we allowed maldistribution to continue and now maldistribution has plunged us into a major catastrophe. We are now starting, therefore, on roads we ought to have thought of before: a juster distribution of income, the levelling down of over-privilege and the levelling up of underprivilege, unemployment insurance, old age insurance—methods to achieve security for all the people. Such roads, one way or another, every civilized nation will have to travel even though the travelling is hard. And this is the law of the matter stated nearly two thousand years ago: the righteousness of the kingdom of God first, or not enough to eat or drink or wherewithal to be clothed.

Another illustration of our truth is clear in the fact that we have been unethical in our idea of what an economic system is for. An economic process is the basic social service of the people, its function as sacred and indispensable as that of a teacher training minds or that of a physician healing bodies. Indeed, what is the use of healing bodies if they have not the wherewithal to live or of training minds if they are not housed in bodies whose material needs are being fairly met? So Jesus said: "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." Any God worth believing in would have to know that. The ethical test of every economic process therefore

is that it is primarily devoted, not to making money for a few, but to enriching the life of all.

As every one knows, we have been unethical in many departures from that high objective. In the South, let us say, there is an electric light and power company. Now, supplying electric light and power is a basic, indispensable social service. But in the North, let us say, there is a group of men who control the Southern company and others with it. Moreover, between that social service in the South and that group in the North is a whole series of holding companies, each with a full complement of executives, each issuing securities to sell to the people, each retaining controlling stock in the hands of the inner group. So, whereas the Southern company is worth two and a half million dollars, by the time it has been pyramided and pyramided, it represents seventeen and a half million dollars—that is to say, seventeen and a half million dollars of debt upon that social service, involving money to be paid from its operation to individuals who, by and large, have never contributed anything indispensable to the social service. Thus the ethical test of the economic process can be lost sight of amid the mazes of an ingenious financial system where the process is deflected from social welfare to private gain. And, alas, that particular type of financial sleight-of-hand is only one of sixteen major ways, set down by one of our leading authorities, in which we have forgotten what the economic process is for.

If someone says that the Southern company is private property and that therefore the owners ought to be allowed to do with it as they please, the ethical answer is clear. No private property can be considered merely private when it can have such enormous social

consequences. We cannot call railroads and coal mines, forests and mineral resources, which God gave to all the people, private in the same sense in which a man's house or spade are private. Even if a man has an automobile, society steps in to say, Such and such are the restrictions on your use of it. No private property can be merely private whose misuse can cause so much public damage.

We have gotten at least that far in our national thinking and no socially intelligent person supposes that these vast private properties based on natural resources, which belong to all the people, can be merely private any more. As to what the economic solution will be, in what relative degrees the techniques of social ownership and of social control will be employed, no one confidently can prophesy. But a preacher has this advantage: he commonly stands outside the economic struggle and looks at it as a spectator. And this at least is what one preacher sees. At one end of our lives are areas which the Government already by common consent has taken over. We rise in the morning and drink a glass of water from a Government water system. We read our mail delivered by a Government post office. We walk on streets that are owned, paved, cleaned, and lighted by the Government. We see children going to governmentally-owned schools and using governmentally-owned text books. We enjoy governmentally-owned libraries and public parks. If a crime is committed we hope the Government will catch the criminal and if a fire occurs we trust the Government to put it out. As long as four years ago, it was reported that two thousand American communities already had their own electric light plants. Here at one end of the line is a great accumulation of functions once

individual, now governmental. But at the other end of our lives are areas where, if any Government tried to coerce and regiment us, as under communism or fascism, we probably would land in concentration camps, so angry would our protest be. For there are areas of life the essence of whose meaning is liberty and where the more liberty and the less government the better. In art certainly, in music, in religion, in scientific research, we want no governmental intervention. Freedom to think and to say what we think; freedom of assembly and of protest even against the Government; the right to own our homes if we can and to possess ourselves of property, for ourselves and for our children, which we personally use—such are the areas where we, along with all men and women brought up in the American tradition would say, Let the Government keep out!

Now, between these two areas, one where the Government is commonly accepted and one where it is commonly rejected, lies to-day the great American problem—a vast accumulation of private property which is no longer merely private, with the clash of antagonistic opinion sharp between the advocates of social ownership and the advocates of social control. As a preacher I claim no competence to deal with the purely economic aspects of that problem, but if in dealing with its ethical aspects I have no competence, then you ought to get another preacher. And this is the ethical problem as I see it. If there is any area of business enterprise from which we wish to ward off Government ownership, there is only one way to do it. It cannot be done by argument mainly, nor by inherited legalities about the rights of private property, nor by reliance on force, which will in the end defeat itself. There is only one way ultimately of keeping

the Government out of any area of business enterprise: namely, to prove by actual performance that by some other means we can achieve the complete dedication of the economic processes not to private gain but to public welfare. If our capitalism can so adjust itself to the new circumstances that it can achieve such devotion of economic processes to the welfare of all the people, even the least of them, then capitalism can go on. If not, there is nothing on earth that can save it and nothing in heaven that will try. That, I am certain, is the ethical estimate of the situation.

For here, again, we confront Jesus. He knew nothing about our modern economic problems but he did know the laws of the moral world. And this is one of them: no nation can take the vast resources of a continent, which God gave to all the people, and use them in careless disregard of the welfare of millions of the people, without in the end being punished, not for its sins but by them. Still from that Galilean mountain the voice sounds which we may heed or neglect but which we cannot escape: first the kingdom of God and His righteousness or else not enough to eat or drink or wherewithal to be clothed.

Now for the conclusion of the matter. Is someone supposing that the conclusion of the matter will be, as so often happens when a preacher talks, a call to business men to repent? Undoubtedly American business has ample reason to repent. But let business men say that to themselves! A preacher had better say something else first. For of all institutions in the Western World which most need to repent, a preacher may well put the church foremost. It is the church that has fallen down. That is the conclusion of the matter.

See the indispensable social function which was handed to us, the churches and the synagogues. We were supposed to furnish society with its controlling spiritual aims. We were supposed to put first not the peccadilloes of ecclesiasticism but, as Jesus said, the kingdom of God and His righteousness, so that the children born into our civilization should feel the dominant influence of those directive goals. Instead, even in this country with thirty-four million young people between the ages of five and eighteen, barely half of them are receiving even formal religious instruction, Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish, and how much good some of that formal instruction is doing who can tell? As for our total effect in dominating Western civilization with spiritual aims, let no preacher waste time bewailing too much the failures of others until his penitence has had a long, long session at home!

Never in history was there more need than now for a religion that will saturate society with the consciousness of its spiritual objectives. Does someone say that science can save us? Yet science furnishes us merely with means, amazing means to do something with, but what we shall do with them depends upon our spiritual culture determining the ends to which our science is devoted. Does someone say that public education has been marvellously diffused? Yes, but an educated mind is merely a means, a shining instrument to do something with, and what we, the people, will do with it depends upon our spiritual culture deciding the goals which we seek. Does someone say that our new productive machinery can supply man with everything he needs? Yes, but our productive economy is only a means and, as one considers what we already have done with it, there is an appalling

lack obvious in the spiritual objectives to which it has been devoted. This seems to me as dismaying a sin as history records, that in a time when the means by which we live are so marvellously increasing and the need of spiritual goals for their dedication is so clamorous, we the churches, whose task and privilege it is to supply society with its spiritual goals, have so failed, and instead of putting first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, even among ourselves, have often put first this wretched mess of sectarian ecclesiasticism.

All of which I assure you is not intended mainly as denunciation but as appeal. I appeal for your personal allegiance to a high, ethical religion, without which society cannot survive. I appeal to you for patient, sacrificial help in all endeavours of the Church and synagogue to recover lost ground and become leaders of the spiritual life of the nation. For nothing can be well with anything, not even with what we eat or what we drink or wherewithal we are clothed, unless first we seek the righteousness of the kingdom of God.

HOW MUCH DO WE WANT PEACE?*

WHEN the Great War was at its height and Paris was still threatened by the German armies, an American publicist, thoroughly imbued with President Wilson's high ideals, visited France, and one night, near the front at a rough dinner given for him in an underground chamber, made a speech. That night the Germans launched an air raid and, as the visitor from home rolled off his finished periods on the world made safe for democracy and organized for peace, his paragraphs were punctuated by the bombs that fell about with tremendous detonations. At last, the incongruity of the occasion became too obvious and the gravity of the company broke down in laughter.

In this peaceful sanctuary to-day a similar situation is less picturesquely but just as truly presented. Armistice Day has come again and preachers are supposed to talk like Christians idealistically and expectantly about peace, yet, all the time, the nations of the world, spending more on armaments than ever before in peace time, are precipitating themselves toward war like the devil-infested swine plunging into the sea.

Nevertheless, if a man could keep his thinking realistic, it might turn out to be a favourable time to see some things about peace which we profoundly need to face. Many of us have taken the peace movement too easily; that is, we have thought that we were for peace because we were against war. Now, of all uncostly things, nothing is much cheaper than to be

*An Armistice Day sermon.

against war. Practically everybody, one way or another, deploras war, regrets its bloody shambles, its mass murders, its devastating consequences. Even ardent militarists, introducing speeches in favour of more armaments, commonly begin by saying that they are against war.

Moreover, for centuries high-minded and sensitive people have been against war. Euripides' drama, *The Trojan Women*, first performed in Athens in the year 415 B.C., was one of the first great pieces of literature in history launched against war. In it one feels the sensitive spirit of Euripides wrung with pity over the elemental human woes which ever since have been the horror and calamity of war. There in that ancient drama are the wife bereaved of her husband in battle and the mother bereaved of her son: there are the pathos of Ilion's fallen towers and the horror of ravished womanhood; there is one passage which even yet is as moving as though it were written yesterday, in which Hecuba bewails her grandson, slain by the Greeks, and cries,

Lo, I have seen the open hand of God;
And in it nothing, nothing, save the rod
Of mine affliction.

Over four centuries before Christ, this drama poured out its pity and tears against war.

At that time ten thousand men made a great army, such as the Greeks had at Marathon; in our day we have had over sixty-six million men under arms in one conflict. Then they fought with swords and javelins; now we use sixty-mile guns, aeroplanes, and poison gas. Then war was localized on battlefields and waged by soldiers only. Now Marshal Foch himself has said: "The next war will be a world war. Almost every

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country will take part in it, and the combatants will include, not only the manhood but the women and children of each nation." That tiger cub of war has grown until he is a man-eater with a vengeance, and still multitudes of good people are no further along than was Euripides. That is, they are in sentiment against war.

By that attitude alone we never will achieve peace. Peace is not something we fall into because we react against war. Peace is a positive achievement involving an organized world community of law and order which we must want so much that we are willing to pay the full price it costs. For centuries people hated plagues, like the Black Death, stood in fear and horror of their ravages, as well they might. At last, however, mankind overpassed this merely negative and emotional detestation and began thinking positively like this: No matter what it costs, we will have liberty from plagues; we will search out their causes, campaign against their carriers, delimit our liberties by sanitary laws and isolation hospitals, establish quarantines at our national boundaries, and, if need be, interrupt the free movement of migration; above all else, we want freedom from plagues and we will pay any price to get it.

There can be no end of war until we want peace that much. The substitution, for our present nationalistic anarchy, of a world community in which tensions are resolved by conference and not by battle is a positive achievement attainable only when man wants it so much that he will say, No matter what it costs, we must have peace.

On this subject of the cost of peace, a far greater candour is needed than the partisans of peace have so far exercised. Underline this: *World peace is going to*

cost heavily in the surrender of some things which multitudes of people do not want to give up. That fact the peace lovers have not commonly been frank about. We have sung about peace, drawn idealistic pictures of the desirability of peace, have tried to lure people to the love of peace, but to-day let us first of all name candidly some of the things, deeply cherished by multitudes of men, the surrender of which world peace will cost.

First, it will cost the nations the surrender of some of their national sovereignty. Partnership inevitably limits the independence of the partners. In business, if a man cares above all else for his sovereign independence, he will never enter a partnership and so, refusing to limit even by a little his individual sovereignty, he will forgo those things which never can be gained except when people work together. But if, now, reconsidering the relative advantages, he decides that, after all, he wants the things which only corporate activity can gain, he has no choice except to limit his independence enough to seek common ends with other men. He cannot eat his cake and have it. He cannot become a partner without limiting his independence. It all depends on what he wants most.

One of the supreme examples of this in history is our own nation. The Colonies had to decide what they wanted, a series of absolutely sovereign states or a nation, at peace and working together. They decided on a partnership but it nearly broke the hearts of many of them to pay the price, the limitation of the sovereign independence of the states.

Plenty of people to-day want peace in general who are not ready in particular to pay the price. But the nations never can have peace until they want it so

much that they will sacrifice enough of their sovereignty to create a world system of law and order able to furnish a practicable substitute for war.

Again, peace will cost the surrender of vested interests in war, notably the profits of the munition makers. They are enormous. Even in times like these, four and a half billions of dollars a year are spent by the nations on armaments. Peace means losing one of the world's largest businesses. If some idealistic soul here cries, Good riddance! I agree, good riddance! But we may be sure that powerfully entrenched forces do not propose to make that surrender if they can help it. They think that peace will cost too much.

Consider this picture. It is taken from the records of the British Parliament. The date: the winter of 1932-33. The occasion: the war between China and Japan. The scene: a room in a great British armament factory. That factory was making munitions for both Japan and China and by accident the Japanese representative and the Chinese representative visited the factory on the same day and were shown into the same room. You expect a fight in consequence? Upon the contrary, they got down to business, discussed the relative charges being made by the firm for the munitions with which their people were killing each other, and came out from that room with a joint ultimatum demanding reductions in prices. That is the essential commercialism of modern war. When you hear military music and feel the thrill of uniformed and marching men, say this to yourself, War is the biggest racket in the world and some do not want peace enough to pay the price of its surrender.

Again, peace will cost profound changes in our economic life, notably the surrender of a narrow

economic nationalism. Secretary Wallace is right about that: "America must choose." So must every nation. On the one side is this new world community of open avenues with closely reticulated relationships and interdependencies; on the other side are the old ideas of national isolation, as though an accidental geographical boundary line could now determine the economic factors by which mankind basically lives. We cannot have economic wars waged with tariffs and monetary policies and still expect political peace. We cannot have a predatory economic imperialism and still expect peace. We cannot have our capitalistic system plunging us, as it has plunged us, first into rivalry for raw materials and then into rivalry for world markets, and still secure peace. There, in the surrender of warlike economic policies is a price which world peace absolutely demands but which the nations do not want peace enough to pay.

Once again, peace will cost the surrender of the age-long belief in the efficacy of violence. It is one of the most inveterate faiths of man that violence can achieve desirable social ends, and that old belief, rooted in man's primitive life and confirmed by the customs of bloody centuries, now comes to its climax in the persistent trust of the nations in war as a way of gaining their aims.

Yet look at the realistic facts. What nation in Europe is to-day the cause of especially serious disturbance to our hopes of peace? Germany under Hitler. But I thought it was Germany we fought a great war against. It was. I thought it was Germany we conquered. It was. I thought we did to Germany by means of war what under the circumstances victors do to a beaten enemy. We did. And sixteen years after, Germany is rapidly rearming and is a critical source of

anxiety to the whole world. That is just how efficient war is. One might have thought that while, to be sure, there are incidental disadvantages to war, at least it could crush an enemy nation. But lol even at that apparently obvious thing it is a futile failure. And as for the rest of us, after having fought a war to end war, do we know what the facts are? The budgets of the nations in this year of our Lord, 1934, show the following rates of increase over military expenditures in 1913: France 25.8 per cent, Italy 26.3 per cent, Great Britain 48.8 per cent, the United States 190.9 per cent, Japan 388 per cent. That is how efficient war is for social ends.

Yet even when this is said, and said, too, in a Christian congregation, one knows that the persistent grip of the old belief in the efficacy of mass violence will only with difficulty relax its hold. It is not only in realms like national sovereignty, the profit on munitions, and economic conflict that the price must be paid for peace; it is within ourselves, in age-old, inveterate beliefs.

Now, the crux of the peace question lies in the fact that many in general want peace who, facing such costs of peace as we have mentioned and knowing how long the list of costs would be should we go on with it, feel that the price of peace is too high. I agree with them that the cost of peace will be heavy. Make no mistake about that. When you hear sentimentalists trying to imitate the angels over Bethlehem, call them down to earth. This is no time to be cherubic about peace. The ominous fact is that the price of peace is high, that it will mean the surrender of things to which many people tenaciously cling, and that it is an open question whether mankind wants peace enough to pay the cost.

For myself, I do. I think that peace is worth all that it possibly can cost. At any rate, if we will not pay the costs of peace we will pay the costs of war. That is the alternative. Peace or war—there is no middle ground. We and our children after us are going to pay the costs of one or the other.

Over sixty-six million men mobilized in one war, of whom over thirty-seven million became casualties—the price of peace is high, but it will not cost that. Four years of mass murder with direct expenditure of two hundred and eight billion dollars and an indirect expenditure of a hundred and fifty-one billion dollars—peace may come high, but not so high as that. I myself saw one of the first groups of American men come back gassed from the trenches and watched them in the hospital tents behind the front gasping their lives out. Peace is costly, but it does not cost that. A powerful American league intent on moving up to the highest possible figure the expenditure of the nation for its navy turns out on investigation to have been formed by a group of men over half of whom are in businesses that would financially profit by large naval appropriations. Peace is costly, but it does not cost damnable things like that. Yes, and after sixteen years of post-war catastrophe, with victors and vanquished sunk in mutual disaster, an Armistice Day dawns at last upon the richest country in the world with millions of its people, one way or another, on relief. Peace will never cost anything like that.

I urge on our consciences this question: How much do we want peace? Do we want it so much that we are willing to pay anything it costs?

Put it positively: We should want peace enough to pay anything it costs.

First, because we want civilization to go on and not

slump back into barbarism. Civilization cannot go on along with modern war.

Someone has defined civilization as "the multiplication of the necessities of life." Go back to primitive man in the jungle and the number of things absolutely indispensable to his existence were few. But come down with advancing society across the centuries, and with each new stage more and more things have become necessary. That is true both about moral qualities within man and scientific inventions used by man. Civilization is the multiplication of the necessities of life. But of all necessities which civilization has pushed up to the front as indispensable, what can compare to-day with international peace? With that we have at least a chance at other necessary gains. Without that we have no chance at anything civilized at all.

I agree that war may once have had chivalry in it. It was always brutal, but it was at least a matching of man against man and it could be pictured in romantic and glamorous terms. But not now. Now boys are butchered at long distances by unseen executioners using ingenious mechanisms. Now cities are bombed from the air, and mothers and children indiscriminately sacrificed by murderous scientific contrivances. Now poison gas makes no distinction between soldiers and Red Cross nurses, and in the next war the last shred of decency will be thrown away by the use of bacteriological germs. Modern war is a vast agglomeration of atrocities. We can have that or civilization, but not both. Civilization is a garden where we are trying to grow something spiritually significant. War ploughs it all under. Civilization is a complicated system of increasingly intricate relationships. War blows it up with dynamite, as anyone can see to-day.

HOW MUCH DO WE WANT PEACE?

Does someone say that peace costs too much? My friends, the lack of peace costs more than too much. Continued too long, it will throw away our last chance at anything civilized.

Again, we should want peace enough to pay its cost because we want democracy to go on and not be swamped in the tyrannies of national and international dictatorship. Mussolini, so the papers say, has decided to start the military education of Italian youth at six years of age. Make no mistake, Mussolini knows what he is doing. Dictatorship and militarism are mutually indispensable. Military discipline makes all respond alike. Military drill makes all act alike. Military uniforms make all look alike. Militarism is regimentation, and every dictatorship on earth, from Russia with its Red Army, to Hitler with his mass marching, makes use of that. There is no way known to men by which to prepare a people for the goose step of political regimentation so efficient as to militarize them.

Add to this the further fact that in the last war not more than five per cent of the sixty-six million soldiers of all nations were volunteers. Ninety-five per cent of them were conscripts. Walk around that fact, I beg of you, and take its measure. Every modern war now will mean conscription of men, of women, of children, of property, of conscience, of everything. No major war under modern conditions is possible without practically universal conscription.

Many of you are old-fashioned people. You sometimes look askance at pacifism. You were not brought up on that. But you do believe in democracy. That is part of being old-fashioned now, that over against the dictatorships of the proletariat or of the Hitlers and Mussolinis, we do believe in the basic meanings and processes of democracy and do not

want America to surrender them. Well, the peace movement is vitally concerned with that. Democracy and war are mutually incompatible. No two things on earth instinctively hate each other more.

If someone says that this is not so in our country, listen to a definition of democracy from a Citizenship Training Manual prepared under the auspices of our own War Department:

Democracy:

A government of the masses.

Authority derived through mass meeting or any other form of 'direct' expression.

Results in mobocracy.

Attitude toward property is communistic—negating property rights.

Attitude toward law is that the will of the majority shall regulate, whether it be based upon deliberation or governed by passion, prejudice, and impulse, without restraint or regard to consequences.

Results in demagogism, license, agitation, discontent, anarchy.

The manual containing that was first used in 1928 for teaching citizenship in the camps, and was withdrawn four years later because of public criticism. There was no intention of being un-American. There was every intention of being loyal to our national institutions. But the military mind could not forbear seizing the opportunity to make representative government seem as unlike democracy as possible and to make democracy seem a detestable and dangerous doctrine. It is not pacifism but the inevitable demand for regimentation and dictatorship on the part of militarism that most menaces the basic ideas of American government. One need take only a single look at Europe to see that without peace democracy is doomed.

Finally, we had better want peace enough to pay its cost because we want Christianity to go on. To be

sure, Mussolini sings the praise of war in ideal terms: "War alone brings all human energies to their highest tension and stamps the mark of nobility on those peoples which have the courage to face it." Do not laugh at that. Never laugh at anything that Mussolini says. It always has enough truth in it to make it float. He is so far right, even about this, that all great catastrophes do release human energy and reveal nobility in those who courageously face them. That is true about earthquakes, about plagues, about famines, about burning ships at sea. Courageous souls shine out in such disasters, as the men who fought in the Great War often shone out against its cruel background with such high spirit and valour that we salute them with profound respect. But do our Mussolinis then propose that we should organize such things as earthquakes, plagues, famines, burning ships at sea, so that nobility may be stamped upon our souls? No, it is only about war that men talk such insanity. The practices of war and the principles of Christ are absolutely antithetical. We can have one or the other, but not both.

Here is a letter which came to me only this last week:

Having seen my own friends dying, dead, and decomposing on the barbed wire entanglements not many feet from where I had to defend for days; and other friends, their bodies floating down the rain-soaked trenches, I have very little faith left in a church which supported this glorious estate. For many years I called myself an atheist.

So! A few more wars, and who can have faith in the Church? Along with civilization and democracy, Christianity is doomed unless the nations are willing to pay the cost of peace.

THE HIGH USES OF SERENITY

A FEW miles from Wiscasset, in the State of Maine, is a beautiful, old New England meeting house which was dedicated to the worship of God about the time the Constitution of the United States was adopted. Separated now from any large centre of population, it is generally closed, but once a year at least the countryside makes pilgrimage to worship in it. A few weeks ago, sitting in one of the old box pews, I listened to a well-known writer and student of English literature speaking on the influence of the New England meeting houses on the character of the Maine people. What most I recall, however, and expect never to forget, is a condensed statement evidently born out of long brooding over the classics of our English speech: "There is no great art without serenity." Even an amateur can understand that. In music, literature and painting there is a difference between the fussiness and sensationalism of cheap and superficial work and the impression made on us by things supremely beautiful and, when one stops to consider it, the speaker in that old New England meeting house was right. An essential element in all great art is serenity.

If someone says that great art has come out of troubled souls, as Chopin wrote his music often in an agony of creative turmoil, that is true, but the nocturnes themselves have poise, symmetry, proportion, peace, as truly as the Parthenon has, which even in its ruins fills the eye with rest.

If someone says that in their works, as well as in

themselves, Wagner and Beethoven, Goethe and Shakespeare could be tumultuous and stormy, of course they could, but it was never like a tempest in a little pool roiling everything up, but always like a storm at sea, with wide distances around and undisturbed depths beneath. Think of the great music which we love the best, the great books which have meant most to us, the great paintings before which, if we could go back to Florence or Dresden, we would sit down quietly. The speaker was right. There is no great art without serenity.

Now, the highest of all arts is not music or literature or painting, but life, and there, too, without serenity there can be nothing great.

This may be a dangerous thing to say, for nothing much more degenerating to character can be imagined than to make serenity an end in itself. One might almost as well make sleep an end in itself. No healthy person would do that. Sleep is not an end in itself, but it is a grand place to start from in the morning. A physical organism which has no background of tranquillity can have no foreground of activity. That truth, translated from the physical to the spiritual plane, is, I should suppose, in days like these, one of the most important that a man can get his eyes upon.

The high uses of serenity are plainly indicated in the family life. The members of a family ought to be engaged in many diversified and exciting enterprises; a home should be a beehive, and in and out of it parents and children go on eager errands; all of which is gloriously possible if at the heart of the home there is serenity. Tennyson said about his wife: "The peace of God came into my life before the altar when I wedded her." When home means that, what great

things may come out of it! When home lacks that, what great thing can come out of it? For here also the basic law holds good: nothing great without serenity.

Let us get our eye clearly, then, on what we are talking of—not serenity as an escape from life, but as an indispensable part of life, what rest is to the body, what peace is to the home, what roots are to the tree, what depth is to an ocean. Nothing in heaven above or the earth beneath great without it!

Consider, for one thing, that our personal happiness is profoundly involved in this. How much of happiness consists in interior serenity and how impossible is any happiness without it! Give us the loveliest of autumn days that the artistry of nature can create, with peaceful and resplendent trees around us and every circumstantial factor fortunate, yet even there a man cannot be happy if within him his spirit has lost its serenity. On the other hand, consider how strangely circumstanced some of our happy days have been, not set in autumnal trees or in any fortunate environment, but in difficulty. Yet we were happy, and the reason is plain—our spirits within us were serene.

If someone says that serenity is not the whole of happiness, that excitement, sensation, thrill are part of it, of course they are. Alas for a man who has nothing exciting to do or to enjoy, and who does not sometimes cast his harness off and have free pasturage to kick his heels in! Nevertheless, of all pathetic things few are worse than the familiar sight which one sees on every side in a town like this—people, I mean, who are trying to substitute thrills for serenity. Having no serenity at home within themselves, they run away into sensations, spend as much time as possible away from themselves amid their thrills,

and then at last have to come back again to no serenity. That is the very essence of unhappiness.

