

Highways To Happiness

BY

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“On the Road to Tomorrow”, “Little Journeys,” “Golden Stories for Boys and Girls.”

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Introduction

THE pioneer days of our history developed a physical courage that faced the hardships of the wilderness and wrested from its dangers and its resources the foundation of our modern way of life. But as in every advancing civilization, the opportunities for heroic action grew less challenging as increasing leisure supplanted the arduous labors of pioneer days. In the extravagant years since the turn of the century, our complex civilization has obscured many of the road signs that pointed to a safe destiny. Confusion in political, economic, and social life has increased our moral and spiritual hazards, and made life to millions of people a great question mark. Happiness for many has become a will-o'-the-wisp.

Through an old-time prophet God sent this message to a people who had strayed from His counsel: “Stand you in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and you shall find rest for your souls.” It is to point out that old way that this book was written, for the old way is the tried way, the sure way, the safe way to happiness—a happiness that seeks in noble living and altruistic service the resolution and contentment of our simple hearted pioneers.

The Constitution of our country proclaims the right of its people to the pursuit of happiness. We rejoice in that freedom, but the Constitution by which it is implemented provides no formula for happiness. The only source book of principles on which a happy solution to life's problems can be projected with any certainty is the Bible, the book on which our founding fathers raised our national ideals. It is from the principles and simple propositions of that Book that this volume appeals.

Out of a lifetime of mature living and tall thinking the author presents here the challenge of a new frontier, not of a forbidding wilderness to be overcome, but of a spiritual kingdom to be explored. “The discoveries of the next fifty years must be in the realm of the spiritual,” declared a late prominent physicist before he died. This is a good map book for those seeking such spiritual adventure. **H. M. TIPPETT**

Preface

INQUIRE as to the destination of almost any normal human being travelling life's highway, and you will find that his goal is happiness and contentment. Not many ever arrive at this wonderful place, for it always seems to

be just around the next bend in the road.

In my travels along this interesting highway, I have seen a good many hurrying travelers get off the road and lose their way. As a result, many of these wayfarers who might have been happy were miserable. On the other hand, I have observed some who might have found plenty of excuses for being sad, gloomy, and discouraged, but who were always optimistic, helpful, and happy. So often I have wished that I had known forty years ago some of the lessons I have learned from my contacts with my fellow travelers. I have found some satisfaction, however, in recollecting and re-evaluating them. I believe our rewards for right living need not be put off until we get to that promised better, future world.

Without any desire or effort to be “preachy” I have endeavored to record in the following pages some of the lessons that my fellow travelers have taught me. I sincerely hope they will stimulate the reader to new resolution and help him find the road to ultimate happiness.

C. L. PADDOCK.

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1. Why Am I Here?

A YOUNG MAN just out of his teens regained semi-consciousness in the quiet, white-walled room of a hospital emergency ward. Groggy and half-dazed, he looked about him. Was he having a dream, or was he really in a strange room, in a spotlessly clean bed? Slowly he moved his hands, turned his head from side to side, and then tried to move his feet.

One foot moved all right, but the other one would not. Sharp pains ran up and down his leg, arousing him to full consciousness. He knew now that he was not dreaming. Noticing his movements, a nurse came to the side of his bed to see whether she might be of some help, then hurriedly called members of his family from an adjoining room.

"Why am I here?" was his first question. "What has happened? How badly am I hurt?"

He had been testing out a new motor-cycle and had run out of a side street into heavy traffic. Colliding with a motor-car his motor-cycle was wrecked, and he was picked up by an ambulance and hurried off to the hospital.

As his memory cleared, a number of questions rushed to his mind: What is my real condition? How long must I stay here? What can I do to shorten my stay in this bed? Will my injuries be permanent? What are my prospects for the future?

This was about the last place in the world he would choose to be, but he decided that the only sensible thing for him to do was to make the best of the situation, co-operating with the nurses, the doctors, and with nature, so that he might get out as soon as possible.

Waking up in a hospital ward has its analogy in common experience. Normally we glide and dream our way along through childhood with no worries or responsibilities. In a few years we develop a sort of semi-consciousness of new relationships, our school associations and home duties contributing to our growing awareness. Then a bit later we awake to the fact that we are in a

world of action surrounded by millions of other human beings, that heavier burdens are being passed on to us, and that play days are getting fewer. There is really something important for us to do.

We may be led to inquire, "Why am I here?" We had nothing to say about our coming. We did not choose our parents or our environment. We were not asked what color hair we wanted or whether we would like to be short or tall. Home may be a very humble dwelling "across the tracks," or a mansion on the boulevard, but we had nothing to say about it. Father may be a common laboring man, a great doctor, a lawyer, or a business executive; and we must accept the standard of living in keeping with his occupation.

A very dear friend of mine was so unfortunate as to be reared in an orphanage. He knew nothing about his father or mother. Many thousands of boys and girls have been reared in similar institutions, but in spite of this handicap they have developed healthy bodies, good minds, and strong personalities. They have become worthy citizens and achieved distinction, standing out from the crowd in blessing to their fellow men. Many come to years of accountability and responsibility with a handicap. Some are crippled, blind, deformed, deaf, or dumb. Others are physically whole but mentally defective. Countless thousands are socially underprivileged.

Many again are so fortunate as to have been born in pleasant homes where the parents are Christians, read the Bible, say grace at the table, have family worship, and live morally clean lives. But millions are reared in wretchedness, and amid an environment where there is a total lack of refinement or culture. Whatever our lot, here we are. Even if we do not like our surroundings, there is no honorable way of getting out of this world. What are we going to do about it?

It would be wonderful indeed if every child could boast an ideal heredity, and be reared in a beautiful environment. Not many of us are so fortunate. At times it may seem that we have come into a hard old world, that we have not had a fair deal, that there is not much use in our trying, that others have all the breaks, and that things are against us. In spite of occasional forbidding circumstances, however, there are always encouraging factors if we look for them. It is wonderful what we can do by a little effort, aided by the encouragement of friends, and inspired by faith in God. One great writer has said that there is no limit to the usefulness of the young person who takes the Bible as his guide, and stands like a rock for principle.

My father died when I was ten years old, and my mother and I had to work at anything we could find to make a livelihood. I often worked while other boys and girls played. In college there was no monthly allowance from dad, but by honest labor I had to balance those accounts in the business office. When I entered college I had forty-five pounds in my pocket. Five years later, after I had completed my course, the school owed me seven and sixpence. There were other young people fighting the same battles with me, and I am happy to find most of them serving mankind as doctors, nurses, teachers, ministers, farmers, or technicians. Hard as the world may seem, it gives back to us just what we put into life, and sometimes more.

Happy ought we to be if we have good parents, a comfortable home, a healthy body, a good environment, and everything as we would choose to have it.

Many who read these lines may be thinking the same thoughts that have gone through my mind so many, many times. As I worked while others had time for sports and amusements, I felt that life had not given me an even break. Many of my classmates in high school and college were good looking, wore good clothes, and had magnetic personalities; but I surely was slighted when the looks were passed out. Moreover, I inherited an inferiority complex. I envied the young people who could sing and speak in public. I seemed to be in the one-talent class, and often doubted whether I had even one talent. It sometimes seemed to me that there was not much use in my trying to do anything at all, for so many more fortunate and more talented would step in ahead of me. But kind friends, interested teachers, and a mother who believed in me, encouraged me to push on. I did so, trying to make the best of what seemed to me to be very unfortunate and forbidding circumstances. I lay no claim to greatness today, but by doing the best I could with what I have had, I have accomplished more than some of my talented and more fortunate classmates.

Fanny Crosby, the noted hymn writer who was blind from the time she was a few months old, might have said, "I have too great a handicap. The world has not treated me right. Because I am blind someone will have to care for me and feed me. I have nothing to live for." But that is not what she said. When she was old enough to understand that she would never be able to see, she wrote with hopeful resolution:

**"Oh, what a happy soul I am!
Although I cannot see,
I am resolved that in this world Contented I will be.**

**"How many blessings I enjoy That other people don't!
To weep and sigh because I'm blind I cannot and I won't."**

Happily, cheerfully, and courageously she faced her problems. She might have been a liability to her family and to the world, but she became a valuable asset. She left more than eight thousand uplifting, inspiring hymns, which have been sung round the world. Though living behind a curtain of darkness herself, she spread hope and courage and sunshine over all the earth by her hymns.

Although we cannot change the background or circumstances under which we came into the world, we can decide where we are going and what we shall be and do. Some people believe that things happen pretty much by chance, that some of us are predestined to success and some to failure, that there is no Supreme Being guiding in the affairs of men and nations. Some learned men teach that our world and the whole universe have evolved through millions of years to their present state, and that life on this planet has evolved likewise. They would have us believe that lower forms of animal life have developed for millions of years and progressed through various stages until man came as the result. Others believe that there is a divine Creator who made and rules the universe, guiding the

worlds in their courses and directing in the lives of men. These people put confidence in the Bible record which says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

The Christian believes that God knows all about him, that He is interested in him and will help him in times of need. He also believes that he must give account to God for the record of his deeds, and that if he loves God and obeys Him, he will live again in a better world which Jesus has gone to prepare for him. The person who does not believe in God expects no help from a Supreme Being, and has no hope of a life beyond the grave.

I am glad we can believe what we will. But we must all admit that what we believe will influence our acts and our lives. It does make a difference, then, what we believe.

It takes a curious kind of faith to believe that some tiny molecule or atom in the dim, distant past began to revolve and move about, and in Eons of time developed into a great system of worlds, each planet or star moving harmoniously in its path among many other worlds. It likewise strains one's faith to believe that man evolved from the simple protozoa of the mud to his modern civilized state.

It surely takes no greater faith to believe that God created the universe, that He made our world, and that He placed on it varied forms of life, of which man was His noblest creation. It takes faith to believe that this God who created us and knows all about us, who loves us and helps us, will give us eternal life.

It takes about as much faith for me to believe that things just happened, that the wonders and beauties I see all about me evolved without a great designer, as it would for me to believe that if I dumped the pieces of a hundred watches together in a large container and left them alone for a hundred years, they would in time get together to make one hundred perfect timepieces.

For me it is more reasonable to believe that an Omnipotent Being created our world that He directs its movements, and that He is interested in man above all the creatures He has made. I believe such a faith will help me to be a better person. I am more happy in so believing, and more inclined to be helpful to my fellow men. I treasure in my heart the hope that if I love this Supreme Being and try to serve and obey Him, He will give me life beyond this life. Even should such hope be unfulfilled, I should still be the better for having believed it. I should be happier here, and no worse off in the end if my hopes were in vain. But if the promise of a world to come should prove true, I should certainly have the advantage over the person who does not believe in God.

2. Just Where Are You Going?

ONE DAY down in Mobile, Alabama, I entered a shoeshine parlor on a busy street. Three boys were sitting on the steps-no customers. Two of the boys were colored; one was white. The colored boys motioned to the third boy that he should serve me, and as I took my seat he began industriously to brush my shoes, talking as he worked. He was a pleasant, good-natured boy of about twelve. I asked him about his work and his ambitions.

"How do you like your job, son?" I ventured.

"It is not bad, but I am not going to shine shoes all my life!"

"What are you going to do?" I asked next.

"Well, I had five things in mind I wanted to do, but now I have decided on just one of them. I am going to be a doctor. It's a wonderful profession!"

"It will take a lot of money to go to school so you can practice medicine," I told him.

"Yes, I know that," he replied.

"Would you mind telling me how much money you make here, son?" I asked.

"I get ten dollars a week. But of course I make a lot more than that in tips." All the time he was shining and rubbing and polishing. Now and then he glanced up to answer one of my questions.

"I don't want to pry into your business, but have you saved anything toward your expense when you get to medical school?"

I was very much surprised when he gave me a quick, positive answer. "Yes, sir, eighteen hundred dollars in bonds. I have been saving my money." I was glad to add my tip to that reserve fund he was building up.

Here was a boy of twelve who knew where he was going. He had a goal in mind, and, young as he was, he was working to that end. Who wouldn't like to help a boy like that along the way to his-goal! Statisticians tell us that 10 per cent of the people have some definite aim in mind, and are working to that end; and the other 90 per cent are just drifting, they know not where. This is sad to contemplate.

In the 10-per-cent class are leaders of men, the salt of the earth, the Daniels, Esthers, Lincolns, Moodys, Edisons, Fanny Crosbys, Pasteurs, and others.

When but a youth Daniel, who later became one of the greatest prophets of the Bible, was carried away from his home and country into the court of old Babylon. Though he was surrounded by the luxury and temptations of a heathen nation, the Bible record says of him, "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat," or with the drinking and other customs of that court. He had a goal in mind, and he was determined to be true.

Suppose we should see a large ship in the harbor all steamed up and apparently just ready to pull in her gangplanks and push off into the sea, and we should say to the captain, "Are you all loaded?"

"Yes, we have a heavy cargo."

"Are you leaving soon?"

"We are about ready to pull in the hawsers."

"To what port are you bound?"

"To be honest with you, I had not thought of that. We have no port in mind." A captain of that kind would not be in charge of a ship very long. No vessel ever drifts into a definite port. You and I are sailing life's ocean. Suppose someone should pull up alongside today and ask you for what port you are bound, what would be your answer? Have you thought about a destination?

Among the great throng paying honor to Wiley Post in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1933, was an awkward, gangling, fair haired youngster. Post had made a solo flight around the world in the Winnie Mae in 186 hours and 49 minutes. That was a real accomplishment in 1933, and the veteran pilot was in the limelight. Something about young Bill Odom impressed Post. The boy stood out among the crowd. Post gave the lad a piece of the fabric from the Winnie Mae and autographed it for him.

"I'm going to fly around the world myself someday," the youth told the aviator.

Bill Odom kept his resolution. . In his late twenties he encircled the globe in 78 hours and 55 minutes. Between a Thursday and the following Sunday he flew 20,000 miles, and he made it in 107 hours and 54 minutes less than Post had taken for his world-girdling trip. There was a considerable lapse of time between the boy's resolution to fly around the world and the fulfilling of his dreams and ambitions. We can only imagine some of the sacrifices he made, the hours and weeks and months of study and practice it cost him, before he felt capable of starting on a round-the-world flight. He had ambitions, he dreamed dreams, and he made those dreams come true. He had a goal, and he reached it. He knew where he was going, and let nothing turn him aside.

Whenever I go through Flagstaff, Arizona, I always recall the story of a little boy who lived there. One day a teacher in the Flagstaff school was walking up and down the aisles of her schoolroom checking on the work of her pupils. She noticed one little fellow writing on the flyleaf of his book, and she quietly stood and read over his shoulder, "Henry F. Ashurst, Senator from Arizona." He was in primary school and not very old, but he had decided that someday he would represent his State in the Senate.

He traveled a long, hard road to reach his goal. He was a clerk in a store, a timber-cutter, a lawyer, and finally a Senator. While just a boy he decided where he was going, and he finally got there.

Chalmers was employed as a janitor in a large Ohio factory. He had an aim, however, which did not savor of janitor ship as a lifework. He studied shorthand in night school, and some time later, when the firm needed a stenographer, the young man applied for the position.

"What do you know about shorthand?" the manager asked. "Haven't you been janitor here?"

"Yes," answered young Chalmers, "but I have been studying shorthand at night school, and I believe I can do the work." He made good as a stenographer, but he went on studying. He wanted to be a salesman, and studied salesmanship after working hours in the office. One noon when he was alone a customer called, and young Chalmers sold him a cash register, much to the surprise of his superiors. They put him on the road as a salesman, and at twenty-three he became sales manager. At twenty-eight he became general manager of the firm, at a salary of fifty thousand dollars a year. Purpose did it.

If you want to reach a place of achievement, you will first of all have to decide upon a goal. Sometimes that is a real problem for a young person. You ask, "How do I know what I ought to do?" I asked that question in my late teens. I was not sure what I ought to do, but I sought counsel of some older men and women in whom I had confidence. Your minister, your teacher, your parents-someone who has been over the way and who knows you and your capabilities-will be glad to give you advice. To me it is sad to find young people finishing high school or sometimes even going to college who have no idea what they want to do as a lifework. One noted writer has said, "Let the student take the Bible as his guide, and stand like a rock for principle, and he may aspire to any height of attainment!" I believe this is true, for lives of successful men and women prove it.

"If should ever be fortunate enough to own this beautiful estate, I should be most happy," said a young man to his friend as they walked over the green fields and wooded slopes of a valuable rural property. In a beautiful spot on the estate, surrounded by nature at its best, stood a medieval castle. The place was most appealing in its sylvan loveliness.

"Yes," said the young man, "if I had a deed to this place, I'd be very happy."

Looking the youth straight in the eye, his companion earnestly asked, "What then?"

After a brief pause the aspiring young gentleman replied, "Then I would pull down that old castle and build a comfortable, modern, home. Here I would invite my friends, and together we would enjoy the luxuries of life." "Then what?"

"Then I'd get blooded horses, high-powered cars, servants, and fine clothes. I'd travel around the world. When at home I'd invite my friends in, and we would dine, dance, drink fine wines, smoke, and live in luxury." "What then?" The questioner was insistent.

"I suppose I would grow old like other people, and in my old age live a more quiet life. I would settle down in quiet retirement."

"And what next?"

"Well, I imagine I'd have to leave this home, its luxuries, and my friends, I'd die as others have died, and be buried in an expensive mausoleum."

"And then?"

"Then, then-" and he paused as if pondering. "Oh, forget about your 'then'! I haven't any longer to talk about such things. I must be going."

So the two friends parted. But the young fellow could not get away from that question, "What then?" Years later, when he met the questioning friend, he had answered that question. It did not worry him then. "God bless you, old friend," he said, "you were the means of entirely changing the course of my life."

"How?" inquired the friend.

"By a question you asked me some years ago-'What then?'"

It is a question each of us should ask himself as he looks down the road called life. It is really foolish to build and plan for this life alone.

I think sometimes that we are about as consistent as a medieval king who had a jester in his court of whom he was fond, an amiable man of good character and above reproach. Often when the cares of his court weighed heavy upon him, the king called this court comedian to his room, hoping that by his wit and wisdom the jester might cause him to forget his troubles for a time.

This comedian cheered the king in his dull moments. Often by his witticisms, his poems, and his songs he chased the clouds away. To show his appreciation of this faithful servant, the king gave him a golden bell, saying, "This small token of appreciation is yours, to remind you of my regard for you. It is yours until you find a bigger fool or a better fool than you are; then you may give it to him."

One morning the king had a worried look when the jester came to his bedside. He had been ill for some time, confined to his bed. "I'm going on a journey," said the monarch, "and I'm not prepared."

"Have you known about this journey long?" asked the servant.

"Oh, yes," answered the monarch. "It is no surprise to me."

"You mean you have known that you were taking a journey and have made no preparation whatever?"

Then the king explained that the doctors had told him that he could not get well. He was taking the journey that all must take, the journey from which we do not return. The servant was sad, for he loved his master.

"King, I must return to you the golden bell you once gave me. You are a bigger fool than I. Any man who has known that he was making such a journey and has made no preparation for it is surely a fool."

The king was no more inconsistent than millions of men and women today. We all know that we too must someday make this journey. Someday we must give an account of our stewardship; we must stand before the Judge of all the earth. How many of us are making preparation for this journey, this accounting, this judgment?

We would not work for a firm all year, and go to another establishment at the end of the twelve-month period to ask for our pay, would we? But many of us say by our actions that we feel sure we can serve the devil all our lives and then ofTer God the last few minutes of our conscious existence, and all will be well. It hardly seems fair that human beings should give their whole lives to serving the devil and then expect God to give them a home in heaven at the end of their wicked lives.

Aren't we foolish to think we can lie and steal and swear and drink and live for ourselves alone, disregarding all the commands of the Bible, ignoring the perfect pattern left us by the Master, until we face death, and then expect to reap the reward of right doing? It is true that many men and women give their hearts to God on their deathbed. The thief on the cross acknowledged the Master in his dying moments, and was received of Christ. But we ought not to plan things that way.

I Should we not in youth, in times of health and prosperity, yield our lives to the One whom we would like to be with us when we enter the dark valley? Should we not get acquainted now with Him whom we expect to receive us with open arms at the end of the way?

3. Do Things Just Happen?

JUST BEFORE the close of World War II, in the lounge car of a Southern railway train, I made the acquaintance of a traveler for a large publishing concern. He related a remarkable personal incident that has helped me to be a bit more calm and patient at times when things do not work out just as I have hoped or planned.

This gentleman was on business in a large Western city, and had made plane reservations for an evening flight to the Atlantic seaboard for an important board meeting the following day. He arrived at the airport in plenty of time, and when his plane came in he took his seat and relaxed, expecting that in a few hours he would be in a comfortable hotel room on the East Coast in time for his business appointment.

Presently the airline hostess came and touched him on the shoulder, informing him that his seat had been taken by someone with government priority. He could scarcely believe it to be true, and hesitated to leave the plane. Finally, sick at heart and disappointed, he made his way back to his hotel. Now it would be impossible for him to attend the board meeting, which was so important. There was no other way to go there. He had no reservations by train; and if he had, it would have taken too long to make the trip. He was pretty well wrought up. He could not see how any good could come from this disappointment.

The morning paper next day told in headlines large and bold that the plane he had expected to take had plunged into the Mississippi River at Memphis, and that every person on the plane was lost.

I asked him, "Did you thank God then that He had changed your plans?"

Yes, I did thank Him, and it has taught me that it is best not to get too upset when some of my plans do not work out in every detail."

Our plans are not always God's plans. In His wisdom He takes us in charge at times, and works out an entirely different program from what we would have chosen. The disappointments that come we may not at the time understand. Why we should not have our way is sometimes hard to see.

As a boy at home, I could not understand why my father and mother at times stepped in and upset some of my plans. They tried to explain to me why it was best that I should not go here or there, or do this or that. I could not understand it then, but I see now that they loved me and did what was best for me.

In Romans 8: 28 Paul assures us, "All things work together for good to them that love God!" You and I do not know the future, and may not know what is best for us, but God knows and cares.

A man and his wife went as missionaries to a cannibal island. Other missionaries who had gone before had been killed by the natives. Many hours they spent imploring God's care, for they knew full well that they were in grave danger. One day two of the headmen of the island came to their mission home and asked to see their guards. "We have no guards," the missionaries assured them. "Oh, yes, you do have guards, and we have come to see them." "What do you mean by guards?" asked the missionary.

"We planned two moons ago," said the natives, "to kill you both. We came here at night, and found a number of guards stationed about the place. We were afraid, and went back to our huts. We came the next night, and found the same soldiers all around your house. One of our daring warriors made sport of us and said he would come and kill you, for he was not afraid of guards. He came, and he too was terrified. Now where are your guards?"

Is it possible that Heaven is interested in you and me? With millions of beings in this world, could God be concerned about us as individuals? The Bible says He is. In Luke 12:6,7 we read, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: you are of more value than many sparrows." If God notes the sparrow's fall, He surely is interested in us.

The famous Antarctic polar expedition of Sir Ernest Shackleton just after the outbreak of the first world war is one of the great epics of geographical exploration. His ship, the *Endurance*, caught in an ice lock and was smashed to pieces by the pressure, the expedition barely escaping with food, tents, sledges, and the small boats. For five and a half months they drifted on an ice floe in the Antarctic Ocean, more than three hundred miles from land. It was a time of extreme hardship in sub-zero weather, with the ice cracking beneath them and the blizzards howling about them.