On an average, twenty-two thousand people commit suicide in this country every year, and the month when the largest number of them do it is May. It is a lovely month; all nature stirs with prophecies of coming summer—and they kill themselves. Moreover, for the most part it is not the poor and hard-put-to-it who do that. Listen to one of them who killed himself in the month of May: "I have had few real difficulties. I have had, on the contrary, an exceptionally glamorous life—as life goes—and I have had more than my share of affections and appreciations. . . . No one thing is responsible for this and no one person—except myself." Hearing that, what do we know about that man? Surely this much, that, for all his excursions into life's successes and thrills, he kept coming back to a spirit where there was no serenity.

This human need for tranquillity has always inhered in life, but in days like these it is accentuated. An Englishman is reported to have said that on three trips to the United States he came to three different conclusions as to what was the major passion of Americans. After one visit he concluded that this passion was power, after another he decided it was wealth, after the third he was sure it was acceleration. Well, acceleration is a towering fact among us. Speed becomes a mania, and the pace is sometimes frantic, and in the midst of it one who cares about man's happiness and quality looks on the wreckage of that inner grace without which there can be nothing great in life or art, serenity.

In view of the prevalent unhappiness because of this, some of our modern sophisticates might well cease their attacks on our forefathers because they were

dour, grim and unhappy. Sometimes they doubtless were. Their theology at times was dreadful. But, while they may have been dour, grim and unhappy, they were not cynical, flippant, futile and unhappy. The more one deals with first-hand evidence, the more one is inclined to stake the Puritans themselves against many of our modern sophisticates in point of happiness.

A new biography of Louisa Alcott, author of *Little Women*, is just out—*Invincible Louisa*. One gets the impression that in her generation life was not so steady and calm or so dour and grim as we have pictured it. At any rate, in the first twenty-eight years of Louisa's life her family moved twenty-nine times, which is a record even for New York. Life then was not calm and easy. In the Alcott household it was very difficult. But one gets the impression also that it was happy, fundamentally happy; serenity in the soul, serenity in the home, something profound and peaceful in themselves and in their relationships with one another and with God—a haven to come back to from the storms of life. We moderns desperately need that and a vital Christianity gives it. For whatever else a real religion has done or left undone, it has ministered to those who understood it best a profound resource of inner power, a margin of reserve around their need, so that even in a prison Paul could sing about the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding." He had within himself a serene spirit to come home to. Without that, nothing in the world can give abiding happiness.

Consider also that not only personal happiness but personal character is involved in this. A great deal of our so-called modern badness is not malicious; it is simply life, lacking deep wells of quietness, trying to

make up for the loss of serene meaning by plunging into sensations with a kick in them. When Dante turned his back, an exile, on his loved city of Florence, he described its wickedness as like the restlessness of a sick woman in a fever who keeps changing her posture to escape the pain. So, in a town like this, men plunge into debauchery and women fly from one sensation to another and live like whirling dervishes, for the same reason that small boys pull false fire alarms to feel the thrill of the converging fire engines. People behave so because they have missed something in their lives. The boys have missed the old and simpler happiness that some of us who lived in the countryside knew. They have no normal resources to fall back upon. And men and women who act like that have missed an inner quiet, a serene meaning in life that makes cheap sensation seem intolerably tawdry.

Some things we cannot imagine being cared for by a man with any serenity of life. Why should he be attracted by drunkenness or by the hectic chances of a gambler's existence? Why should he find life's satisfaction in artificial excitements, with the hours between them but a dull interlude? This mad living, this constant change of posture to escape our pain, is a psychological compensation on the part of people who have missed serenity.

One of the finest things ever said by one man about another John Morley said about William Ewart Gladstone: "He was one of that high and favoured household who, in Emerson's noble phrase, 'live from a great depth of being.'" If that had been said about Gladstone by one of his co-religionists it would not have been so impressive, but Morley was an agnostic; he was no co-religionist. Only, closely

watching his lifelong friend, he saw where the secret of his moral power lay—he lived from a great depth of being. In a world like this and in a generation such as ours, there is no separating the problem of character from that. That pretty much *is* character.

Indeed, let a man ask himself what spoils serenity and he cannot answer without plunging deep into his moral life. Remorse ruins serenity; our infidelities, which we so eagerly anticipate and which pass from expectation through enjoyment into memory, haunt us evermore. Ill-will spoils serenity, as does the cherished grudge, the mean vindictiveness. Jealousy wrecks serenity, as in the old story where, from the day he began enviously eyeing David, Saul never had a peaceful moment more. Engrossing ambition, where a man's ego becomes the clamorous centre of the universe—that exiles serenity. Here we come to grips with our theme. Some at first may have supposed we were speaking of an easy virtue. No, one of the most costly. If serenity were easy there would be more of it. At its wicket gate there stand conditions to be satisfied—no unforgiven sins, no cherished grudges, no jealousy, no egoistic ambitions—the profound moral conditions of serenity.

To be sure, in this realm as in every other, there are caricatures and fakes. Man so instinctively knows that inward calm is to be desired that every conceivable device for getting it without fulfilling its serious conditions has been tried. One of the commonest, I suspect, is to seek a serene mind by shrugging one's shoulders at life, saying that nothing much matters anyway so that one need not bother much about anything. That provides a bogus serenity.

In Maine one summer, so Bishop Fiske writes, he and three friends spent a vacation with their guide, an

old Maine fisherman. It was the summer when William Jennings Bryan was making his last attempt at the presidency, and rock-ribbed Republican Maine was worried. One of the men in the party was a research physician; one was a geologist; another was an astronomer. They talked about the ages of the rocks and the evolution of life from the creatures of the sea, and the immeasurable distances of the stars, and the Maine fisherman listened. At last even his taciturnity broke down, and he poured out a flood of questions. Were the rocks really so old? Did life evolve from the sea creatures? Were the stars so far away? Was everything so inconceivably vast and ancient? And when at last he got it in his mind, he heaved a sigh of relief. "I guess," he said, "it won't make a powerful lot of difference even if William Jennings Bryan *is* elected!"

Such detachment born of a long look can have wholesomeness in it, but it is not of that we are thinking now. Rather, serenity is the basis of powerful activity. There is no art, no creativeness, no release of moral power even to rebuild society, without it. If a man is going to help lift the world he must have some solidity within him to lean his lever on. Some here doubtless said at first, In days of social and economic tension such as these, how can a man waste his time talking on serenity? I am thinking of these social questions. What else can an intelligent man think of in days like these? One who cares about them walks the streets and sees how few people are constructively and unselfishly thinking about public matters. How can they? They have no leisure from themselves. They have no serenity. They are harassed and agitated about themselves. They are afflicted with an appalling self-preoccupation. They have no inner steadiness to lean their levers on. And consider-

ing the case, one begins to understand some things not so clearly seen before.

Consider the Quakers, for example. Of all the Christian groups which, would you say, has been right about more social questions than any other? The Quakers. Well, then, what have they stressed? It is very strange! They have stressed serenity:

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our feverish ways.

Yet when we stop to think of it, is it so strange? Can we think of any supreme soul in history without this quality within him? We cannot understand Christ without it. When he talks about inward peace one well may listen. A young man he was, dangerously plunging into revolutionary matters that would shake the world; yet he talked about inward peace. He never could have done anything without it. In the Garden of Gethsemane he might have lost it. That was the struggle under the olive trees, to maintain his serenity. Everything depended on it. There was a victory when he was sure of it, the interior leverage of the divine Archimedes by which he moved the world. It is of that we are talking. Lacking it, there is no powerful character, and it belongs only to those who live from a great depth of being.

So, inevitably, we come to our third fact: not only are personal happiness and personal character involved in this, but personal religion. Some time since, an invitation came to attend a conference of humanists, non-theistic humanists, who are trying to build churches on a moral programme only, and I was asked to tell them frankly what I thought was the trouble with the humanists. It was impossible to go but, could I have done so, I know what I would have said

in candid criticism of my humanistic friends. All profound religion ministers to three basic human needs: the need of a great metaphysic, a philosophy of life to put meaning into living; the need of a great morality, principles of conduct, personal and social, to ennoble living; the need of a great mysticism, profound resources of interior power by which to live. All profound religion has made to life these three major contributions: a great philosophy, a great ethic, a great resource of power. The trouble with the humanists is that they are trying to limp along with one of them, the ethic. All complete religion has three dimensions. It has height, an elevated philosophy of life; it has depth, a profound resource for life; it has extension, a noble way of living life. The trouble with the humanists is that they try to keep it one-dimensional, to preserve the moral extension without the height of faith or the depth of power, and I, for one, am certain that that essentially is incomplete and that, for psychological reasons, if for nothing else, it will not work.

Humanism, however, is more than an organized movement. It is a modern mood, an attitude, a drift that affects us all, so that every Sunday these pews have people in them powerfully tempted to a one-dimensional Christianity of moral demand only. Then, when trouble comes, people have no high philosophy of life or deep resources of power to give serenity. And sometimes, alas, they discover that, in facing heavy hours, bearing heavy griefs, handling heavy tasks, when a man loses serenity he loses everything.

I plead to-day for a kind of religion which helps a man to live from a great depth of being. You young people in particular, eager, enthusiastic, devoted, as many of you are, to the noblest causes of to-day,

beware of a Christianity that merely adds one more demand on life without being a resource for life. The demands of life are terrific enough already. As the years pass they often mount appallingly. What if, then, a man has a Christianity which merely piles on him a further demand for more sacrifice and more toil but which does not at the same time help him to meet the demand from a great depth of being? There is much eager, youthful, one-dimensional Christianity like that to-day.

My friends, if we are to have a profound religion we may indeed throw away our old, childish, anthropomorphic ideas of God, but we may not throw away God and leave ourselves caught like rats in the trap of an aimless, meaningless, purposeless universe. There is nothing in that philosophy of life to help a man live from a profound depth of being. And while we may throw away our early, ignorant ideas of prayer, we may not throw away prayer, the flowing of internal fountains that keep their freshness when all the superficial cisterns peter out. These are the other dimensions of religion which, helping us to meet demand with resource amid the strain of life, bestow serenity.

Young man or woman, some day you are going to be forty years old, fifty years old, sixty years old, and the years between now and then will not be easy either. We will take it for granted that morally you will try to live a good life and socially a useful one. All *that* I pray for you, and something more beside, that as age comes on you may deserve the salutation which in the old days of titled nobility stood high on the list—'Your Serene Highness.' After a long life, that is a crown of praise—Your Serene Highness.

BASIC CONDITIONS OF SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING

A CERTAIN headlong precipitancy impresses visitors to America as characteristic of our living. We hurl ourselves after the things we want. In the language of the day, we are temperamentally go-getters. Into the midst of this headlong life of ours, with its restless, anxious plunging after anything we may desire, let us to-day interject one of the most familiar sayings of the Master: "Which of you by being anxious can add a cubit unto the measure of his life? If then ye are not able to do even that which is least, why are ye anxious concerning the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow."

How far away from New York City that seems! How alien to our common speech it is! Nevertheless, which of us by being anxious *can* add a cubit unto the measure of his life?

To be sure, if we start early enough, if we fulfil prior and remote conditions, we can prolong life's span, but no one ever yet has succeeded in doing that by being anxious, by directly plunging after it and pouncing on it. So vital an achievement must be gotten at by another method altogether. One must approach it indirectly; one must fulfil the antecedent conditions of health. And, says Jesus, if you would learn the secret of that kind of vital process out of which come far and away the most important and desirable attributes of living, you might well consider the lilies, how they grow.

To be sure, being a lily is no natural expression of our ambition. Few of us have ever desired to be

flowers, and especially in times like these when personal problems are so difficult, social situations so dangerous, the demand for immediate and direct action so clamorous, such a figure of speech seems singularly inept and feeble. We who have been in Palestine, however, know that the flowers are still the loveliest things there. They have outlasted the centuries, have watched armies come and go, have seen the rise and fall of empires, and they are still the fairest sight in Palestine. They grow wild, rampant, glorious over the hills of Galilee, and two months from now the heights where Jesus walked will be bespangled with them like stars in heaven on a clear night. When Jesus, therefore, talked about those flowers he meant something real. Flowers do not achieve beauty by direct, aggressive, go-getting methods. Beauty always comes by indirection. Flowers busy themselves absorbing vitality. They welcome the sun, drink in the rain, seek rootage in the earth, and then afterwards, as a by-product and consequence of that, there comes a loveliness which never can be achieved by precipitate pursuit.

Surely, a lesson is there which we moderns need. For our lives fall into two parts: first, the things we can get by direct attack—when we want them we pounce on them as a lion on his prey—but second, the ends which must be gained by indirection. Some things we achieve as we catch a railroad train, by running after them, but some things are not like that—they come of themselves when their conditions are fulfilled. When one carefully considers it, the most desirable attributes of living lie in that second group. Culture, for example, the inner richness of an affluent mind and spirit, cannot be secured by methods of direct aggressiveness. Which of you by being anxious

can add one cubit to the measure of his culture? Culture, indeed, we never get; it comes. It is an aftermath, a by-product, an unconscious consequence of fine conditions beautifully fulfilled. Culture is like the light on Moses' brow when coming down from communion with the Eternal, "he wist not that . . . his face shone."

Obviously, then, we are dealing here with something deeply important, but whether or not it will seem important to us depends on what primarily we want of life. If mainly or merely we want external things, then we will value direct methods most. By direct precipitancy of attack we can get external things. But if, spiritually mature, we recognize that the framework of life is nothing if we have no life to put within it, then we will go deeper and seek another technique. A man might conceivably get a house by merely aggressive methods but no man ever secured a home that way. A house is a thing which we can get; a home is a spiritual consequence which comes when the conditions are fulfilled. Consider the lilies, how they grow!

In all this we are dealing with one of the profoundest truths about religion, for the central meaning and effect of religion lie in this second realm. What is the good of religion? says the go-getter. As one sees what it is he wants and how satisfactory to his objectives are his direct methods of attack, one throws up one's hands in despair of rendering him an understandable answer. It is as though in another realm he should say, What is the use of knowing Shakespeare, of loving Bach and Beethoven, of apprehending what the great artists have tried to say? of what utility is it to enter into the heritage of the world's beauty, although, like the flowers of Palestine, it has

outworn the strife of centuries and seen man's powerful empires rise and fall? When one faces the utilitarian mind saying, What is the use of experiences like these? one despairs of answering. For one would have to say that such experiences fructify the soil of the spirit so that gradually it becomes rich and then afterwards lovely things can grow which would else have been impossible. One has to say that such experiences shine on the life like the sun and change the climate so that by and by fair consequences come which otherwise would have been unthinkable. Such, too, is the way of great religion. You cannot commonly put your finger on the immediate utility it serves. All great religion stands, forever saying, with Jesus, "Consider the lilies, how they grow!"

For one thing, we do inevitably tend to grow in the direction of our central faiths about life. To believe that at the heart of reality is eternal Spirit—to believe, that is, in the living God—when such faith is real and vital, inevitably has a fructifying consequence. In this regard a man's soul is like the River Nile. I have seen it in November at the flood and across its moonlit inundation have sailed amid the palm-tree islands to the very foot of the pyramids. How came this inundation at Cairo? Thousands of miles away it had been raining among the mountains of the interior. So a man's soul is continental in range and what happens at Cairo depends on what has happened among the heights. You cannot effect this inundation at Cairo by direct methods. It all depends upon what happens among the mountains. So, at long last, from great faiths abundant life flows into souls.

Very familiar in the confessional conference is the man who comes with a particular, practical problem in the foreground of his attention, concerning whose

case the skilled worker with souls knows that before tackling that problem he must first trace the man's situation back, often far back, to the heights of the interior and his central faiths about life. Sometimes one can find no God there—no, nor anything like God. The universe aimless, life accidental, unpurposed, meaningless, man himself a "disease of the agglutinated dust"—such ideas among the heights, with no rain falling out of them to flood the streams of living, result in this practical problem of barrenness far down river at Cairo. That man's deep need cannot be gotten at by tinkering with the immediate problem; one must go far back among the mountains.

Of what good is religion? One readily understands a go-getter asking that. To be sure, there have been types of religion which promised men that in answer to prayer God would pour money into their pockets; even a utilitarian mind might appreciate that sort of faith. Such credulity, however, drips away from an intelligent man, and if he is persuaded that life consists in the abundance of the things which we possess, one easily can understand his saying, I will blow on my hands and get what I desire. But if a man has come to see that verily he is a *soul*, that he cannot live by bread alone, that as he thinketh in his heart so is he, he must see that inwardly, gradually, inevitably he is fashioned by his central faiths.

This is February. We are in the heart of winter, but spring will come again and May be here. The trees will break once more into leaf and the very dust ascend into fragrance and colour. How, then, will this amazing miracle be wrought? It is very strange. One has to go millions of miles away to find the explanation. It is all done by indirection. The whole planet will turn in the heavens until the sun's rays

fall more straightly upon us. The secret of the flowers is over ninety million miles away. The universe is no go-getter. It does not plunge after flowers. It starts far off, fulfils the conditions of their creation, and then flowers come of themselves. So is a great and vital religion. If we are merely utilitarians, we can easily neglect it but, if in the midst of a difficult generation we are trying to keep our souls, how can we live without it? Consider the lilies, how they grow!

For another thing, we inevitably tend to become like the central objects of our worship. Show me, as another has said, the man whom you admire and I will show you the manner of man you inevitably tend to be.

In one of our modern novels a character says that if she were only a man she would take life by the throat and choke something big out of it. That is the method of direct attack on life—take it by the throat and choke something out of it—but at our best we know that the finest attributes of living are not so secured. They always come by indirection; they spring from something beyond themselves that we adore.

In this country we desperately need to learn this lesson. We need to learn it in our schools. Some of us are still profoundly grateful for many elements in the older education in which we were trained. It was not utilitarian. It was not intended to make us more successful money-getters. Its objectives were not immediate. It was not in the ordinary sense of the word practical. It led us through the green pastures and beside the still waters of the great masterpieces of man's literature. Under those older teachers some of us learned to love the loveliest things that ever have been said or written in man's heritage.

I do not mean that we either can or should recover the technique or philosophy of that older pedagogy, but in these modern days beware how we make our education too utilitarian, too practical, too immediate in its objectives! Beware how we make these children think that they can choke out of life the finest things, when the finest things always come indirectly from our admirations, our reverences, our appreciations, our worship!

When a man talks to modern people about worship he finds a strange diversity of response. Of course the go-getters can see nothing in it, but why should they? There are some, however—I leave you to judge which is the more intelligent and high-spirited type—who give another answer. When Professor Hocking of Harvard sums up the healing, restoring, integrating influences of life, he says, "Worship is the whole which includes them all." When Professor Wieman, of the department of philosophy of the University of Chicago, talks about worship, he says, "There is no other form of human endeavour by which so much can be accomplished." Such men, not bound by tradition but of open minds and free spirits, have learned long since, as one of the profoundest truths about spiritual life, that we never secure the finest things by pouncing on them but always get them indirectly from something we adore.

When all day we have been dealing with the close-ups of life's details, until we are irritated by them and the meaning is drained away from them, nothing helps so much as to turn from them to the organizing centre of one's life, from the many to the One, until perspective is regained and meaning comes back again. And that is worship.

When all day we have been analysing life, practising

upon it a critical discrimination which breaks wholes into parts and parts into atoms, as a botanist might take a flower to pieces, until our very lives are disintegrated, nothing helps so much as to change our inner attitude from analysis to synthesis, from criticism to appreciation, until the One suffuses the many and life is drawn together and meaning returns. And that is worship.

When all day we have been controlling things, saying Come! and Go! to forces beneath us which we can command, until we have fairly lost sight of the spiritual aims for which we should be controlling them, nothing makes so much difference as to stop controlling things beneath us and begin worshipping the One above us by whom we ought to be controlled. And that is worship.

What does worship do for you? the go-getter says. Friend, it is extraordinarily difficult to answer that so that you could understand. For what worship does is often not particular and immediate; you cannot put your finger on it. It is like having rainfall among the heights of the interior. It is like a change of climate. It is like beginning to understand the earth because at last we have looked away from it and have known the sun. That is to say, in its final effect it is one of the most tremendous influences in the spiritual life. Consider the lilies, how they grow!

One wonders how some of us will roll off this truth from our lives and escape its impact on our consciences. Some, perhaps, will say that in a turbulent time like this, when problems, personal and social, are tragically clamorous, this kind of truth is too poetic to be heeded. The preacher, they think, speaks from a secluded realm and does not know the difficult and sometimes sordid circumstances which are faced

in the thick of the world's fight. What difference does it make, they cry, how the lilies grow?

Upon the contrary, is it not precisely in a time like this that most we need those backgrounds of faith and devotional practice out of which, as an inevitable consequence, beyond our power specially to will them, come moral steadiness and strength? And far from being a soft, æsthetic matter, it is in every realm the measure of intelligence that, when a man wants something over *here*, he knows enough to go away over *there* and fulfil the remote conditions for securing it.

Fritz Kreisler is still playing glorious music, but do you remember what he said about his experience in the trenches during the Great War? "It is extraordinary," wrote Kreisler, "how quickly suggestions of luxury, culture, refinement, in fact all the gentler aspects of life, which one had considered to be an integral part of one's life, are forgotten, and, more than that, not even missed. Centuries drop from one, and one becomes a primeval man, nearing the cave-dweller in an incredibly short time." So even Fritz Kreisler found situations in this world where the centuries drop from one and spiritual culture is easily forgotten and one is terribly tempted to be a primitive cave-dweller. What is it carries a man through such situations and brings him out upon the other side to be Fritz Kreisler still? Not this or that detail of deliberate choice, in all likelihood, but something far more general, more remote, more profound—a long-accumulated deposit of character from great faiths held about life, great devotions to life, and fine imaginations of life hung upon the walls of the soul. If ever in history men and women needed that background of character, is it not to-day? There are trenches in peace time.

Think of some lovely personality we have known, reminding us, as another put it, that small souls help the world by what they do but great souls by what they are. Can you imagine achieving a character like that by pouncing on it? In any man such character is an aftermath, a by-product, an unconscious consequence. It is the gradual deposit of the home he came from and the friends he has loved, of the books with which he has fed his spirit and the pictures imagination has hung on the walls of his mind, of great faiths about life's meaning and of inward communion with his God in the secret place.

I plead for the necessity of such Christian faith and devotional practice if we are going to keep our souls. Of course, if we do not want souls, so be it! But if we do—go home to-day and read again James Russell Lowell's poem, *The Cathedral*. To be able, when one will, to step into the presence of great faiths, great worships, high imaginations of life's meaning, until life becomes continental and the rains fall upon the mountains—what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and, neglecting *that*, lose his soul?

EVERY MAN'S RELIGION HIS OWN

IN the New Testament the Christian gospel is spoken of in two contrasted ways. On the one side, it is an objective, external fact; whether accepted or rejected, there it stands, a message to mankind through an historic personality. So the Book of Revelation calls it "the everlasting gospel" and Paul refers to it as "the gospel of God" and "the gospel of Christ." Paul calls it by another name, however, suggestive of another range of meaning, when in his letter to the Romans he writes, "according to my gospel." So, when Christianity came into Paul's mind and, like the ocean flowing into a special bay, took the contour of his experience, not only did something profoundly important happen to Paul, as we have always understood, but something profoundly important happened to the gospel. As Paul looked at the result, he could call it, indeed, "Christ's gospel," but also "my gospel"—that is to say, Christ's gospel as it has taken shape in me, as I have been able to apprehend it, seen with my eyes and applicable to my life—*my* gospel.

If this were merely an historic matter, we could content ourselves with studying, as scholars do, the changes of category and colour that were impressed upon the Christian message when it passed through the mind of Paul. But this is more than an ancient matter. Who of us can consider his own religious problems or watch the souls of men struggling with belief and disbelief and not see how many of our difficulties spring from this contrast: on the one side, the historic gospel, the official gospel, established Christianity,

and, on the other side, what is real to me in Christianity, what gets me and makes a difference to me—*my* gospel.

Let us start by noting that something always does happen to Christianity when it comes into a new life. We commonly emphasize the transforming experience that befalls the soul. See, we say, from St. Augustine and St. Francis of Assisi to John Bunyan and Kagawa of Japan, when Christianity comes into men it radically changes them. But here is a companion truth: in St. Augustine and St. Francis, John Bunyan and Kagawa of Japan, Christianity flowed into diverse contours of mind and character and shaped itself to intellectual forms and practical expressions intensely individual and unique. Surely, something transforming happened to the men but something transforming happened also to the gospel. There is a sense in which there is a new kind of Christianity every time it flows into a new soul.

Certainly that was true in the case of Paul. Every New Testament scholar understands what is meant by 'Pauline Christianity.' It was not the same as the Christianity of James or John; it was not identical with Peter's. The sun falls through a prism into diverse colours. A tree puts forth its leaves, no two of them alike. So, even at the first, New Testament Christianity was not a unanimous and indiscriminate affair. It kept flowing into fresh personalities and becoming a new thing in each new soul.

Even before one goes further with this matter, it ought to have significance for someone here, especially some young, independent spirit, resentful at the endeavours of the elders to run him into predetermined moulds, particularly wary, it may be, about putting his neck, as he figures it, into the noose of official

Christianity. Friend, you have that figure wrong. Religion is not like a noose; it is like music. To be sure, music has basic and eternal factors in it which cause it always to be music and not something else, but it has also this constantly revivifying attribute, that each new musician who is possessed by it makes it a new thing. Palestrina could have said, My music. Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Wagner, César Franck—the merest amateur in appreciation knows the difference. Whenever music flows into the contours of a new artist, it becomes a fresh, original, individual thing. So is real Christianity. The Master never tried to make James like John or John like Peter. Individuality is of the essence of religion. I would not for anything run you into a religious mould, but if the great realm of spiritual life revealed in Christ could find in you a fresh, original expression, so that of some of it you verily could say, My gospel, that would be a major event in your life story.

With so much clear, let us pass to a further aspect of the matter. By its essential nature, religion is a kind of experience which, if we are to possess it at all, must be possessed by each man for himself. We fool ourselves about the things we can publicly inherit. Gratefully lumping in a general mass the high traditions of the race and calling them ours, we forget that there are realms of experience which by no possibility can be inherited. In them each new man, as he arrives, must be a personal discoverer. Real estate can be handed down from one generation to another but not friendship. To be sure, our inheritance can help us there, leading us to opportunities for friendship else impossible, but always the inevitable moment comes when, if I do not claim the privilege

so that for myself I can say, My friend, then no matter what the tradition of friendship may be, I have no vital portion in it.

Sometimes this seems about as solemn a fact as life presents us with. Some things can be done once for all and we reap the benefit, no matter what we do. Columbus discovered America; it need not be done again. Edison discovered electric light; that is a gain for us all, willy-nilly. But soon one's thought passes over the boundaries of such public inheritance to those realms where, no matter what has been done in the past, it is of small account to me if I do not personally rediscover it, appropriate it, possess myself of it, and intimately live by it. All the courage of the past means nought to a man who cannot say, *My* courage. All the prayers of the past cannot nourish the spirit that never prays. There are no proxies for the soul. Only what is mine is really mine. The profoundest experiences of the spirit must be reproduced in each new man. No substitute can take my place in loving Shakespeare or delighting in nature. I can have no surrogate in worshipping God or caring for my fellow men.

Indeed, is it not clear that the supreme hours in human life come when some universal experience impinges upon our individual experience and becomes our very own? All men must die; that is a universal. Then some day the inevitable hour arrives when it ceases being merely universal and becomes individual—I must die. In that hour there are no proxies for the soul.

Love is a universal. We had known the tradition of love from our youth up and many a story of it and poem about it we had read. Then the hour came when it was no longer merely universal but particular.

Love became our very own. In such hours there are no substitutes for the soul.

Surely, this applies to the Christianity of someone here. Multitudes of people in Christendom have no more Christianity than they can outwardly inherit—its forms and customs. Yet, living in a world where the spiritual life revealed in Christ is available, it is a tragedy not to have some of it for one's own and be able to say of its inner faiths, its deep resources, its saving virtues, That is mine.

Indeed, such are the intellectual problems of some of us that, if we are to have any Christianity at all, we must have it on our own terms; we must give up all Christianity unless we can thus be independent about it and have our own kind, even though it differs from the official brand. Surely, that was true of Paul. No sooner had Christ's commanding presence come into his life than, he tells us, he consulted with no man but went off to Arabia alone. He had, for himself, to think through this new experience and, when he returned, he brought back Christianity, indeed, but Pauline Christianity, his very own.

If that attitude was necessary even in those days, when official standardization had so little affected the gospel, how much more is it needed now! Some of us would find our whole lives profoundly changed if once we thoroughly understood the implications of this approach to being Christian. "I do not see," says a recent letter, "how people can believe the Apostles' Creed." "What do you make," says another, "of all this mass of sectarian ecclesiasticism?" You see, such minds are confronting the official gospel, established Christianity, and because it is not theirs they stand outside it.

Let a man who has been a minister of Christ for

over thirty years say, I do not see, either, how people believe all the Apostles' Creed or consent to the sectarian churches. Surely, if Paul were here, far from consenting to our formal creeds and official churches, he would go again to some Arabia and think this thing through for himself, go down into the inner elements of Christ's message to discover what does verily belong to him there, apprehended by his mind and applicable to his life.

My grandsire was a stalwart Christian, but my Christianity is not like his. To be sure, it is like his in the same sense in which music is always music, whoever interprets it, or nature's beauty nature's beauty still, whether Homer sing of "the wine-dark sea" or Shelley celebrate the west wind on an autumn day. Surely, my grandsire's Christianity and mine are of kin but how different—in intellectual formulation, in practical expression, how profoundly different!

This, which is true of individuals, is true also of generations as a whole. Go back to some ancient day in Europe when, let us say, within thirty-four years the Black Death carried off twenty-five million of the population, when misery reached depths beyond imagination's fathoming, when Christianity, having no visible hopes on earth, concerned itself overwhelmingly with post-mortem otherworldliness. That is not our Christianity; it cannot be. Here is the healthy side of modernism. We have broken up the idea that Christianity is like an old copy book in school with a perfect, copperplate piece of writing on the page's top which we must repeat and repeat with linear exactness down the page. Vital Christianity never was like that. Was St. Francis a copy of St. Augustine? Is Sir Wilfred Grenfell a copy of Phillips Brooks? Are all of them together merely copies of Jesus? Such

souls in religion have been as gloriously diverse as artists have been in art.

Here in this church many people have joined with us who came at first shyly and hesitantly, wondering whether they had a right to a place in the organized company of Christ. They said in effect: We do not accept the official creeds; we cannot believe all that the official Church seems to teach, but here at the centre of our lives is that much of Christianity we have found very real, by which we are trying to live, for which we will gladly stand; have we a right in the Christian fellowship? One of the most notable results of this church's policy is found in souls like that, scores of them, among the most exhilarating characters and the most effective workers in our fellowship. For even a little Christianity personally possessed is worth an infinite amount of Christianity externally copied.

Let us press on now from this to a matter immediately suggested by it. In a day of trial and strain it is only that much of the gospel which has become *my* gospel which can stand the storm of doubt and trouble. A few years ago, for example, Bertrand and Dora Russell blew across this country like a high wind, arousing everywhere the publicity which sensationalism can always evoke. And this was their message, that marital fidelity is now an obsolete ideal, that husbands and wives should freely grant each other extra-marital *liaisons*, that jealousy about such *liaisons* is the sign of a narrow mind, that now at last the hour had struck for emancipation from such obscurantism, and that they, Bertrand and Dora Russell, were in their own relationships exhibiting their gospel's truth. So they talked and the repercussions of their influence were tremendous. Only a week ago I ran upon another

sample of it. To be sure, within the last few months Bertrand and Dora Russell themselves have come to the end of their matrimonial rope in the English divorce courts. But some of us did not have to wait for that before we knew that they were absolutely wrong. And if asked how we could be so sure, the answer would go back not so much to general argument about the psychological factors in marriage, although they seem obvious enough, but even more it would go back to our personal experience of what a great home is like—*my* family life, as I knew it when I was a boy and as I have known it since. A deep conviction about the home, able to stand the storms of modern doubt and the persuasiveness of clever argument, is that much of the general truth about the family that has become one's very own.

If, then, in the realm of religion someone asks how it is that in this terrific generation, when every form of unbelief has pitilessly beaten on the Christian faith, some of us, shielded by no orthodoxy from the full force of the storm, have still maintained a Christian faith, the best answer, I suspect, was given by Canon Streeter of the University of Oxford. He kept his faith, he said, though often sorely tried, because he had an inner experience which he knew a materialistic interpretation of the universe was powerless to explain. Some of us have had all the theology we possessed stripped from us and every argument we had been accustomed to use in the defence of our faith wrested from our hands. What a generation it has been in which to keep one's faith! But always in a pinch there was that unshaken core of solid fact, an inner experience which we knew a materialistic interpretation of the universe was powerless to explain—my gospel!

As for trouble, that always reveals the difference between a Christianity affixed to us and a Christianity possessed by us. I do not need to tell you in days like these how easily the things not our very own peter out in a crisis. It is when the storms fall that the Pauls stand out and if one asks why the Pauls stand out, the answer is not so much that they believe in *the* gospel—millions do that—as that a vital part of the gospel has become so really theirs that, though the tempests beat, they can say, This verily is mine.

Hear, then, the conclusion of the matter, that without such recognition of the individuality of religious experience there can be no genuine religion, but with the recognition of it there does come also a serious peril. Suppose we should hear a man say that he loved nature and that far from being a borrowed experience it was his very own; we should be glad of that. But suppose we should learn that this man, though he had means and opportunity to acquaint himself with nature in all her varied moods on sea and mountain, never left New York and that what he meant by his experience of nature was only what he got in Central Park. That would trouble us. What a pity, we would say, that a man who has in him the capacity to love nature and has this solid core of real experience in Central Park should not extend it! Has he not read Masefield on the ocean or Wordsworth on the hills? Have not Keats and Shelley awakened his discontent with his too-limited delight in nature and made him want to go adventuring for larger views and deeper insights? To be sure, an independent mind will not subjugate itself to authority but there are two kinds of authority. Keats and Shelley do not ask a man to put out his eyes in order to use theirs. Keats and Shelley open a man's eyes to see what else

he had not seen. What is the matter with a man then, who, when he has a real experience in a great realm of human life, does not want more?

That parable certainly applies to some of us. For here is the unhealthy side of modernism. Accentuating individualism in Christian faith and experience, we have done well but, in consequence, too many modernists, possessing only a little real religion, as though all the nature that a man knew were in Central Park, have settled down with that, content, complacent, sometimes intellectually supercilious, saying, My gospel. Friends, you would not take a cupful of scientific knowledge and, saying, My science! be content as though it were the whole. You would be humble about that and pray for more.

So I raise with you the question of your Christianity. Is ours the only bay into which the great sea of God has flowed that we should be satisfied with it? No one ever understands what the Church really means until he sees her in this regard. The real Church—ideal, spiritual, catholic, universal—is trying to keep all the bays in mind, to comprehend them all and not forget the ocean. For our individualistic Christianities are minute and partial. Some individuals are all for personal religion; that is real to them. Some are keen about the social gospel; that grips them. Some are mystics, and prayer is their native speech. Some are ethicists, and the gist of their gospel is, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Some come at religion by way of the intellect, head first; it is philosophy to them. Some come with broken lives; for them it is forgiveness and renewal. How partial we are and how incomplete our particular outlooks on the sea!

Sometimes in imagination I behold the Church—as I wish in this closing moment of our worship you

might behold her—pleading with us as though she said, Price, indeed, your individual Christianity, but humbly, mind you, humbly and with tolerance for others and, above all, with penitence profound that when you say, *My* gospel, it falls so far short of being *the* gospel.

EVERY MAN A GAMBLER*

THOUGHTFUL observers of man's moral conduct have always been concerned over the dangers of gambling. Indeed, would not all of us agree that to have ingrained in one's thinking and dominant in one's living the idea that by lucky chance we may succeed some day in getting something for nothing is about as disastrous to moral integrity as any evil that can beset a man?

Nevertheless, when all that is granted, it remains true that every man is a gambler. Whatever achievement we seek, we have to hazard our lives on something or other. Columbus discovered this continent because he staked his life on the idea that the earth is round. Washington founded the nation because he hazarded his life on the possibility of our independence. And every ordinary son of man wagers his effort on some uncertainty every day he lives. Here is a strange, intriguing aspect of human existence. Life is not simply a game of chance—it is much more than that—but one cannot understand it without taking into account this element of hazard. We are gamblers, all of us.

Even the scene on Calvary illustrates this. At the foot of the cross the soldiers, not wanting to divide the unseamed garment of our Lord, are gambling for it. But as they cast their dice for his garment, see what Christ himself is doing on the cross! Studdert Kennedy, a British chaplain in the Great War, put it plainly:

* Preached on the last Sunday of the year.

And sitting down they watched Him there,
The Soldiers did.
There, while they played with dice,
He made His sacrifice,
And died upon the Cross to rid
God's world of sin.
He was a gambler too,
My Christ,
He took His life and threw
It for a world redeemed.
And ere His agony was done
Before the westering sun went down,
Crowning that day with its crimson crown,
He knew
That He had won.

Well, I hope he did, but this is certain: what those lines vividly state is everlastingly true about the Master. There is no understanding him without that. There was gambling that day not only at the foot of the cross, but on it:

He took His life and threw
It for a world redeemed.

One major value of the calendar is that it jolts us out of ruts and, as special days come round, forces us to think of special aspects of our experience. So New Year's comes again and plainly presents to us this fact of hazard. What is going to happen to us this next year we do not know. What will come to those we love or on what good or evil fortune the causes will fall that we care most about, how can we tell? "Behold," said Paul, "I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there." That is our case too at the New Year's time and, as we thus move out into the unknown, inevitably staking our lives on something or other amid the uncertainty, we are gamblers, all of us.

Indeed, alike our characters and our careers are largely determined by the things on which we wager our lives. When Thackeray, the novelist, was a youngster his schoolmaster used to say to him, "Thackeray, Thackeray, you are an idle, profligate, shuffling boy," but sometime in his youth this unpromising lad must have begun thinking within himself, I wager my life I can write a novel. How else could we have had *Henry Esmond* and *Vanity Fair*? Every boy is a gambler when he chooses a vocation. He must stake his life on it.

This might not be so if life had only two tenses. If we had a past and a present only, we might learn all about the past and adequately assay the present, and so live in certainty. But our lives are three-dimensional. They have a future tense. Life is a continuous adventure into the unforeseen and the unforeseeable. If, therefore, one would get at the creative core of a man, one must find out, if one can, on what ideas and ideals, what aims and purposes, what manner and philosophy of living he is hazarding his life.

In endeavouring to get at the spiritual meaning of this factor in experience, consider for one thing that much of the thrill and interest of life rises at this very point. Granted that the necessity of hazarding life in the midst of uncertainties grows wearisome. We become tired of our unknown to-morrows, cry not for excitement but for safety, crave above all else release from life's risks into its securities. Describing a prudent weather man prophesying what was likely to happen in New England, Mark Twain said he would get out something like this: "Probably north-east to south-west winds, varying to the southward and westward and eastward, and points between, high and low barometer swapping around from place to place;

probable areas of rain, snow, hail, and drought, succeeded or preceded by earthquakes, with thunder and lightning. . . . Postscript: But it is possible that the programme may be wholly changed in the meantime. "Life is sometimes as full of vicissitudes as that. One thinks of some of you this New Year's time, wishing how earnestly that the weather of your lives would settle down into something dependable!

Yet life with its risk and hazard gone and everything reduced to a dead certainty would be intolerable. Then we should know all that would happen to us and to our loved ones and to the world this coming year and the next year and the year after that, until we died. How unendurable that would be—life a lead-pencil sketch handed to us from now to the end and we, knowing everything in advance, merely inking it in! Should we find ourselves in such a world, we would cry for our old uncertainties. God, we should pray, let us risk again; it was better so!

Indeed, when we think not of ourselves and our occasional and natural weariness of hazard but of other lives which most have stimulated and inspired us, we know that the supremely significant portion of the human record lies in this realm we are talking of. What a gambler a man like Sir Wilfred Grenfell has been, taking his life with its native ability and medical skill and betting it on Labrador! Those who play the races say that gambling is exciting. I suspect it is. I do not know it in that form. But in the great traditions of the race, from Abraham going out from Ur of the Chaldees toward a land he knew not of, to friends of mine who have staked their lives on some cause they cared about and backed its winning with their sacrifice, the zest and significance of living lie

in our capacity to hazard ourselves for something in which we verily believe.

Why is it indeed that ethically serious people feel so deeply the moral peril in what ordinarily is called gambling? We know that gambling on the Stock Exchange is a public menace of the first order and that in this renaissance of lotteries, tempting people to trust to chance to get something for nothing, no good is involved for personal or social character. The reasons for this conviction could be variously stated, but this is one of them: such gambling is an ignoble burlesque of one of the noblest faculties of human character. There on Calvary you see it pictured. Nothing worth while was to be expected from those soldiers casting dice for the undivided garment of our Lord. One sympathizes with them a little. They got a momentary breeze of interest out of gaming to relieve the monotony of their dull and vulgar lives. But then one lifts one's eyes to the figure on the cross and sees to what great heights this capacity of man's can rise to face hazards, take risks, yes, with profoundest reverence one says it, to wager one's life on one's faith.

At any rate, this New Year's time, I lay this matter on our consciences. You never expected, it may be, to hear a Christian minister plead with you in favour of high stakes for great winnings in the world's most important and most exciting game, but never in my ministry was I more in earnest. As we go out into this new year, we are wagering our lives on something, good or bad, high or low. We are of kin either to the soldiers at the foot of the cross or to the Christ upon it. And what it is we are staking our lives upon will be our making or our ruin.

Consider further that this aspect of life is not only

morally important but intellectually serious. Some here with scientific minds may have shrunk from our emphasis on hazard, risk, uncertainty, and may have been thinking: Knowledge is basic; the truths we can demonstrate and be sure about are our great assets; to extend that realm of exact and provable information is the major aim of life and the glory of the race.

Well, no one here will minimize the profound importance of scientific knowledge. When we consider the evils which even our recent forefathers took for granted and see how free we are from some of their dreads and hazards, we could sing anthems in praise of knowledge. On sites where our American Revolutionary armies camped it is said that men still dig up flattened bullets. Alas, they were flattened by Revolutionary soldiers who, lacking anæsthetics, ground bullets between their teeth in their excruciating pain. Take the measure of a simple fact like that and of the manifold facts of which that is representative, and we will indeed thank God for demonstrable, scientific knowledge.

Yet, when that is granted, our truth still holds good, and for this reason: our knowledge has limits—not temporarily but permanently, not accidentally but necessarily. That is to say, whatever life knows, life essentially is and always must be adventure into the unknown, where the chief value of knowledge is not that it makes everything certain, which it can never do, but that it constitutes the frontier, backed by accumulated resources, from which our hazardous expeditions into the unforeseen and unforeseeable may set out.

Every man who ever fell in love and married must know that. Push knowledge of your desired com-

panion to the limit of its possibilities. Let everything that provable science and authentic information can contribute to your understanding of her and of her family be gathered. Yet all that is only a frontier. Then you must venture. "Marriage is a lottery," runs the old saw. Indeed, it is. In marriage as in every vitally important act of life, whatever knowledge we can get, valuable as it may be, is but a springboard from which we plunge. And the knowledge without the plunge never yet got a man married.

This essential failure and futility of what we know save as it is used as a basis on which, shall I say, to gamble about something we do not know, is of the very stuff of life. The scientists would say this about science itself. No gaming house in the world, not Monte Carlo even, can match the scientific laboratory in the sheer fascination of its gambling. For that is the proper business of a laboratory, to hazard one hypothesis after another, to wager patient toil on this idea and then on that, until one wins. Such is the exciting process of discovery—every acquisition of knowledge a frontier from which a new venture may hopefully set out. So, because great minds have been willing to stake everything they had on that process, the world, which, in Professor Whitehead's memorable phrase, was once "an uninterpreted swamp, pestilential with mystery and magic," has become to us a law-abiding universe.

This, I take it, is the reason why faith is an essential part of the intellectual apparatus of mankind. Faith is unintellectual only when, degraded, it becomes credulity. In its genuine form faith is an indispensable part of the intellectual process. For in every area of our lives we stand on frontiers—what we know behind us, what we do not know ahead of us, our present

knowledge valuable chiefly because it enables us wisely to make the next venture, our venture necessary if we are ever to know more. So faith is of the essence of knowledge, and if one asks, then, what faith is, I answer, it is our capacity, standing on a frontier, to hazard our lives on something as we move out into the unforeseen.

We do that in our thinking, and there could be no progress in thinking without it. We do that in our practical living, from choosing a vocation to the simplest operations of our daily business. We do that in our personal relationships when we make a friend and in our social attitudes when we wager our best efforts that war may cease or that a more decent economic life may be attained. Too commonly we speak as though some people had faith and others lacked it. That is absurd. Everybody exercises faith every hour of every day. It is impossible to live at all or to learn anything without it. We are creatures who live on frontiers.

So powerful is faith thus understood that one wishes we had more of it in our religion, where the word 'faith' is so common and the reality so rare. How many people, when they think of Christian faith, think of a creed? Now, the trouble with a creed is not simply that it inevitably becomes an agency of regimentation in the Church, a Procrustean bed on which those who seem too short are stretched out and those who seem too long are sawed off; the trouble is rather that a creed makes Christianity seem finished, its ideas set, its propositions concluded, and so makes faith in Christ seem consent, often dull and tame consent, to a static formula. What would the men of the New Testament have thought of that? For in the New Testament the centre of the Christian gospel is not a

creed, but a cross. That is another matter altogether. The cross is the supremely influential example in all history of the hazarding of life on a great faith in God and a great hope for man. For Christianity also lives on a frontier—what has been thought and done behind us, what is to be thought and done ahead of us, and the call out for volunteers to take up the cross; that is, to stake their lives in following Christ.

He was a gambler too,
My Christ,
He took His life and threw
It for a world redeemed.

The word 'faith' is the common stock of the Christian vocabulary. What could we not do if we had more of the genuine article?

Left at this point, however, our truth might still be misunderstood. Some souls here, already sufficiently battered by the shocks of fate and bewildered by its uncertainties, might be all the more confused, thinking that even the preacher says, Life is a gamble. Consider, then, this final and strange matter. It is in this very realm, where we have been using words like 'risk' and 'hazard,' 'gamble' and 'wager,' that, as a matter of fact, our most profound and moving assurances lie. This is a strange aspect of our experience. Paul is like all the rest of us at New Year's time, as he goes up to Jerusalem not knowing what will befall him there. But if one of us could have said to Paul as he started out, Life is a gamble, isn't it? the apostle's answer would have been marked by no wavering uncertainty. To be sure, life is a gamble but, of all the things Paul was most sure about, nothing compared with the ideas and ideals, the faiths and hopes on which he was wagering his life.

As we move out into a new year, I crave for our souls that kind of assurance. Nor is there any reason why we should lack it. In the deep and central matters of faith and conduct a man need not, as they say, bet on the wrong horse.

If someone says that our prevision of the future is very dim, that is true. In 1851 a sympathetic philanthropist left a fund in perpetuity as the articles of incorporation say, "for worthy and distressed travelers and emigrants passing through St. Louis to settle for a home in the West." What to do with that fund now is a lawyer's question. Much of our prevision of the future may be as fallible as that. If someone says that the mysteries of this universe are too profound for our understanding, that is true. Some mysteries are like Mount Everest; they never have been climbed but they may be. Some, however, are so high that we know well that our human minds not only never have ascended them but never can. Yet, even in a world with mystery too steep for our ascending and a future too opaque for our provisioning, we do not need, in the vital matters of life, to bet on the wrong horse.

It would be an informal kind of creed, but it would be much more vital than most creeds are, if a man should say something like this:

I wager my life on honesty and truthfulness and decency, and not on their opposites; on a high standard of monogamous family love and not on promiscuity; on good will, not ill-will; on generosity, not selfishness; on undiscourageable faith in a better world, not cynicism. I wager my life we can stop war and build an economic order where all the children of the people shall have a decent chance of livelihood.

I stake my life on Christ, that every detour by which man tries to escape his principles will only lead back to him again as the way, the truth, the life. Already one historian has said about Napoleon Bonaparte that, though for years he bestrode Europe, shuffled national boundary lines, made and unmade kings and princes and left millions slaughtered in his wake, the whole "Napoleonic episode" was an "enormous irrelevance." But they never will successfully say that about Christ, though he was born in a manger and slain on a cross. I'll bet my life on that.

I wager my life on God. To be sure, I know how deep the problem runs and how little a way our plummet reaches into its profundities. But this is clear. Here and now before our eyes are two aspects of our experience. On the one side the physical, things we can see and touch, weigh and measure; on the other side the spiritual, the love of beauty, goodness, truth. On the one side the visible stars; on the other invisible minds that can measure their distances and weave them into a law-abiding order. On the one side a pen to write with; on the other this amazing reality, a spirit that could need a pen and with it write, "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal." On the one side a cross of wood, on the other a soul who could die there as the Master did. Two aspects of our world are thus before us, with the materialist staking his life that in the last analysis only the physical is creative and real and all the rest mere accident and fortuity. Well, I stake my life upon the other proposition: not matter—if, indeed, in view of the new physics we can be sure what such a word would



mean—but spirit, that uses matter, is the truly indicative element in our experience, pointing toward Spirit as the source and goal of all. On that, humbly but confidently, I hazard my life.

That kind of statement would be a real creed, and I appeal to your best conscience that in your highest hours you know that a man who thus wagers his life is not betting on the wrong horse.

How one wishes one could be sure that this would come through to some conscience here! Friend, you cannot stay neutral. You cannot move out into this new year staking your life on nothing. You may say that you will not make up your mind but you cannot help making up your life. You may hold your opinions in suspense, but you cannot hold your character in suspense. That gets made up one way or another, and it gets made up because, willy-nilly, deep in the creative centres of your spirit you stake your life on something. I plead for high stakes on great issues and, above all, for some youth here who will take his life and throw it for a world redeemed.

I stake my life on Christ, that every detour by which man tries to escape his principles will only lead back to him again as the way, the truth, the life. Already one historian has said about Napoleon Bonaparte that, though for years he bestrode Europe, shuffled national boundary lines, made and unmade kings and princes and left millions slaughtered in his wake, the whole "Napoleonic episode" was an "enormous irrelevance." But they never will successfully say that about Christ, though he was born in a manger and slain on a cross. I'll bet my life on that.

I wager my life on God. To be sure, I know how deep the problem runs and how little a way our plummets reach into its profundities. But this is clear. Here and now before our eyes are two aspects of our experience. On the one side the physical, things we can see and touch, weigh and measure; on the other side the spiritual, the love of beauty, goodness, truth. On the one side the visible stars; on the other invisible minds that can measure their distances and weave them into a law-abiding order. On the one side a pen to write with; on the other this amazing reality, a spirit that could need a pen and with it write, "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal." On the one side a cross of wood, on the other a soul who could die there as the Master did. Two aspects of our world are thus before us, with the materialist staking his life that in the last analysis only the physical is creative and real and all the rest mere accident and fortuity. Well, I stake my life upon the other proposition: not matter—if, indeed, in view of the new physics we can be sure what such a word would

mean—but spirit, that uses matter, is the truly indicative element in our experience, pointing toward Spirit as the source and goal of all. On that, humbly but confidently, I hazard my life.

That kind of statement would be a real creed, and I appeal to your best conscience that in your highest hours you know that a man who thus wagers his life is not betting on the wrong horse.

How one wishes one could be sure that this would come through to some conscience here! Friend, you cannot stay neutral. You cannot move out into this new year staking your life on nothing. You may say that you will not make up your mind but you cannot help making up your life. You may hold your opinions in suspense, but you cannot hold your character in suspense. That gets made up one way or another, and it gets made up because, willy-nilly, deep in the creative centres of your spirit you stake your life on something. I plead for high stakes on great issues and, above all, for some youth here who will take his life and throw it for a world redeemed.

ON SEEMING AS CHRISTIAN AS WE ARE

EVERY religious person inevitably faces the temptation to hypocrisy. As religion organizes its fellowship into churches, its thought into creeds, its worship into rituals, these outward exhibitions and professions of religion can be easily assumed by any one so that nowhere more than here does a man find all the apparatus of hypocrisy ready to his hand. Indeed, an enemy might describe organized religion as an institutionalized invitation to be hypocritical. See, the enemy might say, as though with evil purpose to tempt a man you provide him with churches that can be formally joined, creeds that can be formally recited, rubrics and customs that can be externally observed, and so you put at his disposal every conceivable implement for seeming to be more religious than he genuinely is.