When the weather finally broke, they were able to launch their three boats and to land a few days later on Elephant Island. Here the main party was left, some too sick to travel farther, while Shackleton and five of his men set out for help, steering their course to South Georgia Island eight hundred miles away. It was a terrible journey, and after arriving at their destination, they found themselves on the wrong side of the island. Sir Ernest and two of his men started to walk over the snow-covered mountains and treacherous glaciers to the whaling station on the other side.

In writing of this trying experience later, Sir Ernest Shackleton recorded in his diary: "When I look back at those days I have no doubt that Providence guided us. . . . During that long and racking march of thirty-six hours over the unnamed mountains and glaciers of South Georgia it seemed to me often that we were four, not three. I said nothing to my companions on the point, but afterwards Worsley said to me, 'Boss, I had a curious feeling on the march that there was another person with us.' Crean confessed to the same idea. One feels 'the dearth of human words, the roughness of mortal speech' in trying to describe things intangible, but a record of our journeys would be incomplete without a reference to a subject so near to our hearts."

An attendant at an all-night chemist shop tells an interesting story which should be an encouragement to greater faith. He had a busy evening, and at eleven o'clock, when business seemed to be over for the day, he began to make preparation to lie down on the cot in the rear of the store, hoping to have a little sleep. The front door had been locked, some of the lights put out, and he was just falling into a pleasant sleep when the night bell rang, and he jumped to his feet to serve the customer. It was an emergency call. The customer having been served, he locked the door and again sought his bed. A half hour later another customer rang the bell, and an hour later he was aroused by the bell again.

He was not in the best humor when he admitted the boy, who thrust a prescription into his hands and asked that he prepare it as soon as possible. "Mother is 'very sick,'" the boy urged. "Please put up my medicine quickly!" We will let the attendant finish the story in his own words:

"With sleepy eyes and ill-humor I prepared the medicine, dismissed the boy, locked the door, and was about to turn out the light, when I picked up the prescription to file it, and, to my horror, discovered that I had made a serious mistake. A deadly poison had been put in that medicine.

"What should I do? Overcome with shame and self-accusation, I paced the floor. Had I known the boy or where he lived I should have followed him, to prevent the use of the medicine. I looked for the name in the telephone book, but they had no telephone. I threw myself upon my knees; with tears I confessed my sin of petulance, ill humor, and neglect, and pleaded with the Savior not only to forgive my sin but somehow to overrule my mistake. I knew not how this could possibly be, but continued on my knees, scarcely knowing what I said; my prayer was more groaning in the spirit than anything else.

"My prayer was interrupted by the violent ringing of the bell. I opened the door, and there was the boy. 'Oh,' he said, 'I fell and broke the bottle; please put up the medicine again.'

"I almost fainted for joy. Before I put up the medicine again, I slipped into my little chamber, threw myself on my knees, and simply said with tears of gratitude streaming down my face, 'Lord, I thank Thee.' My prayer had been heard and answered."

As Christians we base our beliefs and hopes on the Bible, which assures us that God, our Father, is interested in all our problems.

"But now thus said the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine. When thou passes through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walks through the fire, thou shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Isaiah 43:1,2. Jesus died on Calvary for us, and, of course, is interested in us. As our Creator He loves and cares for us.

A young man, selling religious literature, was travelling through the rugged Alps one late winter afternoon. Down in the valley he sighted a small home, and decided to descend the treacherous steep in order to visit the family living there. Cautiously, carefully, he picked his way down the steep mountainside. Arriving at the cottage about dusk, he found the farmer waiting for him, for he had been watching the youth make his way down the dangerous path.

"Where is your partner?" asked the farmer.

"I'm alone," replied the traveler; "I have no companion."

"But there was someone with you as you descended the mountain," said the farmer, "for I have been watching you for some time. Someone was close by your side as you picked your way from crag to crag up there. I know I saw two men walking side by side."

Who shall say but that God's messengers in the guise of men often walk by our sides to preserve us from harm? Has not the Lord promised us in His Word that He will be with us when in the green pastures," and "beside the still waters"?

On a blustery, stormy, winter day, at a broad intersection on a busy trunk highway I noticed a man standing near the side of the road. I was on my way home to lunch. The next day he was there again at the same place, and the next day, and for days afterwards. Blizzards came, with cold weather, sleet, and snow, but he was always there. In the pouring rain I saw him there with his raincoat and umbrella. On days when the skies were clear and the sun was shining he kept his watch on the busy highway at the noon hour. It made me wonder.

Then one day my curiosity was satisfied-I found out why he waited there by the busy thoroughfare in all kinds of weather. He had a little daughter about seven years old who was going to school. She had to cross this highway just at the brow of a hill. There was a constant stream of cars, trucks, and buses going both ways. The father knew of the dangers at that crossing. He loved that little girl enough to be there to help her safely through the traffic in all kinds of weather.

A number of times after that I saw him take her by the hand and help her to safety on the other side of the busy thoroughfare. She accepted her father's kind attentions with no apparent thought. As soon as he let loose of her hand she skipped off toward home, or ran to play with some other children. She was unaware of danger or of her father's concern. It seemed a matter of little consequence to her that he stood in the blizzard or pouring rain to protect her.

This is a busy old world. Traffic is hurried and heavy. There are so many danger spots along life's highway. Absorbed in the duties and pleasures of life, we are not always alert to the dangers lurking about us-dangers threatening our physical safety or our spiritual happiness.

At life's busy intersections a loving heavenly Father stands to help us past the dangers of today and tomorrow and other days to come. From dangers and from temptations and trials He shields and protects, if we are willing to accept His guidance and care. From just how many dangers He has protected us, we may never know. Are we unmindful of His care and unthankful for His blessings? Should we not be willing to place our hands in His, and accept His guidance and protection?

"He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." Psalm 91: 11. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." Proverbs 3: 6.

In his autobiography, "Men and Rubber," Harvey S. Firestone tells an interesting little story which particularly concerns Mr. Henry Ford, who was a close, personal friend of Mr. Firestone.

Thomas Edison, John Burroughs, Mr. Ford, and Mr. Firestone were on one of their summer camping trips, and were travelling by motor-car. While camped one evening, near the road, they saw a man walking briskly down the highway toward them. On approaching the group he said, "Gentlemen, I've had trouble up the road about a mile. I am on my way to an important engagement, and my car has stalled. It absolutely refuses to go. Do any of you men know anything about motor-cars?" Mr. Firestone answered his query. Pointing to Mr. Ford, he said, "That old fellow over there knows quite a bit about a car."

"Will you come and help me?" the stranger asked pleadingly.

"With pleasure," Mr. Ford replied.

Mr. Ford started his own car, and he and the man in distress drove back to the stalled vehicle. In a few minutes Mr. Ford had the man's car purring, and both of them were happy about it.

"How much do I owe you?" asked the man, taking out his wallet as he inquired.

"Not a cent, friend," said the volunteer mechanic. "I really don't need the money, and it was a pleasure to be of service to you."

"It is worth a lot to me to be able to get on my way. I would like to show you that I appreciate what you have done for me, but if you don't mind my saying so, if I knew as much about a motor-car as you know, I would not be riding around in a car like that," pointing to his benefactor's Ford car. Mr. Ford drove back to his friends, told the story, and they all had a hearty laugh.

The man who had designed the first practical motor-car was not stumped when confronted with engine trouble in a different make of car, for he had become master of every kind of mechanical difficulty. He could make a car engine alive when it had gone dead. In the case of the stalled car he made it run as though there never had been any trouble.

With us, things often go wrong. We make mistakes; our plans do not work. We slip and fall. Sometimes we seem to be sliding back instead of making progress. Our acquaintances think they know the trouble, and they suggest this remedy and that, but still things do not go right.

There is One who knows about your weakness and mine, for He has gone over the way before us. He is our Creator, our Maker. Why shouldn't He know more about us and our needs than any other? Why shouldn't we go to Him with our troubles and trials? He has invited us to come.

In Matthew 11: 28, 29 we are invited, "Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls."

An ambitious little chap had spent hours in making himself a small boat. He had whittled and scraped and fashioned a piece of wood until it was the right size and shape. It really looked like a boat. When he was satisfied with its appearance he hurried to the lake to see whether it would really sail. It proved to be well balanced, and rode the small waves better than he had expected.

He was having a wonderful time with his home-made toy, when the string that held it slipped from his fingers, and a wave carried the tiny craft out beyond his reach. Imagine his feelings as he saw it drifting farther and farther from shore! Frantic with distress, he appealed to an older companion near by to help him rescue the precious boat.

The older boy, without saying a word, picked up some large stones and began throwing them at the tiny craft. This only added to the little fellow's concern, for he thought that the older lad was trying to sink his boat. As he watched, however, he noticed that each stone the boy threw went out beyond the tiny craft, and the waves made by the stone brought it closer and closer to the shore. Soon it was within reach. The little fellow grabbed the string, and was happy again.

We often get out beyond our depth. And when we find ourselves in deep water we cry for help. We call to God for assistance. He does not always answer our appeals just as we might expect. Sorrows come crowding in. Troubles pile one upon another. Clouds settle down to shut us in. We feel, much as the boy felt, that the help we asked for is not coming. At times we are tempted to feel, as he did, that when we ask for help all we get is more trouble.

But when our frail craft seems sure to be sunk, God in His love may be bringing us back nearer and nearer to Him. We may feel hopeless, helpless, and forgotten. But He who notes the sparrow's fall does not forget His children, for "underneath are the everlasting arms."

When the foundations of American Government were being laid, delegates in session were seriously considering what should go into the groundwork of the nation. On one occasion Benjamin Franklin rose and, after pointing out the seeming futility of their efforts so far, made the following statement: "The longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that GOD governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?"

During the blitz of London a certain old woman seemed to stand up pretty well under the terrible strain. Someone asked how she kept so calm from day to day. She replied, "Every night I says my prayers, and I worries about what Hitler is going to do tonight. Then I remembers how the parson said God was always watching, so I goes to sleep. After all, there's no use for two of us to lie awake."

The confidence of a little girl who was riding on a train through the mountains at the time of the American Civil War is an example of trusting simplicity that older people might profit by. It was in the Northern sector, but Southern soldiers were in that area, and the passengers were much concerned. Bridges might be destroyed, or the train might be attacked. Some faces were pale. Everyone seemed worried. They wondered whether they would make the trip safely. A little girl in the car was laughing and playing. She seemed to be the only one in the coach who was not worrying. An elderly gentleman asked whether she was afraid, to which she replied with a smile, "Of course I am not afraid. My daddy's the engine-driver!"

But trust in God's providence leads us to act upon our faith, too. An old grandmother found her cupboard bare one morning. The little grand-daughter who lived with her asked, "Granny, what shall we do this morning? We have nothing for breakfast!"

The dear old saint replied, "We will light the fire, put on the kettle, set the table, and tell our heavenly Father. If He has to turn stones into bread, we shall have something for breakfast!"

Before long there was a knock at the door, and a little old man inquired whether she had a grindstone she wanted to sell. She did have, and sold it to him for thirty shillings, and they had plenty for breakfast. But before they went to the store to buy food, she said, "Let us kneel down again, and give God thanks!"

A chaplain named Johnson, noted for his religious convictions and devotion to duty, was with a group of men on a South Pacific island in World War II. A bombing raid was planned which would take them over an enemy-occupied island several hundred miles away. The men were naturally nervous and restless, but they felt a bit more secure because their chaplain was to go along. The mission was a success. They flew over the target, dropped their bombs, and headed for their home base.

Some distance out over the vast expanse of water they had to cover on the return journey their engine began to sputter. Something was wrong. They managed to make a safe landing on a small island. After scouting around a little, they found that the island was occupied by the enemy. They were between two armed forces, but fortunately the landing of their plane had not been heard. What should they do? They were out of fuel and surrounded by enemies who were well armed.

A sergeant spoke up. "Chaplain, you have been instructing and exhorting us for many months now. A number of times you have told us if we ever got in a tight place, to call on God, and He would hear our prayers. This is a good time to try out some of the theories you have been preaching to us. With no gas for our engines, and with enemies on both sides of us, unless God does hear your prayers, we are done for." It was a challenge Johnson accepted.

He encouraged the boys as best he could, then slipped quietly from his men, and fell to his knees. He prayed most of the afternoon. After supper the boys made themselves as comfortable as they could, and went to sleep, excepting one man, who kept watch. The chaplain continued praying.

In the middle of the night the sergeant awoke and wandered down to the water's edge. A large dark object had been washed up on the beach. It proved to be a barge loaded with drums of high octane petrol-just what they needed. The boys were awakened, the plane's tanks were refueled, and soon the chaplain and his men were safely back at their base again.

Thank God for fearless, faithful chaplains all through the war who braved danger and made any necessary sacrifice to help their men to know God in a time when they needed Him most. From shell holes, from submarines beneath the rolling waves, from planes miles up in the clouds, from prison camps, from hospital cots, sincere, earnest men prayed to God, and He heard their cry. Which one of us as a parent would turn a deaf ear to the cry of distress from one of his children? God says, "Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Isaiah 49: 15.

A regiment of British soldiers in India was called upon to undergo Kitchener's Test, which meant a march of many miles along a sandy track in a given time without a single man dropping out. A young recruit in the regiment found the test rather trying. After a part of the distance had been covered he said to his partner, an old, seasoned soldier, "Bill, I can't stand the test. I shall have to drop out." The tropical sun beat down mercilessly, the sand was deep and hot, and the lad was just about overcome. Seeing that he needed help immediately, the older soldier said, "Here, give me your rifle."

That lightened the load, and the lad trudged on by his side for a few miles more. When he again began to lag, the veteran took over more of his equipment, and before long was carrying all the boy's kit. When the distance had been covered and the command, "Halt," sounded down the line, every man was in his proper place.

As we pursue the journey of life there will be tests for us, too-long marches and heavy burdens. The road may seem hard and endless, and at times we may feel that we shall simply have to drop out by the way. Temptations and trials become more than we can bear, and we fear we shall sink beneath the load.

But, like Kitchener's recruit, we, too, may transfer our burdens. By our side is the Savior. He has been over the way before us, and has promised to go with us "even unto the end." He is "a friend that sticks closer than a brother," and will help carry the load when it is too heavy for us.

The disciple Peter, impulsive and self-sufficient by nature, after long years of experience, which taught him the meaning of trust, wrote to the early church, "Casting all your care upon Him; for He cares for you." I Peter 5: 7. So if you ever feel, as did the young soldier, that you must drop out, that you cannot go on, simply transfer a part of your load. Yes, Heaven is very much interested in all of us, and it is God's plan and desire that we shall all be saved. But each decides his own destiny.

4. Behind The Scenes

THE AVERAGE young person does not take everything for granted. We want evidence, and most of us are fair enough to accept proof when it is supplied us. Yet many things we shall have to take by faith. We believe some things because we have confidence in the people who told them to us. My parents told me I was born in the month of October, on a certain day of the month, in a little town in a Midwestern State. I could not prove that, but I believe it. I have no reason to doubt my parents.

How do we know there is a God who is our Father and who is interested in us as individuals? Shall we believe what we cannot see or prove? At the close of a religious service held in the open air on Glasgow Green a few years ago, a man was seen frantically elbowing his way through the crowd toward the speaker's stand. Reaching the platform as the benediction was about to be pronounced, he asked for the privilege of saying just a few words. Permission, being granted, he endeavored to destroy confidence in the Word of God, and to tear down faith in the gospel and Christianity. "Friends," he cried, "I hope you do not believe what this speaker has said. I don't believe one word of it. I don't believe in a judgment, in a heaven, or in a hell. I don't believe in God or in the devil, for I have never seen either of them!" He talked in this strain for a few moments with no response from the crowd.

As he finished, another man in the great throng asked permission to speak. His speech was short and to the point. "Friend, you tell me that a river flows near this spot, the river Clyde. I don't believe any such thing. It is untrue. You say there are shrubs, lofty trees, and green grass growing where I now stand. Neither do I believe this. You declare that the sun is shining in the heavens. You will also tell me that there is a great crowd of people standing near. I will not believe you. This is not true. By this time most of you are thinking that I am beside myself and wonder why I talk in this manner. Friends, I was born blind. I have never seen the blue sky, the tall trees, the green grass, the river Clyde. I cannot see one of you. If I deny the existence of all these things and of you, my friends, it only proves that I am blind, or I would not make such statements. And you," he said, pointing his finger in the direction from which the infidel's words had come, "the more you talk, the more you expose your ignorance. You are blind spiritually and cannot see." The message went home, and applause rose from the crowd.

Two Arabs, sitting in their tent in the cool of the morning, fell to discussing religion. "How do you know," one inquired of the other, "that there is a God, a Supreme Being, who created all things?"

After meditating for just a moment, the other made answer. "How do I know whether it was man or camel that went by my tent while I slept last night?"

"You know by the footprints," the questioner replied. The marks in the sand could not be mistaken. Though the Arab had been asleep he knew beyond a doubt that a camel had passed his tent in the night.

"So," said the humble man of the desert, "that is the way I know God. I know Him by His footprints, which are all about us."

Look where you will in this old world, you will find God's footprints, unanswerable evidences of His power, His love, and His care for us. Of the many millions of human beings in our world no two are exactly alike. In nature we find no duplication. No two leaves and no two blades of grass are the same. The flowers with their many-tinted hues of perfectly blended colors speak of an

infinite power. In the variety of fruits, vegetables, and foods of different colors, tastes, and shapes, and in the beauty on land and sea and in the sky the marks of God's creative love are seen.

Someone asked a little boy wending his way home with a loaf of bread, "What have you there?"

"I have some bread," the little lad answered.

"Where did you get the bread?" was the next query.

"From the baker."

"Where did the baker get it?"

"He made it, of course."

"From what did he make it?"

"From flour."

"Where did he get the flour?"

"He must have gotten it from the farmer."

"But where did the farmer get it?"

And the truth dawned upon the boy, for he replied, "The farmer got it from God."

"Well, then, sonny," the questioner asked, "from whom did you get that bread?"

"From God, of course," he answered.

Study a drop of water under a microscope, and you find it teeming with the minutest of living beings. With a powerful telescope we may look into the heavens, and find countless heavenly bodies, each moving in a definite pathway and on time to the fraction of a second. The brooks and rivers flow on and on, day after day and night after night, and are replenished from the sky by showers of rain. The tiny snowflakes speak of God's love of the beautiful. The mighty mountains awe us with a sense of our own insignificance in comparison with the power that made them.

God performs miracles before our eyes every day we live. The functioning of our own bodies is marvelous beyond our understanding. The reproduction of life in both plant and animal we must recognize as the power of a great designer.

Each year the same robins and wrens come back to our homes and build nests in the same locality. How do they know the way back? How do they know when it is time to migrate northward? Flying hundreds of miles, over cities, villages, and farms, they return to build in, perhaps, the very same tree.

Who can stand on the sands of the seashore with the waves lapping at his feet without feeling that a great God rules the universe? Who can ride the white-capped waves of the mighty ocean without being awed with the same thought? Who could paint the sky with the soft and beautiful blended colors of a glorious sunset—who but a great, overruling God?

Someone asked a trusting old fisherman, "How do you know that Christ is risen?"

"Do you see those cottages near the cliff?" he asked. "Well, sometimes when I am far out at sea, I know by the reflection in those windows that the sun is risen. How do I know that Christ is risen? Because I see His light reflected from the faces of some of my fellows every day, and because I feel the light of His glory in my own life."

In the rocks and hills, in verdant valleys and fruitful plains, we see reflected something of the wisdom and glory of a living, loving God, the Father of us all. We may not have seen Him, but His stately stepping are in our midst.

A young man who professed not to believe in the existence of God reasoned like this. "I believe only the things I see, and I have never seen God. I have heard you Christians talk about Him, but no one has ever seen Him. I cannot believe in such a being. There is no God."

That is not good reasoning, is it? There are in our world so many vital forces that we have never seen and cannot understand; yet we believe in their existence. In fact, the real and abiding things are those which are unseen; the tangible things that we handle, the visible objects all about us, are temporary and transitory. A well-known Bible text expresses the thought in these words: "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Corinthians 4: 18.

For instance, think of the flags that fly from our public buildings and from the masts of our ships at sea. They are made of pieces of cloth of different colors and markings. They are but the visible emblem of those cherished but invisible ideals of patriotism which every true citizen feels. Men have died that their flags might be kept flying, not merely for the sake of the cloth or material of which they are made, for it is not worth much in itself, but for the patriotism which burned within them. The flag, outward symbol of a nation's identity, may perish; but that intangible thing we call patriotism, which makes the flag significant, lives on in the hearts of the people.

We see the windmills turning, but where is the wind? We cannot see it; but if we pass through a devastated area after it has done its work of destruction, all doubt of its existence will be removed. In terrible violence it has spoken. Mute signs of its power lie everywhere.

The church that we see standing on the corner lot today may be gone tomorrow; but the religion of Jesus Christ, which the church represents, will abide. We see its fruits in the lives of men and women around us, and we feel its power in our own lives. Though invisible, it is a real transforming power in human hearts.

There is a hidden force in the hearts of men and women called love, which leads them to dare and die. A parent will sacrifice life itself for the child he loves. We feel its warmth and often witness its wonderful power, but who has ever seen it?

A gentleman asked a little fellow on the street, "Lad, is your home in this town?"

"Sure, our home is in this town! We ain't got no house for it yet, but papa's building one." The house is seen, the home unseen.

There is an unseen force running the motors of our factories and lighting our houses-we call it electricity. We enjoy its blessings, even though we cannot tell just what it is.

No, we have not seen God; but we have seen His handiwork in leaf and flower, in snowflake crystal and fairy rainbow, in grain-laden fields and golden sunsets.

I have always felt that I was taking no risk in believing, but there surely is a risk in doubting. I have nothing to lose by believing in God, but I dare not think what I may lose if I should deny His existence.

When Georges Eugene Benjamin Clemenceau died, all the world paused to mark the passing of the "Tiger of France." He did not believe in life after death, and to the end would not permit prayers to be offered for him. "Let me die before men," he said;

"I want no women, and I want no tears." As he neared the end he asked his nurse to leave the room, and requested his chauffeur to go to the cemetery at Vendee to dig his grave in the family plot. He expressed the wish that no public funeral be held, and that he be buried as quickly as possible after death. "Let me be carried in the silence of daybreak to my Vendean forest," he requested, "and there, beside the coffin of my father, let mine be placed, upright, like his. Even in death I wish to remain standing."

At his request his body was not embalmed and was dressed in his everyday clothes. Inside the casket were placed his cane, a bit of soil from the battlefield of Verdun, a vase made from a German shell, which contained a small bouquet of faded flowers that had been given him by a man near the battle line. Just before noon on the day after his death he was laid to rest in a plain grave without pomp or ceremony, in the quiet little cemetery of Vendee.

He laid down his burden with no expectation of a resurrection or of an afterlife. He entered the "valley of the shadow of death" alone and without hope or comfort.

Contrast his dismal prospects with the certainty of the prophet Job, who expressed his confidence so beautifully and with such unflinching faith and assurance. "I know that my redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." Job 19: 25-27.