While no friend of religion would acknowledge that to be the whole story, yet all intelligent friends of religion, from the days of the Hebrew prophets and Jesus on, have told us that we religious people need especially to face the admonition: Be—genuinely and inwardly be—what outwardly you seem.

While that need is perennial, however, it is not today our special problem. In so far as our generation in this regard has a distinctive problem, it lies elsewhere. Multitudes now are making no profession of religion—most emphatically they are not. If we should accuse them of being hypocrites, their answer would be ready. Hypocrites! they would say; we certainly

are not hypocritical; we profess nothing in religion; we make no pretensions of Christian faith or practice; we are not advertising anything in our show windows which we lack upon our shelves; we are not hypocrites! Surely that is a characteristic attitude of our day. You see, there are two ways in which a man can make shift to be honest in religion. One is to make a high profession of faith about life and then try his humble best to live up to it. Or a man can so reduce his profession to a negligible quantity that there is little left to live up to. Either way, a man can make shift to be honest in religion, to square what he is with what he seems to be, and the second method is being widely used.

Indeed, so widely is it used that it may well be challenged. Consider, then, these friends of ours who say that they are not religiously hypocritical because they profess nothing in religion. Far from consenting to that, I know some such people who seem to me to be hypocrites, unintentional hypocrites, as though a man should run around the earth to get away from something and, because the earth is round, come back to it from the opposite direction. For hypocrisy, like Janus, has two faces. You can get at it from two sides. Some people are hypocrites because they profess a Christian faith they are not living. Others are hypocrites because deep within themselves they have genuine Christianity they are not showing. Some hypocrites need to be told, Be as good as you seem; other hypocrites need to be told, Seem as good as you are.

A generation ago the principal of one of our leading boys' schools addressed a group of Freshmen entering Harvard and, in effect, said this: "If I were speaking on any other campus I probably would not say what

I am going to say to you. But I know Harvard. I am a Harvard man myself and I understand the sophisticated atmosphere into which you Freshmen now are venturing, so that while on any other campus I might say to you, Be as religious as you seem, I say to you, Seem as religious as you are."

The sophisticated atmosphere of Harvard a generation ago has to-day become general. We commonly distrust pretension in religion. We are chary about wearing our hearts religiously upon our sleeves. We reduce our professions of religion to a minimum. We think we are being honest. But honesty is a virtue too profound to be so facily achieved. Many of us need to square what we seem to be with what we are, in a way we never have considered—Seem as Christian as you are.

It is interesting to note that Jesus bore down on this aspect of the matter. With what reiterated emphasis he attacked hypocrisy we know. Two things the Master could not endure: cruelty and sham. We are familiar with those passages where he assailed sham, all the way from mild ones like, "Sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men," to terrible ones like, "whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."

So, someone says, that is what hypocrisy meant to Jesus—trying to appear better than we are. Surely! but listen to the other side of the matter. What about appearing worse than we are? "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see . . ." So! To have light and keep it dark, to have

some radiance in you, though it be but the slender flame of a candle, and hide it, to refuse to set it out where the generation that so desperately needs it can get its full effect—that is hypocrisy, too. That also is failure to square what we seem to be with what we are. I cannot remember ever to have heard that preached about. In this generation, then, with our reluctance and chariness about religious profession and pretension, there must be a lesson here for some of us—Let your light shine.

For one thing, there surely is something to be said for people who succeed in publishing their light rather than their darkness, their faith rather than their fear, their courage, not their cowardice, their best, not their worst. Indeed, even at the risk of seeming a devil's advocate, let me for a moment sing the praise of some people who have deliberately appeared better than they were. I remember a British captain in the trenches during the Great War who, when zero hour struck and he led his men to the attack, stepped over the parapet of the trench with a light mackintosh over his left arm and an ordinary walking stick in his right hand, and, as nonchalantly as though he were starting for a stroll, beckoned his men to follow. Was he inwardly excited? He must have been in turmoil. Was he frightened? Ask such a man and see: he was fairly petrified with fear. Could any one have guessed it? I should say not. He seemed as calm and unafraid as though No Man's Land were Piccadilly. That British captain had discovered a secret about life which, exhibited also in days of peace, makes one of the noblest attributes of human character, the capacity, that is, to go down into this strange medley which is ourselves, with its mingled qualities of good and evil, and there, keeping the worst to ourselves, shutting

up within ourselves the fear, falsity, and cowardice, let the best of us get out, let the light shine.

We are accustomed to stress the other aspect of the matter. We emphasize those miserable people who for an ulterior end assume the cloaks and trappings of a high profession to hide the villainy within. There are such people, the "whited sepulchres," and because they are so contemptible to honest men and women and can so easily be described as appearing better than they are, we have come to dread appearing better than we are as though it were the leprosy. Yet, when we stop to think of it, we must recall some people like that British captain, who in difficult circumstances did, may I say, appear better than they were, who, that is, kept back the fear and let out the faith so that in retrospect they shine among the noblest exhibitions of human character we have known.

Think of some of them: blind people who must have had terrible times inside themselves with bafflement and rebellion, but who so kept that to themselves and let their radiance and hopefulness and undiscourageable faith appear that we in our blue hours have gone to them for cheer; bereaved people whose real life stopped with another's death, so that their souls inhabited a lonely land, but who kept that to themselves, translating their experience into sympathy and insight and understanding so that as they grew older, even in their loneliness, they grew lovelier like the setting sun; or poor people, unemployed, hard-bested, humiliated, who restore our faith in human nature by their outspoken faith and courage. For while this country has been going through some dark years, they would have been infinitely darker had it not been for multitudes of people who courageously appeared better than they were. I sing the praise of

men and women who succeed in publishing their best.

There is an old saying much wiser in content than it is correct in grammar—Put your best foot forward. There is something to be said for that. Certainly, there is enough of the worst in the world, cowardice and despair, fear and doubt, Antichrist and paganism, so that if a man does have any light he had better let it shine.

Consider again that not only is this true in general but it applies particularly to religion. The reason why the younger generation especially are reluctant to make any public profession of Christian faith is obvious. We are living now, not for the first time or, I suspect, for the last time in history, through a day of rapid change, when so much new knowledge has been copiously poured into our minds that the channels of our religious thinking have been flooded and the consequent confusion is so bewildering and the impossibility of phrasing faith in the old formularies so obvious that many think it positively insincere to make any profession involving religious faith. So we get nothing from them except disbeliefs. All their publicity is negative. They do not think this; they do not think that—such is the total impression which they make. They market nothing but their doubts. Yet often when one converses intimately with them, when one knows them as they are, one sees that they have goods a-plenty to market beside doubt. They are not adequately represented when they are called unchristian or irreligious. One often finds in them real faith, deep reservoirs of Christian character and conviction, so that one who cares about the Christian cause and about the world at large wishes he could make this whole generation hear that Harvard speaker's

challenge: Seem—at least you can do that for the world—seem as religious as you are.

One suspects that most ministers, asked to phrase their aim, would say something like this, that in a generation which desperately needs it they are trying to create more Christian faith and character. To be sure! but I suggest another, kindred aim. What if we could get the Christian faith and character already existent and now under a bushel out on the stand where it would give light to all that are in the house? What if the hidden, unprofessed, reluctantly admitted, inoperative Christian faith and character could be set out where this age, which needs it, could feel its full effect? What if we could persuade some here that while, of course, it is hypocritical not to be as Christian as we seem, it is also hypocritical not to seem as Christian as we are?

Consider the force of this, when one stops thinking about what he ought to do and remembers what some other folk have done to him. Some of us are unpayably indebted religiously to Robert Louis Stevenson. Now, Robert Louis Stevenson was a man who could easily have kept still religiously. He was not orthodox, not within a thousand miles! He was bound by no church; he was a conscript of no creed. He flayed the sectarianisms of his day, went through a period of youthful atheism himself, and, to the last, assailed the faults of organized religion. Once, after watching a Gilbert Island native inventing ingenious excuses for the failure of his "devil-work," he said he "saw behind him all the fathers of the Church . . . bowed over the same task of welding incongruities."

People to-day, holding such positions, commonly act and talk as though they were outside religion altogether. But Stevenson, who cannot be imagined

hypocritically professing more than he thought, did not want, on the other side, hypocritically to profess less than he thought. So his candle got out from under the bushel and helped to illumine the whole generation in which some of us were reared. Listen to him, as he describes a walk he has been taking. "All the way along I was thanking God that He had made me and the birds and everything just as they are and not otherwise." "Thank God for the grass, and the fir-trees, and the crows, and the sheep, and the sunshine, and the shadows of the fir-trees." Listen to him as he describes how, after an aimless youth, he found his vocation: "I came about like a well-handled ship. There stood at the wheel that unknown steersman whom we call God." Hear him as in perplexity he writes, "'Tis a strange world, indeed, but there is a manifest God for those who care to look for Him," or in a happy hour, "If you believe in God . . . where is there any more room for terror?" Read those passages presenting as much of Christ as he did understand or hear him bear witness to as much of prayer as he could profit by: "A generous prayer is never presented in vain; the petition may be refused, but the petitioner is always, I believe, rewarded by some gracious visitation." See him in a dark hour when, as he said, "The inherent tragedy of things works itself out from white to black and blacker," as he cries, "I believe in an ultimate decency of things; ay, and if I woke in hell, should still believe it." There is a man who does not believe everything but who is saying as much as he does believe. Such light as he had, that put meaning into existence for him, that enabled the stricken body fighting off tuberculosis on a South Sea island to sustain a spirit unconquered and unafraid—such light as he had he let shine. And

some of us who remember our youthful struggle when the voices of orthodoxy had lost their power, recall with endless gratitude that voice of Stevenson, so that if one could imagine him saying, Well, I do not believe much, my faith is unconventional, I think I will not advertise it, we would cry, No! You must not put that candle back under a bushel; you must seem to be as Christian as you are!

I wish that now I could think that here in this church somebody's candle is going to come out from under a bushel and be set upon a stand.

Consider once more the essential importance, even from the standpoint of the man himself, of this commonly neglected matter of expression—getting out what is in us, so that the world may know it is there. Character, for example, is what a man is; reputation is what he gets expressed. No sensible person would say that the first is important and that the second is not. No sensible person would even say that if a man's character is good he can haphazardly let his reputation take care of itself. That is a romantic illusion on which many a life has gone to pieces. If a man is honest, it is his serious business to appear honest; if truthful, it is his solemn obligation to seem truthful. The publicity department of every good man's life is a problem by itself.

To be sure, reputation can be merely paint which covers up an inner rottenness. But having endlessly emphasized that obvious fact, let us not forget the nobler meaning of reputation, not paint—polish, like that which brings out the grain in an Arizona stone log, so that the beauty which is really there is made evident. That also is part of a good man's obligation.

Deeper than this, however, is a further matter which we are drilling for now, that what we do not

express tends to die and what we do express tends to live. Put a candle under a bushel and keep it there too long and it will go out for lack of oxygen—which thing is a parable of a profound psychological truth. What we habitually express we habitually confirm.

A Quaker father, so we are told, once heard his son in a burst of anger indulge in profanity and the father said to his boy, "Keep it up, Thomas, keep it up, until thee gets it all out of thee." One respects that father's patience but questions his psychology. At any rate, if that boy should habitually express his profane feeling in profanity, he would not get it all out of him; he would dig it all into him. What we habitually express we habitually confirm, so that long ago men like William James told us that, when the first rush of rage begins to rise and temper seems to be triumphant, if we will relax our tense muscles and unclasp our clenched fists and refuse expression to temper, temper will die.

Here, then, is a major fallacy in much common thinking. We start with what a man is, his character, and think of his expression merely as a consequential overflow of that, so that all the lines of creative influence, as we see them, run in one direction only, from what a man is to what he gets exhibited. That is a dangerous half truth. Expression also is powerfully creative. It goes down inside a man's life, where strangely mingled are both faith and fear, courage and cowardice, lust and purity, unselfishness and greed, and there expression lays hold on one part of him, lifts that up into the light, puts it on the stand and so, uttering, confirms it. Expression, therefore, always involves something besides expression. It means that deep within ourselves we are identifying

ourselves with one part of ourselves and so uttering it that ultimately it becomes the real ourselves.

No man looking carefully on human life dare minimize this powerful force of expression. Every young infant is a strange bundle of contradictory possibilities. O, somehow in the early years at home to help that growing child to express the best that is there, because only so can the best win! Many a youth to-day, misled by popular pseudo-psychology, plunges into sexual license on the basis of that father's admonition, to get it all out of him, whereas, alas, such expression does not get it all out of him but digs it all into him. Many a family starts with real love but as the years pass dust gathers on love's expressions; the gracious and affectionate intimations by which love utters what it feels—these are forgotten, until the candle under the bushel goes out.

As for being Christian, I venture that many youths of this generation are not so much thinking their way out of Christianity as talking their way out of it. To be irreligious has become a conventional pose. To say, I make no pretense of being Christian, is in the vogue. So a youth expresses only his doubt. Nothing religious in him gets expression save disbelief. But there is bound to be more in a fine youth than that. Faith in life—what fine youth lacks it?—often radiant faith in life. The rich heritage of the Christian tradition has not been utterly without effect in the life of that high-minded youth, and there is within him sensitive response to many a deep matter for which Christ stands in character and conviction. Only, he is shy about that. It is his negations which he expresses. Some day you will find him an inveterate agnostic concerning whom the truth will be not so much that he *thought* his way as that he *talked* his way into

agnosticism. What he habitually expressed he ultimately became.

I plead to-day for a nobler attitude. Let your light shine. Some of us tried that long ago. We took our stand upon the nobler side of life's hypothesis. The best we could see in life, the noblest faith we could believe about it, revealed in that much of Christ we could comprehend—to that we committed ourselves. I celebrate the lifting power of a great profession. To stake your life openly upon the highest faith you can believe, the truest purpose you can conceive, to profess it and then do your humble best to live up to it and square your life with it, that is far finer than to hide the light you have beneath a bushel until it goes out.

As to the pertinency of all this to our present generation, that should be obvious. We need light. Long ago the Master also came into a generation which needed light. Under his influence fell a little group of ordinary men persuaded by him to take such light as they had and put it on a candlestick, with what revolutionary consequence! I lay this challenge on your consciences and on mine. At least a man can do this much for his generation—he can seem as Christian as he is.

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THE IDEAS THAT USE US

ONE of the most extraordinary eras in human life was the first century of the Christian movement. Our calendars still are dated from its beginning and, any way one looks at it, it was an amazing turning point in mankind's journey. To one, however, who knows that era well and without romantic illusions looks on what happened there, nothing is more surprising than the ordinary character of most of the men who helped lead mankind around that corner. The records of the New Testament are realistically frank about the first followers of Jesus, their crudity, their slowness of comprehension, their downright self-seeking even, and yet these were the men who helped inaugurate one of the great, new eras of human life.

Behind this fact there is a major principle. Victor Hugo was right in his belief that nothing is so powerful in this world as an idea whose time has come. Repeatedly in history that truth has been vindicated. As though its hour had struck, a new idea emerged. The special men and women who happened to represent it were often not remarkable in themselves, not by any means the most brilliant and able of their time. Only this was their distinction: they were the implements and instrumentalities of an idea whose time had come.

As a picturesque illustration of this, consider Peter and John after the death of Jesus, haled into court in Jerusalem and threatened with condign punishment if they did not cease preaching the new gospel. No one who realistically visualizes Peter and John can have

illusions about them. They had been fishermen; they were Galileans, of the common people, and to the educated and aristocratic gentlemen of the court they seemed, as it is written, to be "unlearned and ignorant men." As one imagines the scene, with the best minds and names of Judea on one side and on the other the unprepossessing prisoners, the one incredible absurdity would seem to be that the future should belong to Peter and John. But it did. They were the representatives of an idea which possessed and used them. "We cannot but speak," they said, "the things which we saw and heard." The tremendous power which was going to change the course of centuries was not primarily in them, but lay deeper. They were being used by an idea whose hour had struck.

As we pursue the significance of this truth into our present situation, it is evident that a man need not be in himself very great to be used by a great idea. By no stretch of imagination can Simon Peter be considered an extraordinary man. Saint Peter, indeed! One feels, as one reads the record, that he was a long way from a saint. Reluctant at the first to follow Jesus, stupidly unable to understand some of the Master's simplest ideas, so much on the wrong side of the major issue in Jesus' life, sacrificial saviourhood, that Jesus had to say to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan," and, when danger threatened, wilting before a serving maid in Pilate's court, denying he had ever known the Lord—he was a very ordinary man. Had we been able to apply to him our psychological tests to reveal his intelligence quotient and such-like, I suspect he would still have turned out to be an ordinary man. Yet he was and is Saint Peter. He belonged to that little group of men who led mankind around one of the most crucial corners in history. If he himself

were to explain how this almost incredible thing happened to him, I can imagine his saying something like this: It was not due to what I was in myself; the world of my time was full of men more able, more brilliant, more capacious, of better character than I; how I came to be Saint Peter can be put into a single phrase: an ordinary man used by an idea whose time had come.

This is the explanation of some of the most shining names in history. They were ordinary men used by extraordinary ideas. Here, indeed, is both the truth and the falsity of the new school of biographers who recently have been stripping the glamour from our long-loved heroes and heroines. A great character in history, long idealized, now stands before us with his court clothes taken from him, left in *désabillé*. He does not seem to us an extraordinary person and we are irritated by our disillusionment. One naturally thinks that Columbus, for example, must have been an extraordinary man. Now, however, he is portrayed to us as not remarkable at all. His generation had many mariners brave and daring like himself. Even our intelligence tests probably would not have explained his eminence. So far the new biographers have the right of the matter; that much is true. But let us not forget that an idea which had knocked in vain at many a mariner's mind knocked at Columbus' mind and was let in. A great idea whose time had come used him. That is glory enough for one lifetime on this earth.

I defy the cynicism of these new biographers. They cannot take my heroes from me. They picture Florence Nightingale with the faults of an uncertain temperament. They show her under strain, losing her self-control. They quote her when she was impatient,

tempestuous, and petulant. They leave her just like ourselves. Of course she was like ourselves. If every time God wanted to do great business He had to perform a miracle and make perfect persons, the world would be hopeless. We ought to know that Florence Nightingale, carrying the load she carried, facing the administrative stupidity she had to deal with, had moods and tempers, petulances and tricks of character that would not appear ideal in biographical portraiture. But let them not forget that other matter—being what she was, a great idea that has made this earth ever since a more decent and humane place for sick people, used her. That is glory enough for one lifetime.

When we take this principle out of other people's biography into our own, it brings a challenge to all of us. One need not in himself be very great to be used by a great idea. Even some of us who do not think much of ourselves may have this high distinction that the supreme ideas of our time use us.

Let us go deeper into this truth and consider that if up-to-date someone has been resistant to this sermon, not wishing to assume the responsibility of such a life as our thought suggests, not so easily can he evade it. Willy-nilly we *are* used by ideas. That is not an ideal simply; it is an unescapable fact.

Take selfishness, for example. When one sees a person conducting his life selfishly, how one would like to talk to him in some such way as this: The principle on which you are living is an old one; as far back in history as one can go one finds homes ruined, friendships broken, wars waged, and every evil thing that has made man's record hideous and cruel sustained by that idea. Now it is using you. In every generation ideas have to find people they can

use or they could not go on. So your selfishness is not an individual matter as you think. It is cosmic. Generation after generation, men come and go. They pass. But ideas do not; they abide. On each new life when it arrives they knock and say, Let me use you in your time. The ultimate meaning of our lives, therefore, lies in the ideas which we allow to use us.

Well, there are some ideas I should hate to have use me now. Drunkenness, for example, the supposition that one can solve real problems or escape from real perplexities by the swift and facile road of intoxication. That is an old idea, ancient as the legends of Noah, and its trail across history, as it has found in multitudes of people a vehicle and implement, is one of the saddest portions of the human record. I should hate to have that idea use me.

Or, turning to the social realm, race prejudice. That is an old idea too, ancient as the story of the Tower of Babel, and still, I think, it has in it more concentrate evil, more poison to cause human agony than almost any other cruelty of man. I should hate to have that idea use me.

Or coming to the intellectual realm, cynicism, the loss of faith that life has meaning, the conviction, as Theodore Dreiser, the novelist, puts it, that man is only an accidental mechanism, undevised and uncreated, living a life that gets us nowhere spiritually and has no importance after all. That is an old idea that has sucked the sap from life for centuries. I should hate to have it use me.

This way of picturing the matter is quite different from our ordinary method of imagining it. We commonly think that a man gets his ideas, that they are his private property, his interior possession. No, ideas get us. They are historic, not we. They last on

from age to age. They need representatives and witnesses. They use us. No man ever can understand what sin means until he sees this. Some old idea that for ages has thrown its influence like vitriol across mankind finds in us an instrument. We give it gangway in our time. We prolong its life by our embodiment. We betray humanity from within by giving one of its ancient enemies the use of us. That is the fact and the shame of sin. So, you see, there is no use trying to escape this truth. We *are* being used by ideas. All we can do is to choose which ones shall use us.

Going deeper into this matter, consider what happens to a man when he takes this philosophy of life earnestly, makes constructive employment of it, and knows at last that, being what he is, he is being used in his day by some ideas to which the future belongs. Have you never seen a young man or woman made all over by that? One of our seers has said that the greatest hour in a man's life is when he turns the corner of a street and runs into a new idea. That is certainly the greatest hour in many a youth's life, especially if, as the youth faces that truth or cause, there rises in him the invincible conviction that he belongs to it.

Dean Wicks of Princeton, watching boys grow up in college, says that the sign that a boy has passed out of his childish stage and has become a man lies in the discovery of some important enterprise or undertaking concerning which he says, I belong to that. Commonly we miss this glory which lies within our reach. We think that life consists in saying of many things, These belong to me. We gather instruments that we can use and say, All this belongs to me. Then, some day, like Paul or Peter, Columbus or Florence Nightingale, or like some humbler folk

whom history has forgotten but God has not, we come to our crucial turning point, the revolutionary upset and conversion of our lives, and find our fate in something concerning which we say, not, That belongs to me, but, I belong to that.

This is so much the deepest experience in life that if it could come to someone here it might mean the swinging of the door of a new era for multitudes; it certainly would mean the swinging of the door of a new era for that life. For while it is true, as we have said, that one does not need in himself to be very great to be used by a great idea, it is also true that no man can be used by a great idea without becoming greater himself.

Consider one item in our common human problem which this experience crucially affects. I mean dealing with our inward self-contempt. Even in a congregation as large as this there is, I suspect, no one who in his own solitariness does not deal with self-contempt. Because of our inside information about ourselves and the mortifying situations which outwardly we face, every person confronts the lurking devil of self-contempt. That is one reason why we welcome praise so eagerly; the approval of our friends helps to lift us above our low self-estimate. That is why we are so pleased by position, office, and prestige; they re-establish our uncertain self-confidence.

A boy in one of our church families came home the other day from the school where he is getting started and made this glad announcement: "I am the assistant to the assistant manager of the third football team." Every man here with lively memories of his boyhood feels his heart go out to that lad. So, sometimes wholesomely, by welcoming the trust of our friends, and sometimes less wholesomely, we try to handle our

self-contempt. But only one deepest way exists of dealing with it, one supreme experience where utter humility and utter self-respect are blended, and that is when a man, being what he is, no larger than God made him, recognizes that in his time he is being used by ideas on which man's welfare depends and to which the future belongs.

Felix Adler expressed it in the very phraseology we are employing to-day. Looking back over his life work, he said, "I am grateful for the Idea that has used me." We modern preachers do not talk so much as our forefathers did about preparing to die, and doubtless by that we have escaped morbidity. Nevertheless, death remains a fact and the days do come when a man must see his life in retrospect, and, since this is so realistically true that no honest man should wish to evade the issue, he may well recognize that, when the signs of evening gather in his western sky, it would be a triumph, looking back, to be able thus to say, I am grateful for the idea that has used me.

There lies the victory of some souls who seemed to be defeated. Mozart died in poverty and was buried in a pauper's grave, but when recently I heard Kreisler play from Mozart I felt the victory that has been his despite the world which so mistreated him. If he could come back again, he would be grateful for the idea that had used him. They made Socrates drink the hemlock and outside the gates of Jerusalem they nailed to a cross the Son of man. Yes, but the triumph refused to stay in the hands of those who afterward went comfortably home to dinner. How elusive triumph is! How it slips through the fingers of the men who grasp it and flies to the defeated! For in the end there is no victory without being used by an idea whose time has come.

That truth belongs to the humblest soul. As water is represented not only by a great lake or a sea but by a brook, so supreme ideas use humble people. The potential value of our lives, so often circumscribed and apparently unimportant, is that great ideas can use us.

Finally, pursue this idea into its special meaning in this distracted and often disheartened generation. At one stage in his career William Wilberforce was so downcast about the British Empire and the world at large that he hesitated to marry and so give hostages to fortune in so dreadful a world. He was as low in his mind as that. Moreover, he was not unjustified in being discouraged about social evil in general and the slave trade in particular. Was not the slave trade a cruel and towering fact? Had it not existed through all history so that the memory of man went not back to the time when it had not cursed the race? Did not the world's wisest statesmen say that they foresaw slavery's indefinite continuance? Even Edmund Burke said that. Well, then, with the existent facts, the inveterate history and the cynicism of the worldly-wise on the side of slavery's continuance, what was there to give a man hope? Nothing much. Only an idea, which spread like fire from mind to mind, that slavery was wrong, that it never could be harmonized with the principles of Christ, that it was, as well, economically self-defeating, that it was as degrading to the masters and as impoverishing to the wage-earners as it was brutal to the slaves—an idea which kept using more and more people, with Wilberforce pre-eminent among them, until before he died he was assured of the abolition of the British slave trade. Once more in history the statement was vindicated: there is nothing so powerful in this world—

not existent facts, nor inveterate history, nor the selfishness of ruling classes, nor the reluctance of apathetic governments—nothing so powerful as an idea whose day has dawned.