As finite mortals, there are some things we do not understand. We must accept them by faith.

Augustine, who lived in the fifth century, often resorted to the seaside for meditation and prayer. With the old ocean rolling in and the white-capped waves breaking at his feet, he pondered on sacred things. One day as he walked along the beach his face wore a serious look. His heart was troubled over the doctrine of the Trinity-the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He reasoned and he studied, but could not understand how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit could be one. His finite mind could not comprehend it. For a moment his attention was turned from this problem by the sight of a happy little boy carrying water from the great, turbulent ocean with a sea shell, and pouring it into a hole he had dug in the sand a short distance from the sea. The little fellow made trip after trip with his sea shell full of water. Curious to know the purpose of all this childish activity, Augustine inquired, "What are you doing, my little man?"

Without any hesitation the boy replied, "Oh, I am trying to put the ocean into this hole I have made."

The monk felt as if a burden were suddenly lifted from his heart. The child had taught him an important lesson. After a few kind words to the busy lad, he walked on down the beach, saying to himself, "I see it now. I am standing on the shore of the great sea of time, and trying to get into this little finite mind of mine the things that are infinite."

Have we tried to do that? Are we willing to take God at His word, and have Him know some things which our minds cannot comprehend? Shall we try to reason out some of the deep things of life, and allow doubt to come into our hearts because in our weakness we cannot solve all the problems of the universe?

5. Man's Predictions

THE HARDENED OLD CAPTAIN of the ironclad Merrimac was an unbeliever. For many years he had sailed the seas, and his association with wicked seamen had not softened his heart or lessened his unbelief. He had no respect for Christianity, no time to read the Bible, no faith in God. Years of exposure and hardship had left their marks upon him, and the old seaman had to forsake the sea for a quieter life. He found a refuge in a sailors' and soldiers' home. Here there were many others who had gone down to the sea in ships."

The chaplain, who had also been a man of the sea, tried to get the skeptical old captain to read portions of the Bible, but all his urging was in vain. One day he tried a new approach: "You begin reading here with the Book of John, and each time you find something you do not believe take this red pencil and mark out the verse." The chaplain's voice was persuasive.

The old captain had met many a challenge from wind and wave, but there was a new kind of hazard, and much to his liking. He reached for the Book, and promised to read. There was a twinkle in his eye and a smile on his face, which indicated that he expected to vindicate his unbelief. There was no question in his mind but that he would show the chaplain a well-marked Book in a few days.

Each day as the chaplain made his rounds he paused at the old captain's door to inquire, "Well, captain, how are you getting on with your reading? Have you marked anything yet?" A smile would steal over the wrinkled face, but there would be no reply. Several times the same question was asked, and each time the chaplain was answered with only a pleasant smile.

A week passed by; then the chaplain stepped into the room one morning for a little visit and to ask again about the Bible and the marks, but there was no answer and no smile. The old captain was dead. The Bible lay open upon the coverlet. Where were the red marks? There was not a scratch or a mark in the first two chapters of John. - But the sixteenth verse of the third chapter was well underlined, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but

have everlasting life.” And in the margin, in a trembling hand, had been written this note: “I have cast my anchor in a safe harbor. Thank God.”

Like many a soul who has not read the Book, the old captain had doubted. But he had not read far until light broke through, and dispelled the clouds of unbelief. Joy came into his heart, a joy that only a sailor knows when reaching a safe haven after a stormy voyage.

Too many people have formed opinions, reached conclusions, and made decisions about the Bible without knowing much about the Book. Voltaire was one of those individuals. He declared that “in less than one hundred years Christianity will have been swept from existence and will have passed into history.” Thomas Paine at one time predicted that in five years not a Bible would be found in the United States. Hume foretold the death of Christianity in twenty years, but the first meeting of the Bible Society in Edinburgh was held in the room where he died. It was another fulfillment of the declaration of Jesus, eighteen hundred years before. “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.” Matthew 24: 35. It has come down to us through storm and bloodshed unsullied, and without loss of power. Floods of criticism and persecution have descended upon it, but like the ark upon the restless deep, it has ridden safely through the storm.

Last New Year’s Eve I had the privilege of being with some Christian friends at Bok Tower in Florida. In the group was a Clean-cut, refined young man in his thirties. It was refreshing to be with him. Only a year before, this young man had been a drunkard. He told me that he had hardly known what it was to be sober. When he was under the influence of liquor he was mean and quarrelsome. His loved ones were mistreated; his home was neglected. Through the influence of a Christian who lived near by he began reading the Bible. As a result, his life was completely changed and his home transformed. He is a wonderful example of what the Bible will do for a sinner.

A woman on the verge of a nervous breakdown went to consult a famous physician. She told the doctor her symptoms, and there was a long list of them. The doctor listened to her story, asked a few questions, rose from his chair as if to dismiss her, and said, “What you need, madam, is to read your Bible more!”

“But, doctor,” the bewildered and half-angry patient began.

“Yes, you go home, and read your Bible one hour a day for a month. Then come back to see me again!” He bowed her out without an opportunity for her to say more.

She felt resentful as she turned to go. But on thinking the matter over she decided the prescription was not expensive and surely would do her no harm. She was a church member, but social obligations and her business and home duties had taken her time so that she had not been reading her Bible. Worldly cares had crowded out prayer and missionary work. When she got home she rearranged her program and began to study her Bible regularly and to take time for prayer. It was a wonderful experience.

One month later she was back at the doctor’s office.

“Well,” said the doctor as he quickly glanced at her face, “I see you have been following my prescription. Do you feel that you need any medicine now?”

“No, doctor, I don’t,” she said frankly; “I’m a different person. But how did you know what I needed?”

Turning to his desk and picking up his well-worn Bible, he said with earnestness, “If I were to omit my daily reading of this Book, I should lose my greatest source of strength and skill. I never go to the operating room without reading my Bible. I never attend a distressing case without first seeking help from its pages. Your case called for sources of peace and strength outside your own mind, and I knew my prescription would help you.”

“But I must honestly confess, doctor, that I came very near not trying it.”

“Few are willing to try it,” said the physician, “but there are so many, many cases where it will work wonders.”

Thomas L. Masson, a well-known publicist, said: “I read the Bible two hours a day.... I began by reading fifteen minutes a day, and this increased my general efficiency so much that I soon found I could give up an hour and lose nothing, but gain. Then I found I could give up another hour.

“The Bible is the best business text-book there is. It makes you cheerful, persistent, honest, and gives you the kind of an understanding that looks through a superficial proposition into the source. It gives you the spiritual power to know how to be provided all the time with the right equipment to carry on your work, and nothing superfluous. Superfluous possessions cause a lot of trouble. I secretly long for them, and know that when I do, I am in the flesh.’ Real substance comes from God, and it always comes when needed. Read Deuteronomy, 5th chapter, or Matthew, 5th chapter.

“I read the Psalms through every month, according to the prayer-book schedule, which I find the best for the purpose. In connection with this, I read one chapter of the Old Testament, one chapter of the synoptic Gospels, and one chapter of an epistle, with the commentaries. By this I mean that I look up the references as I go along.

Sometimes, in two hours, I never get further than one verse; then the others have to wait. But I read the daily assignment of the Psalms first, so I won’t miss any. There is nothing like the Psalms as a spiritual gyroscope.”-Literary Digest, March I, 1930.

The Bible will give us wisdom and understanding. “From a child thou has known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus!” 2 Timothy 3: 15. Reading the Bible will increase our faith. “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Romans 10:17.

It will serve as a guide in showing us the right way. “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” Psalm 119: 105. It will clean up our lives. “Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” John 15: 3.

It will bring joy to our hearts, make us happy. “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts.” Jeremiah 15:16.

It will help us to be overcoming in the hour of trial and temptation. "Because thou has kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Revelation 3: 10.

It will strengthen and nourish our souls. "But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Matthew 4: 4.

The study of the Bible will help to fit our characters for citizenship in the kingdom of God. "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." James 1:21. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." Acts 20: 32.

It is the one book which tells us what truth is, and reveals the meaning of the unusual times into which we have come. It points out the right way, and helps us to walk in that way. It strengthens us for the trials and hardships of the way, and helps us to overcome our natural tendencies to evil. It brings joy to our hearts as we grow in grace, as we gain victories over the evil one, and as we seek to help those about us. Reading the Bible feeds our spiritual selves, and helps us to pattern our lives after the blueprint left us in the Book. It will enable us through Christ's help finally to overcome, and to perfect characters which will admit us into God's eternal kingdom. No other book will do that for us.

6. Staying Through

IN WORLD WAR II, after the surrender of the Belgians in 1940 to the German advance, the British front was left unsupported. Unable to make a connection with the French on the south, the British fell back toward Dunkirk on the Straits of Dover, leaving behind an enormous quantity of war material. The Axis powers, following up their advantage boasted their intentions of destroying the flower of the British Army. At the mercy of this relentless foe, the British fought a rearguard action, some of their finest battalions sacrificing themselves to cover the retreat.

On arriving at the Dunkirk beach, thousands of soldiers waded out into the water, hoping to see through the mist the outlines of their evacuation vessels. The Allied peoples around the world hovered near their radios, or eagerly, intently, nervously read their papers. Those were tense, dark, discouraging hours. Every boat that could navigate the channel went to the rescue of the harassed troops. Heeding not the concentrated bombing from hundreds of planes overhead and the bombardment from the heavy guns on shore, the boats pushed in to the beaches to save the British soldiers.

It seemed that nothing could live in this concentrated barrage of death. The full story of heroism, the bravery, and the suffering of that terrible time will perhaps never be told. It seems unbelievable that the enemy was not able to carry out his threat and annihilate the trapped, helpless soldiers scrambling for the tossing boats.

One episode of that last terrible morning deserves to be told and retold. Close to the gory waters of the pounding surf two British nurses were ministering to the wounded and dying. With backs bent over their suffering, helpless comrades, they did not notice that boats had come to rescue them. In constant danger from enemy fire they worked with their medicine and bandages. With death hovering around and above them, and weary from long hours of labor without food or sleep, they toiled dutifully on.

A commanding officer noticed them and ordered them into a boat. There were many reasons why they might have obeyed immediately. Their lives were in imminent danger, they were dead tired, and to disobey an army command was a serious offence.

Without even looking up, these two courageous girls shook their heads, and worked on. One took time enough to reply. "We are staying through," and stay they did till every wounded man in their care was either on a boat headed for England or dead.

The ability to stay through, to persevere to go on in the face of discouragement, may make the difference between success and failure. How often the difference between success and failure "is just a matter of time."

I felt that I was taking on quite a job one time when I started to paint our house myself rather than to pay a painter to do it. I am not a painter, but I thought I could do the job all right, if I took time enough. Just as I started to work, my young son, then aged five, appeared on the scene and wanted to help paint. I asked him whether he would not prefer to play and let me do the painting. No, he insisted that he wanted to paint, and that with his help the task would not take nearly so long. I found a small brush, and told him to paint the boards down low, where he could reach from the ground. I showed him how to rub the paint in and how to avoid laps in his painting. I climbed the ladder and began painting at the top. When I got down to move my ladder I found I was alone. My helper was gone. He had soon gotten all the painting he wanted. Many grown-ups are like my little boy. They give up before accomplishing anything.

Someone has said that Peter should have been the apostle to the American people, for it seems to be a trait with too many of us to start big, as if we would turn the world upside down and then peter out, lose heart, quit, and start some other project. We are children grown tall in this respect. Too many of us are good starters and poor finishers. In many a race a large group starts out, but only a few come in at the finish.

Pasteur, wearied by thousands of experiments, all of which seemed to have been time and money wasted, was almost discouraged; but before the light of hope flickered and went out entirely, he tried one more experiment, and that experiment gave us some wonderful discoveries in the control of disease germs. How much his going on has meant to mankind!

A manufacturer of brooms in the State of Ohio, in an earlier day, shipped his product across the country in the old prairie schooner, or covered wagon. At one time he ordered a load of brooms sent to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which was about sixty miles distant. The teamster was new at the business; in fact,, it was his first trip.

He got along very well with his load until he reached the west bank of the Allegheny River, which was no small stream at that season of the year. It was spanned by an old-fashioned covered bridge. If you have ever crossed one of those dark, covered roadways over a river, you remember how much it looked like a big mailing tube, with the near end very large and the far end very small. When the teamster drove his team and the wide load up to the west entrance of the bridge, he received a shock. He stopped his team and got down off the wagon to look the situation over. The exit on the far end of the bridge looked so small that he was sure his bulging load of brooms would never go through that small opening. He was so worried about it that he decided not to tackle it. He did not want to get stuck in that bridge. Swinging his team around, he drove back home.

Naturally, his employer was puzzled to know why he had come back with all the brooms. The driver in all seriousness explained his predicament. Of course, he lost his job, for he lacked that quality which successful men and women need—the ability to go on even when one cannot see the way through, the resolution to persevere. Most of the old covered bridges are gone, but men and women are still turning back when things look dark, when they can't see their way through. Yes, millions are starting for Pittsburgh who never reach their destination.

Margot Asquith tells of meeting a tramp with whom she fell into conversation. Curious to know how a man who was going no place in particular would decide which direction he would travel when he started on the move, she inquired, "My good man, how do you determine just which way you will go when you start on your next trip?"

"That's easy, madam," he replied. "I always turn my back to the wind." In other words, he took the easy road, the path of least resistance. He went with the crowds, drifted with the tide. He did not have the courage to head into the storm, to face the wind and travel into its bite and sting. If he had possessed the courage to do this, he would not have been a tramp. Too many of us are trying to keep the wind to our backs.

One time my wife and I drove to California, and we faced a strong head wind nearly every mile of the way. I wished that wind would let up or switch around to my back. On the way home we had a strong wind at our back, and my engine heated up a number of times. The head wind was better for me, and I did not know it. Calm seas do not make good sailors, and boys flying kites find that kites will rise only against a wind.

Thomas Alva Edison, when experimenting with his phonograph, could not see his way through one of his major problems. His machine simply would not transmit the letters. But he doggedly kept on. For from fifteen to twenty hours a day, for six or seven months he persevered, until he succeeded. And after high honors had come to him for his many accomplishments he was humble enough to say that what he had been able to accomplish was more the result of perspiration than inspiration.

Disraeli, as a young man, decided that he was one day going to be prime minister of England. His way was often blocked, but he went either through or around every difficulty. His first speech in Parliament was a joke to many of his fellow members, and they hissed him to his seat. His remark in answer to their jibes and hisses shows the mettle of the man: "The time will come when you will hear me." He drove on toward the premier ship, and reached his goal.

"Diamonds are only chunks of coal That stuck to their jobs, you see; If they'd petered out, as most of us do, Where would the diamonds be? It isn't the fact of making a start, It's the sticking that counts, I'll say; It's the fellow that knows not the meaning of fail, But hammers and hammers away. Whenever you think you've come to the end, And you're beaten as bad as can be, Remember that diamonds are chunks of coal That stuck to their jobs you see."

Many years ago there lived a boy who gave much trouble to his father because of his laziness, especially at school. One day his father told him that if he did not get through the next examination, he would be sent to a private girls' school.

The boy did not take his father's threat very seriously, but when he failed in the test, his father kept his word and sent him to the girls' school.

On his return home the boy took his dictionary, found the word impossible, and struck it out. He had learned his lesson, and learned it well. Never again did he let that word overcome him. If he had, we would probably never have heard of Lord Kitchener, for it was he who was so lazy as a boy.

For six years Adoniram Judson preached to the Buddhists of Burma before he knew of a single convert. Time after time he and his faithful wife celebrated alone the ordinances of the church. At the conclusion of the Lord's Supper they would say, "We are the church of Jesus in Burma." When he had been in the field five years someone wrote Judson asking what the prospects were for the conversion of the heathen. "As bright as the promises of God," he replied. This faithful couple persevered until a foundation was laid and souls were won.

The battles in our own hearts and in the world are won by going on and on and on. For twenty years James Whitcomb Riley tried to sell his poems, but without success. But he kept on till he did sell them. Clarence Budington Kelland received sixty-four rejection slips before his first story was sold.

Early in youth Abraham Lincoln decided to give his life to his country, but for a long, long time it seemed to him that his country did not want his services. He ran for the legislature, and was defeated; he tried to get into Congress, and failed; he sought a position in the general land office, and was turned down. Twice he was defeated for the United States Senate. He lost out in his first effort to be nominated for the Presidency, but at last gained the greatest gift the American people could give him—he became the best-loved President. Then came the greatest test of his life—the American Civil War. When criticisms fell like rain, when battles were being lost daily, when failure seemed certain and imminent, when trusted men turned traitor, when generals surrendered, he remained firm in the dogged determination to go on to victory.

The two Wright boys were called the "crazy Wright brothers" because they believed that they could make a machine that would fly. Thomas Edison's teacher said that Tom was "addled," and that it was a waste of time to send him to school. Poor old Bruno

was burned at the stake for teaching that there were other worlds than ours in the solar system. Whatever you want to accomplish, it can be done, and do not let anyone tell you it cannot. If God wants you to do something, all the world cannot keep you from it.

A legendary story is told concerning Stradivari, the renowned violinmaker. When he was asked how long it took to make a violin, he answered, "A thousand years." Then it is related he went on to explain that "violins made from young trees shielded from the storm could never be fashioned into masterpieces. It requires a thousand years in which the tree is tried by wind and tempest, beaten by sleet and snow and hail, covered by ice, drenched by rain, scorched by the summer's blighting heat, and blasted by the icy breath of winter. A thousand years are necessary in which to strengthen and exercise the arms of the branches by the gnarling of the tempests-to rejoice with fair lovers under its cooling shade-to weep with mother birds at the destruction of the young-to whistle with the gentle zephyrs of night rustling in its leaves in moonlight sonatas of love and hope." From this time of testing would come timber which, when properly seasoned and fashioned, might be made into a real violin.

Friends of Stradivari made sport of him because he spent so much time and took so great pains in making his instruments. Today he ranks with the great and good; those who criticized him sank into oblivion.

In northern California there was a deserted mine shaft, which years before had been worked by a lone prospector. For long months during the gold rush he had labored in his search for gold. With pick and shovel, drill and dynamite, he had blasted and picked his way through rock, limestone, and earth, toward the heart of the mountain, hoping always that he might be rewarded with the precious yellow metal.

Long months of arduous labor brought no encouragement, no rewards. Finally, in despair, he left his picks, shovels, dynamite, and all his equipment, and headed for his old home in the East. He said he would never return. There was no use in his going on.

Years later a large mining syndicate bought the property and reopened the deserted mine. They cleared out the fallen rocks, earth, and debris, and were soon at the place where the discouraged prospector had left his tools.

With modern equipment the new company began operations where the prospector had quit. With the first blast they struck a rich vein of gold. Only a small margin of rock had separated the young prospector from success and his heart's desire. Had he drilled one more round of holes, his life's dreams would have come true. Only another day's work!

Many of you who read these lines may feel somewhat as the young prospector felt-there is no use trying to go on. Maybe you have spent long years in preparation for your lifework and have found no opening, no place to use your talents. Perhaps you have set a goal for yourself and have been struggling and working to reach it, yet find yourself a long, long way from the destination of your dreams. Maybe your plans have been upset time and time again. Maybe relatives or friends have told you that you might as well give up. Perchance you have been overcome by temptations and have stumbled and fallen.

Do not lay down your tools! Do not get discouraged! Do not give up! There may be rich veins of gold only a few steps farther on. Work, struggle, persevere, and fight until the conquest ends in victory.

A Boston manufacturer said to a young inventor who had been puzzling his brains over a knitting machine, "Why don't you make a sewing machine." "It can't be done," said the inventor. A workman in the shop overheard the remark. It was a new thought. It aroused a new purpose, and Elias How began to brood over it. Years and years he wrestled with the idea. Model after model he built and broke, until at last in 1845 he did what could not be done, and stitched himself a suit of clothes with his own sewing machine. Luther, when he was summoned to appear at Worms to answer for his faith, was warned by his friends of the dangers to which he was exposing himself. They tried to excite his fears by telling of the dangers that threatened him. But he would not turn back. "Even should there be as many devils in Worms as tiles on the house-tops, still I would enter it." He was a man who could not be frightened, for he was impelled to his mission by a conviction that would not be denied.

Do you have some physical handicap? Do not let that discourage you. Robert Louis Stevenson was a victim of tuberculosis. Many of his sweetest child rhymes he wrote propped up in bed.

Julius Caesar, in spite of epilepsy, became the undisputed master of the world in which he lived.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning suffered a serious breakdown at the age of thirteen, and was a constant sufferer the rest of her days. Much of her life was spent in a sickroom, yet from that darkened room came the poems which won her fame of being the Shakespeare of English women.

Helen Keller, though deaf and blind, has become one of the most famous women of North America. Michael Dowling was caught in a Minnesota blizzard and so badly frozen that he lost both legs, his left arm, and the fingers of his right hand. Notwithstanding these handicaps, he became president of a bank and speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives. Someone asked him how much he thought physical disability interfered with a man's earning capacity. He replied, "From his neck down a man is worth about \$1.50 a day; from his neck up he may be worth \$100,000 a year." Further examples could be multiplied showing how handicaps and hazards spurred men to heroic endeavors.

Michelangelo was a chronic sufferer from fever. Milton was blind, and Beethoven, the musician, was deaf. Polio did not keep Franklin D. Roosevelt from the White House, though it kept him often in a wheel chair.

Do not let some physical handicap hold you back, or discourage you from trying.

Not many men who gained eminence were born with the proverbial "silver spoon" in their mouths. Martin Luther sang from door to door to get something to eat. When Dwight L. Moody was a boy his mother was left with nine children. Creditors came and took everything they owned. Many times the children had to be put to bed to keep warm. Benjamin Franklin was a journeyman printer, the son of a tallow chandler. Shakespeare was the son of a glover in a little country town. Thomas Edison began work as a telegraph operator. John Wanamaker, who became a merchant prince, began at \$1.25 a week. Lincoln was a rail splitter. George

Washington Carver as a baby was traded for a horse. He was born in slavery, as was Booker T. Washington; these two men accomplished amazing things for the world and for their race.

Poverty is no handicap. It has so often proved a real blessing. When I was a boy we used to raise Plymouth Rock chickens. In the spring of the year we usually put eggs under a number of the old hens, and we marked the day we put the eggs under the hens and the day they were supposed to hatch. I watched that calendar carefully, and on the twenty-first morning I was out to see whether any chickens were out of the shell. Several times I found an egg and heard the little chick inside peeping as it kicked and struggled, trying to get out. I felt sorry for the little chicks, and peeled some of them out of the shell. I did not want to see them struggle that way. Every chicken I helped out of the shell died. They had not had the exercise they needed to strengthen and prepare them for life in the big, cold world.

Too many parents have done something similar for their children. These fond parents think back to the times when they got up at four in the morning, worked, struggled and sacrificed to make a living and to get an education. "No, indeed," they cry, "John and Mary are not going to work as we worked." They anticipate every want of their children, and take the necessity for effort and the joy of struggle and achievement away from them. They leave them no duties, no responsibilities or struggles, so what good are they? Some of them are like the chickens I helped out of the shell. When life's real problems and burdens come to them they are unprepared. They have unfair competition with young people who learned to work and struggle to gain a competency.