My soul, gird yourself with that truth now! None will doubt the perilous posture of the world's affairs. When one asks what there is to give us social hope, the answer—ideas in the air—seems vague and tenuous. Yes, but they are ideas that spread from mind to mind—that war is wrong and stupid; that mankind is one family, woven more inextricably together by each new scientific invention, and that it is insane to try to evade the spiritual and governmental implications of that fact; that as democracy could not exist if a multitude of the people were illiterate, so democracy cannot exist if a multitude of the people are economically insecure, and that society therefore must take responsibility for at least a minimum economic security as it does for a minimum education; that in consequence the old, brutal, economic "catch-as-catch-can" must go and a more decently humane and co-operative order be established; that on this continent, lured by the most amazing opportunities for material success which any people ever faced, we have been deceived by the outward shows of prosperity and must learn again that unless a people's faith and character, their shared good fortune and mutual goodwill are healthy, there can be nothing sound at all.

Well, this audience does not need from me a long rehearsal of true ideas in the air. What we do need is a fresh vision of the overcoming power in those ideas if we will have it so. In every generation the future has belonged to ideas in the air. They crucified Jesus but one thing they could not do—injure his idea. Not a nail they drove pierced it; not a stone they rolled

before his tomb imprisoned it. Here is the realistic basis of social hope that, when once a great idea is started, no one can stop it. If you crucify it, you glorify it. If you bury it, you give it an Easter Day. If you postpone its victory, you only make the more overwhelming its victory when it comes.

My chief concern is not for the ultimate victory of good. My chief concern is lest in my generation I should somehow miss being used by the great ideas. For at this sermon's end, as at its beginning, one is haunted by that court scene in Jerusalem. How typical it is of history! All the educated, well-born, worldly-wise, prosperous men there were on the wrong side of the supreme issue of their time, and on the right side were two humble men of lowly station whom in retrospect we honour now because they helped lead mankind around one of the most significant corners in its history, and who, somewhere to-day, I trust, are grateful for the idea that used them.

WHAT IS OUR RELIGION DOING TO OUR CHARACTERS?*

SOME years ago in the American College at Beirut, Syria, I addressed an audience of students in which, so they said, there were representatives of sixteen different religions. One could fairly feel the rival faiths bristling at each other. I still can see in my mind's eye a Moslem from Upper Egypt, a fierce devotee of Islam, who had come to the college at Beirut determined that he would never give in to the influence of Christianity. He was there, and others like him, on guard against this preacher from the West who probably would argue for his religion against theirs. And I can feel yet the tense quietness of the audience at the first sentence. It ran like this: "I am not going to ask any one here to change his religion but I am going to ask every one here honestly to face this question, What is your religion doing to your character?"

To be sure, it was a Protestant Christian from the West who asked it but, even so, what escape did that offer to the Moslem from Upper Egypt? He had come in, a fierce partisan of his faith, ready to defend it against all rivals; but this was another matter—what was his religion doing to his character?

Every Sunday in this congregation are representatives of all the major religious backgrounds of the West and some from the Orient, and to-day, this first Sunday of the Lenten season, I propose asking that same question again. We are not suggesting that any-

*Preached on the First Sunday in Lent.

one here change his religion, but this is a larger matter, which outflanks our partisanship and takes us all in: what is our religion doing to our characters?

The Lenten season is traditionally supposed to be a time of penitence. I wonder if there is any swifter path into it than this question suggests. Far from being an obvious matter, the query involves a neglected truth about religion. That religion is one of the supreme builders of good character, that what this nation needs now is more religion to generate and re-enforce moral quality in the people, is a common preachment both in the pulpit and out of it. One would think that the more religion in general and the more Christianity in particular we could achieve, the more good character we could be sure of, whereas the fact is that in its effects religion is as ambiguous as water. It can refresh and fructify the moral soil or it can bring flood and ruin. Some of the worst characters in history, as well as the best, have been motivated by religion. To use the figure that the Master himself employed, "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!"

One would expect religious faith and experience to be ambiguous in their effects. Everything else is—love, for example. Love at its best illumines us and our songs and symbols of it turn to light. Most of us, however, at least have friends in whose experience love has gone wrong. They walk in deep darkness because of it and without the aid of any commentary can explain the meaning of Jesus' words as Dr. Moffatt renders them: "If your very light turns dark, then—what a darkness it is!"

Jesus' perception of the moral ambiguity of religion was forced on him by his own experience. From the day he was driven from Nazareth's synagogue by

people whose religion had accentuated their racial prejudice, to the time the crowds cried for his crucifixion as a heretic, he was confronted by dark kinds of religion. When we are reminded of this we recognize it, in general. I challenge our consciences about it this morning in particular. If the light—that is, the religion—that is in us be darkness, how great is that darkness!

To start with a familiar matter, religion can be one of the most depressing influences in life. Lady Astor is said to have called Dean Inge a gloomy man believing in a gloomy God, which is utterly unfair to Dean Inge but which correctly describes one kind of religion. Every parish minister dealing with the cure of souls must feel at times about wide areas of religious faith and practice what Voltaire felt in his day when he cried, "Crush the infamy!" For a little religion, like a little knowledge, is a dangerous thing. Religion is like the Simplon Tunnel—go a short distance into it and one is plunged into darkness; one has to go farther and go through before one comes to the sunlit stretches of the Italian hills. Underneath the surface of our modern culture there are souls a-plenty who have just enough religion to make them wretched. They have just enough belief in God's existence, enough perception of moral law, enough faith that there is something after death, enough vision of a better life, so that they cannot, like cheerful pagans, sin and be happy at it, and yet they have not achieved the radiance, resilience and gaiety of the true saints. They are caught "betwixt and between." They have enough religion to make them miserable. We know well what Oliver Wendell Holmes meant when he said, "I might have been a minister myself, for aught I know, if a certain clergyman had not looked and talked so long an undertaker."

Such religion is an utter caricature of Jesus. There were gloomy men in his day, believing in a gloomy God and criticizing him and his disciples because they were not gloomy too, to whom Jesus said that he and his disciples were like a wedding party. "Can the sons of the bridechamber mourn," he cried, "as long as the bridegroom is with them?" Wherever one touches that triumphant life, with the phrase 'good cheer' familiar on his lips, saying, as John reports, even at the Last Supper, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full," one feels his radiance, his resilience, yes, his inner gaiety. But, someone says, he was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." To be sure he was. Is not a rainbow one of the loveliest things in nature? We can all say with Wordsworth:

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky.

What, then, does it take to make a rainbow? It takes a storm-cloud illumined by a burst of sunlight. So the most exhilarating characters in history have been made by sunlight transforming tragedy. Joy is not a weak thing; it is the visible sign and ultimate evidence of inward, spiritual triumph.

From the days of Jesus until now that has been one of the supreme tests of true Christianity. When Paul listed the fruits of the Spirit, he put love first and joy second. We can tell the true saints in part by this. One would know that Torquemada, the old Inquisitor, was no true Christian. One cannot imagine him radiant or gay. But St. Francis of Assisi, preaching to his brothers, the birds, and singing the canticle of the sun, day-Livingstone, saying about his dark years in Africa

that they were not a sacrifice but a privilege—there is the authentic mark of a genuine Christian experience. You would not consider a man a true lover of music who was morose about it. You would not believe a man who said he loved nature but was habitually gloomy over it. Any genuine experience in a high realm of the spiritual life is evidenced by radiance and gaiety and joy. What, then, is our religion doing to our characters?

With this as an illustration of our meaning, let us go further. Religion can be not only one of the most depressing, but one of the most belittling influences in life. An essential factor in religion is the sense of sacredness, and what religion does to character depends largely on what the sense of sacredness attaches itself to. In the realm of religion, as everywhere else, there are small matters—"mint, anise and cummin," Jesus called them—on which religion can lay its sanctifying hand until they become huge and towering. Among the most tragic factors in history is the propensity of religion to make things matter terribly that intrinsically do not matter in the least. Some may say: This has been the work of little men and in any realm they would have been little anyway; religion did not make them so. True! but they would not have been so dangerous if they had not been religious. Religion can make triviality terrific. Meanness in other realms has at least a fair chance to be recognized as such, but religion can sanctify meanness, make little things holy until strong, deep loyalties adhere to them. Small men, in the name of God, can even harass the Christ and raise the storm that breaks at last on Calvary.

The consequence is that, both in individuals and in whole generations, religion, far from promoting

good character, can supply and has supplied substitutes for good character. To be sure, the bandit reputed to have hoped for pardon and for heaven because he had been careful never to commit a murder on a Friday, is an extreme example, but he is an example of something which every religious man needs to watch his step about—substituting things technically religious for the solid virtues of honest character. How Jesus did, to use the current phrase, keep cracking down on *that*. There is hardly a page of the Gospels where he is not talking about that—"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith."

The pity of such trivial religion is that its possessors miss the enlarging influence which religion at its best has always exerted on life. What great souls it has produced! A friend once told me that he had heard one of the leading Buddhists of India say that Gandhi was a great Buddhist, that he had heard one of the leading Moslems of India say that Gandhi was a great Moslem, that he had heard one of the leading Christians of India say that Gandhi was a great Christian. That is, Gandhi has a religion which has expanded his range until he strikes the note of catholicity and universality. Lord Reading, when he was Governor-General of India, had trouble enough with Gandhi but his comment after his visit with him is said to have been: "I do not agree with all his opinions, but I am a purer man for having met him." Whether in individual lives like that or in great historic movements of thought where the prophets of religion gave us our first hopes and our driving ideals of human brotherhood—all mankind one family under one God—high religion has created great souls

and great ideas. What, then, is our religion doing to us?

At no time in history can largeness have been more called for than it is to-day. Magnanimity, generosity, tolerance, catholicity, universality, breadth of vision, inclusiveness of sympathy and understanding—how profoundly they are needed! These wretched prejudices, partisanships, parochialisms that so split the nations and the world are ruining us. A great religion producing great spirits—one can fairly see the whole world saved by that. What is our religion doing to us?

With this much said, let us go further, for religion can be not simply a depressing and belittling force, but one of life's most enfeebling, debilitating influences. Surely, someone says, That cannot be; whatever else religion does, it produces power and, even when it goes wrong, it still backs men up with the sense of divine assistance and confirmation and so releases confidence and strength. Religious faith assures us that there is a world unseen, intangible, and real. Religion says to us that over and through this visible system of external circumstance there is a world invisible and ideal. Just as truly as we can see a man's body but never can see his thoughts, his loves, his creative motives, which are the man himself, so this universe at large, which the eye beholds, is only the outward integument of something deeper—invisible, spiritual, eternal. That, says our critic, is of the essence of religious faith, and to say that that is enfeebling and belittling is incredible; it is a fountain-head of transcendent power in living.

To this argument I answer: You are right about that essence of religion and you are right that, well handled, it does produce powerful character. But, for all that, when it is misused, even that essence of

religion is one of the perils of mankind. For see what a lotus-land of easy retreat is offered by this belief in a world beautiful and spiritual. So, from the stark and ugly facts of life demanding our intelligent and sacrificial attention, we can run away to a land of pure delight. The man who wrote "Way down upon the Swanee River, far, far, away" had never been there. He simply searched an atlas until he found a name liquid and rhythmical, and then he dressed it to fit into the picture that had charmed his imagination. To multitudes of people the religious life is a Swanee River to the lovely thought of which they run away when life is difficult. We may well ask ourselves what our religion is doing to our characters in this realm?

To be sure, there is a kind of faith in a world spiritual and real to which a man can wholesomely retreat, not weakly running away to it but ascending into it and coming back again powerfully equipped for life. Music means that to some of us. It is not a lotus-land; it is no Swanee River; it is a real world here and now to which we go and from which we return with vision cleared, faith renewed, and power replenished.

As we were entering the war in 1917, the English poet, John Masefield, fresh from the trenches in France, visited America. He was under no illusions about war and described it in the strong language of a captain who had been three years on the Somme front: "Modern warfare is damned dirty, damned dull, and damned dangerous!" But a friend of mine also heard him say that, passing through the front-line trenches before an attack, he had heard English soldiers quietly repeating to themselves Gray's *Elegy*, *Written in a Country Churchyard*:

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

What strange, dual, bifurcated creatures we are, living in two worlds! So in peace time, many of life's experiences can be dirty, dull and dangerous. How impossible, then, some of us would find it to live well without that other kind of world, spiritual and ideal, to which we can ascend to gain strength for grappling with the tasks of life!

Indeed, is there anything much more significant than those souls, deep in the secrets of religion, whose faith in an ideal and spiritual world is the creative source of their social passion? Let a man have an ideal world that is real to him, in which, let us say, all souls are loved by God and all personalities are sacred, and that vision, far from being a lotus-land, will not let his thought or effort rest save in a transformed earth. There is, for example, one section of this city, extending from 59th Street to 86th and from Central Park to the East River, which includes one of the wealthiest sections in the world. They say that the annual maintenance of some apartments there amounts to \$45,000 a year, and yet in that district is "Slum Area No. 5" in which there are 32,000 rooms without windows or with windows opening only on a five-foot shaft through which no gleam of sunshine can ever come, where to-night thousands of America's little children will sleep. What is America's religion going to do to America's character about situations like that—be a lotus-land to run away to from the horrid thought of such impoverishment or an inward standard of duty, an impulse of motive, a source of power for changing social conditions which make

it possible? Jesus also had a living faith in a spiritual world, ideal and eternal, but it was no lotus-land for him. When he spoke of it he shook the conscience of the centuries with his words, "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness."

Religion is ambiguous in still another realm. Strangely enough, it can on one side produce fine humility or, on the other, appalling self-centredness and egoism. One has only to listen to some selfish hymns to see that. Indeed, there are prevalent ideas of divine guidance by which eternal God is so reduced as to become an individuals' valet, giving him direction, so one famous, present-day religionist declares, as to the colour of the tie he shall put on in the morning. So can a great matter—God's guidance of personal life—be made the minister of egregious self-centredness.

Such egoistic religion is easy to explain, for religion teaches us that there is a will of God and that we can know and do it. If someone claims that as a glorious faith, I agree. In the midst of a world which so often seems chaotic, to believe in an Eternal Purpose unifying life and putting meaning into it is glorious. Nevertheless, that belief is also dangerous. If one handles it as Jesus did, making oneself small and the Eternal Purpose great, saying, "Not my will, but thine, be done," it builds magnificent character. But belief in the will of God can be perilously handled in another way altogether. One can start, that is, with one's individual opinions and convictions and then identify the will of God with them; one can start with one's self-centred interests or with one's emotional "hunches" and identify the will of God with them. So, instead of humbly enlarging oneself through vision of the Eternal Will one uses the Eternal Will

as a "yes man" to confirm and validate one's own ideas and feelings. God can become the egoist's rubber stamp of cosmic approval. *There* is an opportunity for colossal pride and egotism.

How has God stood it in Christian history? The Christian record should have been a symphony played upon the theme of the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, but it has been anything but that. In bigotry, intolerance, persecution, all in the name of the will of God, it has been dreadful. That the patriarch of Alexandria kicked to death the patriarch of Constantinople over a difference of doctrine is, as everybody who knows church history understands, far too typical. When, now, this is brought down to date, it changes its form but not its substance. I crave for myself and for you, this Lenten season, a fresh vision of the will of God that will bring us to humility and penitence. It is a tremendous experience to get a glimpse of what really is the will of God. It is not God's will that these wretched nationalisms should continue, and armaments mount, and war ravage the earth. It is not the will of God that His children should suffer the limitations of penury and the humiliations of inequality which now ride mankind like the Old Man of the Sea. It is not God's will that personality, the most potent and promising creation we know of in the cosmos, should in any one remain enslaved by sin or conquered by trouble. The will of God for the world and for our lives within it does not consent to any deplorable *status quo* but involves disturbing, forward-looking ideas which require strong vision to see, faith to believe, and courage to stand for. God's will, when it is truly known, produces no egoism. It carries men out of themselves, makes them forget themselves; it rebukes and chastens, humbles and dedicates them.

In what clear contrast with self-centred religion stands the quality of Jesus! His first principle of religious faith and conduct was not *God for me*, but *My life for God*. Such an attitude reorients life and brings with it humility, not pride; magnanimity, not arrogance; self-sacrifice, not expectation of immunity from trouble. It sees in true proportion God's eternal will and man's earthly life and does not mistake their relative importance. It leads its possessor habitually to Gethsemane's prayer and commonly to Calvary's cross.

What deplorable consequences in character have come and still are coming from religion! What moral tragedies befall when, even in this realm, the perversion of the best becomes the worst! I commend you, therefore, to your prayers for a religion which will be in you light, not darkness—elevating, not depressing; enlarging, not belittling; empowering, not enfeebling; God-centred, not self-centred. The profoundest need of the world is such character produced by such religion.

A FUNDAMENTALIST SERMON BY A MODERNIST
PREACHER

THIS sermon springs from conversations with two young men. One of them a Jew, the other a Christian, in intellect and character they represent the best we have, and in effect they said the same thing.

Said the young Jew, "Long ago I gave over orthodox Judaism and am a convinced liberal, but sometimes, worshipping in modernist synagogues, I feel that something is missing from our new Judaism which the old Jews had, and that in comparison with theirs our religious faith is thin and superficial."

The young Christian said to me: "I am a modernist. I never could force my mind back into the narrow moulds of the old theology, but sometimes, especially in crises, when one wants deep rootage, the modernist soil seems thin. There were power and depth in that old-fashioned Christianity which sometimes we modernists lack."

As I listened to those young men I thought about another Jew, also the best of his time, who long ago in a day of crisis and moral chaos said: "Ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein."

This morning I share with you the consequence of thinking about these young men. Let us say plainly at the start that the words of Jeremiah, "Ask for the old paths," are so fundamentalist in tone that one wonders whether any one except a fundamentalist has hitherto preached on them. We, of course, stand stoutly here for the gains of modernism. We do not run our thoughts of God into the moulds of old

world-views or identify our Christian convictions with obsolete doctrines, miracles, and Biblical inerrancies. We do not believe in the old pictures of creation behind us or of second-comings on the clouds ahead of us. We gratefully accept the new knowledge of the world and we will have our Christianity in terms of thinking that honestly belong to us as intelligent moderns or we will not have it at all. So far from singing:

'Tis the old time religion,
And it's good enough for me;

we would as soon sing that the old ideas of a flat earth or old ways of getting from New York to Chicago are good enough for us. They distinctly are not. When, therefore, this morning, we ask for the old paths, we are making no recantation of modernism.

Lowell is right about that :

. . . Time makes ancient good uncouth:
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast
of Truth;
Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires! we ourselves must Pilgrims be,
Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the desperate
winter sea,
Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted key.

That is true. Nevertheless, consider that James Russell Lowell wrote that. He was a very modern man, a Harvard professor, a Unitarian, an emancipated intellectual. Where, then, was he looking for the example of the kind of spirit which he did not wish his generation to lose? Of all places, in the Pilgrim forefathers! How little he would have agreed with most of their opinions! and yet he did wish that his generation might keep something that was deep in the spirit of the Pilgrims at their best. Even he was asking for the old paths.

This, I take it, is what my two young friends meant. This is what we are driving at. Old-fashioned Christianity did have in it something deep and powerful which we modernists often miss.

What we are doing, then, this morning might be summed up in some such way as this. Our religious modernism, standing for the right of the mind for freedom from the cramping limitations of obsolete theologies, has had to win its way against militant opposition. As always happens in such a case, we have had to show up the faults of the old-fashioned Christianity, take our stand against them, assail their obscurantisms and their appalling appeals to fear. In a word, modernism has been compelled to deal with the old-fashioned Christianity at its worst. To-day we are going to take a look at it at its best.

That is fair. If we are to hold the allegiance of my two friends, we had better take a look at the old-fashioned religion at its best. They are right about it. Depth and power were sometimes there which our superficial modernism lacks.

Consider Martin Luther, for example. We could not go back to his theology even if we wanted to. To his dying day he thought the earth was stationary, and he even called Copernicus "a new astrologer." He thought that demons caused thunderstorms, and is reputed to have hurled his ink-pot at the devil. Any modernist can have his fill of condescension, thinking how much better informed he is than Martin Luther.

Yes, but let every modernist remember that once Martin Luther stood in the presence of the Emperor Charles, surrounded by his royal court, and, knowing well that he was bringing down upon his head the combined wrath of Empire and Church, announced his dangerous convictions, saying, "Here stand I.

God help me. I cannot otherwise." What a religion! It produced something that our modernism often does not produce, the unconsenting individual conscience.

If there is one thing that society has a right to expect from religion it is that. As a religious man society does not need me because I happen to believe in evolution or in a law-abiding cosmos. As a religious man society needs me because I am supposed to have an inner loyalty to something greater than kings, stronger than armies, more imperative than popular majorities. As a religious man society needs me because I am supposed to keep my moral watch, not by casual street clocks, but by sun and star time.

That is why so many religious leaders in America protested against the majority decision of the judges of the Supreme Court in the *Macintosh* case. So far as legal technicalities are concerned, that is their affair—we are not competent—but when Justice Sutherland for the majority and Chief Justice Hughes for the minority said what they did say concerning the effect of that decision on religion, then we men of religion knew that Chief Justice Hughes was right.

To say that no man can become a citizen of this republic without agreeing in advance to surrender his conscience to the nation in any future war is to say that citizenship in this nation involves willingness in advance to give up any real religion that he has. For a real religion always erects at the centre of a man's life an inner tribunal, his conscience before God, which he must obey rather than anything that any government or any majority may dictate to him.

Now, the old-fashioned Christianity at its best did often produce that unconsenting conscience. To be sure, our forefathers often put their stubborn conscientiousness in dour forms. John Bunyan would

stay in jail for his convictions, he said, till the moss did grow upon his eyebrows. Who was it said of John Calvin that he feared God so much he feared nothing else at all? Outgrow the forms if you will; nevertheless, let it be said that old-fashioned Christianity was not emotionally sentimental and morally easy-going like much of our superficial modernism. It did at its best put granite into the characters of men, and sometimes that unconsenting conscience lifted whole groups, like the Puritans and the Pilgrims, into tremendous exploits. I suspect that one of the things which my two young friends miss in some modernism is this moral grip.

To be sure, modernists have often told them that they must clear up the social situation, rebuild the economic order, and improve international relationships. That kind of unconsenting conscience which deals with social evils in the large, modernism distinctly does possess. In that respect I imagine that we have more faith and a better kind of faith than our forefathers had. But these young people discover that in the meantime, before we have transformed the world, they have another task—to transcend the world, individually to live above it, individually to stand out from it and be superior to it, and from the low levels of its life to appeal to the inner tribunal of conscience. I call you to witness that at that point much of our broad-minded, emancipated, intellectual modernism is soft.

We had better take that truth to heart in this city. You say you never will go back to those old theologies and sectarianisms. I agree. But, my friends, they are not the essence of religion. Remember the words which Myers put upon the lips of St. Paul:

Whoso has felt the Spirit of the Highest
Cannot confound nor doubt Him nor deny:
Yea, with one voice, O world, tho' thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.

That is an essential consequence of genuine religion, and for all our new intelligence we had better ask for that old path.

Again, consider a man like St. Augustine, in the fourth and fifth centuries. His theology would be impossible to us. He was so responsible for the doctrine of predestination that if in any kingdom of heaven he knows what came of it on earth he must be penitent and ashamed. Nothing would be easier than for a modernist to condescend to Augustine—until he starts thinking about Augustine's life. Running away from his boyhood's home in North Africa to Italy to escape the influence of his Christian mother, living there with his mistress, prospering as a rhetorician at the headquarters of the Empire, there at last he fell under the spell of a great Christian, Ambrose of Milan. Walking one day in his garden, at war with his own conscience, he thought he heard a voice saying, "Take up and read," and turning to the New Testament his eyes fell on this verse: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." That was to him what the Damascus Road was to Paul or a little Moravian prayer meeting in Old London to John Wesley. From that day his life ran out like an ever-deepening river through one of the most chaotic, desperate eras in history, with the Roman Empire crashing all around him until at last he died courageously in his episcopal city of Hippo while the barbarians were hammering at the city gates. And through it all runs the tremendous power of his prayers. "Come, O Lord, in much

mercy down into my soul, and take possession and dwell there. A homely mansion, I confess, for so glorious a Majesty, but such as Thou art fitting up for the reception of Thee. . . . Give me Thine own self, without which, though Thou shouldst give me all that ever Thou hast made, yet could not my desires be satisfied." What a religion!—power over tumultuous passions within and desperate circumstances without. I suspect it is that kind of thing which my two young friends often miss in superficial modernism.

You see, modernism has stressed activity. We modernists are very busy. The gospel of modernism has largely concerned work. Admirable as that is, our forefathers understood that religion is not simply activity but receptivity. So at their best they struck their roots far down; at their best they dug their wells deep. They did not read so many books as we do, but those they did read they thought more about. They did not do so many things as we do, but they understood better the uses of solitude. They did not join so many committees as we do, but they understood better the meaning of prayer. Sometimes, in consequence, there emerged a personal, spiritual power that puts us to shame.

The progress of spiritual life is in this regard a good deal like the advance of an army—the objectives are ahead but the provisions come from behind. Alas for an army that is all objective and no base! A good deal of our superficial modernism is in precisely that situation to-day—excellent objectives, but the lines of communication with the base of supplies cut, so that, when a crisis falls and brings the impact of its fear and its discouragement, modernism lacks reserves.

If someone says that this is an old man's point of view, I protest. Only this last week there came to see

me a young man who was considering the possibility of going over from Protestantism to Roman Catholicism. Why? Because, said he, in all his youth in liberal Protestant churches he never had been taught how to pray, and now in a crisis, when things were hard outside and inside, he had found some Roman Catholic friends who knew how to pray and, trying their method, he had found power to carry on. You see, we Protestant modernists have sometimes been so anxious to be liberal that we have forgotten to be religious.

We had better take that to ourselves in this church. We never will go back to old theologies and outgrown sectarianisms. Granted! But we might well go back to One who antedates old theologies and sectarianisms, and who long ago, having to face a cross, sought the Father's help in a garden. He never would have been able to face that cross as he did face it without his experience in that garden. As we see him coming out from under the olive trees inwardly ready now for any Calvary with which the world may face him, for all our new intelligence we had better ask for that old path.

Consider again a man like John Calvin. He was too hard and metallic a soul to become fond of easily, and he so shared the intolerance of his day that some things he did, like consenting to the death of Servetus, seem to us unforgivable. As for his theology, with the damnation of non-elect infants and the rest, even fundamentalists cannot stomach that. A few years ago in this country, one of our great denominations, I am told, in convention assembled, held a debate as to whether or not they believed in the damnation of non-elect infants, and as the vote was about to be taken a professor of Greek with a sense of humour

rose and said: "Mr. Moderator, would it be possible so to phrase this motion that the effects of it would be made retroactive so that all those helpless infants who have been roasting down there for ages might be saved any further suffering?" The assembly broke down in uncontrollable hilarity. So, nothing could be easier from the standpoint of modern intelligence than to deride John Calvin.

Nevertheless, take one good look more at that terrific theology of his with predestination, election, and eternal punishment. Of course I do not believe it. But I see that at least here was an honest man who did not propose to allow himself soft deceits about the kind of universe he lived in. Go yourself and look at an imbecile child. There is predestination for you. As another said, that child was not born but damned into the world. Look all about you at children, some of them endowed with everything that heredity and early environment give to guarantee achievement and some of them endowed with little or nothing except foretokens of failure and doom. There is election for you, some chosen and some not. Or watch the law-abiding processes of this cosmos where we reap what we sow and men and nations plunge prodigiously through evil-doing into inevitable punishment. There is hell for you, observable to anyone with eyes.

The old theological forms in which our forefathers endeavoured to put such facts I take to be as dead as Sennacherib, but I call your attention to the sobering truth that in comparison with the candour and fearlessness with which the old-time Christianity faced these facts, our superficial modernism, with its sing-song from Coué that every day, in every way, we are getting better and better, sounds soft and lush and sentimental.

That is why scientists of an earlier day, like Thomas Huxley, or modern agnostics like Walter Lippmann, agree in having more intellectual respect for the old Christianity than for the new, though believing in neither. Listen to Thomas Huxley:

The doctrines of predestination, of original sin, of the innate depravity of man and the evil fate of the greater part of the race . . . faulty as they are, appear to me to be vastly nearer the truth than the "liberal" popular illusions that babies are all born good . . . that it is given to everybody to reach the ethical ideal if he will only try; that all partial evil is universal good, and other optimistic figments, such as that which represents "Providence" under the guise of a paternal philanthropist, and bids us believe that everything will come right (according to our notions) at last.

Indeed, in a time of storm and stress like this, we have some lamentable consequences from the soft and roseate view of the universe which too often modernism has encouraged. What a stream of individuals appear who, having maintained faith in God while everything was going well, now give it up because some things are going ill! They are fair-weather Christians. They can believe in God as long as they are comfortable, but if they are uncomfortable they give up God.

What kind of universe do they think they are living in anyway? This is a wild place. Our forefathers understood that. This is a world where Christs come and are crucified, where being disciples of Christ might mean being boiled in oil. This is a world where whole civilizations crumble into dust so that only archæologists can read the meaning of their hopes and fears. This is a universe where an entire planet, like this earth, once having been uninhabitable, will some day be uninhabitable again, and the fairest hopes that

ever stretched their sails upon the human sea can be wrecked and made hulks of by man's unwisdom and his sin. We fair-weather modernists had better salute those old-time Christians. They did not blink the facts. Instead of lying to themselves about the kind of universe this is, they achieved a faith strong enough to rise above it, carry off a spiritual victory in the face of it, and in the darkest hours that ever fell on human history they lifted high an ancient song:

Therefore will we not fear, though the earth do change,
And though the mountains be shaken into the heart of the seas;
Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
Though the mountains tremble with the swelling thereof.

.

The Lord of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge.

I suspect it is a realistic and courageous faith like that which my young friends too often miss in modernism, and they are right. Fair-weather Christians are not Christians at all. Look at Christ and see. Not until a man can face, as he faced, the darkest facts of life and still keep his soul unafraid does he know what it means to be a Christian.

An unconsenting individual conscience, the deep secrets of prayer, a courageous faith in God that rises above the darkest facts of life—there were depth and power in that old-time Christianity which our thin modernism often misses. If that be fundamentalism, make the most of it.

You see, we modernists have often gotten at our faith by a negative process. We do not believe this. We do not believe that. We have given up this incredible idea or that obsolete doctrine. So we pare down and dim out our faith by negative abstractions

until we have left only the ghostly remainder of what was once a great religion. Then seeing how few our positive convictions are and how little they matter, we grow easy-going about everybody else's convictions, and end in a mush of general concession. Then a crisis falls upon the individual soul, upon the family, upon the world at large, where a religion that is going to amount to anything must have deep conviction in it. "The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock"—how much we need that!

Some of us have never lost that. There is no reason why a modernist should lose that. If modernism is going to make any permanent contribution to the spiritual life of man it must not lose that. Here in this church we will not stand for such thin modernism. O my soul, be broad in your sympathies, but, O my soul, go deep in your convictions!

FAMILY RELIGION

Our subject suggests at once a verse in the Epistle to the Colossians which I should suppose would haunt any one deeply concerned over the present posture of events in our American homes. "The church that is in their house," says Paul.

The phrase goes back to the time before there were special buildings called churches. The only place where worship could be held under cover was in a house, and there in some home in Colossæ the little company of Christians habitually gathered and worshipped. While, however, this is the bare meaning of the phrase, it is obvious that when they chose the house in Colossæ where the Church was to meet they must have selected one representing the best they knew in family relationships. They could not have carried the Church into a wrangling, unhappy home. The phrase, therefore, becomes symbolical of something permanently true in a Christian family. We desperately need to think about it in America to-day—the church that is in your house.

Religion moves in different areas and organizes itself around different centres. There is personal religion, which we carry around with us and live by in the inner regions of our personalities. There is ecclesiastical religion, institutionalized in churches, with their traditions, politics, rituals and rubrics. And there is family religion which, when it is at its best, floods a home with light and makes the relationships therein sacred and beautiful. It creates a church within a house.

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We are all concerned with this last area of religious life. We came from homes, we live in homes, we plan to have homes—nowhere are our deepest personal interests more involved than in the problem of the family. And when we step outside our individual concerns and consider the nation, it grows daily more obvious that the real battle-ground for the moral life of America is the family. We may multiply our inventions and raise to its pinnacle the highly articulated, mechanized miracle of a civilization which we have started here; we may increase our industries and accumulate wealth; we may even build great temples dedicated to public worship and great schools dedicated to public education; but, after all, what this country will amount to in the end depends upon what happens to its homes. There is no substitute for parents.

Moreover, religion has a tremendous stake in the home. All our Christian ideas are home ideas, and all our Christian language is home language, whether we call God our Father or ourselves His children, or define our social ideal in terms of human brotherhood. One cannot think or talk Christianity without the atmosphere and terminology of the family. Christianity is not simply religion; it is religion saturated with family life until it means fatherhood, sonship, brotherhood, love. So the fortunes of Christianity and of the home are inseparable. What happens to one inevitably happens to the other. Let the family life of this nation decay, and there is no magic by which the Christian religion can be maintained. When we think of the family, then, we are at the centre of things as individuals, as citizens, and as Christians.

In the first place, many people run upon the need of a church in their house when they have children

of their own. An all-too-typical mother came to me in poignant distress about her religious life. She had received a traditional religious training in childhood, had surrendered her faith during college and had graduated as an agnostic, had moved out into a fortunate marriage, been blessed with a large family of children, and had been so busy and happy that for personal purposes she had not missed religion. What worried her was her children. Said she, "I have friends who also are without religious faith, whose children are being brought up as mine are, and I cannot endure the consequence. They are all little pagans. I would not for anything have my children grow up so. I must have some religion to give them. I do not feel the crucial need of it myself, but I must have some for my children."

That mother's case represents a situation increasingly common. Parents in shoals have been abandoning the religious training offered by the churches. Fathers have preferred the automobile or the golf course to the sanctuary, and mothers have followed them, or, becoming modern on their own account, have espoused some 'ism,' from positive atheism to general indifferentism. One way or another, a large proportion of the children of the United States to-day are being reared without any religious training worthy of the name.

When, however, the pendulum swings far one way, it is likely soon to swing the other. Things are not going well with the moral character of America on the basis of irreligious family life and irreligious education. Many fathers who are not particularly worried about themselves, although probably they ought to be, are deeply worried about their sons. One hears parents lamenting in their children the lack of

something—they are not quite sure what—which they had in their youth, something stabilizing and directive that produced quality in character and purposefulness in life. They vaguely suspect that it may have been the religious influence of their homes. They wish that their children had something like it. They are certain that their children need it. Sometimes, as in the anxious woman's case, they make up their minds that their children must have it.

It is not possible to exaggerate the stake which we all have in this matter. When a man reaches the vicinity of fifty years of age, he begins to understand how much everything he has cared about depends on the children. Death in itself is not undesirable. Death, when it cuts athwart our personal affections and our plans can be terrible enough but, for all that, when a wise man stands back from life and looks at the matter objectively, he thanks God for death. Thank God that we do not live to the reputed age of Methuselah, that "The days of our years are threescore years and ten, or even by reason of strength fourscore years," and that then we stop and do not go on weighing down the race longer with our accumulated conservatism! Thank God for the world's new chance with the children! Each generation comes up fresh from the gates of the dawn and in a sense the world can start over and try again. But while this rhythm of birth and death is advantageous, what a responsibility it entails! Everything depends upon the training of the children.

We want a new international spirit issuing in a new construing of international life, and the world organized for peace instead of war. But when we have made our last plan about external arrangements, the issue will depend upon the training of the children.

We want a united Christianity. Sick to death are we with these futilely divided churches that cannot even take the Lord's Supper together. But when we have made all our arguments and devised all our schemes, the ultimate problem is the training of the children.

We want religion, pure and undefiled, as an effective force in the character of our nation. Indeed we do. Some in the invisible congregation may be listening—in who have not been in church for a quarter of a century, but that would be true for you too. You know that more genuine, character-producing religion is needed in this nation. It was a financial journal—not a preacher—which said that what we need most of all is some of the religion that mother used to make. But whether in the end we are going to get it depends upon the training of the children. What about the church in your house?

We may say that the ecclesiastical church ought to help. Of course it ought! We may say that the church school has here its responsibility and opportunity. Indeed, it has! But, after all, what can be done in the religious training of the children in the church on Sunday is only accessory to the home. There are no substitutes for parents.

In the second place, the importance of the Church that is in the home is accentuated by the fact that, after all, religion is something we catch rather than learn. There are many things even more prosaic than religion which thus are caught rather than taught. In high school I hated mathematics and, like many another boy, looked forward with eagerness to the millennium when I should have passed my last examination in the abominable subject and would never have to look at it again. Then, going to college,

I fell under the influence of one of the most inspiring personalities I ever met. He was a professor of mathematics. I was always going to drop mathematics in college, but I never did—went straight through my course with it, elected everything he gave, did not so much learn it as absorb it. He performed the incredible miracle of making even mathematics contagious. If that can be done with mathematics, what shall we say about other more obviously personal, intimate, spiritual things, like poetry, for example? One can teach a child many things about poetry—metre, rhythm, scansion, and the rest—but if ever you find a youth who loves poetry you may be sure that he caught that from somebody. The love of poetry is handed down by contagion.

So is religion. It is a fire that is passed from one life to another, not primarily by instruction, but by kindling.

Take as a sample only one doctrine of Jesus, the sacredness of personality. All personality is sacred, Jesus said, whether in man or woman, king or slave, saint or sinner. The most sacred thing in this universe is personality, and it never is to be scorned or wronged, but helped. Whatever is most distinctive and original in Jesus' message radiates from that centre, and one cannot understand his conception of God, his ethical teachings, or his practical programme of life unless one understands that.

Nevertheless, set a little child down before that statement as a doctrine and try to teach it to him. Get the matter logically set out: all personality is sacred. Arrange the corollaries and make a neat, dogmatic lesson of it. How much will the child really learn that way? What a child gets about the sacredness of personality he chiefly absorbs from the way his

parents live with each other, with the household servants, with their friends and their enemies, with folks of other colours, other races, other classes. If you see a child to whom personality really is sacred across the lines that divide us prejudicially from one another, so that he counts nothing human alien to himself, you may be sure he caught that from somebody. My friends, the only religious *teaching* that amounts to much consists in explaining to a child the history, meaning, and reasonableness of something which he already has caught.

Suppose it were not religion that we are talking of but a poem on the love of nature, like Wordsworth's:

. . . How oft—

In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

One can make a doctrine out of that. What is the metre? What is the scansion? What is the rhythm? What is the geography of the Wye? Some of us recall that way of introducing children to literature. In the Scotch comedy, "Buntie Pulls the Strings," a youth protests against learning the catechism on the ground that he does not understand it, to whom the father indignantly replies, "Who's expecting you to understand it—learn it." We all know that method of teaching subjects.

But when a teacher does for a boy what one did for me in my high school days—takes him up into his room week after week and reads to him the loveliest things in English speech until he catches the flavour

and fragrance of them, joins in appreciation of them, and falls in love with them—then to explain why they are beautiful becomes almost a painless process. One likes to understand what one loves.

If religion, like other fine things, has to be caught, the home is the place for it. We are all the time trying to load off upon some other organization the responsibility of our homes. As another has re-phrased the ancient saying, When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Boy Scouts will take me up. We may well be grateful for the Boy Scouts, and for all the religion that can come into a child's life from the Church, the church school, the day school, and every other agency interested in the welfare of children. But, after all, it is the life that the child catches at home that goes deepest and lasts longest. What about the church in your house?

In the third place, the importance of this matter is accentuated by the fact that, willy-nilly, in the home we are teaching our children religion of some sort. Once in a while one hears parents say that they do not intend to teach religion to their children. Religion is an intimate, personal matter which every child has a right to choose for himself, and they propose to leave the child neutral while he is growing up and then let him freely select religion for himself. How plausible and liberal that sounds! But anybody who knows child psychology at all knows how absurd the proposition is. Even if we wish to, we cannot keep a child religiously neutral. What do we think religion is—a bay window put on the side of a house after it is finished? Do we suppose we can build the entire house and then add religion as an afterthought? Religion is not thus an addendum appended to life but the spiritual atmosphere pervading the whole establishment, and as soon as

a child is born the home begins creating in him a spiritual climate, teaching him basic reactions to life, attitudes toward life, feelings about life, which inevitably enter into the very substance of any religion which he ever will possess.

Suppose, for example, that some parent should say what, alas, many parents do say in effect, that sex is a very intimate, personal matter and that they are not going to teach their children anything about it but let them be neutral until, of age, they choose for themselves what sex shall mean. You see at once how mistaken and dangerous that would be. Sex is not merely a side show in life; it is so central that our reactions to it colour the whole of life for good or ill, for beauty or ugliness. Just because it is so intimate and personal, not even a child can be neutral. Be sure of this: if we do not shoulder our responsibilities as parents and teach our children what sex means at its best they will pick up attitudes on that matter somewhere else, the more's the pity! So it is with religion. No child remains neutral. One of our leading psychologists, investigating the nature of school children's thinking, found that two little souls had already gotten some major religious ideas from the pictures of Satan on tins of devilled ham upon the pantry shelves.

Some time ago a young woman came to my confessional who, having discovered that her supposed husband was a bigamist, had left him and, undertaking the support of herself and her child, was finding life not only practically hard but spiritually forlorn. She needed religion and she knew it, but all the truth and warmth of it eluded her. The reason was not far to seek. Her childhood home had been a domestic hell, with habitual quarrelling, profanity, drunkenness, and dreariness. She had become so habituated to fear,

suspicion, distrust, and hopelessness that to rise into confidence, faith, and hope, the climate and atmosphere where religion dwells, seemed to her almost impossible. Those profane and contentious parents would probably have laughed at the idea that they were giving instruction to their child in the field of religion, but they were—a very dastardly course of lessons, which made faith in God for her a psychological exploit of the first magnitude.

Our homes run the gamut from such an abysmal pit to lovely and radiant households of the kind some of us have known, where faith in God and goodness was as natural as breathing. What about the church that is in thy house?

Finally, the importance of this matter is accentuated by the crucial need of our young people themselves. What are you training your children for? What objective have you in mind in your rearing of them? I can answer for our household. We are trying to train our children for independence. We are sure that to-day children need primarily to be trained for independence.

What some will think of that is easily imaginable. To train children for independence, they will say, is the last thing wanted; children are too independent now; they begin even in early adolescence to refuse the bridle and harness, and one has only to watch them anywhere to see them jumping fences and making the wide world their race course. Train them for obedience. Teach them the meaning of authority. Bring them under restraint. Does one throw kerosene on fire to quench it, that you talk about training youth for independence?

The reasons for such an outburst are obvious enough, but, for all that, the outburst misses the

point. The children of to-day are independent and nothing can keep them from being so. The more vigorous and worth while they are the more independent they will be, *but they are not being trained for it.* They are going out as though independence were an easy matter to handle, whereas of all fine arts it is the finest and most difficult. Life is like a tree—every time new branches come there must be stronger roots. And youth in our generation has branched out—one can fairly lie awake at night and hear it branch out—into new liberties, new responsibilities, new self-expressions beyond the power of any to prevent.

People sometimes talk as though this expansion of life into new liberties were a substitute for religion and made it less necessary. One might as well talk about branches being a substitute for roots. Branches *require* roots. How can we drive that lesson home on our young people and on their parents? There never could have been a generation before which more specifically and crucially needed training in the meaning and handling of independence.

Every summer when I go up to my Maine island I find some trees that have blown down—too many branches above ground and not enough rootage below ground. And every fall when I come back to New York I find some lives that have broken down for the same reason—too much strain, not enough staunchness; too much modern life, not enough deep religion. Some of you who are not conventionally religious but who do care about the moral welfare of this nation may well listen to John Ruskin on the downfall of Venice. "The decline," he says, "of her political prosperity was exactly coincident with that of domestic and individual religion." Just so! What about the church in your house?

THE MAINSPRINGS OF HUMAN MOTIVE

IN one of the most familiar passages in the New Testament, the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, Paul says that if he bestows all his goods to feed the poor and gives his body to be burned but has not love it profits nothing. That is to say, a man may be an extensive philanthropist and even a martyr but if his motives are low his deeds lack moral value; the ethical quality of conduct depends upon the motive out of which it comes.

In general we would agree with that. To be honest merely to keep out of jail, to support socially prominent philanthropies because we want our names publicly associated with them, to join the Christian church to improve our business relationships, or to become ardent patriots because we want government contracts—we would at once agree that to do such apparently superior things for such really inferior motives morally vitiates the whole affair. Yet, after all, this question of motive is profoundly puzzling. Our motives are the most inward and intimate, the most complex and confused factors in us. What man of us has not often gone back into that dim hinterland of the soul and wondered what the motive was on which he acted?

Some years ago in the city of Boston, the police force went on strike. For a few days the customary restraints of public law-enforcement were relaxed and those of us who saw the consequent upboiling of the underworld, the appalling revelation of the kind of motives that operate in some people when the hindrances to their

free expression are removed, will never forget the sight. It made a man search his own soul. What if we had freedom and power to do whatever we might please so that all our conduct poured unhindered from our interior incentives, what kind of persons would we turn out to be? How much of our goodness is induced by public constraints; how much of it is the genuine overflow of our interior motives?

Before we go further, let us be specific about the finer areas of incentive from which great character proceeds. Here are five of them briefly described:

First, the *sense of honour*. One of the most ennobling motives that can grip a man is the consciousness that he has been the recipient of such goodwill and sacrifice from others that he owes it to the world to pay back a little of what he has received. Many of us had our first experience with that motive in the love of our families. We can remember yet temptations in our youth when the down-drag was terrific and when what saved us was the thought of our homes and of the love which there had been invested in us. A point of honour is created when any one is cared about like that—some things one may not do without shame; some things one may not sink to without sacrilege. The profoundest effect of being genuinely loved is a sense of sacredness in life and, if a man is fortunate, that sense of sacredness grows with the years. He sees in every lovely area of spiritual privilege that we are the children of sacrifice, that as we can never pay for Brahms or Beethoven, even though we may pay for a chance to hear their music, so wherever goodness, truth, love, or beauty comes to us, we cannot make up the debt. *Noblesse oblige!* As Joyce Kilmer sings:

Lord, Thou didst suffer more for me
 Than all the hosts of land and sea.
 So let me render back again
 This millionth of Thy gift. Amen.

That is a fine motive.

A second area of high incentive is *pride in fine workmanship*. One hardly gets his eye on anything in life more ennobling than someone doing something as beautifully as he can do it, for the inner satisfaction of doing it that way. To be sure, this motive is as practical as it is fine. "We may fling ourselves," says Chesterton, "into a hammock in a fit of divine carelessness. But we are glad that the net-maker did not make the hammock in a fit of divine carelessness." Basic in all worthy living is love of fine workmanship, and when it takes possession of a man so that he cares profoundly about doing what he has to do as well as he can do it, for the sheer joy of doing it that way, life is redeemed from meanness and drudgery. So Stradivarius is represented by George Eliot as saying about his violins:

. . . When any master holds
 'Twixt chin and hand a violin of mine,
 He will be glad that Stradivari lived,
 Made violins, and made them of the best.
 The masters only know whose work is good:
 They will choose mine, and while God gives them skill
 I give them instruments to play upon,
 God choosing me to help Him.

. . . He could not make
 Antonio Stradivari's violins
 Without Antonio.

That is a fine motive.

A third area of high incentive is *sportsmanship*. Hardly anything goes deeper with us than the love of a

game, and when a man rises to the place where he sees all life as a game and wishes to play it fairly, that is an admirable motive. So Jesus himself said: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them." That, I take it, is the noblest statement ever made of the basic principle of sportsmanship. How do they bring up children in countries where there is no organized play? A more fundamental factor hardly ever gets into a boy or girl than the motives and standards of fine sportsmanship. Indeed, sometimes we come to know a man whose whole character stands or falls with them. He may lack some of the elements of faith and interior nourishment on which we rely but we come to count on him for this: he has a passion for sportsmanship and in any situation you can trust him to play the game. That is a fine motive.

A fourth area of high incentive is *love of adventure*, especially venturesome devotion to causes which we do not expect to see finished before we die but in which we believe and to which we think the future belongs. That is a tremendous motive. Of what thrilling endeavour has it not been the driving power—Columbus' voyage, Galileo's telescope, the Declaration of Independence, the campaigns against war and poverty. In every realm the whole world has been moved forward by men and women in whom the incentive became dominant somehow to annex their strength to a cause greater than themselves, which, if they could, they might leave, when they died, farther on than when they started. That is a high motive.

A fifth area of fine incentive is *living for the approval of the Highest*, or, as our fathers put it, living in the sight of God. By no possibility can any one avoid living

for somebody's approval. That is one of the most unescapable and powerful motives in us and the final determinant of character is often found in the place where a man looks at last for that approving word, "Well done." Happy the man, therefore, with a living faith in the reality of the divine world and such interior fellowship with it that amid the alien pressures of this world he can live for the approbation of the Highest. A friend of mine, on a little island off the coast of South America, met a girl of English parentage who had been born, and all her days had lived, on that small island. With eager excitement she told him that it had been planned the following summer that she should go back home to England. "Back home?" my friend said, "How can you go back home? You were born here! This is home." "No," said the girl, "England's home!" So amid the alien and depressing circumstances of a little island in a far-off sea, there had been for her a group of ideas, ideals, traditions, standards, motives that made England "home." Happy the man who, amid the antagonistic pressures of this world, can live, as the New Testament puts it, with his citizenship in heaven, and so conduct himself for the approval of the Highest. That is a fine motive.

Here, then, are five areas of high incentive so familiar that some gracious visitation from every one of them has come to each of us. Consider, then, some comments which the very thought of them evokes.

In the first place, how desperately the world needs men and women whose lives proceed from such high incentives! Wherever to-day public welfare calls for necessary action someone lifts a pleading cry, Where shall we find the men able and honest enough to do that? On every side one hears that call. We desperately

need characters that can be counted on to act from high motives. Such characters are not altogether lacking. The world is bad enough; sometimes it is beastly. There are days when the newspapers, having combed the planet with their ingenious mechanisms of communication for every vile and hideous deed that has been committed anywhere, make one sick with dismay and shame about the race. But there are other days when sanity and hope return. We see someone who has been deeply loved trying to pay a little of his debt back again, or someone who, for the love of it, is doing something as beautifully as it can be done, or someone who in a pinch is playing the game, or someone who has identified himself with something greater than himself for which he cares more than for himself, or someone who has surrendered the applause of the crowd for the approval of the Christ. How such souls lift and illumine life!

Indeed, this is the very test which we apply to all our moral heroes. When we say of Jesus that we think he was absolutely good, what do we mean but this, that in whatever situation we imagine him, whether having all power to do anything that he might please or facing the terrific circumstance of Calvary, we are sure that we could always count on him to act from high motives.

Agreed, I can hear someone say, and precisely at that point your argument breaks down with me—I am not a moral hero; all well enough for the singular geniuses of the ethical life to exhibit these fine propulsions of the spirit, but I am an ordinary man and, having to make my living, and that, too, in a hard and selfish world, I must act from lower motives; I admire the moral heroes but I cannot imitate them. To this I say, Friend, we may well be thankful for



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AND APPROVAL

many lower motives which confirm the higher ones. Henry Ward Beecher said that sometimes a mother could have all Mount Calvary in her heart and all Mount Sinai in her hand and a rebellious child get both. So there are low motives, such as the fear of evil consequence in a law-abiding world, which sometimes back up the higher ones. Even Jesus did not hesitate freely to appeal to them. Nevertheless, we may not claim, as we are tempted to, that the higher incentives of the moral life are aliens and strangers in our spirit.

In a life like Mendelssohn's there are areas where the reader, if not a musician, must admire the creative experience which he cannot share. When Mendelssohn writes a magnificent oratorio, we marvel but we cannot imitate. There are other areas in his life, however, where one deals not with the singularity of genius but with the universality of human experience. When Mendelssohn falls gloriously in love with the girl who afterwards becomes his wife, he writes to his sister Rebecca about it, saying, "I am more desperately in love than I ever was in my life before, and I do not know what to do. . . . I have not an idea whether she likes me or not, and I do not know what to do to make her like me. . . . When away from her . . . I am always sad. . . . O, Rebecca! what shall I do?" That is not the peculiarity of genius but the universality of romance. Similarly, we may rightly say that in their profundity and the extension of their influence we cannot imitate our moral heroes, but we may not say that we cannot share their motives. Indubitably we can share them. The humblest soul that lives can have for his life the noblest motives for living that exist.

I appeal to one now. This generation needs, more

than it needs anything beside, characters in high places and in low that live from fine interior incentives.