No matter where you live somewhere near you will be some crepehanger, some pessimist, some kill-joy, to discourage you, to tell you that you can never reach the goal you have set for yourself. "Don't choose a medical career; it costs too much money." "Don't try to be an artist; you haven't the gift, the talent." "Farmers are having a hard time; don't be a farmer." "Don't be a teacher; it is a thankless job.

These people have always been around. They were present when Columbus talked of reaching the East by sailing west. "It can't be done," they assured him. But he cried, "Sail on!" until he discovered a new world.

They told Fulton his steamboat would never go. They told Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, that they would as soon give money to build a railroad to the moon as to invest in an experimental telegraph line. They called George Westinghouse a fool when he talked of stopping trains with wind, but what would our great transcontinental railway systems be without the air brake?

A young Christian was relating some of his experiences in World War II. With a company of his comrades he was separated from the main body of troops. Surrounded by the enemy for days, this group of soldiers found that their food had run out and that their water had become exhausted. Knowing they were without food and water, the enemy sent a messenger every little while, suggesting to them that it would be wise for them to surrender.

One night, with no food and no water, and with only one shell left, they held a consultation as to what steps to take next. They decided to pray to God for His help, then to fire their last shell into the night as a signal to their comrades. After the shell had exploded, the only thing to do was to wait. In the morning they heard the hum of a motor overhead. It was a plane from their own headquarters. Flying over the surrounded boys, it dropped packages of food and canteens of water. On one of the packages was a note: "Don't give up: We are coming."

For several days the planes passed overhead, and supplies were dropped, always accompanied with the message, "Hold on." Then there came the roaring of artillery and the marching of infantry, and the lost battalion were rescued and taken back to their own lines safely.

We, too, are surrounded by the enemy. When we are in a tight place, when we make mistakes, when we stumble, he whispers, "Better surrender. Why not give up? It is a hopeless fight. You have failed so often."

When satanic suggestions whisper to you, "Surrender," God sends along a message of hope: "Don't give up; I'm coming." So hold on, fight on. Heaven will send help just when we need it.

7. Common Courtesy

DR. R. A. TORREY was speaking one night to a large audience, and in his discourse told of a young man who some years before, at the risk of his life, had rescued from the cold, icy waters of Lake Michigan nineteen drowning people.

As he reached the climax of his story someone stood in the audience and shouted to the speaker, "The hero of your story is in the audience tonight." When the man was identified Dr. Torrey invited him to the platform and introduced him to the cheering throng. When asked what one thing about this whole experience stood out in his mind, he said, "The one fact I cannot forget is that out of the entire nineteen not one of them ever came to thank me." It is difficult to imagine human beings showing so little gratitude.

Such incidents make one wonder whether courtesy is dying out as a common virtue, or whether it has long been dead. It is unusual any more to see a gentleman in a public conveyance offer his seat to a lady. Perhaps the reason may be that many women are equally ungracious in expressing their thanks when the courtesy is shown them. Have we grown too callous to say thank you, or to show our appreciation with a smile? Are we too busy, too thoughtless, to be courteous?

A soldier in General Patton's army was sent back to a rest camp after a strenuous period of service at the front. When he returned to his outfit he wrote General Patton a letter and thanked him for the rest and care he had received. It greatly impressed the general, for he said it was the first letter of its kind he had received in thirty-five years of leadership in the army.

We surely do not wish this virtue to become lost. If each of us would be just a little more thoughtful, a bit kinder, more courteous each day to those in the home, to those with whom we labor, to those we meet, how much better this old world would be! And many of the little courtesies we might manifest are like the smile the poet wrote about-worth a million dollars but costing not a penny.

It was said of Theodore Roosevelt that he was kind, gracious, and always courteous. One night, many years ago, a colored man was walking down Forty-second Street in New York City from the station to a hotel, carrying a heavy suitcase in one hand and a heavier Gladstone in the other. Suddenly he felt a hand slip into the handle of the case alongside his own and a kindly looking white man said, "Pretty heavy, isn't it, brother? Suppose you let me help you. I'm going your way."

The surprised traveler assured him that he could carry the load all right, but the stranger already had the suitcase in his hand and was walking alongside him. In telling this afterward Booker T. Washington said, "That was the first time I ever saw Theodore Roosevelt." People may have differed with Roosevelt in his opinions, but every man was his friend.

"It is the little attentions," says a well-known writer, "the numerous small incidents and simple courtesies of life, that make up the sum of life's happiness; and it is the neglect of kindly, encouraging, affectionate words, and the little courtesies of life, which helps compose the sum of life's wretchedness."

Some years ago a convention was being held in Philadelphia, and the hotels were crowded to overflowing. A plainly-dressed, ordinary-looking couple with a German accent called at one of the smaller, out-of-the-way hotels and asked for a room. That they were tired and worn from travel was quite evident, and the clerk was impressed with their need and their open countenances.

Every room had been rented, and there was not a vacant bed in the hotel. The clerk told them as kindly and courteously as he knew how that there were no available rooms. "But," he said, "I'll tell you what I can do. I will give you my room, and I'll sleep on a stretcher tonight."

The weary callers that night were John Jacob Astor and his wife, and the hotel clerk was George C. Boldt. In later years Astor built the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel for Boldt, and the courteous clerk became an influential and wealthy man. How different his life might have been had he turned the young couple away from the crowded hotel! Astor knew that he would be a success as a hotel man, and was willing to invest money in him.

When President William McKinley was searching for a good man to represent the United States in a foreign land, he had in mind two men with talents and qualifications about equal. One of them lacked tact and courtesy, the outstanding qualifications of an ambassador. An incident which the president recalled determined his choice.

Some years before McKinley was president he boarded a tram one day and took the last vacant seat. There entered the car an elderly woman, carrying a huge basket of laundry. She walked from the rear to the front of the car, looking for a seat. None of the men offered her a place to sit down. One of the two men the president was later to consider as an ambassadorial appointee was sitting just across from where the woman stood. Mr. McKinley walked to the front of the car, tipped his hat, took the woman by the arm, picked up her heavy burden, and helped her back to his seat.

In making his choice for his foreign representative President McKinley remembered the man who had sat comfortably in the tram that night while a woman stood near by. This was the deciding factor in his subsequent choice, and the thoughtlessness, or lack of courtesy, of this individual kept him from an ambassador's position.

Not long ago I read a story that is not hard for me to believe, although I cannot vouch for its authenticity. The natives of a small Kentucky town were much excited one morning, for there was a rumor abroad that the Louisville and Nashville Railway was going through, and there was a possibility it might hit their town.

At the town's one, very ordinary hotel a short, stocky man, his clothes spattered with red mud, had registered. The officious clerk assigned him to the poorest room in the house instead of giving him the best he had. The best rooms were none too luxurious or comfortable. In a few moments the stranger was back, requesting a better room if possible. "That room is plenty good for the likes of you," exclaimed the discourteous clerk..

Disgusted, the gentleman reached for the register and wrote across the page in large, bold hand, "Surveyors, locate the L. & N. road far enough from this hotel and this town that they can just hear the whistle." He was the president of the road. It was too bad the good people of the town had to pay for this rude clerk's discourtesy.

Courtesy pays in satisfaction to all concerned. I believe it pays in pounds and pence, too.

Over in Dallas, Texas, a gentleman, dressed as a farmer or rancher, walked into the salesroom of a large firm that sold trucks. There was no salesman to greet him, and he spent some minutes examining a truck standing on the floor. Two dapper but indifferent young salesmen saw him but made no effort to serve him, in fact, ignored him. The caller went on down the same street to the place of business to a competitor.

He found a different atmosphere here. He was greeted courteously by a young attendant, and in a half hour' had bought five trucks. He handed the salesman a certified cheque, and added, "I'll be back in a month, and I want to purchase eighty of these same trucks. Can you supply them?" He was assured that they could serve him. The other firm might have had the business had those two young fellows shown some interest and a little courtesy.

8. What Is Success?

WOULDN'T IT be interesting if we had some sort of success meter that we could clamp on our arm or some part of the body, and that we could look at every now and then, which would tell us whether we were succeeding, or how near we were coming to our desired goal? By a mere glance we could see whether we were 80 per cent successful, or whether the needle was pointing away down near the failure side of the meter. If we had such a meter, I imagine we would be taking a reading quite often.

Our friends, too, would be curious to get a look at this meter once in a while to see how we rate. We might not be very willing to let them see it, especially if we were not making progress and the reading was low.

There are meters for almost everything else. When I go to see the doctor he tells me in a few seconds exactly what my blood pressure is. There is no guessing, for the mercury column right in front of me on his desk tells the truth. On the dashboard of my car are meters to tell me the heat of the engine, the speed in miles per hour I'm travelling, and how much electricity is being generated as I travel along. When up in the air I find numerous instruments right in my line of vision. They record altitude, speed, fuel supply, and other necessary information. In our homes are meters for measuring gas, electricity, and water used, and as a rule they are very accurate. Yes, there are meters wherever we go, but none for measuring how successful we are.

If you should ask a hundred people to tell you what they think success is, you would get many different answers. Every normal person wants to succeed, and sets up some standard in his thinking as to what constitutes success. Then he works to reach that goal.

Some people measure success in money. They feel that if they can accumulate a large fortune they will have succeeded. So they work to that end. They choose some business which they feel will assure good financial returns on their investment, then plan and toil and save. With satisfaction they see their business grow. With even greater satisfaction they watch their bank account getting larger and larger. They may even neglect their homes and their families. They have no time to be neighborly or sociable. They must make money-yes, make thousands. With all their energies bent on making a fortune they neglect health, home, friends, their inner self. Too many have done this. They may reach their goal, and become millionaires, but if in the making of money they neglect so many of the essentials of life, just how much of a success are they?

Another class are hungry for power. They want to sit in the seat of authority, to rule nations, to have the world at their feet. There have been many men and women with such ambitions. The names of many of these power fiends will instantly occur to you. They have lived in every age. We have had some striking examples in our own time. Climbing the ladder step by step or sometimes on the shoulders of others, they have become drunk with their success. By unprincipled maneuvering they have crushed or destroyed all opposition. As national leaders they have overrun and overpowered weaker nations. Pillaging, robbing, destroying, murdering, they marched to their goal. It is too bad these power-mad creatures have not studied their Bibles. They would have known that they never could succeed in ruling the world, for through the prophet Daniel, God tells us that there will never be another world empire until Christ sets up His kingdom here. When their goal seemed almost in sight most of these would-be rulers went down to their graves in ignominy and shame, despised by their own countrymen and by all the world.

We might continue to list the coveted goals and ambitions of men and women. Some would excel in music or in art. Others would strive to reach the top in athletics. Many would be orators, and sway men and women by their words. Thousands long to write a best seller, to be an author of renown. Maybe you aspire to be a noted surgeon, an engineer, a teacher, or a nurse. Certainly there is nothing wrong in desiring to excel in any chosen vocation,

If we measured success in money a good many of us would have to admit we have miserably failed. I have known some rich men who were failures, and some people poor in this world's goods who, I thought, had really tasted success. Jesus left us something to think about when He asked the question, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

If success were computed in terms of power, the great bulk of humanity would have failed, for not many ever wield a scepter or wear a crown. On the other hand, we have all known humble individuals whom the success meter would rate pretty high.

I could not help thinking about these factors of true success as I rested comfortably in a luxurious seat on a modern streamliner not long ago. The train was the last word in beauty and comfort. We glided so smoothly along through beautiful countryside that we could hardly realize we were travelling ninety miles an hour. A large Diesel-powered locomotive was pulling the dozen bright, silver-colored, deluxe coaches. The train was staffed with a stewardess, and porters to keep the coaches spotlessly clean. The conductor wore a pretty rosebud in his coat lapel.

At a terminal I noticed a small engine with three coaches making connections for a short run somewhere off the main line. In the yard I saw another engine shunting cars about, making up a load for a through freight. The thought occurred to me: Is that freight engine shunting cars as much of a success as this pretty, streamlined Diesel giant? Is that local train serving branch lines a failure simply because it is not streamlined and working on a sixty-mile-an-hour schedule? What would you say?

Where I live I sometimes see firemen whizzing by in a shiny red fire engine with screaming siren. On the same streets I see other civic employees with brush and cart cleaning the city thoroughfares. I see another driving a sprinkling truck, washing off the boulevards. Other employees go up and down the alleys gathering up the garbage and hauling it away for disposal. In the mayor's office are white-collar workers. If each man in the employ of the city is doing his work well, why should any one of them be considered more of a success than the others?

Roger W. Babson says: "Although fundamental economic law is a great factor in determining whether or not we are successful, we must not make the mistake of assuming a wrong definition for success. Success is not land, money, popularity, attention, or even influence. Success is that 'something' much more enjoyable than any of these things. Success is a spiritual quality, an inward satisfaction, which cannot be measured by material things.

"Land, money, popularity, attention, and influence are merely forms of conveyances. They are bridges, by which this 'something' under certain conditions and to a limited extent, is made more easily attainable. A bridge is necessary in order to carry trains from one bank of the river to the other. Likewise a certain amount of material things is necessary to take one to the desired port of success.

“However, if the bridge is too heavily loaded it breaks down, and the train falls into the river.... This ‘something’ is true happiness. It makes no difference how much land or money, power or fame, a person has; if one is not happy, then one is not successful.”

Other men who are considered successful look at this matter in a similar light. Mr. Babson once asked Mr. Edison whether he thought his struggles were really worth while, and whether it paid to work and struggle as he did in developing his ideas and in marketing his product. He replied: “It all depends on what is success. If success is the acquiring of money, or power, or fame, then the struggle is not worth while because after you get these things, you find them to be mere empty shells. If, however, you are in a line of business which makes people happy, and you get the vision of making people happy, then you are happy yourself. and the game is worth the powder.”

When asked what he considered his greatest invention he said: ‘I am probably best known by the phonograph. That perhaps has been the best advertised, and it has caused my name to become a household word. I have perhaps made the most money through the growth of the moving-picture industry. Certain patents which I had in that connection have given me a large amount of revenue. The storage battery and various other things have at times been hailed as my greatest invention. However, Babson, do you know that I consider the incandescent light as my greatest invention, although I never made much money from it. The money in the incandescent lamp business has been made by others. Still I call it my greatest invention, because it has brought the world so much happiness.’ “-Id., pages 73, 74.

It was evening, and the room was lighted by these lamps which he considered his most significant invention. He went on: “Did you realize, Babson, how as we sit here tonight that incandescent lamp is being used? The President of the United States is sitting in his library at the White House reading by my lamp. The great Premiers of Europe are using it in the great capitals of their nations. Yet this does not interest me, but rather that this incandescent lamp is being used tonight in all the great hospitals of the world. Operations which otherwise could not be performed, and lives which otherwise would be lost, are being saved by this incandescent lamp.

‘The homes of millions and millions of housewives all over the land are being made brighter and their lives easier by this incandescent lamp.... It is not being enjoyed simply by the rich. The . . . tramps, who are walking the streets of New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, New Orleans, San Francisco, London, Berlin, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, the great cities of China, India, and Egypt, are also enjoying this incandescent lamp.” Id., pages 73-76.

He measured his success in terms of service to his fellow men. The poet, Edgar Guest, must have had this same thought in mind when he wrote his poem, “Service.”

SERVICE

“You may grow to great riches and glory,
You may toil for yourself through the day,
You may write in your record and story
The struggle you’ve met on the way;
But vain is the fame that you boast of,
And wasted the years that you scan,
Your strength you have not made the most of,
If you’ve rendered no service to man.

“If something of you isn’t living
Long after your spirit has fled;
If your hand ceases toiling and giving
The minute your body is dead,
You have quitted this world as a debtor
And failed in the infinite plan;
If you leave not one roadway that’s better,
You have rendered no service to man.

“You may work for the profits of labor,
And claim all its payments in gold;
But then if you help not your neighbor,
Your toil is both selfish and cold;
If it brings no delight to another,
No rest to an overworked clan,
The earth shall your memory smother,
For you’ve rendered no service to man.

For the things men are planning and doing
Must be for the joy of all.

The sum of the goals we're pursuing
Unselfishly world-wide must fall.
And if nobody's burdens are lighter
Than when your poor being began,
You have dismally, failed as a fighter,
For you've rendered no service to man."

EDGAR A. GUEST

A successful business man has listed some stones that we must put into our character wall if we are to be a success-integrity, industry, intelligence, initiative, concentration, and interest in one's work. See that these characteristics get into the foundation of your life, and you will travel far along the road to success.

The garbage collector and the city mayor have been mentioned. The city needs both of them. Both are performing a needed service. They may both be a success, or neither of them may be. If that garbage man is using all his talents and abilities, doing the very best he can with what he has, I would call him a success. I do believe, however, that if he is doing so, the chances are he will not be collecting garbage long. He will have a more responsible position. If the mayor of that same city is using only half his energies and talents, he most certainly is not a success. God expects you and me to do the very best we can with what we have. The shunting engine could not pull the streamlined train at sixty miles an hour, and the giant Diesel might not fit very well into the job of shunting cars in the yards.

God has given each of us special talents, individually diversified to meet the varied needs of society. To everyone He has given time and opportunity to develop and use these talents. Surely if we fail to use what we have, we could not feel that we had done our best, and in that sense we could hardly be considered successful.

9. Mixing the Price Tags

A GROUP OF BOYS in America broke into a hardware store one night but, strange to relate, did not take a thing. They were not thieves but pranksters, bent on a unique form of mischief. They did no damage to the stock or furnishings but spent the time switching the price tags on the merchandise.

The next morning when the proprietor came to his store he found nails priced at \$14 a pound and lawn-mowers tagged to sell at 8 and 25 cents each. Electric fuses were \$18 apiece, and a shiny midget car was priced at 5 cents. A rubber-wheeled child's express wagon was offered for only 10 cents, and a fly-swatter for \$22. An electric razor was marked 50 cents, and a common water pail, \$20. The merchant was naturally exasperated, yet became amused at the ridiculousness of the situation.

Looking about the world in which we live today, we find values changing. It would seem as if someone had crept in while we slept and changed the price tags on virtue, faith, honor, and truth.

We work and struggle, save and sacrifice, to build up a big bank account, an estate to leave to someone when we are gone; but in our struggle and sacrifice we entirely neglect some of the worthwhile things. God and eternal life are forgotten. We have little or no time for Bible study, for prayer, for worship in His house. Then the end comes suddenly, and we find that we had our price tags mixed. We have an ambition to build a large mansion with more rooms and furnishings than we can possibly use, and forget all about the mansions Jesus told us He has gone to prepare.

The Lord advises us to give a little thought to this matter of price tags. "What shall it profit a man," He asks, "if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

When it was announced that gold had been found in the Klondike, there was a mad rush for the faraway gold fields. Men and women from every part of the country sold all their earthly possessions and started on the long, perilous journey. It was a tedious, wearisome, and hazardous trip. Many died from hardships encountered by the way, and their bones were soon bleaching along the trail.

Those who reached Dawson and the gold fields found that there were still hardships to endure. Flour sold at \$6 a pound. Kerosene was \$40 a gallon, and nails were 25 cents each. They spent the long bitter-cold winters in rudely constructed shelters, often without sufficient food and clothing. A few of them found gold, it is true; but they paid the full price in privation and suffering. Some paid with their lives. The majority discovered that it was costing them too much. One of these men was a pioneer preacher who had taken a little time off from his ministerial work and joined the prospectors in searching for the precious metal. Sitting alone in his little cabin, he did some thinking. Here he was out digging for gold when souls in darkness and sin needed his help. Suddenly the gold seemed to him as nothing in comparison to the souls of men for whom Christ died. Abandoning his claim, he made his way back to his parish and gave his life in service to the people who needed his spiritual guidance. There is nothing wrong in digging gold, but that man had his price tags mixed. God had called him to be a seeker for souls, not a digger for gold.

A friend told me of driving through the country-side with a wealthy business man. It was a balmy spring morning, when nature was doing her best to make everyone forget his troubles and be happy. The trees were in blossom, and their fragrance filled the air. The birds were singing as they built their nests. As the big car purred along the beautiful highway the conversation drifted to business. The rich man did not hear the birds; he did not smell the apple blossoms. His face had a worried look, for he had lost money on some investments. He still had large financial resources and his business, but he was miserable and despondent.

This unhappy man looked my friend right in the eye, and with feeling in his voice said, “You surely look happy. I wish I were, but I am miserable. Some of these days I am going to drive this car into the garage, close the doors, and let the engine run. And that will end it all. There is nothing for me to live for.” He had plenty of this world’s goods, but had lost the real joy of life. He had his price tags badly mixed.

Today there is a mad rush for money. Men are willing to go anywhere, to make any sacrifice, to take any risk, to get a few more pounds. Men will work in the very jaws of death for money. I have seen them on scaffolds hundreds of feet in the air, where one misstep would mean death.

Thousands of men descend into the bowels of the earth day after day, where they labor in the darkness, hidden away from the beauties of nature, not because they love to be grimy and dirty and to live away from the sunshine, but because they can get a good wage there. Some go down into the depths of the sea, taking their lives in their hands because diving pays well. No disparagement is meant here of those who honorably pursue hazardous occupations. These examples are cited only to show what risks men are willing to take to make their work more gainful.

“Money,” the poet Emerson once said, “often costs too much.” Money is a good thing, and we are too prone to criticize the mail who has it. It can be a real blessing when rightfully used. But when we start in the mad rush for money, we should first sit down and decide just how much we can afford to pay for it. It is the love of money that is the “root of all evil,” the Scripture tells us. One millionaire on his deathbed said that his money had brought him only days of anxiety and nights of restlessness. He paid too much.

Health is the exorbitant price some men and women are willing to pay for gold. No one will deny they have made a poor bargain, for there is not enough gold on this old planet to exchange for health. Some have quieted their consciences and sacrificed their principles for a few paltry dollars. Ask any man who has sold his honor, his conscience, and he will tell you he paid too dear. No bank account that cost a man his peace of mind is worth the price he paid. Thousands of men are selling the love and companionship of their families to put a few more pounds in their till. When it is too late they will ask the question, “What does it profit?” Friendship and all the blessings that it brings are frequently bartered away for gold. You cannot buy a friend, but friends can be sold for money. I have heard a good many men say, “I know what is right, but I can’t do right and keep my job.” We cannot afford to do wrong for any pay envelope ever issued.

A busy Christian farmer had an only son about whom he was much concerned. Every day he prayed that the boy would give his heart to God and be a Christian. It was spring and seeding time, and most of the crop had been sown. A religious service was being held in the town near by; and much as the farmer wanted to finish his seeding, he announced to the family at supper one evening that the next day they would lay aside their work and attend the meeting in town.

“But, dad,” questioned the boy, “you are not going to leave that south field unseeded, are you? The soil is in perfect condition, and it might not be that way again.” He could not understand his father’s actions.

“That field will have to wait,” said the father; “the meeting must come first.” The boy made his decision to be a Christian at that meeting, and the crop was harvested all right a bit later.

A year from that time the son lay on his deathbed. When he and the father were alone he said, “Dad, I’m glad you let that seeding wait last spring.” That father really knew values.

“Last week,” says a writer, “I was visiting the home of a famous agriculturalist, and he took me out to his farm. He showed me his cattle. In each stall above the head of every cow was its pedigree, along with a careful record of every pound of milk produced. During the evening a young man came and asked to take the dairy owner’s only daughter to a party. After the young couple had gone out I said, ‘Who is that chap?’ The father replied, ‘I don’t know. Just some friend of Mary’s.’” That father knew all about his prize cows, the date of birth, and the age of each; but it is doubtful whether he had as much interest in the vital affairs of his daughter. He knew the pedigree of each animal in his barn, but he did not know the name of the young man who took his daughter out and did not bring her home until two a.m.

I’d say that father had his price tags badly jumbled, wouldn’t you? Another father who was much wrapped up in his livestock told a visiting minister with tears in his eyes that his children had lost interest in spiritual things. The minister suggested some steps the father might take to help his boys and girls. The father thought a moment, and then with trembling voice he replied, “I am afraid it is too late. I have been too busy with the cows and the chickens.”

In the Book of Luke We read of a rich man whose ground brought forth plentifully. And he thought to himself, “What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou has much goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.” Luke 12: 17-20.

What shall it profit us if we gain houses and land, if we control the markets of the world, and neglect our spiritual life? Even though our bank account may be written in six figures, if we look back over a wasted life, what shall it profit? We come into the world with nothing, and we take nothing with us when we leave.

10. What Is Christianity?

ONE MORNING as a young wife was getting ready to go to church alone, she said to her husband, “Jerry, why don’t you join the church, too? You ought to be a Christian. It would be so much more pleasant for both of us. I don’t like to go to church alone. Why don’t you?”

He hated to see her go off to church alone, and he did not like the idea of staying at home by himself.

After a moment of silence he said to her, "Helen, I did think seriously for a while about this matter of joining the church, but I decided that I wouldn't." She asked him why he had made that decision.

"Well, dear," he said very seriously, "I can't see an awful lot of difference between church members and those who make no profession. You belong to the church, but I don't. You go to dances, and so do I. I play cards, and so do you. We go to the movies together. I drink a little now and then, and you drink with me. My temper gets the best of me once in a while, and I notice you fly off the handle, too. One of the members of your church cheated me in a business deal recently, and some of them do dishonest things I wouldn't think of doing. I can't see why I should bother with religion. If it doesn't change my life, why join the church?"

That young husband asked a fair question. Just who is a Christian anyway? If I have my name put on a church roll, does that necessarily mean that I am a follower of Christ?

Putting a tag or label on a person does not make him a Christian. It is disappointing to find that a good many people think that that is about all it takes, so they join the church, get themselves tagged, and then live like the rest of the world. That is why many people do not want to join the church, and why they feel that there is nothing but sham and empty profession to. Christianity. Some people think that if they go to church once a week and pay a few shillings toward the preacher's salary, they can do almost anything on the other six days of the week. Labels are often disappointing.

A man with a horse and wagon stopped at our door one time selling apples. Mother went out to look at the fruit. He said that they were Missouri pippins. Mother knew apples, and she knew at a glance that they were the common, woody, almost tasteless Ben Davis. So she did not buy. But a neighbor who had recently come into the community bought several cases of them. Of course he was disappointed. Naming them Missouri pippins did not make them so.

A curio collector in the eastern part of the country bought an old mansion, furnishings and all, near the Atlantic seaboard. He felt sure that he would find many valuable antiques in this ancient castle. When the papers had been signed, giving him possession, he hurried into the house and began to explore the place. From cellar to attic he went, examining every piece of furniture. Up in the attic he found an old violin. Throwing up the window blinds, he looked it over carefully. Imagine his happy surprise to find a Stradivarius label inside. This would make him rich, he thought. The violin alone would be worth many times what he had paid for the property. He hurried to the city and sought out an expert violinmaker. He asked what the instrument might bring, and was surprised again when told it was not a Stradivarius, but a cheap imitation with a copied label. It takes more than a label to make a Stradivarius violin.

What is Christianity? Had someone asked me as a boy, I think I might have said, "It's going to church, and sitting for a long, long time listening to a dry sermon you can't understand, and reading the Bible when you want to be out playing." In my teens my definition might have been, "Religion means to have a long face, to pray long prayers, to go to church once a week, to act sanctimonious when company is around, and never to have a good time."

This little anecdote may be more fiction than fact, but I read of a little boy and his mother who were in the country, and were walking out over the farm. Across a fence they saw a cow grazing, and the little boy asked, "Mother, is that cow a Christian?" "No, son," she answered, "animals can't be Christians. But what made you think that?"

"Well," the little fellow promptly replied, "it has a long face just like daddy's."

That little fellow had the wrong idea of Christianity, for a Christian should be the happiest person to be found anywhere.

Ask a number of adults today what Christianity is, and you will get some peculiar answers. The general idea is that it means joining some denomination, going to church once in a while, paying a little toward the minister's salary, mingling with the better class of people, and reading the Bible occasionally. It is much like belonging to a lodge or a social order.

But to be a real Christian means more than that. Of course, a Christian will belong to a church and be faithful in attendance and in supporting its finances. But Christianity really means to be like Christ. It has much to do with our inner experience. It changes men and women inside and out.

A wood dealer in a certain community had a change of heart, so he said, and joined the church. He had cheated almost everyone in town by cutting the wood he sold a few inches short of a standard cord. His cords were never 128 cubic feet. When people heard of his becoming a Christian some doubted his sincerity. A group of men were talking about him. One slipped away from the crowd and went out to measure a cord of wood this man had just delivered. He came back and assured the little group that the man must have changed, for the wood was a full four feet long yes, a little more than four feet. His heart was really changed, and that changed his conduct.

A husband who had been unkind and very selfish became repentant of his conduct and made a profession of religious conversion. Someone asked his wife whether she thought it was genuine. "Well," she said, "he got up and built the fire in the kitchen stove this morning for the first time since we were married, and he carried the water from the well. He even suggested that we ought to have water piped into the kitchen, and that I ought to get a washing machine instead of washing my laundry by hand. Yes, I think Jim is really a changed man."

A Christian will be different in his home. He will be Christ like, kind, sympathetic, tender, helpful. His wife and children will know whether he is a Christian. If we cannot be Christians at home, there is something wrong with our religion.

A minister was one time preaching on this subject, and spent quite a bit of time telling how a Christian should be kind, helpful, patient, and thoughtful of others. Two women were sitting side by side down in one of the pews. One of them nudged the other and said, "I wonder whether he lives that kind of life before his family."

"Yes, he does," the other whispered. "I know he does, for he happens to be my husband."

When Jesus comes into our hearts, when we yield our lives to Him, we will see some changes. We will begin doing some things we never thought of doing before, helping others about us, doing good. We will stop doing some things that are not Christian. The change may not all come about instantaneously. The Christian life is one of growth. The Good Book says that when Christ

returns to this earth the second time, His followers are going to be “like Him.” (I John 3: 2.) You and I should be adding the Christian graces to our lives as the days come and go. By God’s help we can grow more like Him each passing day. If Jesus is really in our hearts, we will be like Him seven days in the week.

A little girl who had been playing in the attic one rainy day, in ransacking an old trunk found her mother’s church letter, which she had valued so little that she had not presented it to the church in the new location. Hurrying down the steps as fast as her little feet could scamper, she cried joyfully, “O mother, I have found your religion upstairs in the trunk.” Too many of us keep our religion in cold storage, and even our families might not know we are Christians. But if we have Christ in the heart, the whole family will know it; our neighbors will know it; people with whom we have business dealings will be conscious of it. There will be something different about us, refreshingly different. We shall not need any labels.

Genuine Christianity is Christ in the life—a principle that will be revealed in character and manifested in good works, lifting the fallen, comforting the discouraged, feeding the hungry, speaking the kindly word, and lending a helping hand to fellow travelers.

The man who makes no profession, the man of the street, is not much interested in sermons. He seldom goes to church. But he does pay heed to the sermons lived by professed Christians. And he is impressed not so much by what the minister preaches as by what the church members live. If the minister preaches from the pulpit or over the radio, about the golden rule, and the next day one of his members takes advantage of us in a business deal, just how do we feel about that kind of religion?

Because a few church members are not Christians, some people say that they do not want to be Christians, that they will not join any church. One morning I was sitting in the lobby of a Winnipeg hotel waiting for a friend to come down from his room. As he left his key at the desk the clerk said, “You are late to church this morning, aren’t you?” My wife replied, “You didn’t go to church either.”

“No,” the clerk replied, “I never go to church any more; there are too many hypocrites there. So I just stay away.”

I thought my friend gave a very good answer: “But that is the reason I go to church. There must be some genuine Christians there, for where there are genuine there are usually counterfeits.” The fact that we find someone now and then who does not live up to his profession should not turn us away from Christianity, but should cause us to look into our own lives to see whether we are building according to the blueprint Jesus left us.

There is real joy and satisfaction in being a Christian, in trying to be like the Master. Jesus invites us to come to Him, and He promises to go with us, even to the end of the world. (Matthew 28: 20.) Of ourselves we cannot be what we ought to be, but by His help all things are possible. It will naturally take some effort to be a Christian. I believe most young people would like to be one. I cannot think that many really want to go the wrong way. In my teens many questions on this matter disturbed me, as they do many a youth today. Do I need to join a church? Which church should I join? How can I be a Christian? How do I go about it? I am glad I found someone to help me answer some of these questions that troubled me then.

11. Highways to Happiness

ON ONE OF MY JOURNEYS to the North-west I learned the secret of one man’s happiness. He was a news agent on a transcontinental train. I thought his face had an unusual something about it. I bought a paper from him one morning soon after breakfast; and in an hour or so, having read it through, I laid it on the seat opposite me. On one of his trips through the train the news agent asked me whether I wanted to keep it, and I told him I did not. He then picked it up and went on through the train collecting other magazines and papers that passengers had discarded. I followed him to a car up near the front of the train to see what he was going to do with the papers. Spreading them on the seat, he smoothed the wrinkles from them wrapped them into a neat roll, and then, almost affectionately, tied a string around them. Going out into the vestibule between the coaches, he opened the upper half of the outer door. I was standing behind him as he looked out and peered down the track. About a mile down the valley I saw a lone house not far from the right of way; and in a few seconds, as we came nearer, I noticed what seemed to be a person standing in the yard. It proved to be a little old man, stooped with age. As the train sped past, the news agent threw the bundle of papers to him, and each waved a friendly greeting.

There was happiness written all over the news agent’s face as he closed that door and went back to his work. “Do you do this often?” I inquired. “Yes,” he answered, “I throw him a roll of papers every run. He is all alone, and enjoys the papers. I get a lot of pleasure out of it. It is these little things we don’t have to do that bring us joy.” In my heart I wished he could go on with his simple sermon; but he stopped, picked up his basket of oranges and apples, and went on his way through the train with every outward evidence of a happy heart.

A farmer became tired of his farm, and no wonder, you will say, for he was born on the place. All his days had been spent in that particular district. As a boy, he had driven the cows to and from the pasture down the lane, picked apples in the orchard, swum in the creek just around the bend, and trudged across the meadow and through the woods to the little frame school-house down at the crossroads.

By the time he had grown to manhood he had ploughed every acre of tillable land each spring, helped to put the hay in the haymow each summer, threshed the grain in the autumn, and in the cold winter months hauled fodder for the stock.

To this same old home he had brought his lovely bride, the girl of his dreams. His three children had been born under the same roof that he had been born under. Now they had grown up, left the old place, and were in homes of their own.

He was sick and tired of the surroundings. He longed for a change; and often in his quiet moments he dreamed of a peaceful spot where conditions were just right, where he could spend his old age in comfort and happiness. He told the real estate

agent in town how he felt, and the agent drove out and looked the farm over carefully. He felt sure he would have no trouble finding a buyer.

When the weekly paper came on Thursday the old farmer looked over the advertisements, and found his farm listed. It stated that the Hammond place of 160 acres was for sale. The land was fertile, and very productive—a crop failure had never been known. Forty acres were covered with the best of timber; an artesian well furnished water the year round. There was an abundance of pasture-land, an orchard of fruit trees, some berry patches, and an ideal dwelling house of eight rooms with an immense yard and plenty of shade trees. The barn was large and modern; there were machine sheds and a granary with spacious bins. The place was well stocked with horses, cows, sheep, and chickens. It was on a rural mail route, and was supplied with electric and telephone service.

Mr. Hammond read the advertisement. He read it again and again. Then he got into his car and drove to town to see the real estate agent. “I read that advertisement,” he said, “and as nearly as I can figure out that’s exactly the kind of place I have been wanting. I think I will keep it myself.”

Have you ever felt, as Mr. Hammond felt, that you would like to sell out? And are you tired of your surroundings? Is life a bit drab and uninteresting? Are you dissatisfied with your work, your home, your clothes, and your life in general? Are you discontented and unhappy? If so, look your assets over, for after all, they may be just what you have been looking for.

Many girls who are brunettes wish they were blondes, and some of them wish it so much that they resort to bleaches to make their hair lighter. Some boys dislike curly hair and try to straighten out their curls. Girls, on the other hand, are spending not only time but a great deal of money to make their straight hair curly. The farmer who labors from early morning till dark often wishes that he could get away from the drudgery of the farm, and have a white-collar position in the city; and the man shut within four walls in some skyscraper longs to get out into the great out-of-doors, where he can enjoy the sunshine and the fresh, pure air. The man out of work would do almost anything to get a job, and the man with steady employment looks forward to the time when he will not have to work. Those who have to remain home year in and year out wish they might be privileged to travel, to take some long trips or even to go abroad. But talk to anyone who has to travel, living out of a suitcase, and he will tell you he prefers to be at home.

We are all seeking happiness. Not many seem to find it.

Whether you chance to live in some quiet, secluded spot, or in a busy, throbbing metropolis, the highway to happiness runs right by your own door. This road is never closed. It is open the year round to all classes, old and young, rich and poor, without respect to race or nationality. You may travel this wonderful highway if you will. There are some tolls to be paid, however; and you will notice that at these toll stations some of your fellow travelers turn back. They decide the cost is too high.

If this road is of such easy access, why do we see so few really happy people? Some travel around the world to find happiness, but return to their homes miserable and disappointed. Many who have wealth spend it lavishly, always hoping that their next purchase of some coveted thing will bring joy to their shriveled souls. Some are so sure they can buy happiness that they are willing to rob a bank or murder someone to get the money to obtain this elusive but much-longed-for something that will bring contentment. If it could be bought on the open market, there would be many happy people, for there are many of our fellow beings who have the millions to pay any price. Yet few wealthy men have known real happiness.

Some of the most miserable children I have known were those who had too many toys and too much attention, whose every wish was gratified, yes, even anticipated. I have met and mingled with young people who have had almost limitless resources at their command. They had no financial worries. Their every want was supplied with no effort on their part. Yet few of them were really happy. Wealth, however, need be no barrier to the achievement of happiness.

I have met a number of men and women whose lives seemed to be full of joy and happiness. They had found the road and paid the tolls. You can pick them out of the crowd nearly every time. Their hearts cannot contain all the joy in their lives; it bubbles up, overflows, and registers in their faces, in their actions, and in the very atmosphere they create about them. They remold their environment.

You may have read in the newspapers of a mysterious Mr. X, who for a good many years managed to conceal his identity. His real name came to light not long ago. A Canadian multi-millionaire, he traveled over Canada passing out hundred-dollar notes to people he chanced to meet. On one occasion he visited a hospital for war veterans and promiscuously handed out these large notes to patients, lift boys, and others. To a taxi driver in whose cab he rode he gave twenty crisp hundred-dollar notes for the education of his three-months-old son. He arranged with newspapers not to reveal his true name but to call him Mr. X. But a man banding out hundred-dollar notes cannot hide behind an assumed name for ever, and finally he became known as Harry McLean. He had only one explanation for his daily, promiscuous, and almost fabulous gifts. “To get happiness out of life,” he said, “you must put happiness in.” The best way to find happiness is to bring joy into other lives. Someone has said, “You cannot sling mud without getting some of it on yourself.” It is equally true that you cannot hand out happiness without absorbing some of it yourself—yes, a goodly quantity of it.

I consider myself fortunate to know a very happy man who lives in a little town back in the hills, well off the beaten track. There is no railroad into the town. It is nestled in a quiet valley in a district populated by plain, honest, hard-working, country people. This man is a furniture dealer and an undertaker. He has a good business and a fair income. You would know him to be a happy man just by a look at him or by listening to his conversation. He loves the country people with whom he lives and they love him, for it is seldom that a person loves in vain. Each year at Christmas time he plays Santa Claus to every boy and girl in the locality. Did you ever make a gift that did not bring you real joy? If so, you might as well have kept the gift, for God commends only the “cheerful giver.”

On a busy street corner in Atlanta I saw a sight I shall never forget. A poor, blind, colored man had become confused in his directions. He apparently was lost. A look of consternation and helplessness was on his face. He felt around with his white cane, but did not seem able to get his bearings. Just then a well-dressed white woman with a very kind face went to his rescue. She

took him by the arm, said a few assuring words I wish I might have heard, and then helped him across the busy street. She was a happy woman, at least she was when I saw her, for she had brought a little sunshine into a darkened life. She did it so graciously that I knew it was not the first time she had helped someone. Such deeds grow on us-they get to be habitual, and habits of helpfulness are bound to bring happiness.

One day as we drove leisurely along through a lovely little Southern town, my wife spied a sign on the front of a homey looking house-"Shrubbery for Sale." Since we had just bought a new home and needed shrubbery, we turned around and drove back. In the yard we found a cheerful, good-natured woman in her seventies-so we learned later-though she appeared to be much younger.

We talked with her as we looked over the plants and picked out shrubs we wanted. She lived all alone, for her husband had died a few years before. She did most of the work about the place herself. Much of her life she had been ill, and doctors had told her that she would be an invalid. But she determined to do something in spite of her aches and pains-something that would bring joy to others and incidentally ease some of her pains. She loved flowers, trees, and growing things. "I just decided I wasn't going to sit around and do nothing but think of my troubles and worry other people about my physical ills. So I started growing flowers and shrubs. I lived out of doors every minute I possibly could. I love to see things grow, and I have found a great deal of happiness and enjoyment in passing them on to others."

As I loaded the shrubbery into the car she talked lovingly of each plant, and seemed to have a vision of just how it would look around our house, how it would beautify our place, how it would bring us happiness.

My wife and I talked about it as we drove home. This aged widow had suffered for many years. She could not go far from her own cottage, but she had found a road leading to happiness and usefulness. She was bringing joy into the lives of others, and in so doing was finding pleasure for herself.

My neighbor has been telling me about a policeman who lives in our city, who has also found a highway to happiness. He lives in a neat but humble little cottage. Each year he spends hundreds of dollars for shoes, stockings, food, and toys which he loads into his car and takes down into the poorer section of the city to distribute among needy families. To the children he gives a toy or some articles of clothing. To the parents he may give groceries or money. He is not a rich man. He could have a much better home if he would spend his money on himself. But he thinks of, and lives for, others.

I know a woman who bakes the most wonderful whole-wheat bread, but I do not think she ever made a single baking without giving a loaf to someone. Bread baking is not drudgery to her, because she loves to do it. It brings health and pleasure to others, and to her it brings a happy sense of having ministered to those around her. Yes, the road to happiness runs right by your own door. You are not too young to travel it, and you will never grow too old.

All of us do not find our happiness in the same way, for the simple reason that we shall not all be doing the same things to bring happiness to others. The physician finds real joy in seeing his patients recover from their illness. The mechanic is happier if he can put cars into better running order. Nurses find joy in easing the pain of the suffering. The minister of the gospel knows real happiness when he leads a sinner to a new life.

Not long ago I met a millionaire industrialist who has spent his life in manufacturing all-wool blankets. He affectionately stroked and patted a stack of bed coverings as he told me of their wonderful qualities. They were made from the best wool obtainable. There was not one thread of cotton used in his plant. He lived simply. His money had all been turned back into better machinery for making more lovely blankets to beautify homes and to keep more people warm on cold winter nights. He was deriving joy from his business. Why should we not all be in a business that we can enjoy? Or better still, why should we not all find a new zest and interest in the business we are in?

Jesus is usually referred to as a "man of sorrows," but the fact is, He was the most joyful person who ever lived on this earth. We know why. He came not to be ministered unto but to minister to others. Wherever He went He brought joy and sunshine. His life was spent in doing for others. His message was, "Be of good cheer."

12. Skyscraper or Shanty

NOT LONG AGO I was looking at building lots in a Midwestern city. In a quiet, rather exclusive section I found an attractive lot. The owner gave me a price on it. "Of course, I should tell you," he added, "that there are restrictions on these lots. You must build of brick or stone, and the house must have at least a thousand feet of floor space. The total cost must be not less than ten thousand dollars." The authorities wanted to be sure that there would be no shacks going up in the new subdivision.

To each of us has been allotted a little space in this old world, a building site, if you please to call it such. On it we are building characters. There are no restricted areas. We may erect a skyscraper or build a shanty.

In our youth we lay the foundation for our building, and as we grow older we put on some of the finishing touches. If we can know what kind of material a young man or young woman is putting into the foundation of life, it is not difficult to predict quite accurately just what kind of building it will be, hovel or palace, shanty or skyscraper.

Every normal young person wants to build large and strong. No one will plan deliberately to build a cheap, temporary, flimsy structure.

How often I have seen men digging huge holes on vacant lots in the heart of a great city in preparation for a foundation. Day after day the groaning, hissing steam shovel dug out the earth and loaded it into trucks until bedrock was reached. When I saw them going down, down, down, I knew full well that there would be a building going up and up into the clouds. I have seen carpenters, too, laying timbers on a few cement blocks, getting ready for a building. Without needing to inquire, I knew they were planning to build a garage, a fowl house, or some very ordinary structure.

Youth is the foundation time in the building of character. The habits formed while young are the stones in this foundation. One weak, defective stone will weaken the whole foundation.

Engineer Williams was a little nervous as he swung into the cab of his engine and moved the throttle that started the giant on its journey. This was not a new experience, for he had been pulling the fast mail through the mountains for years. But tonight he felt a burden pressing upon him, for he had a different kind of cargo. Behind his engine were coaches and Pullman cars full of human beings, who were trusting their lives in his hands.

He had formed habits of carefulness and caution, but on this run he kept a closer eye on the track. As he rounded a curve in the road, he could see, a half mile up the track, a bridge over a mountain stream. He contemplated what steps he would take should he some night round the curve and find the bridge gone he would move this lever to shut off the steam, and then another to throw on the airbrakes. While he was thinking of just what he would do to stop his train in an emergency, the engine had reached the bridge and crossed it safely.

On each run as he reached this spot in the road, he thought of the things he would do to safeguard his passengers if some night he should round the curve and find the bridge gone. It became a habit with him. This night in early spring, when the snow was melting in the mountains, the stream had swollen above its banks. As Williams rounded that familiar curve he could see by the powerful light on his engine that the bridge was gone. Without any time lost in thinking what to do in this emergency, he merely did physically what he had been doing mentally for so many nights. There was a hissing of steam, a grinding of brakes, and in about a train's length that great monster and its cars of precious human freight came to a standstill before the open gap in the rails was reached. He had stopped that train thousands of times, until stopping it was almost automatic, but to stop it in an emergency as he rounded the bend approaching a mountain river had become a particular mental habit with him, which in this case saved hundreds of lives.