Our second comment is that in this realm lies one of the major reasons why Christians must never allow themselves to forget the social implications of the gospel. When, for example, you commit your children to the church, if you are serious about it, you want us to do for them what we are talking of this morning—make them responsive to the highest motives for living. In all our sanest thought about our children's future, we know that if, amid the alien pressures of the world, their lives could flow down from high altitudes of incentive, that would make great living. That is the Christian church's ethical concern. One might almost say that is what the Christian gospel is all about—the regeneration and elevation of man's interior motives. Then we see these children for whom we have come to care profoundly, now grown past adolescent youth, go out into a world which plays with terrific fingers upon another set of incentives altogether—pride of position and of power for their own sake, egoistic ambitions regardless of the public weal, savage pugnacity even, prejudice of race and nation, love of soft comfort while others lack, acquisitiveness naked and bare of redeeming quality. What devils' work goes on in every generation as from home and school and church, where the highest motives have been appealed to, youth goes out to feel the fingers of the world play upon another set of keys!

Were you, therefore, to say to me—what, I thank you devoutly, you never say—Stick to your personal gospel and leave social problems alone! I would say, Friend, a Christian minister's business is with human motives. The major objective of the Christian gospel is the engendering and sustaining of the highest

motives in character. We cannot forget the social problems when we see our finest work with youth mangled and undone by wide areas of social life which appeal to and so develop another set of motives altogether.

To be specific about one problem, which to-day is commonly debated, when I hear it said that the profit motive is necessary to an economic system, I wish to rise in defence of the finest business men I know against the implied charge that desire for profit is their indispensable incentive. To be sure, if we use the phrase 'profit motive' loosely to mean in general the economic motive or the income motive, it is certainly indispensable in any society at present imaginable. To support one's family is a wholesome necessity and in itself may be an elevating aim, and to suppose that businesses can be run habitually in the red is absurd. But the phrase 'profit motive,' accurately defined, does not mean in general the economic motive; it means something specific and particular for the lack of understanding which much of our popular discussion misses the mark. When a man works for wages or salary, that is not profit. When a man takes standard rent on property or standard interest on investment, that is not profit. Profit is the extra, the velvet, beyond wages, salary, rent, and interest, for which there is no standard, which may be anything from one to a thousand per cent, which in this country during the war gave some munition factories four hundred per cent annually, and the struggle for which all competent observers of every school of economic theory acknowledge is one of the most dangerous factors in our social life.

The latest information with which I am acquainted, coming from a source which ought to be approximately

accurate, says that of the 125,000,000 people in the United States, only about 2,500,000 are stockholders and could receive profit from that source. Most of us get wages or salaries, perhaps rent and interest, but no profit. A motive which, as a matter of fact, brings gain to only a fiftieth of the population—or, if you wish, double or treble that—which, at any rate, brings gain to only a small proportion of our hard-working American population, is not easily conceived as absolutely indispensable. Not socialism but corporate capitalism itself, eliminating multitudes of small businesses, tends to reduce the proportion of the population which can get profit from private venture.

One wishes, therefore, one could speak to business men, with some fair chance of being persuasive, in some such fashion as this: The incentives of business are often nobler than you yourselves give it credit for. When I talk intimately with the finest business men I know, I am sure that their ultimate driving power is not the profit motive but, rather, love of the game, love of adventure, delight in doing a good job, creative interest in taking a new and promising invention and making it available to the world, and, through it all, of course, the economic motive to support one's family and, if it may be, create new opportunities so that other people may support theirs. Such motives, not unmingled with dross, to be sure, are in the hearts of the finest business men now, and our business system can be reformed without bloody revolution, until such motives become increasingly dominant. Personally, my conviction is that when that happens, the profit motive, accurately defined, will not operate.

At any rate, whatever one may think about such special problems, the major thing we are driving at

ought to be obvious. The motives we appeal to in the church and the motives commonly appealed to in the world outside are often in sharp and bitter contradiction. There rises an inevitable conflict which we may not evade without surrendering essential Christianity. Either we will Christianize the motives of the world or the motives of the world will paganize us. For this is the definition of a Christian society—a society that plays upon the same incentives which are appealed to in homes and schools and churches at their best.

Our final comment is that in this realm lies one of the major reasons why personal religion is indispensable. We cannot wait for society to be redeemed before we have to try, one by one, to live on high incentives, and to live on high incentives in a world so full of low incentives costs an inner cleansing and re-enforcement of character which I am certain nothing but a great religion can supply.

When one goes to the coastwise cities of the Orient, hardly a sadder sight meets the eye than the moral collapse of an occasional young American who had been selected here on grounds of ability and character and sent out to represent his firm. When he found himself in the Orient with the restraints of home removed and the customary re-enforcements of communal respectability and family pride gone, thrown back on no more character than could come from his own interior incentives, alas, he went to pieces. In such a situation lies one of the severest tests of character, and when a man seriously faces it I should suppose he would hear the word of Christ made individual and particular: "Ye must be born from above."

Say your worst about the race, we have at least this to our credit that we have now passed from the stage

where man's major problem was his struggle with nature to the stage where man's major problem is the struggle with himself. We can conquer nature. We have achieved a technique involving illimitable possibilities for the mastery and control of physical nature. But can we master and control human nature? Henceforth everything crucial which happens on this planet will depend on that. And that in turn depends on the kind of incentives which can be engendered in men's souls. So at last the whole problem of the human race comes back to each man's doorsill.

Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a right spirit within me.

WHAT ABOUT OUR SOCIAL PESSIMISM?

THE so-called Second Epistle of Peter is commonly regarded by scholars as the latest book in the New Testament, written about the middle of the second century. The first, fine, careless rapture of the Christian movement, therefore, was past when it was written, and from the early enthusiasms of its creative epoch the church was settling down. In particular, the first Christians had ardently believed in the immediate second coming of Christ. The Messiah would suddenly appear on the clouds of heaven to bring the present age to a thunderous conclusion and supernaturally inaugurate the kingdom of God on earth. Such was their ardent hope. But now it was the second century and nothing like that had happened. Hope deferred made the heart sick. Many were profoundly discouraged about the world and their disappointment is set down in "Second Peter"; "Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

It is easy to recognize in this frustrated mood a similarity to our own estate. The world does not seem to be getting anywhere. The more it changes, says the cynic, the more it is the same. To be sure, man has his periods of hope, his Messianic expectations around which with pathetic eagerness his devotions gather but, at the end, these hopes men set their hearts upon turn ashes and no Messiah comes. As Dr. Moffatt translates this text, "Since the day our fathers fell asleep, things remain exactly as they were from the beginning of creation."

Some may not need a message on dealing with this disheartened mood, but I do; I should like to get at what ought to have been said to those discouraged Christians in the second century and, therefore, what probably ought to be said to some of us now. For look at the way things are going on earth! What a world!

In the first place, someone should have told those second-century Christians that their complaint was too highly coloured by emotion to be trustworthy. Things were not at all as they had been from the beginning of creation. It was important for second-century Christians to see this because involved in it was one of the major differences between Christianity and paganism. The prevailing philosophy of the Greco-Roman world taught that human life over vast expanses of time moved in cycles, evermore recapitulating itself. Mankind, that is, was not conclusively arriving anywhere; only round and round it moved through long millenniums and returned to its starting point. Even Plato thought that and Marcus Aurelius, the noblest Stoic of them all, who became Roman Emperor shortly after this text was written, believed it.

One of the major effects of early Christianity was to break the grip of this cyclical belief. Life, as the Christian gospel saw it, was not a treadmill but an adventure with a goal. Christianity moved out into the Roman world with a new, challenging message that man's experience is a story with a *dénouement*, a voyage with a haven, a campaign with a victory,

. . . as if some fair city were one voice
Around a king returning from his wars.

When Christians, then, became social pessimists, convinced that everything was returning where it

started, they were dropping out of Christianity, back into the old paganism.

The case is not otherwise to-day. Our prevalent pagan philosophy also teaches that nothing conclusive is being done on earth and that life moves in a vast, circular course from an uninhabitable planet back to an uninhabitable planet again. One modern pagan puts it plainly: "Scientific materialism warmly denies that there exists any such thing as purpose in the Universe, or that events have any ulterior motive or goal to which they are striving." That still is of the essence of paganism, so that the swiftest short cut out of Christian faith and life for many moderns is not anti-religious theory but social hopelessness.

To be sure, many factors in our contemporary scene make a pessimistic mood plausible. In the play *Green Pastures* when the Lord walks the earth disgusted with what he sees, he exclaims that mankind is "doggoned sinful." Well, mankind is both doggoned sinful and doggoned stupid. Anyone interested in international peace or economic justice, in causes such as the World Court or the Child Labour Amendment, must feel that.

The first thing to do with this discouraged attitude is, I suspect, to recognize that, in the long retrospect of history, hardly anything seems more unjustifiable than such a mood. Strange, is it not, that this pessimistic mood, which when we ourselves possess it is so persuasive, does not commonly stand the test of historic retrospect. That is true, all the way from the dismay of second-century Christians, discouraged because the Messiah had not come upon the clouds of heaven, to counsels of despair and prophecies of doom which practically every generation since has heard. The optimists often make egregious fools of them-

selves, but in the long retrospect of history it is commonly the pessimists who look the more foolish.

At any rate, those second-century Christians were mistaken in rationalizing a temporary mood of disappointment into a permanent philosophy of pessimism. Victories were going to be gained and advances made after them and, in part, because of them, far greater than they could possibly dream. As for us in the twentieth century, with the most amazing possibilities that human life ever faced offered to us, the least we can do is to refuse surrender to immediate bafflement. We can stop rationalizing a temporary mood of disappointment into a permanent philosophy of pessimism.

In the second place, somebody should have said to those second-century Christians that in large measure they had brought their disheartenment upon themselves by trusting in a panacea. For the miraculous second coming of Christ on the clouds of heaven was a panacea. To be sure, the hope of the Messianic advent was a contemporary pattern of thinking, so that we may not condemn the early Christians overmuch for accepting it. Yet, even so, the deeper spirits in the early Church, like the author of the Fourth Gospel, escaped it. He reinterpreted and spiritualized the second coming, making it mean the interior in dwelling of Christ's Spirit in the Christian soul. But so stubborn is the emotional desire of men for a magic short cut to Utopia that the author of the *Second Epistle of Peter* went on arguing for the apocalyptic advent and so, I suspect, made a bad matter worse and produced more Christians who, having trusted in a short cut to social salvation, were disappointed by a panacea's failure, and cried again, "Where is the promise of his coming?"

All eras of widespread turmoil and wretchedness

produce a pathetic list of cure-alls. Look around you in America to-day—with impracticable economic nostrums, and deplorable demagogues hailed as saviours. Indeed, more serious yet, one panacea in particular, like the Pied Piper of Hamelin Town, beguiles the nations: the idea that by letting a centralized, nationalistic government do everything, dictate everything, become everything, we have discovered a cure-all which will redeem us. Statism is the contemporary Messiah. Communism puts it one way—let the state own everything. Fascism puts it another way—let the state dictate everything. Even in this country we are tempted to find Utopia by piling every responsibility upon the central government.

I do not question the increasing collectivizing of many areas of our life where the machine has come. Obviously, the more large-scale machinery arrives, the more we shall have to learn to do together things which hitherto we have done apart. But this reliance upon an all-inclusive, all-powerful, dictatorial, totalitarian state as a Messiah that will cure our ills will turn out to be only another of history's pathetic panaceas with its tragic aftermath of lost faith and disillusionment.

In one regard, the statement of those second-century Christians was correct. In one sense all things are exactly as they were from the beginning of creation. That is to say, the eternal laws are the same, without the fulfilment of whose conditions no salvation ever comes. For no panacea ever saves any society; no Messiah ever arrives upon the clouds of heaven.

We are tempted to-day, for example, to trust political panaceas to bring international peace. I believe deeply in the principles represented in the League of Nations and the World Court. I wish the United States were

working within those institutions. Much can be done that way. But all the political organizations man's ingenuity can build will not bring peace until we are ready to fulfil some profound and basic economic conditions. The people of four nations, I think, sincerely and predominantly want peace—Great Britain, France, Russia, and the United States. They deserve small credit for that for, having already access to and control over enough of the raw materials of the planet to sustain their national existence, why should they desire war? Three other nations, however, whose people also want peace, are training their young boys to fight and are arming to the teeth at the cost of desperate, popular sacrifice: Italy, Germany, and Japan. They are doing that, not because they are another kind of human being from ourselves, but because none of those nations has access to enough of the planet's raw materials to sustain its national existence. They honestly believe that some day they will face a choice between starvation and war, and under those circumstances they prefer war. Our reliance, therefore, on political panaceas to bring peace will only land us in heartbreaking disappointment when another world conflict comes, unless we are ready to face the economic conditions of peace and at the very least provide for such policies as the international apportioning of raw materials so that no nation will have to fight for access to a fair share of them. When we wanted to win the Great War we knew enough, as Allies, to make such mutually considerate arrangements, and we never, as nations, will win the Great Peace without them. Indeed, one of the most searching questions facing capitalism is whether under any competitive economy such conditions can possibly be met; and, whatever happens to

capitalism, such conditions must be met or, swamped in disappointment, we shall some day bewail the failure of our political panaceas.

At any rate, however matters turn out with us, to the second-century Christians someone might wisely have spoken like this: Not only is it untrue that things are as they were from the beginning, but it is even more untrue that they will remain as they are now. Even your hated Roman Empire will fall and moral achievements will be wrought, in your time and afterwards, the like of which you cannot dream. But whenever a moral achievement is wrought, it will be because somebody discovered the conditions which needed to be fulfilled and then fulfilled them. God runs his universe, not by panaceas, but by law.

In that regard the second-century Christians discovered a great truth—Messiahs do not come upon the clouds of heaven.

In the third place, someone should have said to those second-century Christians: You are too much disturbed by the clamour and turmoil of political upheavals. To be sure, it looks to you as though your civilization were going to pieces. Perhaps it will go to pieces; perhaps it deserves to go to pieces; but stop identifying the breakdown of the outward framework of a civilization with the destruction of its spiritual values. Repeatedly in history the crumbling of the outward husk of a civilization has set free, for larger growth, the vital seeds of its culture.

Those second-century Christians might have remembered that about Greece. Greece fell, we say. Indeed she did. The Greek cities, facing the most splendid opportunity the ancient world afforded, surrendered to insane folly, as we are doing now, and in wars of rivalry and greed wrecked their civilization. Never-

theless, what do we mean when we say Greece fell? Homer did not fall. Plato and Aristotle did not fall. The dramas of Æschylus and Sophocles and many a glorious insight which the Greeks put into their matchless art did not fall. Indeed, the influence which such factors in Greek culture released in ancient Greece itself were small compared with the effect they had on Western civilization through the Renaissance.

Consider that worried canon of the cathedral in Fraüenburg in the sixteenth century as he goes about his routine ecclesiastical duties with his mind absorbed in another problem altogether. On the basis of the old astronomy, he cannot make head or tail out of what is going on among the stars and planets. Something is wrong, he is sure, with those Ptolemaic cycles and epicycles. And then, on the mind of Copernicus there fell a wind-blown seed from the Pythagoreans who, centuries before in ancient Greece, had guessed that the earth might go round the sun. Greece fell, we say. Yet it still made possible our new astronomy.

Emerson goes so far in this regard as to say that the world has never lost "one accent of the Holy Ghost." That is putting it more strongly than I can feel sure about. Man is so "doggoned sinful" that I suspect he loses plenty of accents of the Holy Ghost. But this is true, that repeatedly in history the breakdown of a civilization has failed to prevent its spiritual value and culture from having widespread and permanent influence.

When, therefore, to-day, with much lugubrious head-shaking, people say that Spengler is right, that our Western civilization is decadent and will go to pieces, I answer, Maybe it will. Maybe it will deserve to go to pieces. Yet, despite that, one need not collapse

in discouragement. One who reads history and biography must see that in any generation the most significant things afoot can be discovered, not so much in the upheaval of its politics as in the depth of its spiritual culture.

Sir Isaac Newton was writing the *Principia* in his bachelor quarters in Cambridge while James II had all England by the ears with his political revolution. I wonder if a hundred people in England knew what Newton was doing. I wonder if a hundred people in England were not upset by what James II was doing. How much do we know about James II to-day? We know very little. What he tried to do in politics, tremendously important in his day, has been forgotten by most of us long ago. But Sir Isaac Newton is still a vast, continental frontier from which explorations into new mathematics and new cosmology still set out. Always, if we are looking for the things that last, we must look, not so much to the turmoil of politics, as to the depths of spiritual culture.

In our own contemporary life, Hitler's political machine has outlawed Mendelssohn. It is a criminal offence to play Mendelssohn's wedding march in Germany to-day because, although Mendelssohn by conviction was a devout Christian, he was by race a Jew. What a crazy world! a disgusted man says; what are we coming to? In that regard I should not think it difficult to foresee what we are coming to. Twenty-five years from now, perhaps fifty years, what do you think will be the relative positions of Hitler and Mendelssohn? What Hitler stands for is as doomed to decay as were the insane, reactionary policies of James II. But Mendelssohn—there was an accent of the Holy Ghost that mankind will not lose.

At any rate, one might well have said to those

second-century Christians: Perhaps your civilization may go to pieces. Perhaps it will deserve to go to pieces. That is a pity because, if we could get a civilization so ethically founded and expressed that it did not need to go to pieces, it would be ideal. Nevertheless, remember that in the realm of your spiritual values you are dealing with realities which will not go to pieces. The seeds of your Christian faith and life, which the downfall of the Roman Empire, far from crushing, will release to larger growth, are more germinative, more vitally potential, than the uproar of your contemporary politics. These proconsuls whose coming and going disturb your minds will be forgotten, but the things you have a chance to stand for, in the insights of your great prophets and your Christ, far from being forgotten, will constitute the only abiding foundation on which a secure society ever can be built.

We have been critical this morning of the second-century Christians because they so lost heart when their Messiah did not come on the clouds of heaven. Perhaps we have not been fair. At least let us say this for them: when anybody is discouraged about anything, it is because he cares about it. If ever a parent is discouraged about his children it is because he cares about them. If we are disheartened about the nation, it is because we care for it. Let this be said for those second-century Christians: they cared about the world. They were not simply feathering their own nests. They wanted the world to come out somewhere and that concern was a burden on them. Far better a discouraged Christian like that than a contented pagan!

Nevertheless, they should have had more faith in what God can do with a small group, with a vital,

creative minority. That is the final thing one would like to say to them.

How strange the contrast is between what those second-century Christians thought about themselves and what in retrospect we think about them! Suppose you were asked to name the heroic age of the Christian faith when there was a most memorable outburst of courageous and creative effort. Would you not naturally think of the first, second, and third centuries? That is to say, at the very time when they were saying that everything remained the way it was from the beginning, we see one of the most astonishing, revolutionary movements of all time. That was an heroic era, we say. Those Christians went out into a pagan world and stopped one public evil after another, such as infanticide and gladiatorial shows. They took a polytheism sanctioned by custom, glorified by literature, entrenched in imperial power, and conquered it in the name of monotheism. At last, as one of our modern scholars, Troeltsch, says, "Christianity did destroy the Roman State by alienating souls from its ideals." What an heroic epoch! we say. Strange, is it not, that just at the time concerning which we say *that*, they were saying in disheartenment, Everything the same as it always has been!

Let us apply that picture to ourselves. I think it does apply. What a discouraging world, we say. Yes, but if that thing should happen which more than once God has wrought with a minority, it might be that our distant descendants, looking back on us, could say something else altogether. That was a time, they might say, when first in human history a world community became the object of practical endeavour. That, they might say, was the first epoch when mankind passed over the line from an economy of

scarcity to an economy of plenty and began the conquest of poverty. That, they might say, was the era when war became so obviously suicidal to the nations, both vanquished and victors, that the peace movement gained more adherents and made more progress in a generation than it had done in a thousand years before. That, they might say, was the time when the churches, which for centuries had been splitting apart, began to draw together. To think that our children's children's children might say that of us! But they will not say that of us if we desert the faith of Christ for our pessimistic moods or for the hopeless philosophy of contemporary paganism.

ON SHOULDERING ONE'S OWN RESPONSIBILITY

A YOUNG man suffering serious eye trouble was given, by his oculist the following diagnosis: "You are living here on these Western prairies where you look out constantly over a vast expanse; you need something close at hand to lean your eyes against." One suspects that many to-day are in a similar case. We look out over a world in turmoil. Never did the range of an ordinary man's vision take in such wide scope and dwell on such immense affairs. In consequence, many of us have trouble with our vision. We need something close at hand to lean our eyes against, and I venture to suggest what it well might be—individual character shouldering its own responsibility.

At once the disparity between the wide, expansive view and this nearer look is obvious to all. On the one side a world in turmoil, and on the other an individual person assuming his moral responsibility—how disproportionate they seem! Yet, before we surrender to that feeling, we well may think the matter through. Certainly it has happened repeatedly in history that when a stormy era was past and was reviewed in retrospect, the truth was evident which the kingdom of Judah in the eighth century B.C. illustrates. That was a troubled time also, but as we regard it now our vision draws in from the wide expanse to one man alone with his conscience and his God, shouldering his own personal responsibility and saying, "Here am I; send me."

If someone says, That was the great prophet Isaiah whom all the world honours, I answer, He certainly

was not the great prophet Isaiah on the day when first God said to him, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" and he in reply pledged his life: "Here am I; send me." He was simply a young man, unimportant and unknown in a troubled epoch, translating the social need of his time into a personal responsibility and saying, "Send me." Yet, if we wish to understand the eighth century B.C. in Judah, that young man is the key to it. It may be that taking our eyes for a few moments from the wide expanse of the world's problem to lean them against that kind of character is not so disproportionate an act as at first it seemed.

At any rate, there is no solving of social problems in the large without that kind of character. One ill consequence of our present obsession with the titanic affairs of the world is the temptation to forget that in the first instance character is personal, that it does not exist in general but within persons, and that there is no possibility of so putting together weak characters as to secure a strong society. No agglomeration of crab apple trees will make an astrachan apple orchard. No collection of cheap books can make a great library. If a moron marries a moron and they have half-wits for children, no one can so skilfully combine those individuals as to build a lovely family. Personal character is not a small item in the midst of the great world's problem; personal character is the foundation of everything.

If someone says that this is obvious, I answer, Surely it is obvious, but would you think so to look at the world to-day? Upon the contrary, not only is this obvious truth commonly neglected in practice, it is sometimes denied in theory. At any rate, never in my lifetime, I think, has the temptation been so

strong to sidestep the shouldering of one's own moral responsibility, and concerning that temptation, its cause, consequence, and cure, we think to-day.

For one thing, we are tempted to evade the shouldering of our personal responsibility because of self-pity. How can a man look on this tempestuous world without being tempted to feel sorry for himself because he was born in so distraught a generation? These are bad times, we say, and when, as happens to every one of us, the bad times in general impinge upon us in particular, that only accentuates our opportunity to feel sorry for ourselves. How many of us are tempted to live in a cold, grey, overcast mood of self-com-miseration!

Feeling sorry for oneself is one of the most dis-integrating forces that can play on character. Moreover, indulgence in it does not depend upon the ill circumstance of some particular generation. If some of us are self-pitiers, we may be sure that we would have been self-pitiers no matter in what generation we had been born. Self-pity is a personal habit, like bad temper or drunkenness or gossiping; it does not depend upon the special circumstances of any era. The bemoaners have been present in every age. Among us are many, for example, who deplore the breakdown of character in youth. Listen, then, to this, and date it if you can; it is a father speaking about his boy: "The more I ponder over the capers my son is cutting, and the life and habits the thoughtless lad is plunging headlong into, the more worried and the more fearful I get at the danger of his becoming an irreclaimable rake. I know, I was young once myself, and did all those things, but I showed some self-restraint." That is from an old Roman play by Plautus, written about two hundred years before

Christ. Or if it is the general breakdown of religion and social decency that we lament, listen to this and see if you can date it: "There never was a time when a whole people were so little governed by settled good principles." Those were the good old days in the American Colonies before the Revolution. Clearly, if we are bemoaners now we would have been bemoaners then, for self-commiseration is a personal habit, and the cure of it is to deal with oneself, not to dream of being translated to a fairer world where there is nothing to bemoan.

There is a Scandinavian saying which some of us might well take as a rallying cry for our lives: "The north wind made the Vikings." Wherever did we get the idea that secure and pleasant living, the absence of difficulty, and the comfort of ease, ever of themselves made people either good or happy? Upon the contrary, people who pity themselves go on pitying themselves even when they are laid softly on a cushion, but always in history character and happiness have come to people in all sorts of circumstances, good, bad, and indifferent, when they shouldered their personal responsibility. So, repeatedly the north wind has made the Vikings.

At any rate, that young man long ago in Judah never would have gotten fairly started if he had pitied himself. "In the year that king Uzziah died"—so begins the great passage in which Isaiah describes his call. Now, King Uzziah had been a righteous monarch, and his long and successful reign was followed by disaster, so that this opening phrase might be translated: In the era when security and prosperity were threatened in Judah and trouble and defeat were imminent, in *that* era when disaster imperilled the nation, I said, Here am I; send me. Once again the north wind made the Viking.

For another thing, we are tempted to evade the shouldering of personal responsibility because we substitute for it a general interest in social reform which, so we dream, is going to rearrange the world until everything will be lovely for everybody. The more thoughtful areas of young people with whom I deal, especially in the seminary and the university, are commonly divided into two groups: first, partisans of individual faith and character; second, partisans of social reform. The first say that we must get good people to achieve a good society, and the second say that we must get a good society in order to achieve good people. They both are correct. The quarrel between them, for it often becomes that, is like a quarrel between the right foot and the left as to which of them one should walk on; one should walk on both.

Of course it is true that we cannot weave a good society out of sleazy characters, and it is also true that the society which we have now, with its slums that damn character, its wars, its acquisitive motivation, its inequalities and inequities, must be radically changed before millions of individuals will have a decent chance at character. This morning remember that I have said that before, say it now, will say it again. This tunnel must be dug from both ends. We need good people to make a good society, and we need a good society to make good people. To-day, however, I am dealing with a special area of young persons, some of whom, I think, are fooling themselves. I mean, they find it easier to become excited over social reform than to deal intensively with their own characters. They are making a general interest in world problems a substitute for resolute grappling with their own inward needs.