In my boyhood days, before the use of modern fire-fighting equipment, I used to enjoy going to the fire station occasionally at noon to watch the horses jump from their stalls at the ringing of a bell and take their places under the suspended harness in front of the fire engine. In the case of an alarm those horses would jump to their proper places, stand impatiently for the harness to be snapped on, and then rush from the building under the 'Urging of their drivers. This had become a habit with them, and they did it mechanically. At the sound of that alarm they knew just what to do, for they had done it in practice day by day until it appeared to be no effort at all.

At one time I had the privilege of working with a very talented man. He had a good education, a pleasing personality, and a keen intellect. I envied him his abilities. I wondered, too, for a time, why a man of such rare abilities had not climbed higher and filled positions of more trust and responsibility. Before long I knew just why. He had a habit that held him down. He could pack more biting, stinging sarcasm into a letter than any man I had ever known. He could say in a few words the most cruel things. He seemed to delight in cutting, humiliating jibes, whether by letter or by word of mouth. That brittle stone in his character marred his building, and kept him from greater responsibilities.

In school I had a classmate who was brilliant, talented, good natured, and well liked by his fellow students. Having come from a cultured home, he was a model of courtesy. His personality was enhanced by good clothes and charming manners. But he had a grave weakness. He was tardy to his classes, late to his meals, irregular at appointments, and missing when church began; in fact, he was never on time for anything. Such a pattern of living is a heavy handicap to success.

Roger Babson, the statistician, says that 70 per cent of our activity is governed by habit and instinct.

"A man's religion really determines his habits. His habits of doing business and of living really determine whether or not he is to be truly successful. These habits are formed during youth, largely before the age of thirty-five. Motives and desires give the direction to our habits. Hence the great importance of being thoroughly inspired with the right motives and desires that we may 'get headed in the right direction.' Motives and desires do even more than direct habits. They determine the port which is to be our goal of success."

Habits are not formed in a day, but become fixed patterns of conduct by continual repetition of the same acts. If a boy leaves his clothes scattered about the house instead of hanging them in a place provided for them, and continues to develop this habit of carelessness, he will find it very hard in manhood to break himself of it. His wife will be obliged to pick up after him day after day. This will continually grate on her nerves if she is a woman who has formed habits of neatness and order. Homes have been broken up over a habit such as this.

It is not difficult to change the course of a small stream, but when it has grown to be a river and has cut a crooked course, it is certainly an expensive and gigantic task to straighten its channel. One day I was riding on the rear platform of a Canadian National train between Calgary and Saskatoon. We crossed one bridge after another. A trainman told me that the railroad spanned the same river eighty times in just a few miles. The course of that stream might have been changed easily when it was first starting to cut its way through the country, but it was next to impossible now that the river bed had been cut wide and deep. Likewise, it is not difficult to straighten a crooked sapling; but if it is left to grow crooked for a few years, it will be almost impossible to straighten it. These illustrations both suggest that much attention should be given to habit formation in youth when the mind and body are pliable.

Some time ago I was privileged to visit a large, modern jail. The institution was being enlarged, and the inmates were doing the work. About fifty men in uniform, with numbers on their backs, were building a stone wall. Near by were a number of warders, each equipped with a high-powered rifle, and they were watching every move made by the men in prison uniform. Stone by stone these men built the wall-a wall that later on would imprison them, and restrict their freedom.

As I watched them I thought how like us were these men, for we are day by day forming habits, which, if they be the wrong kind, imprison us, make slaves of us, keep us from worth-while achievements, and from heaven when this life is done.

I was on a boat out on the Atlantic one morning headed for home. Our ship was to dock early that morning, and I was up before daybreak. Another passenger had risen before I had, and was nervously pacing the deck when he noticed me. A ray of hope flitted across his troubled countenance as he came my way. "Say, friend," he said almost pleadingly, "have you got a smoke? I just have to have a smoke, and I can't get a cigarette anywhere!" I was unable to help the poor fellow. Although I do not smoke and really loathe the smell of the weed, my heart went out to that unfortunate victim of nicotine. He was miserable, for he was a slave, and his master was lashing him furiously.

Recently I was privileged to eat dinner on a dining-car with a refined Christian gentleman and his young son, aged eleven. I learned that he was a prosperous real estate man in a Southern city. He wanted to know my business, and when I told him I was connected with a publishing house in the same city where he lived, he replied, "Oh, you are a Seventh-day Adventist, aren't you?" He pulled out a package of cigarettes after dinner and asked me whether I would smoke, and then without finishing his question, he said, "I should know better than to ask you to smoke, for I know you don't use tobacco." I was happy to tell him that not one Seventh-day Adventist in all the world uses tobacco in any form.

We talked for about two hours until we reached our destination. He told me he was a member of the church, in fact, a deacon in his church. "I am trying to be a Christian," he said, "and the only thing I am doing that I know is wrong is smoking these cigarettes." His little boy was listening attentively as we talked.

"I know I should not smoke," he said. "First of all, it is a bad example for my children. I don't want them to smoke. I don't believe Christ would smoke if He were on earth. I have talked to my minister about it, and he says my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and I should do nothing knowingly to defile it!"

"Have you ever tried to stop smoking?" I asked.

"Every time I smoke one of the things," he went on, "I resolve I won't smoke another." Then he told me a long story of resolutions made and broken. At one time he and two of his office pals had sworn off, and promised that the first one who started to smoke would buy a new suit of clothes for the other two. In a week they were all smoking again. It was a pathetic story, and he ended up by saying, "It has a terrible hold on me. I just don't seem to be able to break away from it." But I believe he will. I promised to send him some instruction which, if followed, would help him in his fight; and he said he was going to ask God to help him break the habit.

I have talked with hundreds of men and women who are virtually slaves to the cigarette or to drink. They want to stop. They are tired of being in bondage. Of course, the best plan is never to form the habit. After it is formed it takes real will power to break it. But thousands have done it by their own struggle and God's help. It takes a lot of fight, and too many are not willing to battle it out. God will not work a miracle to help any of us until we have done what we can to help ourselves. I do believe that when we have done all we can God will come to our help.

Some years ago by legislative enactment the cotton acreage in the U.S.A. was ordered to be reduced. To comply with this Government order, many farmers in certain sections of the South were required to plough up every other row of cotton in their fields. This reduction of the crop, it was felt, would help to revive the cotton market. The farmers of the South got out their mules and went into the fields to plough up the cotton, but there they met with a real difficulty. For many years their mules had been taught to walk between the rows of cotton. In order to plough up a row, they had to make them walk down the row itself. The animals balked. Each row of cotton might as well have carried a sign, "Don't tread on me!" The mules simply would not stamp down the cotton. Their owners found it difficult to get them to break a habit formed through the years.

Many an individual has formed some habit that he affirmed he could quit at will; but when he really tried to stop the practice he found himself somewhat in the position of the man who hurried through the gate at the station and jumped on to a moving train, hoping to reach his home in the suburbs in a few minutes. When the conductor came around he informed the man that he was on a through train, limited to large city stops. The man looked longingly at the lights in the windows of his home as the fast train whizzed through the town where he lived. He had to go on to the first stop many miles beyond, spend the night in a hotel, and return on a local train the next morning. Thousands today are slaves of habit, and find themselves on a through train.

But there is a happier side to the picture, and that is that it is just as hard to break good habits as bad ones. Those who through the years have become accustomed to pausing before meals to thank God for their food and His many blessings cannot enjoy their food without taking time to follow the established custom. Some of us were taken to church regularly throughout childhood and were taught to attend church as a matter of course whenever we were near a place of worship and a meeting was in progress. It would take an effort to stay away. In some homes family worship is a part of the daily program. It becomes a habit to read God's Word and to pray. This habit has helped many a struggling soul over a hard place in his experience, and brought him spiritual freedom.

Montaigne, the French philosopher, once said, "Cheerfulness is the most manifest sign of wisdom." Certainly, then, it is a habit trait that should be cultivated for the sake of clear thinking and pleasant social and business relationships. Cheerfulness naturally is largely dependent upon one's health, for an amiable disposition is seldom seen in a person who is full of aches and pains. Radiant health is usually the result of common-sense observation of the principles of right living. One set of good habits thus supports other habit patterns and contributes to the total charm of the personality.

We can form the habit of smiling or frowning. We can be habitually optimistic if we will. We can get into the habit of saying kind words. We can form habits of thrift and economy. We can train ourselves to be generous, helpful, kind, industrious, patient, and persevering. Sometimes a seemingly trivial habit may hinder a person's progress. I know a man who practically siphons his food into his mouth. It is an acquired table manner; and although it may seem a small thing, such a disgusting habit might keep a man down all his life, hindering his progress and raising a barrier between him and success.

Habits are formed in youth. It has been truthfully said that “it is hard to teach an old dog new tricks.” This habit-forming time of your life is really the foundation time. You are laying the substructure of your building, and that will pretty much determine what the superstructure is to be. Habits are stones in your character foundation. You cannot build a skyscraper on a chicken-house foundation. Sometimes young people reason that they will go their own way while they are young, do as they please, live recklessly, and then when they get older change their ways.

Thousands of young people have reasoned that way. Then after they have had their fling at life and have reached their forties or fifties they decide to right-about-face. They will now make amends for the past. They will build a worth-while character. If any have wasted the days of their youth, that is surely a good resolution to make when they come to themselves. But it is too late to go back and put in the foundation. That time has gone. The best they can do is to erect a superstructure that the foundation will support. It is utterly impossible to build as they could have built had they laid a strong foundation in the time of youth.

I do not have any prophetic ability; but if I may see what kind of foundation you are building in your teens and in your twenties, I can tell pretty well what your character is going to be. In this formative period of your life, then, put strong, enduring stones into that character of yours. Cultivate right habits while you are young. As one crumbling stone may weaken a building, one wrong habit indulged may mar your life.

13. Man and His Books

MAN WAS the crowning work of God’s creation, and the most important and interesting part of man is his mind. Of the millions of men in the world no two are alike. There are large men, small men, fat men, thin men. From the chin down man’s size, shape, and avoirdupois are determined quite largely by what he eats and the exercise he takes.

The chief difference in men, however, is from the chin up. The size of a man from the chin up is determined by what gets into his brain by way of the five senses. One of the most potent factors in influencing our minds is our reading.

Tell me what a person eats and drinks, and I can tell you something of his physical future. Show me a young person’s library, and although I am no prophet I will tell you something about his probable success.

Our complete stock of words is in the dictionary. We may read them and study them as they appear in their alphabetical order; and they serve the purpose of giving us information; but studied in that way, they do not affect our emotions very much. Those same words, however, can be arranged in such a way as to start a young person on a life of disobedience, lawbreaking, and crime. Let some men arrange them, and they will cause war and bloodshed. Let someone take the same dictionary and arrange the same words, and they will lead to a life of devotion, service, and self-sacrifice. It is important that we read the right books.

Pleading guilty to sixty charges of robbery while armed, four young men, all under twenty-two, confessed that they got their ideas from reading the Jesse James type of magazine.

Terms in the reformatory with lashes were meted out to three youthful gunmen. As the mothers of these boys saw them being led off to serve their sentences, they broke down and had to be assisted from the courtroom. The culprits told the judge that they had been avid readers of lurid crime fiction. If we read all the time, we would not have time to read a small fraction of the best books. Why, then, should we take our precious time to read that which is questionable?

What a privilege, what an opportunity, to be able to associate with the great and good of all ages through books! As I look back over my life I can think of nothing that has been of more help to me than good reading—the Bible; biography; books on travel, on nature, and on other informative and inspirational subjects.

John Ruskin said that whatever he had done in life worth while had been due to the fact that when he was a child his mother daily read him a part of the Bible, and made him learn a part of it by heart.

Henry Clay’s mother, left a widow, had to earn the daily bread for her family by bending over the washtub. It was hard work, but she saved every penny possible and bought books for her son. Through these books he associated with the leaders, the learned, and the geniuses of every age. He went to school in a log-cabin schoolhouse, where indifferent teachers did little to help him. But his mother’s sacrifice brought education to his home in the form of the best books.

Dickens declared that he might have been a hardened criminal or a sneaking cut-throat had he not learned as a child in the slums of London to read the great masterpieces of literature.

READING

All that Mankind has done, thought, gained or been. It is lying as in magic preservation in the pages of Books.

CARLYLE

Books are the monuments of vanished minds.

Sir William DAVENANT

It is chiefly through books that we enjoy intercourse with superior minds, and these invaluable means of communication are in the reach of all. In the best books, great men talk to us, give us their most precious thoughts, and pour their souls into ours.

CRANNING

Without a love for books the richest man is poor.

Author Unknown

Reading is to the mind, what exercise is to the body. As by the one, health is preserved, strengthened, and invigorated; by the other, virtue, which is the health of the mind, is kept alive, cherished, and confirmed.

ADDISON

He that loves reading has everything within his reach. He has but to desire, and he may possess himself of every species of wisdom to judge and power to perform.

WILLIAM GODWIN

One day while still studying in London, Mohandas Gandhi sauntered into a bookstall and purchased a little book which he said directed the course of his whole life. Livingstone used his first week's wage to buy a book. One of Edison's biographers said that between trains one always knew where to find Edison. He would usually busy himself in the Detroit public library, bravely attempting to read each section shelf by shelf. The great Daniel Webster said, "If there is anything in my style or thought to commend, the credit is due to my kind parents' instilling into my mind an early love for the Scriptures." The men and women who read are the men and women who will lead their fellow men.

Someone has said that he would not worry about who made the laws of our nation if he could edit the newspapers of the country, for newspaper reading is the chief source of information for millions of Americans.

Lincoln, the rail splitter, might have been just a day laborer in Illinois had he not had contact with good books in the formative years of his life. As a boy he walked twenty miles to borrow a book, after having read the books in his home library-the Bible, "Pilgrim's Progress", "Robinson Crusoe," "Aesop's Fables," a history of the United States, and Weem's "Life of Washington."

A prisoner in jail wrote the following letter, which warns against reading bad books and degrading magazines. "I was born of honest, respectable, Christian parentage. At an early age I laid the foundation for what I have become-an inmate of a county jail, awaiting trial upon a charge likely to send me to the state prison for fifteen years-all through acquiring a taste for pernicious books and papers.

"Dime novels were my special delight. As I grew older I acquired the friendship of vicious boys and men, and was acquainted with all kinds of vice, though I did not partake of it. I condoned it until I became so familiar with it that it lost all its hideousness to me. This familiarity led me on step by step, until now I see before me the felon's garb at the expiration of a few short weeks.

"Boys, ponder over this. A gray-haired father, delicate, praying mother, brought to the verge of an untimely grave by the bad doings of their only and well-beloved son I Boys, I implore you, read not the accursed, vicious literature of the day. It will steal away your manhood, your truthfulness, your self-control, and leave you a floating wreck upon the sea of life, like a ship without a rudder or a sail, until you commit some crime and repent when it is too late, as I am doing.

"I beg you, boys, by your fathers, your praying mothers, your loving sisters, never let one drop of liquor pass your lips. Think over what I have said, and take warning by my example. Take this for a motto: Let cards and liquor alone, be in bed by 10 p.m. and up at 6 a.m., eat regularly, sleep soundly, exercise moderately, pray constantly, and you will never be behind the bars.

"Respectfully yours,
"PRISONER!"

Erasmus, the leader of the renaissance of learning in Northern Europe, sold his clothing to buy books. Carey read Cook's voyages, and was inspired to give his life to missions. Lincoln read the life of Henry Clay, and this book colored his life. Von Hindenburg, military genius, said, "Since my days as a cadet I have never read a book that did not deal with military affairs!"

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the young man Timothy, he mentioned to him the matter of his reading: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine!" I Timothy 4: 12, 13.

Thousands of books and millions of pages of magazines are coming from our presses each year. They are all being read, of course. Some are popular, and in constant demand. Some are smut and literary garbage. Some are educational, inspirational, and uplifting. Which shall we read? Our choice will have much to do with our usefulness, our outlook on life, our success, and our eternal destiny. We cannot afford to read anything but the very best, lest we come short of our best.

14. We Are Not Machines

DO YOU EVER talk to yourself? "NO," you quickly answer; "it is only old people who talk to themselves!"

Maybe so. Not long ago I was leaving a store when an elderly gentleman passed me going in. I heard him say, "I'm going to get me a good cup of tea."

Do you ever talk to inanimate objects? Have you imagined they were alive? I have heard people doing this; in fact, I shall have to plead guilty myself.

I talked one day to a monster railroad engine. The Continental Limited had stopped at lovely Jasper Park, up on the edge of the Canadian Rockies. It is a division point where the train gets a careful checking over before it starts across the mountains. I got off for a bit of fresh air and exercise, and with the curiosity of most men I wandered down to see the engine. It was a powerful giant.

I stood in wonder looking over this mass of steel, wheels, dynamos, and gadgets. It was all ready for the climb up the steep mountain slopes. The throbbing of the idling motors of the great mogul gave it the aspect of a panting monster eager to be on its way.

There were thirteen heavy steel coaches behind it—a real load for the steep grades ahead. I admired that engine. It fascinated me to think of the incalculable power it possessed. Man seemed so puny beside it, and yet it was useless without his control.

I suppose I did not talk aloud to it, but I did do some talking under my breath. “You are a powerful giant,” I said. “There is almost no limit to what you can move. You are soon going to pull this long, heavy train away from this station with apparent ease. But just a little way down the track, Mr. Engine, you are coming to a switch!” I had been over the road many times before, and I knew there was a fork in the road there. “And big as you are, powerful as you may be, you will be just a machine when you come to this switch. You cannot decide which way you will take. You must go the way puny man has determined you must go. A mere man will throw that switch, and you will go south to Vancouver or north to Prince Rupert, as he may choose to send you. I think I would rather be a mere person with the power to choose my course.” Then I heard a familiar “All aboard,” and I hurried back to my sleeper, confident that this great giant of the rails could pull us up over the rugged Rockies and down to the quiet shores of the Pacific.

Some people wonder why God did not make us to run in a certain groove, so that we could not go wrong, and would have to do right. I have heard people wish they were like a machine, so they could go but one way.

Only today I heard a mother saying to a lively, wiggling one year-old, “Don’t touch that, sonny boy. It is hot; it will burn you. He seemed to doubt it and would slide up close to the stove, eyeing his mother and saying, “Hot, hot, hot.” He had come to the time when he must begin to make choices. He could touch the stove and get burned, and he perhaps would do it at least once, or he could believe his mother and stay away from it.

Every day, yes, in almost every waking hour of our lives, there will be choices for us to make. Always before us will be the two ways—the narrow, uphill road and the broad, downward way. Our destination will be decided by the way we choose when we come to the fork in the road. The switch at Jasper, though but a small piece of steel, could send the train north or south to destinations hundreds of miles apart.

Sometimes two roads are so close together at the fork that it seems it cannot possibly matter much which one we take. As we travel on, however, these two roads get farther and farther apart. At the end of one is our desired destination; at the end of the other, disappointment and a sense of failure. Likewise in life’s journey, one road leads to joy and satisfaction and happiness; the other, to sadness and remorse. One may lead to eternal life; the other, to eternal death.

James Russell Lowell, poet of national issues, wrote:

“Once to every man and nation
I Comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, For the good or evil side.”

If the poet is right, and if we could know just when this moment of decision is to come, which might determine our destiny, we could prepare for this one great moment. We could seek counsel of our friends; we could summon all our reserves, and after careful thought, make that one most important decision of our lives.

These times of decision come unexpectedly, however, and the choice we must make often seems unimportant. Shall I eat this, or shall I refuse to eat it? Shall I go to this place of amusement, or is it wrong for me to go? Shall I associate with this young man or woman, or shall I choose other companions? Shall I read this book, or shall I shun it? Shall I smoke; shall I take a social glass; shall I gamble? Shall I marry this person, or would I later regret it? Shall I be a doctor, a farmer, a teacher, or a minister? It is our privilege to make our own decisions.

So many have thought destiny to be a matter of chance. On the contrary, it is a matter of choice or choices. Like it or not, choose we must. We cannot escape that responsibility. For a time, while we are children growing up, kind parents make decisions for us, but there comes a time when they can only advise, and we must take a hand in shaping our own destiny.

Often, when travelling through the Rockies by the Canadian Pacific Railway, I have passed the Great Divide. At this point a tiny stream, fed by the melting snow from the towering peaks, comes rushing down toward the track, all unmindful of the fact that just a few rods farther on is the Great Divide. But within sight of the train a cement flume in the shape of the letter Y has been constructed. As the water, cold as the snows, and as clear as the blue sky above it, rushes into this man-made flume, it separates, one part flowing east and north into the Hudson Bay, and the other west and south into the broad Pacific.

Never do I see this Great Divide but that I think what a picture it affords of our lives. With the innocence, the vivacity, the recklessness of youth, we travel the sunlit paths of young manhood and young womanhood, little realizing that today, perhaps within an hour, we may come to the great divide in our experience. Today, by a single action, I may determine whether my life shall be one of blessing and service or one of selfishness and disappointment.

We like to be independent, to have our own way, to do as we please. We often say, “It is nobody’s business what I do.” We don’t like to be hampered, tied, restricted. In that respect modern youth are not much different from the young people of other days. And we are more or less independent in the matter of our choices. Parents, guardians, and friends may seek to guide us in our decisions, but in the ultimate the decision rests with us. We choose which way we will take. Thank God, we can choose our own way, but we should do it intelligently.

At one time I worked for a man who took great pride in his ability to drink beer or to let it alone. He had a prosperous business. He declared he drank only moderately of beer and stronger drink. Today he is homeless and penniless. He went too far down the wrong road, and could not retrace his steps. He was not so strong as he thought. He overestimated his ability. You may have temptations to drink intoxicating beverages. In fact, you may be considered old fashioned if you do not do it. The cocktail bars in the hotels and on the trains are patronized not by tramps or derelicts but by the well-dressed and the elite of society.

But remember one thing, the crowds are not always in the right. They have seldom been right. Often when driving my car I am impressed with my tendency at a fork in the road to take the way that is traveled most. We cannot allow such inclination to be a deciding factor in the highway of life. The well beaten path is usually not the right way in the spiritual life. The crowds are generally travelling the broad, downward road. Right is usually in the minority.

Some advertisements would have us believe that it is smart to drink this or that alcoholic beverage. We will be a great deal smarter if we let it all alone, for no good ever came to any person from drinking liquor. It has brought only misery, shame, and death to millions. You will be smart never to take the first glass.

The devil will hold out plenty of inducements to you. But he has been a liar from the beginning. His gay, tinsel roads are not properly marked. You cannot depend on his road signs. I have talked with many persons who have traveled his highways, and they all tell the same story. The road that at its beginning looks to be inviting ends in blackness, sorrow, and despair.

As a young man or woman full of life and energy, you will be seeking some kind of entertainment. You must choose what it will be. Some of you may be tempted to explore the great white ways of gaiety and pleasure. These are moral hazards to well meaning youth. Why choose these when there is available a variety of uplifting, healthful entertainment and recreation? To choose the unclean, the degrading, and the blighting when you can enjoy entertainment that will fill your leisure hours with pleasure and happiness is blind folly indeed. There will be choices to make in regard to your associations and companions-perhaps a life companion. So much depends on the decisions you make in this regard. Your companions will lift you higher, or drag you down. Some years ago I was talking to a Christian young woman who was keeping company with a young man who made no profession of Christianity. I tried to point out to her the difficulties that might come into her life if she married a man with different ambitions, ideals, and goals. She knew that others had had difficulties under similar conditions, but she was sure it would be different with her. They were married. She did not succeed in getting him to join her church as she had hoped. She wearied of going to church alone, of worshipping alone at home, and before long she was going his way. When I saw her last she was far from happy. How could she be happy when she knew that every day she was doing wrong?