We have been repeatedly told that we are tempted to do the opposite, to run away from the large social tasks of mankind to the easier, lovelier, more satisfying area of individual faith and life. Undoubtedly that is true. Probably it is true about some here. Many find it easy to make personal faith and life an ivory tower to which they retreat from the large problems of mankind. But we have been told this for so long that those who keep on saying it may well listen to the other truth. I see people fleeing in precisely the opposite direction. They are making a general interest in social reform an ivory tower to which they run away from the far more searching problem of shouldering their personal responsibility. They are, for example, pacifists in general but they have such quality of spirit that they break up the peace of any group they enter. They are all for social justice but they are so badly twisted inside that nobody who knows them can trust them to be just in a private judgment. They proclaim that racial prejudice is one of the most gigantic evils in the world, but when one comes close to them one sees that they never have dealt seriously with some of their pet prejudices. They ardently say that the world needs to be changed but their neighbours know that, however that may be, *they* certainly need to be changed. They are like Hogarth's pauper, imprisoned for debt himself but still busy with plans for paying the debt of the British Empire.

In an English cathedral, it is said, there is a tomb enclosing the body of a clergyman of former times and on it is this epitaph: "He was a painful preacher of the truth." I know my own soul and yours well enough to know that what I am saying now is the painful truth. Suppose that the social reforms of

which men think most to-day were now successfully achieved. Can any one who, in his mind's eye, visualizes that redeemed society suppose that there personal character would be called for less? Surely, personal character would be called for more. We extend collectivism, let us say, enlarge the area within which life is socialized, and men work, not for private gain, but for public service. What does that involve? That involves new dimensions of public spirit and new motives of social devotion inside people. Or we spread our technical efficiency until men need no longer work long hours—five hours, four hours, three hours daily suffice. What does that involve? The use of leisure is one of the severest tests of and demands on character that the human race has ever faced. Or we end war, build a world community, and organize the brotherhood of man. But that calls for such breadth of thought, expansiveness of sympathy, freedom from prejudice, and capacity for skilled and unselfish administration that one sometimes wonders if man can be changed enough to keep a world community, supposing he can get one.

To be sure, this is not the whole story. A better society, someone says, will call out and help to produce superior character. Quite right. That is a great hope. A co-operative society would demand and so help to create co-operative character, but it is romantic nonsense to leave the matter so. On every side to-day we see people called on for better character, if ever they were in human history, and yet there are doubtless some here who have not seriously shouldered their own responsibility.

At any rate, that young man in Judah never would have become the prophet Isaiah without this grace and courage we are speaking of to-day. Recall him

as he stood face to face with the living God. What did he put first as the problem he felt most acute? "I am a man of unclean lips," he said first, and then, "I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." So he put his personal problem first. He knew the initial difficulty lay there. Before he talked too much about the sins of society, he faced *his* sins. Before he blamed the world, he blamed himself. Before he confessed the evils of his people, he confessed his own. He began with personal cleansing and regeneration. Any one who has gone through the experience of a deep, interior transformation, which has changed his motives and recreated his spirit, understands that no social reform and no rearranged society can ever be a substitute for that.

Furthermore, we are tempted to evade this resolute dealing with our own personal responsibility because, in the face of the public need, what the individual can do seems so disproportionately small. How like Gulliver in the land of the giants one feels to-day amid the titanic forces that sweep across the world! If one is to shoulder his personal responsibility with zest, it must be because he thinks it worth while. But so disproportionate to the need is the contribution of the individual that multitudes think, What is the use? That is their answer when God calls them, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" They say, What's the use?

No pulpit eloquence, however profuse, can smother that mood. It is based on facts too incontrovertible. The forces that sweep across the world are titanic. The population problem, for example, as in Great Britain or India or Japan; the war problem everywhere; the swing of the capitalistic system through its full course into overproduction and underdistribution—

one has only to name a few of these apparently resistless floodtides to feel tossed like a helpless chip upon their turmoil. To rise up, then, in the face of all that, saying, "Here am I; send me," seems to many not so much an evidence of great character as of arrogance and megalomania. That, I take it, is one of the most prevalent moods of our day and, as you see, it critically endangers the shouldering of personal responsibility.

Far be it from me, who so often feel the pressure of that mood myself, merely to rail at it. There is plenty of justification for it. But in more thoughtful hours one knows that it is not the whole story. If in an epoch like this a man is to keep his head level, he must beware of being so obsessed by the titanic problems of the world that, becoming a determinist, he feels himself merely a helpless chip tossed on the sea. That is to lose one's very soul.

At this point we need again a painful preacher of the truth. If you are a determinist now, he would say, because you feel yourself helplessly tossed like a chip on the social floods, you would have been a determinist in any generation you were born into; only, probably in another age you would have given another explanation of it. In one generation you would have said you were a helpless chip because of astrology; you were born under the wrong star. In another generation you would have felt yourself a helpless chip because of predestination; you would have said you could do nothing because God decided everything. In another generation you would have felt helpless because of materialism; you would have thought yourself only a cog in a great machine. Now, however, you feel yourself helpless because you think you are a chip tossed futilely about by the great social forces.

Observe that this kind of determinism originates and always has originated in some emotional mood, such as the sense of personal helplessness, and then has tried to rationalize itself through any theory that chanced to be at hand and so to make itself intellectually respectable. The primary and creative factor there, however, is not now and never has been intellectual but emotional. Mark Twain made a penetrating comment when he said: "What a man sees in the human race is merely himself in the deep and honest privacy of his own heart. Byron despised the race because he despised himself." Every good psychiatrist understands the truth of that. The attitude of a man toward the cosmos at large or toward mankind as a whole is likely to be the projection on a large canvas of his attitude toward himself. If a man despises the race, he probably first despised himself. If a man is a cosmic determinist, he probably has felt himself helpless in the presence of his own life problem. Obviously, the cure of determinism, so produced, does not lie in theory. Let us rather face what actually happens in practical life when a man stops feeling himself a helpless chip and, instead, shoulders his responsibility.

Lyman Beecher, for example, was a towering figure in New England in his day. One week-end he was to exchange pulpits with a neighbouring pastor, a man who held a stiff theory of predestination, while on that point Lyman Beecher was for his time fairly liberal. So on Sunday morning both men started from home, each going to the other's church, and met midway. As they paused, the neighbouring minister said, "Doctor Beecher, I wish to call to your attention that before the creation of the world God arranged that you were to preach in my pulpit and I in yours

on this particular Sabbath." "Is that so?" said Lyman Beecher, glaring at him. "Then I won't do it!" and he turned his horse around and went to his own church. When a man with that kind of stout character refuses to regard himself as a helpless chip and resolutely shoulders his responsibility, things do begin to happen not disproportionate to large consequences.

Certainly, things begin to happen inside personal character. Long ago, in Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, you might have seen a fourteen-year-old boy very homesick, crying. His schoolmates were making fun of him. His clothes were outlandish; his mother had fashioned them. Furthermore, he was expected to speak a piece and was thoroughly scared. Suppose that one of us could have shared with him our deterministic mood about being helpless chips. Go tell him that if he cannot speak then he cannot speak. Tell him that we are merely transient and ineffectual pawns played by fate. If he believes us, we will have spoiled one of the most powerful forces in American history, for that boy was Daniel Webster. Thank heaven, he did not surrender to the idea that he was a helpless chip. I suspect, upon the contrary, that he said to himself something like this: My father is undertaking almost intolerable financial burdens to give me the opportunity of an education—I must not fail him; one way or another I must get under my responsibility. And, lol! the consequences were not disproportionate to large problems.

This deterministic mood of ours about being helpless chips tossed on the sea of great social forces is not factually correct. The most tremendous forces in the world both for good and evil are not huge and planetary; they are moral and vital. The chestnut trees of New England are practically gone. What

destroyed them was a fungus brought into Long Island from the Orient about thirty years ago. On what small hinges do large consequences swing! Let us keep our perspective right about this! One man watches an apple fall and the cosmic outlook of the whole race is changed. One man watches the steam lift the lid of the kettle on his mother's stove and the structure of civilization is rebuilt by the machine. One man experiments with a new force to get light and not a corner on the planet will escape the consequence. What do we mean by big things? All the big things are small in origin, vital, like ideas that flame from mind to mind until, a prairie fire, they sweep the world.

If someone says, You are talking about geniuses, the few select spirits of large influence, and are leaving out us common folk, I answer, No, I am thinking about all of us. A personal friend lately talked with a member of the British Government, a man who would have weight in deciding whether or not Great Britain would enter a war if it broke on the Continent. My friend asked him a point-blank question: Would Great Britain go into another war? and he received a point-blank answer: No, not unless the churches changed their mind; as it is now, no government could take England into war against the opposition of the churches. If that is true in Britain, it either is or can be true in the United States. When enough people shoulder their responsibility, there are no visible limits around the consequence.

To-day, for example, we are tempted to think of suffering in impersonal, titanic terms, as though the world's catastrophic trouble were a great flood upon which we are tossed. Yet, consider this from a wise observer: "Half the world's sorrow comes from the

unwisdom of parents." Even to-day, with all the other causes of suffering, I suspect that is true. Close at hand, within our reach, where our personal responsibility lies, where we are not helpless chips tossed about, half the sorrow of mankind comes from the unwisdom of parents.

There is no problem on earth so huge that it can be truly described if individual responsibility is not put at the centre of it. Great Britain in India is one of the largest political problems in the world. What, then, are some of the major difficulties in the way of its solution? Here is one Indian of the kind the British Empire might well desire to have friendly to British rule in India, yet this is what he says, "When I think of the British in India, I always see a drunken, rough soldier who entered our house and whipped my aunt, or a Customs official (probably a Eurasian) who hit my father for being in his wife's way on the pavement." At first one is surprised at the disproportion between the largeness of the problem and the smallness of the incidents. But take it, not from me, but from the loyal Britisher who tells the story: that Indian put his finger upon one of the major difficulties in the situation. Indeed, put yourself in the Indian's place! You know!

There is no problem on earth so large that its cause and cure do not root back in individual responsibilities.

I must confess, however, that I, for one, should not assume personal responsibility in this present time with any zest if I thought that the world at large were only a mechanical, aimless, godless, physical system. So would Isaiah have said. "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord"—that was basic with him, a world of spiritual origin and purpose, and at the heart of it a living God with whom one could co-

operate. So he did not need to pity himself. So he could not evade the problem of becoming a character meet to be a fellow worker with God. So he did not need to be discouraged by the disproportion between the size of the problem and his individual gift. "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord . . . high and lifted up. . . . Then I said, Here am I; send me."

HOSPITALITY TO THE HIGHEST*

EVERY biographer delights to discover in the infancy or childhood of his hero some event which may be a symbol and foregleam of the hero's subsequent career. But did ever a single incident in any one's infancy suggest so much as is summed up in Luke's saying about Jesus' nativity at Bethlehem: "There was no room for them in the inn"?

As one reads the words now, there is foreboding in them. *That* was to be the Master's experience throughout his ministry—no room for his teachings in the minds of men or for his quality of spirit in their lives, no room in the synagogue for his reforming zeal or in the nation for his prophetic message. The crucial difficulty of his life which denied him the service he longed to render, closed to him the hearts he longed to change, and brought him at last to Calvary, was something so simple, so familiar, so little recognized as a tragic evil, and so universal among us all, that one almost hesitates to name it—inhospitality.

In a picture of Jesus' boyhood in Nazareth, he runs to his mother with outstretched arms and his cruciform shadow falls on the ground before him. So in imagination men long have dwelt upon the premonitions of tragedy which the Master's childhood may have known. Crucifixion, however, is a form of cruelty too extreme to be familiar. We do not readily picture ourselves crucifying Jesus. But this other element in the Christmas story is well known to all of us; we may not disclaim our share in his rejection through finding

*A Christmas Sermon.

no room for him. Yet, familiar as it is, such inhospitality was the central tragedy of Jesus' life. A century after Bethlehem, in far-off Ephesus, a loyal disciple wrote the Fourth Gospel, and still the tragedy was the same: "He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not." And to-day, from how many preoccupied lives and embittered human relationships does the Master hear the ancient words, "No room"!

One does not mean simply that we lead practically overcrowded lives, cluttered with such preoccupying business that from our limited time and attention the highest is shut out. Of course it is true that the loveliest things in life, which, hospitably welcomed, would enrich us all, are commonly excluded by such preoccupation. Great books are not read, great music is not heard; we are too busy. There are beauties in nature whose enjoyment "redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity" within us; but we are too busy. We miss enriching friendships and possibilities of happiness in our family life; we are preoccupied. No room—of how much sorry loss of priceless opportunity is not that the explanation!

So, too, the major enemy of Christianity itself is not atheism but secularism, not the theoretical denial of Christ but the practical crowding out of Christ and everything he stands for. When the hall is filled with immediate and temporal concerns, when every seat is taken and even standing room is crowded, how can anything else get in? It is this which makes difficult the task of all teachers of spiritual life, whether in the realm of beauty or of religious faith. One does not mind so much those who carefully and deliberately cry, I do not believe. They are not many and they at least are serious. But the dull, impenetrable, stolid, overfull lives that can say nothing, even when the

Christ comes to them, except, No room for him—that is the tragedy.

Behind such practical crowding out of the highest, however, is a deeper matter. Spiritual inhospitality to the best, whether in music or books or friendship, or in dealing with Christ himself, is not mainly due to our being too preoccupied. If at the inn they had known what the Christ Child would become in the world, some of them at least would have found a place for him. We find places for the things we really care about. They crowded Christ completely out because they never guessed who he would be. How could they? But we know. We have no such excuse. It was nearly two thousand years ago that the hostler at Bethlehem

. . . opened up the stable
The night Our Lady came.

We know Jesus. Have we not come from homes where his spirit made a radiance in the faces we loved best and a fragrance in their lives? Are we not sprung from a civilization where artists like Raphael have glorified him and musicians like Bach have written their noblest compositions in his praise? Has not even an agnostic historian, Lecky, said that "the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and all the exhortations of moralists"? We cannot plead that we do not know Jesus. There are many questions about Christianity and about Christ which we cannot answer. But Jesus himself, the essence of his character, the quality of his spirit, the core of his teaching, we do know. And we know that those areas of life where his spirit has been welcomed and enthroned, as we

have seen it in some genuinely Christian friendships and families and in some genuinely Christian social attitudes, are the loveliest results our civilization has to show for its centuries of struggle. So when we cry, No room for him! it is not so much because we are practically preoccupied as because our souls are of such a quality that they are hospitable to something quite different from Christ.

On Christmas Sunday morning, therefore, as in imagination we stand at Bethlehem's inn and see how easily the highest can be shut out by a little inhospitality, we well may say to ourselves that to be hospitable is about as important and as self-revealing an act as any we perform.

Consider, for one thing, how much of the richness of our lives comes not from our outward strenuousness but from our inward hospitality. When we hear a famous American described, as one was described, as "a steam engine in trousers," how clearly the type of character suggested by that stands out. Vigour, energy, drive, strenuousness—such valuable qualities are there, without which no continent like ours could have been subdued. But if a man is merely a steam engine in trousers, how much less than a man he is!

Upon the other side, suppose we had never heard of Wordsworth, knew nothing concerning him save, it may be, his lines beginning:

. . . Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth.

How instinctively our estimate of him would rise! We should know at least that he was not merely a steam engine in trousers. He had an interior hospitality

Christ comes to them, except, No room for him—that is the tragedy.

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The night Our Lady came.

We know Jesus. Have we not come from homes where his spirit made a radiance in the faces we loved best and a fragrance in their lives? Are we not sprung from a civilization where artists like Raphael have glorified him and musicians like Bach have written their noblest compositions in his praise? Has not even an agnostic historian, Lecky, said that "the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and all the exhortations of moralists"? We cannot plead that we do not know Jesus. There are many questions about Christianity and about Christ which we cannot answer. But Jesus himself, the essence of his character, the quality of his spirit, the core of his teaching, we do know. And we know that those areas of life where his spirit has been welcomed and enthroned, as we

have seen it in some genuinely Christian friendships and families and in some genuinely Christian social attitudes, are the loveliest results our civilization has to show for its centuries of struggle. So when we cry, No room for him! it is not so much because we are practically preoccupied as because our souls are of such a quality that they are hospitable to something quite different from Christ.

On Christmas Sunday morning, therefore, as in imagination we stand at Bethlehem's inn and see how easily the highest can be shut out by a little inhospitality, we well may say to ourselves that to be hospitable is about as important and as self-revealing an act as any we perform.

Consider, for one thing, how much of the richness of our lives comes not from our outward strenuousness but from our inward hospitality. When we hear a famous American described, as one was described, as "a steam engine in trousers," how clearly the type of character suggested by that stands out. Vigour, energy, drive, strenuousness—such valuable qualities are there, without which no continent like ours could have been subdued. But if a man is merely a steam engine in trousers, how much less than a man he is!

Upon the other side, suppose we had never heard of Wordsworth, knew nothing concerning him save, it may be, his lines beginning:

. . . Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth.

How instinctively our estimate of him would rise! We should know at least that he was not merely a steam engine in trousers. He had an interior hospitality

to some lovely things. There were times when beauty came to his door and he made room for it. And we should expect in such a life some richness, some radiance and fragrance, some charm and winsomeness which no trousered steam engine can ever know.

One goes to Dresden and finds it a busy town. Its streets are thronged, its markets populous, its industry manifold; one can spend there laborious and animated days. Some of us remember most clearly, however, not our strenuous expeditions there but a quiet room where Raphael's Sistine Madonna is and where we sat silent and absorbed trying hospitably to understand. That memory goes deeper, reaches higher, lasts longer, is more significant than anything else we brought from Dresden. Life is like that. Our enrichment comes from our hospitalities.

Far from being sentimental, this is as true of the mind as of the spirit. How full our American universities are of strenuous minds and how poor they are in rich minds! The strenuous mind can do many things—amass facts, learn techniques, develop skills, teach classes, give examinations, write books, and make speeches. As Stephen Leacock says, it is the business of the American professor to chase his students "over a prescribed ground at a prescribed pace, like a flock of sheep. They all go humping together over the hurdles, with the professor chasing them with a set of 'tests' and 'recitations,' 'marks' and 'attendances,' the whole apparatus obviously copied from the time clock of the business man's factory." "This process," adds Leacock, "is what is called 'showing results.'" How much of our so-called educational life is thus strenuous but how little of it is rich! For to possess richness of mind one must be more than strenuous, one must be hospitable. A

wealthy mind cannot always be vehemently adoring but must sometimes be entertaining guests. No one can be mentally rich who does not know what Browning meant when he made his Cleon say:

I have not chanted verse like Homer, no—
Nor swept string like Terpander, no—nor carved
And painted men like Phidias and his friend:
I am not great as they are, point by point.
But I have entered into sympathy
With these four, running these into one soul,
Who, separate, ignored each other's art.
Say, is it nothing that I know them all?

This world is bad enough, my friends, but at Christmas time we may be forgiven for saying our best about it. There are lovely things here after all. Not only has Christ come and found some lives with room to take him in, but in our Western tradition at its best and in our personal lives at their best, even in a troubled time like this, there are such opportunities for hospitality as most of our forefathers never dreamed. And these gracious and beautiful things come asking of us only a welcome. It seems so small a thing to ask! Beethoven's symphonies and Shakespeare's sonnets, flowers in the woods and Christ in the heart—they come seeking hospitality. Well, then, how much of all that is best in the world belongs to us? I press that home upon our consciences. How much of the best in the world belongs to us? That surely is measured by our hospitality. Poverty-stricken in spirit and poor in mind, some may blame their impoverished estate on circumstance, but most of us cannot. We have had homes too fine, friends too loyal, opportunities too rich to make that excuse. The reason we are poor is pictured in the story of Bethlehem's inn—the star over it, the angels singing

about it, the Wise Men from afar seeking it, but, as for the inn itself, no room for him there.

How magical a change a little hospitality can make! A youth turns, as it were, the corner of a street and, running into a new idea, makes room for it, and lo! his life is utterly transformed. Hoping for the return of his stolen gold, Silas Marner, the crusty miser in George Eliot's novel, opens his door as a neighbour bids him and in an unexpected moment of hospitality welcomes the little child who creeps to his hearthside, and lo! his whole character is reoriented and redeemed. Peter meets Jesus by the lakeside and, though ashamed to welcome so great a spirit into so unworthy a life, saying at first, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord," he makes room for him at last and by that not only he but all the world is altered. One of the mysteries of life is a man surprised into unsuspected greatness by a momentary hospitality, like Paul's on the Damascus Road, so that afterward he says, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." And the thrill of preaching lies in the knowledge that this can still happen. For Bethlehem is not historic merely. The ancient scene is reproduced in many a life to-day. Still Christ comes to the inn. Only, we can change the outcome. Room for him! Room for him there!

Were we to say nothing more, however, our Christmas message might seem private and subjective, as though in a troubled generation we were content merely to make our personal lives like oases in the midst of a barren land. But our truth goes far beyond that. One cannot understand aright the whole world's trouble unless one sees it in terms of inhospitality.

What if mankind did not so habitually repeat the scene of Bethlehem! What if, when saviours come in any realm, we did not meet them with this obdurate,

impassive refusal of a welcome! Thales first foretold a solar eclipse, the one in 585 B.C., and the ancient Greeks at Alexandria knew that the earth was round. Why did the facts about our solar universe have to wait long, dull centuries and man live still in a meagre world before the truth shone out? When we furnish our houses, we put 'Welcome' on the very doormat, but when we furnish our minds we do not. Has ever a new and saving idea come to the race without hearing the cry, "No room"?

The tragedy of mankind is this impassive, obdurate refusal to welcome the saviours of the world. For the saviours have not been lacking—not in science, not in music, not in spiritual faith and life. They have come, but whether it be Galileo or Wagner or our Lord himself, with what impenetrable inhospitality has the race refused them! This puts the world's salvation squarely up to us, the common men and women. The saviours come—God sends them; it is we, the masses of the people, who cry, No room! Sometimes in retrospect this unreceptive inertia of mankind seems ridiculous to the point of laughter. Said a school board in an American town a hundred years ago, "You are welcome to use the school house to debate all proper questions in, but such things as railroads and telegraphs are impossibilities and rank infidelity. There is nothing in the Word of God about them." That is ludicrous, we think. When, however, one considers humanity's estate to-day, this shutting of the doors to new ideas is no laughing matter. We are moving out into situations in economic life and international relationships so unprecedented that old formulas are as inadequate to save the day as old ox-carts are to handle modern transportation. Inhospitability of mind and spirit to new ways of dealing

with our economic life, to new ways of thinking about international relationships, can utterly ruin us. Granted that 'Welcome' on the mind's doormat is too promiscuous and indiscriminate. Hospitality of mind is too important to be loosely given. But when I think of you and of myself in these dangerous years ahead, what most of all I fear is this, that in our times new ideas will come, new social outlooks to which the future of mankind belongs, and, because our minds are filled with old ideas, old prejudices, old mental habits, old class interests, old forms of patriotism, we will cry, No room!

You see, at first hospitality seems merely a gracious virtue. Strenuousness may be difficult, but hospitality is lovely. My friends, a mind and spirit that can recognize and welcome the highest when it comes is one of the supreme gifts of man. It is indeed true that, next to genius, what is most like it is the power to know and admire it. Next to being creatively great oneself is the capacity to recognize greatness when one sees it, and make room.

True in the realm of mind, this certainly is true in the realm of character. Can you imagine Pilate being inwardly hospitable to Jesus? How could he be? Cynical and crafty Roman, habituated to Cæsar's service, sophisticated in his thinking, and hard as nails in his life, what could he have done with the Man of Nazareth wandering at liberty through the rooms of his soul? Is any discomfort worse than to entertain a guest day after day in your home when you are alien to him at every point and what he wants forces the suspension or suppression of your main desires? Or can we imagine Caiaphas, the High Priest, being spiritually hospitable to Jesus? Shrewd, cagy old ecclesiastic, with a stereotyped religion and a

crabbed mind—what had he in common with this “young Prince of Glory” whose religion was as fresh as the flowers on his Galilean hillsides and whose good-will was as spontaneous as the affection of the children whom he loved? What could Caiaphas have done entertaining him? Indeed, if one thinks hospitality easy, let him watch Judas Iscariot trying to be hospitable to Jesus. I think he really tried. But there was something else in him—the love of money, was it?—that filled the inn at last so that the end of Jesus’ life, like the beginning, heard the cry, this time with tragic consequence, No room!

We are not proposing, then, this Christmas Sunday morning, an easy thing—to let him in, to make room for him—but we are proposing a glorious thing. A man’s best memories, when life is closing, I think, will be his finest spiritual hospitalities and what came of them.

Imagine, for example, someone here—a hard-headed man, analytical of mind, a little proud of his freedom from sentiment—looking now, it may be, upon this Christmas festival with shrewd, appraising eyes. How valuable such a cautious and analytical attitude can be, and yet, if that is all, how utterly impoverishing! I have seen Yosemite Falls in the springtime leaping from its great height in a diaphanous tracery of spray and mist. Now, the analyst is right—that waterfall is H_2O . That is important truth. But something else is there, not to be gotten at and inwardly possessed by analysis, but by receptivity, appreciation, insight, responsiveness, hospitality. With only one life here on earth to live, it is a pity, because of an inhospitable mind, to miss the spiritual values which mean most, reach highest, last longest, and in the end make life rememberable. Above all, make

room for *Him*, fairest among ten thousand and the one altogether beautiful.

One suspects, however, that the real barrier to our welcoming of Christ is not a sophisticated mind but an unworthy life. Sin is the obstacle. There are things in our lives which will have to leave if Christ comes in. That is why the world as a whole rejects him. If he came in, war and greed, and many a social evil they have produced, would have to go. So he is still "despised, and rejected of men." That, too, is why some here to-day are saying, even though the words do not take audible form upon their lips, No room. If someone says that, with vehement determination barring the door against him and choosing to live with the company which would have to leave were he to enter, how can a preacher's words melt that deliberate refusal? But if some are saying, No room, humbly, because their lives seem too soiled to welcome so great a guest, then there is hope. Friend, he did not come in the first place to a palace, but to an inn. And through the centuries since he never has despised the common, vulgar, soiled, and humble dwelling-places. Such are his specialities. He seeks them out. What huts has he not entered! At what dilapidated hovels has he not knocked, seeking their hospitality! And what amazing consequence has come to those who welcomed him! Good news, indeed! "Good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people"—if there is room for him in the inn.

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