You and I must choose whether we will serve Christ or Satan. Some have attempted to give allegiance to both, but this simply cannot be done. The Bible declares, "You cannot serve God and mammon." I am thankful that we have the privilege of choosing. Would it not be terrible if we were compelled to do right and be herded into heaven against our wishes? Imagine the world confined in heaven and compelled to worship God! That would not be heaven, would it?

No, you are not a machine, but a rational, responsible human being. Every day you must use your intelligence in making choices. You may consult your guidebook, the Bible; you may counsel with your friends, your loved ones; but you must make the decisions. It is a wonderful privilege, a tremendous responsibility. Do not decide hastily. Take time to consider well your choices. There will ever be before you the two ways. May the Lord help you to take the right way, for it is you, not fate, that determines your life's objectives and eternal destiny.

15. Let's See Your Tongue

MOST OF US have been sick at some time in our lives, and have called in a doctor. I remember very distinctly the visits of our family doctor to our home when I was a boy. I have seen him per~ 11 his chair up close to the bedside of the patient, take out his watch, and check the pulse. I have heard him say, "Now stick out your tongue." That may not be the modern way of diagnosis. If the doctor found the tongue thickly covered with a yellowish coating, he usually said, "You are bilious. Your stomach is upset." Then he prescribed a diet and perchance some medicine to purge the intestinal tract. Strange, isn't it that a little organ like the tongue so far removed from the stomach should be a sort of index to our physical condition!

When one gets up in the morning with a bad taste in his mouth, a foul breath, and a coated tongue, he is pretty sure all is not well in the digestive tract. It is a sure indication of trouble inside, caused by too much food, wrong combinations of food and drink, or perhaps other forms of dissipation.

But the tongue tells more than that. It tells of our character, our interests, our joys, our sorrows, our fondest hopes, and our highest aims.

Listen to an individual talk for a few minutes, and his conversation will tell you a great deal about his character. If his speech is pure, you will know its source is pure. If his conversation is interspersed with profanity, cheap slang, and vulgar expressions, you can be assured the mind is not perfectly clean nor the heart truly sound. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."

I have talked with men who seemed to enjoy conversing on only one subject, that of pounds, shillings, and pence. Try to turn to any other subject, and they will soon work back to the one cherished passion of their hearts. Listen to some people chatter for a short time, and their tongues will tell you of lives spent wholly in the search for ephemeral pleasures. Now and then we meet a loquacious individual who talks incessantly, and never says anything. Such a tongue indicates an empty life. How true is the old saying, "An empty wagon rattles the loudest"

Slangy talk indicates a lack of words, a small vocabulary. Someone has said that slang is "the weed of language." A tongue covered with the yellowish coating of gossip and slander reveals a heart spring of jealousy and hatred. The person who is in trouble or discouraged is inclined to tell the world about it, even though, as Elbert Hubbard so truthfully said, the world doesn't care to hear about our stomach-aches.

If our souls are on fire with some grand and noble truth, our tongues will refuse to keep the secret. We simply must tell others. Seek as we may to hide from man the hidden secrets of our inmost lives, be these secrets unbounded joys or unbearable

sorrows, scholarly wisdom or childish foolishness, our conversation will sooner or later reveal to the world what lies hidden beneath the surface.

If we have spent years in educational institutions, we won't need to tack the degrees on to our names to let people know we are educated. If we are Christians, we won't have to have a sign on our backs. The world will know by our talk if by no other means. It was said of Jesus that never man spoke as He spoke, and the reason was that no man had ever lived as He lived.

A young man on his deathbed expressed a wish that his words and deeds might all be gathered up and buried with him. He was ashamed of his life record; but, alas! his words could not be recalled; his influence could not be buried with him.

Words we utter today live on as long as time shall last. The unkind, cutting remarks once past our lips can never be recalled. The mightiest conqueror this world has ever known cannot call back a single day's record. Many of our words may have been forgotten by us, but one day they will testify for or against us. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Matthew 12: 37.

"Boys flying kites haul in their white-winged birds, You can't do that way when you're flying words.

Thoughts unexpressed may sometimes fall back dead, But God Himself can't kill them once they're said."
Author Unknown

A woman whose brawling, boisterous husband caused constant discord in the home went to her pastor for advice. She felt her burden was becoming unbearable, and she must find relief from some source. The tenderhearted old clergyman had helped to restore peace to more than one troubled household, so he listened patiently to her story.

"My husband flies into a rage at the least provocation," she said. "If the supper is not ready when he comes in from his work, he storms and curses. Every day something happens to upset him. When he flies into a rage I usually lose my temper, too, and it ends in a family quarrel. I can't stand it any longer. I have come to you for help."

"No," the pastor said, "you cannot go on in this way any longer. Every home should be a little heaven; and if we cannot live happily together here, the chances are we will never get into that better world. The unruly tongue will ruin and wreck any home. I have some medicine that I have prescribed in many cases just like yours, and it works wonders. If you will follow the directions carefully, you will soon notice a marked change in your husband. When this bottle is empty come again, and I will refill it for you without any charge. Be sure to report the results to me."

The husband was to know nothing about this medicine. The directions said, "When your companion becomes angry and says unkind words, slip into another room and take two large table-spoonfuls. Do not swallow a single drop, but hold it in the mouth until said companion has quieted down and ceased his unkind remarks."

That very night the husband became violently angry soon after reaching home. He railed and raved as usual, uttering the most cutting and provocative words. The wife slipped quietly into the adjoining room, and took a good big dose of the clergyman's remedy. Coming back to the kitchen, she held the precious medicine in her mouth, going about her work, while the husband continued his tirade.

The results were wonderful. She was delighted. Each night the remedy was used, and it seemed each evening that her husband had less to say. The bottle being soon emptied, she returned to have it refilled. By the time this second bottle had been used, her husband was a changed man, and their home a different place.

When she reported to the wise old clergyman how miraculously the remedy had worked and how happy they were in their home, she asked for a third bottle full. He told her that she could fill the bottle from her own well.

She may have been what we call a bit dumb, or slow in catching on. It did come to her finally that the trouble in their home had ceased when she had stopped answering in kind her husband's cutting remarks. Before, when he had said unkind words, she usually had an unkind answer. One word called for another. When she used the prescribed remedy and could not answer her husband, the trouble soon ceased. The story is only a fable, of course, but the point is it takes two to make a quarrel in any home. "A soft answer turns away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." Proverbs 15:1. "A soft tongue breaks the bone." Proverbs 25: 15.

A contaminated well cannot give forth pure water; neither can pure speech come from a heart filled with wickedness. "A fool's voice is known by multitude of words." Ecclesiastes. 5:3.

During a visit to New Orleans with some friends I sauntered down to the levee along the Mississippi River, and was much interested in watching the laborers unload the river boats. Down on the bottom deck of one of the steamers we found a poor crippled man, well along in years and unable to work. His feet were deformed, and his hands were all out of shape. He had no money and no home. His clothes were ragged and dirty. His fellows, who had nothing to spare, had divided their simple meal with this poor unfortunate, each taking something from his dinner and giving to him.

Each of us gave him a coin, and one of our party talked to him a bit. "You all are from the north, ain't you?" the cripple asked. The man who had talked with him had not said one word about where he lived, but by hearing him talk this poor unfortunate knew he came from the North. His speech betrayed him.

Words may encourage and uplift and inspire, or they may depress, dishearten, and tear down. What scars those unkind words leave! Homes have been wrecked, lives broken, and hopes blasted by hasty, biting, stinging remarks. Moody, the great evangelist, said that he was led to give his heart to God by a thoughtful Sunday school teacher who spoke encouragingly to him.

A humble peasant once went to his pastor for advice, hoping to ease his troubled conscience. It seems he had circulated a vile story about an acquaintance, and had later found out that the story was untrue. That is often the case.

"I can tell you what to do to ease your conscience," said his spiritual adviser. "Fill a bag with soft, downy chicken feathers and go to every door yard in the village, dropping in each yard one downy, fluffy feather."

The peasant did as he had been told, and returned promptly for further instructions.

"Now take your bag," said the adviser, "and go the same rounds again. Gather up every feather that you dropped and bring them to me."

"But," remonstrated the conscience-smitten man, "the wind will have blown them all away."

"True, my son," said the preacher, "and so it is with unkind words. They are easily dropped, but no matter how hard you may try you can never, never get them back again."

The impetuous, wordy Apostle Peter knew very well that the tongue is an index to our inmost lives. And he discovered that others know this truth and judge us by our speech. When the Savior was on trial before the wily Caiaphas, Peter stood in the court warming himself by the fire. Those who were loitering there thought they saw in Peter the earmarks of a disciple of Jesus, and a damsel accused him of being a follower of the Master.

Peter denied the charge, but soon another maid saw him and said, "This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth!" To convince them that he was not one of the disciples, he denied it "with an oath." Then another who stood by came to him face to face and said, "Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech betrays thee." Then in order to make his denial convincing, Peter began to curse and to swear. No more charges were laid against him, for those hardened men and women knew that no follower of the Master would resort to swearing and cursing. "The words of the pure are pleasant words." Proverbs 15: 26.

Cullen, the Negro poet, tells of a visit he made to Baltimore. All he remembers about that journey was one harsh, cutting word. He tells of it in his poem.

"Once riding in old Baltimore,
Heart-filled, head-filled with glee,
I saw a Baltimore man
Keep looking straight at me.

"Now I was eight and very small,
And he was no whit bigger,
And so I smiled, but he poked out
His tongue, and called me 'nigger.'

"I saw the whole of Baltimore
From May until December;
Of all the things that happened there
That's all that I remember."

James Buchanan Murray tells the opposite effect that kind words may have. He was a popular business man in a growing city. He had a manufacturing plant, and was loved by all his employees. There were no labor troubles in his factory. His neighbors and the people of the city loved him. He was popular with the children, too. One day at a civic meeting he was asked to tell the secret of his success. He suggested that he could best explain that to them by telling a little of his life's story.

His childhood was spent in Newton, a crossroads town, with a few hundred inhabitants. His father and mother had died, and there were no relatives to make a home for him. Neighbors and kind townspeople took him in for a while. When one family got tired of the burden he was passed on to another. His clothing wore out, and there was no one to buy new for him. His uncut hair and ragged clothing made him a pitiful object of neglect. Knocked about from one place to another, he had little to encourage or inspire him. The less presentable he became, the less people cared for him. Finally he had no place to call home. He slept in a hayloft, in some heated hallway, or out under the stars in the summer. He got something to eat as best he could, sometimes from handouts, frequently from garbage cans. Needless to say, he did not overeat. He had no place to bathe or to wash himself. People shunned him and often mistreated him. When anyone spoke to him it was to ridicule or to scold.

In this time of trial he had just one tried and true friend—a dog named Tiger. Tiger was with him day and night, a close friend in adversity. One day Jim and Tiger were ambling along the footpath when they met a woman who had been on a shopping tour. Her arms were piled high with bundles. Just as she neared the boy and his dog one of her parcels rolled from her arm to the footpath, and when she stooped to pick it up all her parcels fell to the ground. Jim sprang to help her, and one by one he placed the parcels back on her arm again. "Thank you, dear," she said; "you're a nice little boy."

Those words were like an electric shock. They set him all aquiver. He was not used to talk of that kind. Those were the first kind words he had heard in many a week. "Thank you, dear; you're a nice little boy." He could not stop them from going through his mind. He kept saying them over and over. He watched the little woman as she disappeared in the distance.

He and Tiger made their way to the woods and the creek behind the town. He wanted to be alone and to revel in the sweetness of those words. He said to Tiger, "Tiger, you're a nice little dog." And Tiger's little stub of a tail wagged a hearty appreciation.

Jim fished around in his pocket, and there among the string, the nails, the marbles, and what not he found a broken piece of mirror. Glancing into the looking glass, he was shocked to see how untidy he looked. His face was dirty; his hair was disheveled and

uncombed. Was he a nice little boy? He sauntered to the bank of the creek, got down on his hands and knees, and washed his face as best he could. He moistened his hair and tried to comb it. Then he took another look. What a transformation! Boy and dog made their way back to town. People noticed that a change had come over him, and they took a new interest in the boy.

Mr. Murray told his business friends that it was the kind word of the little lady who lost her bundles that started him on the right road. To her he attributed his success.

Words of men and women long since gone to dust are still helping to mould the lives of those who came after them. It would be difficult to pick from the many teachings of our Savior the words that have brought the most blessing to mankind. The golden rule is known by all, though practiced by few: "Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them." What a different world this would be if we all followed this rule in our dealings with our fellow men!

"With malice toward none; with charity for all," was the lofty standard of the great Lincoln in the crisis of the Civil War. "England expects every man to do his duty," cried Lord Nelson in a memorable sea battle that saved his country's honor. Napoleon declared, "There shall be no Alps," and those words have sounded down through time, challenging men to overcome heavy obstacles. Important words, all of these, that turned the tide of history!

When Esther, the Jewish queen of Ahasuerus, was asked to go in before the Persian king to plead for her own people, a thing contrary to the custom of the court, she realized it might mean death to her. Unless the king should hold out the golden scepter, her life might be taken. Ordinarily her reception would depend on what mood the king happened to be in on this particular day. She was finally convinced that it was her duty to go in before the great monarch to plead for her own race, and she was willing to risk her life to do her duty. "So will I go in unto the king ... and if I perish, I perish," she declared.

The last recorded words of that battle-scarred warrior of the cross, Saint Paul, should be an inspiration to us all. Facing death at the hands of the Romans, he declared, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." What trust and confidence! What a closing testimony from a man who shunned not to declare all the counsel of God.

Our words live on. The waves of influence set in motion today by the words we speak will widen and widen until they reach eternity's shore. Realizing this, should we not pray daily-yes, often during the day-the prayer found in Psalm 141: 3: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips"?

"God wove a web of loveliness,
Of clouds and stars and birds,
But made not any thing at all
So beautiful as words."
ANNA HEMPSTEAD BRANCH

16. In Time of Storm

THERE WAS A STORM in the offing as we started on a journey of about 150 miles by car. It had been a hot, sultry day; and we expected some unusual weather, but because all the members of our family like to ride in a car when it is raining, we started for home in spite of heavy clouds, lightning, and thunder. The rain came, and more of a storm than we expected. Electricity played across the black, murky sky, as the wind blew at almost hurricane velocity. Telephone and power lines went down as trees and limbs of trees fell across them. To get home, we had to detour around the fallen trees blocking the roads.

It was a most unusual experience. One thing that impressed me was the fact that nearly every tree that fell in the wind was hollow, rotten at the heart, or had some other defect. It would be interesting to know just how long they had been decaying and rotting before they actually fell, and how the deterioration had begun. To the casual observer most of those trees were quite normal. But when the storm struck some of them went down. In a group of trees perhaps one would fall while the rest stood erect and unharmed. I moralized a bit as we drove along. You know about what I thought.

Characters are somewhat like trees. They do not collapse unless there are weaknesses within. A temptation comes to a group, and while one falls the others resist and are stronger for the test. Although the collapse comes suddenly, unexpectedly to outward observers, sin may have been working in that life for months and years. There were times of letting down, side-stepping, travelling into forbidden territory, and yielding to temptation.

Collapses are so common in these testing, trying times. We see them and read of them every day. Machines, businesses, organizations, men, and characters break and collapse under the stress of these unusual days. Everything and everybody seem to be geared to top speed. There is wickedness all about us. There are temptations on every side. We are in a time of storm-a time of strain and stress that really tests character. Collapses come in the little circles in which we move. Scarcely a day goes by that does not uncover some social shame.

Travelling by train some time ago, I noticed a remarkable sight from my window. The train was gliding along close by the side of a lovely river. Spanning that wide stream was the superstructure of what I imagined must have been one time a beautiful bridge. The cement pillars were there, and from them great steel standards reached into the air. From these standards large cables were swinging; and dangling loosely from the huge cables were many small ones, which had held the bridge proper, and over which traffic had passed to and fro. But the bridge was not there. It had fallen into the water below. Then it occurred to me that this was the remains

of that wonderful bridge at Tacoma, Washington, the third longest in the world at the time, which had so suddenly collapsed some months before. It was a headline news item over all the country at the time. A cameraman happened to get a picture of the great steel structure as it fell, and newsreels throughout the land told the story in pictures.

Why would such a bridge, costing \$6,500,000, collapse? There was a reason of course-some flaws in material, some mistakes in construction, some hidden defects either in iron or steel. It suddenly went down without warning.

We were in the city near our home one day with the family car, which had been driven only a few miles. We had parked it near the shopping center. When we attempted to start home the transmission suddenly gave way, and we could not move. A tow truck pulled the car to a garage, and new parts were put in, material, crumbling stone, undisciplined conduct, and unprincipled policies were laid in the groundwork.

A flaming, capsized motor-car near the highway on which I was travelling caused me to put on the brakes and pull up to the side of the road to see whether I could be of any help. Near the car one of the injured was groaning in terrible pain. He was conscious enough to tell us that there were two more in the car. There was no time to lose in getting them out. High tension wires were touching the car, and we dared not go too close. After satisfying ourselves that there was no one in the car, we began searching about in the grass and weeds. About thirty feet away we found a young fellow unconscious, but still alive. About ten feet across the fence we found the third one unconscious. We found his laced shoes off his feet and lying near by. We loosened his clothing, put something under his head, and fanned him with our hats. Soon he opened his eyes, and consciousness gradually came. Others had arrived on the scene and were putting out the fire and looking after the other two boys. When this boy we were helping realized what had happened, he began to cry, and wanted to know about his pals. A carton in the car containing some full and some empty bottles, and the fumes of liquor on his person gave us some facts we did not need to ask for. Witnesses told us that the car had been travelling about eighty miles an hour when the accident happened. This unfortunate victim was seriously injured. Apparently his back was broken. One could not be thrown forty feet from a car going so fast without such serious consequences. As he lay there in pain he said, "I am a fool. I have always felt I could get away with things. I'm what you call a smart aleck. Do not let my parents know. I'll never take another drink."

One of his pals died next morning without regaining consciousness, on what was to have been his wedding Day. How the other two fared, I never heard. What sad sights, what wrecks, what suffering, what remorse! He thought he had the ability to transgress, go the wrong way, and yet avoid the consequences. My heart went out to that misguided boy. There was not much we could do for him. We helped them put him into an ambulance and watched it go speeding out of sight.

Men who rob banks are not as a rule stealing for the first time. They harbor covetousness in their hearts, and do some petty thieving, before they take their guns and start out on a big job. Robbers are not usually developed over night.

The final step into enemy territory usually is not a long one. We live for some time close to the border line before actually doing wrong. The first step down the wrong road is a step toward collapse. Before characters collapse there is usually a period of slipping, of compromising with wrong, of yielding to sin, of violating the conscience. If you are stifling the voice of warning given by your conscience, you are headed toward disaster. If you are compromising with wrong, each time you will find it a bit easier. Pull some stone from the foundation of your character, and sooner or later there will be a sagging of the superstructure.

We cannot with safety make even the shortest excursions into enemy territory. We cannot yield to the violating of principle in the smallest degree. If we play with fire, there is always the danger of being burned.

A good many people worry about their ability to stand when trials and tests come. We need not worry. If you and I meet the temptations and trials that come to us every day, we are strengthened for what the morrow may bring to us. And we need not worry about what tomorrow may bring, for God has promised that with each temptation He will make a way of escape, and He will not permit us to be tempted above what we are able to bear. (I Corinthians 10: 13.)

17. Our Blueprint

DID YOU EVER HEAR of a carpenter or contractor building a house without a blueprint? Could a modern skyscraper be put up without the minutest details being first worked out by an architect? It seems foolish to ask such questions, for most men would not dream of doing such a thing.

I knew one man who did build a house without a blueprint, for I lived in the house he built. He also felt he needed neither square nor level, for his eye was accurate enough. But your imagination can picture about what that house looked like. I will not attempt to describe it. Living in it for one year indelibly impressed upon my mind the need of a blueprint, or a pattern of some kind when one builds a dwelling.

My wife came home from the city one day all excited about a beautiful dress she had seen. It was just the kind of dress she wanted, but it was too expensive. She decided to buy some cloth and make one for herself. She got the material, but would not attempt to make the dress until she had found a pattern.

A dressmaker hesitates to cut into a piece of material without a pattern for fear she will spoil it and the dress will not fit, yet we slash into life carelessly. A carpenter would refuse to begin a building without a blueprint, yet we build on our characters day by day without a pattern; or if we do accept a pattern, we look at it only now and then. Why are we so careless in building our characters?

We see blasted hopes and ruined lives all about us. We see professed Christians, members of popular churches, who are not worthy of the name. Where men might build palaces we find hovels. Character is at a premium. Why aren't we better than we are? The reason is plain-we are building without a blueprint. Or if we may have chosen Christ as our pattern, have our names on the church roll, and profess to be Christians, we imitate our fellow men, and study His life so little that we fall far short of the ideal He has set for us.

Christ came to this world and died, not only to redeem us, but to leave a perfect pattern for us to follow. If we turn from this perfect pattern, and take weak, faltering mortals for our blueprint, our lives will be a failure—we will not be like Him when He comes back again. We are told in I John 2: 6, “He that said he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked!”

Too many today are following plans that came from a poor architect, are following perhaps their pastor, their father, their mother, their banker, or someone else whom they have thought to be a paragon of all that is good. The best person in your community, the most perfect individual in your town, may have some virtues worthy of emulation, but as a pattern for a well-rounded, perfect life, he or she is far short of the ideal. In fact, there is only one pattern for us to follow. To be a Christian, we must follow Christ. We do not study His life enough.

When in doubt as to what course to take, it is a good idea to ask ourselves the question, “What would Jesus do if He were in my place today?” One summer I went out with a college friend of mine to build a house. He was a pretty good builder. I have no building skill. We dug the basement and put in the foundation. One day he set me to cutting the upright pieces that go around the outside frame of the house. He gave me a two-by-four, cut a certain length, to use as a pattern. I used this pattern in cutting my first two-by-four, then threw down the pattern, and used the timber I had cut as my next pattern. Each time I cut off a two-by-four I used it for a pattern in cutting the next piece of timber. When we tried to set those pieces up we found that they were all different lengths. The longer I sawed, the farther I was getting away from the pattern he had given me. He was surely disgusted, and I did not blame him at all.

“You can cut those two-by-fours all over again,” he said. I learned a lesson about using the pattern there. If you take some Christian for a pattern, and someone takes you for an ideal, and someone is watching that person for a pattern, the trend is farther and farther from Christ, the perfect pattern. On that kind of program the church does not improve.

One day the Master was to pass through the little village of Jericho. His fame had spread throughout the surrounding country, and many were curious to see Him. Knowing the time He was to pass through the town, the people lined the streets, anxious to get a glimpse of this much-talked-of man. A little man, named Zaccheus, who up to this time had lived a selfish, grasping life, determined that he must see Jesus as He passed through the streets that day.

I imagine the crowd was lined up three or four deep along both sides of the street, and I can picture this man Zaccheus trying to elbow his way through the crowd to the curb so that he might have a good view of the Saviour. But the Bible record tells us he was short of stature, and could not see the Master because of the crowd of people. Determined to see Him, Zaccheus ran ahead and climbed a tree beside the road, knowing that the Savior would pass that way. He caught a glimpse of Jesus that day, took Him to his home, and from that hour followed closely the footsteps of the Master.

Like Zaccheus of old, we find our view of Christ often shut off by the multitude of people. We look at our fellow men and their imperfections. They seem to be in our line of vision, to shut off our view of the Man of Calvary. And we build by the imperfect patterns around us, and so find in our lives the imperfections of the flesh.

When I was a boy in school we had a period every day for practicing penmanship. We did not have fountain pens, but bottles of ink, and scratchy steel nibs. The teacher kept the ink in a cupboard, and it was passed out to us by monitors each day at penmanship time.

“All right, pupils,” the teacher would say, “put all books of your desk, and get ready for penmanship.” We would get out our copybooks, and the ink would be brought to us.

At the top of each page in that old copybook was a perfect line of script. I thought it must have been written by angels, for surely no human being could write like that. The line was usually an old maxim, like “Haste makes waste,” or, “A stitch in time saves nine.”

I recall quite vividly how I used to grip that pen and, with every muscle taut, try to imitate that perfect line of copy. I noticed after some time of practice that my writing at the bottom of the page was not so good as the first line at the top. There were about twenty lines to be written on a page, each like the copy at the top. And the line of my writing at the bottom of the page was not an improvement at all on the line at the top.

The trouble was that I was getting farther from the copy, or perfect pattern, each line I wrote. And instead of keeping my eye on the copy, I copied a line of imperfect writing of my own just above. The old copybooks held a lesson for me that was more valuable than penmanship.

We must keep our eyes on the copy, on Jesus, if we are to be true Christians. In word and deed and in every phase of our lives we must pattern after Him.

He was unselfish, spending His life in ministering to others rather than having them minister to Him. He was often spoken of as the “man of sorrows,” but there never lived a man more cheerful and optimistic than He. Wherever He went He scattered sunshine and hope and joy. “Be of good cheer,” was a common expression of His. He was magnanimous, broad-minded. He did not stoop to do little, contemptible things. There was no bigotry, hatred, or envy in His make-up. So He instructed Peter that he should forgive, not seven times, but seventy times seven. When they nailed Him to the cross, He prayed, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

His concern was not “How much can I get?” but, “How much can I give?” Before He died on the cross one of His last instructions was to take care of His mother. “Never man lived as He lived.” We as Christians are to be like Him.

18. Is Sincerity Enough?

AMAN NAMED Ferguson, who lived in one of the large cities in the East, asked his wife to make him some pancakes. She liked to please her husband, and made the pancakes for him. They did not look just right to her, so she ate some to see what the trouble might be. She died a few hours later, for she had used insect powder instead of flour to make them.

This woman was as sincere as any woman could be, but mistaken, nevertheless.

I was talking to a young woman who planned to marry a young man whose religious beliefs were very different from hers. I told her that she was taking a chance, for so often these marriages do not bring happiness to the contracting parties.

"But," she argued, "he is sincere; and, if anyone is sincere, he will get to heaven. We will get along all right." The passing years have proved that his sincerity did not bring them happiness.

An east-and-west road runs in front of my house. There is a man travelling on foot along this road, and I inquire where he is going.

"I'm on the road to New Orleans," he replies.

"But this road will not take you to New Orleans, my friend. This is an east-and-west road. If you follow this way, you will land in New York or San Francisco," I suggest to him.

"Thanks for your interest," he answers, "but I am sure this road goes to New Orleans."

He had every appearance of being sincere. I think he felt sure that he was headed for New Orleans. But was he? No, he was not. That road would not take him there. That he sincerely believed it would did not alter the fact. He might trudge it for months, believing all the while that he was nearing his goal, that he was making progress; but that would not make it so. Although he sincerely believed he was headed south, he was going east.

Three women patients in a large hospital were given an anaesthetic injection before an operation for the removal of their tonsils. The nurse who gave the anaesthetic misread the doctor's prescription, and took "grs." for grains to be grams. The patients, therefore, were given a dose about fifteen times as strong as that intended by the physician.

The first patient acted strangely, but she had asthma, and the attendants were not alarmed. The second patient slumped after the anaesthetic, but this was not unusual, so no concern was felt by the nurses. But when the third patient showed abnormal symptoms the doctors made an investigation and began to apply restorative measures. It was too late, for within a few minutes all three of the patients were dead.

The nurse who gave the anaesthetic was faithful and conscientious. No one who knows her questions her sincerity. But the deadly mistake was made, and three women paid with their lives. The nurse believed that she was doing just the right thing for her patients, and she was prostrated with grief. But her sincerity could not bring back life or comfort the sorrowing loved ones.

Many people declare that it makes no difference what we believe if we are only sincere. You may travel any road, join any church, or belong to any one of more than six hundred denominations, as long as you are sincere. In other words, believe anything you like as long as you are sincere in that belief.

But as much as we admire people who are sincere, we cannot agree that sincerity is any assurance of safety or right. To be sincerely wrong will not get us very far along the path of truth. A young man went to a lake to swim. He dived into what he sincerely believed to be deep water. Only a few inches beneath the surface were submerged piles. He struck these with his head, and was taken from the water paralyzed. The doctors doubt that he will ever walk again.

Suppose your child is taken very ill, and you want to get the doctor. Every moment is precious. You do not stop to put on your coat or hat, but start off on a run. You know the doctor's street address, but do not know just where it is or how to find it. However, you do not worry about that; you try to make up for your ignorance in speed.

Knowing of your errand, a neighbor shouts at you, "Stop, friend; wait a minute. You are going the wrong way."

As you run you shout back, "I can't stop; I am in too big a hurry. My child will die."

"But your hurry is not getting you anywhere. You are headed in the wrong direction. The doctor lives the other way."

"Never mind, friend," you reply, "can't you see that I am sincere? Look how hard I'm running."

You do not locate the doctor in time, and your child dies. Sincerity on the wrong road in life means travelling faster to eternal destruction.

How many people today are depending on their sincerity to save them! Sincerely to believe error will result in disaster for any of us. The heathen is sincere as he worships his idols, but he is wrong, and this idolatry degrades him.

Millions of people today sincerely believe that this world of ours will continue as it is for ages to come. The Bible says it will not—that Christ will return soon. Because the majority of people believe the world is to go on and on, does not make it true.

The people of Noah's day may have sincerely believed that Noah was wrong, that the earth was not to be destroyed by a flood. It had never rained. And here was a queer old man preaching that the water would come down from the skies and destroy them all if they did not mend their ways! Though they were sincere, their sincerity did not save them.

Many men and women have conscientiously invested their life savings in securities and stocks, and have believed that they would profit from the investment. But stocks have crashed and securities become almost worthless in spite of the investor's confidence in their stability.

Many have conscientiously, sincerely, regarded as sacred the first day of the week, believing it to be the Lord's Sabbath; but that does not make it so. They will not be freed from the results of transgression if they knowingly reject light. God says the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath. No matter how sincerely one believes otherwise, his belief will not change the truth.

Sincere as you and I may be, we must try to find out whether we are right. "How can I know the right way?" you ask. With so many different denominations all professing to have the truth and to be travelling to heaven, how can I know which is the right

church? This question is worthy of further discussion. It is possible to know we are right, if we will take the Bible as our guide and lay aside the traditions of men.

19. Use What You Have

SOME OF YOU who read these lines are looking back on fifteen years of life, some perhaps on twenty years or more. Someday each of us will come to the last mile, the last lap, the end of the way, and we will be looking back over days and months and years. Life looks different when we are looking back on it. What a wonderful satisfaction it will be if we can feel then that we did the best we could with what we had, that we made good use of the material God gave us with which to build our lives.

Normal young people look forward to the time when they can have a home of their own, and most of them dream dreams of the house they want to build in which to set up this home. Over in the eastern part of the United States a young man whom we shall call Martin was building a house. He was thinking of a home, too. But the story begins some little time before this.

Helen was an orphan, alone in the world, as far as relatives went. Her father and mother had died when she was but a small girl, and she had been passed around from one place to another. She was now in her late teens, and had found a home and friends in a wealthy family by the name of Wallace, which though not their name will do for this story. Helen did her work so well and was such a comfort to this couple that they came to consider her as one of the family. They had no children, and Helen was looked upon almost as their own daughter. They loved her as such.

Helen became the close friend of an ambitious, hard-working young man, and after a time they announced their engagement. Martin Hayes was a contractor and builder, just beginning his career. Being a builder, Martin had no doubt talked with Helen about the dream house they would build.

The Wallaces did not like to think of Helen leaving their home, but they were happy to know that she was to have a home of her own and that she could live near by. As they sat by the fireplace one evening they talked of what they might do to help the young people get a good start in life. Mrs. Wallace suggested that first of all they should have Martin build a house for them. They were well known in the community; and if the public knew the young builder was building a home for the Wallaces, that fact would be a good recommendation for him.

When Martin came over to see Helen one evening they called him in, showed him some blueprints, and asked whether he would like to build a house for them.

"The house must be exactly like the plans," Mr. Wallace said, "and made of the best material you can buy." They went carefully over the details of just the kind of material to be used in the construction throughout the place, and these details were written into a contract. Handing Martin the blueprints, Mr. Wallace said, "Now remember, son, we are trusting you to build the very best house that can be built. We have every confidence in you."

Positively and assuringly Martin promised he would do his best to build them a perfect house, and construction was started. But the young contractor forgot no, he didn't forget—he simply did not keep his promise. When putting in the foundation he used less cement than the specifications called for. "No one will ever know the difference," he argued, "and I'll make a little more profit on my contract." He followed this plan of deception all through the building, putting cheaper timber into the bearings, and in every place that he thought the inferior materials could not be detected. When the place was finished it did look very well, and as far as Mr. Wallace knew it was just like the plans.

One evening when Martin went over to see Helen he took the keys along. The work was done; the house was ready for occupancy. Now Mr. Wallace should have the keys, and he could collect the last payment on the contract. As he took the keys Mr. Wallace asked, "Are you sure you have followed the blueprint in every detail, that you have built the best house that could be built?" Of course it was an embarrassing moment for Martin. A tinge of red crept into his face as he gave his answer, "Yes."

Then the young couple got the surprise of their lives. "Mother and I have been wondering," said Mr. Wallace, "what we might do to help you youngsters get a start, and have decided to give you this new house for your very own. Here are the keys, and here is the deed. It is yours."

Helen's joy was unbounded. Martin did not feel that way, try as much as he could to act pleased. They bought their furniture and moved in. It was not long until there were cracks in the walls and ceilings. The windows did not work right; the doors would not open and shut with ease. Imperfections began to show up here and there. One day when a heavy rainstorm came, Martin was sitting in his easy chair in the living-room, and the rain began to drip, drip, drip down on to the floor. He bowed his head on the table and cried like a child. Helen tried to comfort him. She inquired as to what was wrong. "Helen," he said, "if I had known we were going to live in this place, I would have done a better job, built a better house."

From that time on he determined to build better houses, and resolved that he would never do any more slipshod work, never again be untrue; but as long as he lived in the house that was given him, he was reminded of his folly. You and I build only once. When we come to the end of the way, there will be no chance to build again. Regret for flaws in the structure will be futile.

The Bible tells us that someday there is to be a sort of examination time, a day of reckoning, when you and I will be asked to report on how we used the privileges, blessings, and opportunities that were ours. The Savior gives us this lesson in the parable of the talents in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, verses fourteen to thirty. Why not get your Bible and read these verses? It is an interesting story, and as true to life today as when Christ told it to His disciples.

In this parable the master, who was going on a journey or business trip, called three of his servants to him and told them of his plans. He knew these servants pretty well; and he gave to one of them five talents, to another two, and to the third only one talent, according to their ability, telling them to make the best possible use of these talents, and that he would ask them on his return to report how they had used his goods.

It is difficult for us to know just how these three men felt as the talents were handed out. Being human, they may have wondered why one got more than the others. The man with one talent hunted out a secure spot, and no doubt in the darkness of night he dug a hole and buried his one talent deep in the earth. He may have felt that something might happen, and the master might never return to ask for an accounting. At any rate he fooled away his time, made no use of his talent—did nothing. There are countless young men and women who have buried their talents. But there is always an accounting time, as the rest of the story shows.

The other two fellows got busy. Just what the talents were they possessed we are not told, but they put them to use and watched them grow. Time rolled by as it has a way of doing, and one morning they got word that the long-absent master was back and wanted them to come up to his house the following day at ten o'clock. I can see them on their way to the house the next morning. Two of them walked with a confident, successful stride. They were happy and self-assured as they looked back over their accomplishments while the master was away. The one-talent man ambled along with bowed head and lagging step. He had a defeated air about him. He knew he had not done his best, and dreaded to make his report.

To the man who had received five talents the master may have said, "Bill, how have things been going with you? What have you got to report this morning? What have you been doing these weeks I've been gone? How did you get along with the talents I left with you?"

Impatient to reply, Bill was probably already on his feet, smiling and eager to report. "Master, I did the best I could. I have been busy early and late. You remember you gave me five talents. I think I have had pretty good success, for now I have ten talents."

I And the master commended him with words that I hope you and I may hear when we come to our day of rewards, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou has been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Whether he was a doctor, painter, farmer, mechanic, author, musician, carpenter, or shepherd I would say that man was a success, wouldn't you?

Then the master called on John, the two-talent man, to tell what he had done. "John, how did things go with you? What do you have to report this morning?"

His answer was pretty much the same as Bill's. "I have never been busier in my life. I put those talents to work. I did not have as many as Bill had, but I did the very best I could with what you gave me. I am surprised at the results. I have a gain of 100 per cent. I now have four talents."

And while one man presented to him ten talents and the other only four, the master used the same words of commendation to John as he had to Bill, "Well done.... enter thou into the joy of thy lord." His reward was the same; he had done his best. God does not expect more than that of any of us.

Imagine how the one-talent man felt as it came nearer the time for him to make his report. In his hand he had a carefully wrapped napkin, which contained his one precious talent. I imagine his face had a discouraged, disappointed look, his voice was full of hesitancy as he said, "Master, I hope you remember that you gave me only one talent. I thought the matter over; and knowing you as I do, I decided that I could never do anything with one talent, that it was hopeless, useless to try to do much with just that. If you had given me five as you gave Bill, or two as you gave John, I might have done something. So I decided to hide the talent. I buried it in a safe place. This morning I went out and dug it up, and I am returning it to you, just as you gave it me."

Had this man used the one talent given him, he would doubtless have had two or more to give back to his master, and he would have heard the name gracious; welcome words of commendation that the other two men received. But he had not done his best. He had not tried. He had done nothing. He had been idle, the talent buried, unused. The master called in his servants and told them to take the one talent from him and to fire him. He wanted him in his employ no longer. He was a failure, not because he had only one talent, but because he had not used what he had.

I know a young man whose ancestry was not very fortunate. He was born with an impediment in his speech. He had little formal education. But that young fellow has planned, worked, and struggled. It is amazing what he has been able to do. He has not had much, but he has used what he had; and it is marvelous how he has improved.

In the evening shadows on a side street in the quaint little city of Cremona, Italy, three boys were in serious conversation. One of them had a violin case in his hand, and another was carrying a knife and a piece of wood on which he had been whittling. But let us listen in on their conversation. Salvator was the first to speak.

"There are many, many people in the city now, attending the annual festival; and if we will go up in front of the cathedral and sing and play, they will give us money."

"All right," said Gulio. "You can play your violin, and I will sing. We have practiced together a good many times. Antonio can't sing, but he can go along if he wishes."

Antonio looked a bit sad, for it was true he could not sing. His voice always squeaked. All he could do was whittle, but he agreed to go along with his companions.

The three made their way to the great cathedral. Many people were coming and going. Salvator took his violin out of the case, tuned it a bit, and started to play. It was a sweet melody, and Gulio began to sing. The crowds stopped to listen, and some tossed small coins to the boys. A well-dressed man stepped up to them, and asked whether they would be kind enough to repeat a number for him. They gladly consented. As he left he thanked them and gave Gulio a gold coin of real value. "Oh, well," said Salvator, "he can afford to give us a gold coin. He is Amati, the great violinmaker. He makes lots of money."

Darkness fell over the city, and the boys made their way to their homes, two of them with money in their pockets and with light, happy hearts, the other blue and discouraged. Antonio could not go to sleep for a long time. He could not sing; he could not play; he could only whittle. Why had he been given so few talents? As he lay in his bed that night, trying to get to sleep, he determined that the very next morning he would find Amati, the violinmaker, and see whether he could not get a job helping to make violins. There was nothing he liked more than to carve wood into beautiful shapes.

Early next morning, before his parents were awake, he crept quietly out of bed, and went out to seek the home of the violinmaker. Finding his place, he timidly knocked at the door, and a servant informed him that it was too early to see the master. Antonio waited two hours and then returned. The same servant met him at the door, and told him that Amati was too busy to see him. But the violinmaker heard the plaintive, earnest voice of the boy and came to the door to inquire what the little fellow wanted. "Please, sir," said Antonio, "I have a sharp knife and have learned to whittle well. I wonder if you think I might learn to make violins!"

Touched by the seriousness of the lad, the great Amati invited him to come and help him in his shop. Antonio was set to shaping a bridge, and then later other parts of a violin. For hours and days and weeks he labored before he had made the parts of one instrument.

What a thrill came to the lad when the parts he had made were assembled, and strings put on, making a real violin that would produce sweet music.

That little boy who could "only whittle" became Antonio Stradivari, the greatest violinmaker of all time. We sometimes feel that others have all the gifts and talents, and that we should sit idly by on the side lines while these talented persons really accomplish things. Though we can "only whittle," let us whittle constructively toward some worthy accomplishment.

20. What Would You Do?

IF YOU WERE shipwrecked out in the middle of the ocean, far from shore or from any means of rescue, and were being tossed about in a small boat or on a raft, without food or water, what would you do? Would you trust to luck? Would you start paddling to some unseen shore? Would you pray. Would you think it useless to pray? Would you feel foolish to ask God up in heaven to send help of some kind?

Millions of people today do not believe in prayer, in asking God for help, especially when everything is going just right. But when danger appears suddenly, when tragedy comes our way, when we face disaster, and when we know no human being can help, we all turn to some outside source, some unseen helper for aid. It is not consistent I know, but we instinctively do it. Of course, we can hardly blame the individual for doubting if he has not been taught to pray, if he has no evidence that God answers prayer.

In World War II thousands of men and women were set adrift in boats and on rafts after the vessels in which they had been travelling were torpedoed by some submarine, or had perhaps struck a hidden mine. Many of them died of exposure and starvation. Some very interesting and exciting stories have been told by those who were rescued or in some way returned safely to land.

One very gripping and authentic story was told by Captain Edward Rickenbacker, who, with seven companions, drifted for twenty-one days, three full weeks, on rubber rafts in the great Pacific.

These men were travelling by plane on a Government errand when they lost their way. Their fuel supply ran out, and they had to put the giant clipper plane down on what they hoped to be a calm and peaceful Pacific. When they got out of the plane and into their rubber rafts, the waves were twelve feet high.

They had to leave the sinking plane in such a hurry that they neglected to take water and emergency rations with them. When they took inventory they found that they had four oranges for the eight of them. They were scantily dressed, too. Among their belongings were an emergency kit, two knives, some fish lines and hooks, and a few odds and ends.

Daylight faded, and night settled down on the helpless men. They were wet and cold. Sharks followed them and rubbed their rough backs up against the bottom of the rubber rafts. The night was long and dreary. The second day dawned dull and misty.

They decided to eat one of the precious oranges, so Captain Rickenbacker cut it in half, then halved the halves, and then cut the quarters in two, giving one tiny piece to each cold, hungry man. Of course, they ate peeling and all. They decided to eat one orange every day, which meant that their four oranges would soon be gone.

Then a glassy calm fell upon the sea, and a tropical sun beat upon them mercilessly. By day they longed for night, and during the long, cold nights they wished for the sunshine again.

Their faces, necks, arms, and hands were burned by the tropical sun. They blistered and became raw. The salt water got into the sores, and you know how that hurts. Their swollen limbs pained constantly. With no water to drink, their lips were soon covered with ugly sores.

Cramped and crowded in the tiny rafts, unable to stretch themselves, they drifted they knew not where. If one moved or changed his position, he rubbed the sore, burning flesh of his companion.

On the fourth morning they devoured the second orange. They had now been seventy-two hours without much food and with no water. Countless fish could be seen swimming all about the rafts; but try as they would, they could not catch a single one. The bright, many-colored fish would nose right up to the hooks the men had put out, smell them, wiggle their tails, and swim away. How disheartening to famishing, starving men!

For six days they seemed to be sitting motionless on a calm, brassy, sizzling sea. They were actually drifting, but they did not know where, in spite of the fact that they had a map which they studied often. They believed that they were about four or five hundred miles from an island held by the Japanese.

They had brought a few flares from the plane, and decided to send up some of these every night, hoping they might be seen by someone. These flares were lights which burned for a minute or two, giving a red glare. Each time, after sending these messengers of distress into the sky, they scanned the horizon, hoping for some reply. But no reply came.

Some of the men were now in a bad way. One young fellow of twenty-two, who had been in the hospital only three weeks before, was now only skin and bones. He became so thirsty that he actually cried for water.

One of the men, named Bartek, had a New Testament in his pocket, and spent some of his time in reading it. Someone suggested that they pull their three rafts close together and that they read the Testament aloud and have prayer. Rickenbacker says he did not consider himself a religious man, but he had not forgotten the prayers he had repeated when a child at his mother's knee. We do not forget those things! So, with this New Testament as a help they conducted morning and evening worship out there in the Pacific. One text that they read and reread was a real comfort to them-Matthew 6: 31-34: "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But seek you first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Two of the men did not have much faith in prayer, and were a bit hard and bitter because God did not answer their requests instantly. The others prayed on, hoping God would send the help they needed. On the sixth day the oranges were all used up. With their food gone, their lips parched, their throats dry, and their skin too sore to touch, they talked of how much soda pop they could drink and of how many chocolate malted milks they could devour.

The eighth day was still and hot. In the evening one of the men had read the Bible, including the favorite text, and they had had prayer. Rickenbacker was sitting slouched down in the raft with his hat pulled down over his face to protect it from the sun. A seagull appeared from apparently nowhere and alighted on his head. He says, "I reached up for him with my right hand-gradually." It was an anxious time. What if the bird flew away? He continued, "The whole Pacific seemed to be shaking from the agitation in my body, but I could tell he was still there from the hungry, almost insane eyes in the other rafts. Slowly and surely my hand got up there; I didn't clutch, but cautiously opened my fingers, sensing his nearness, and then closed my fingers hard."

They divided the bird equally and passed it around to the starving men, keeping only the intestines for bait. Of course, the meat was raw, tough, stringy, and fishy, but they said it tasted wonderfully good to them. Then they baited some hooks and dropped them over the sides of the boats and caught some fish, which they ate with real relish. This gave them new life and renewed hope.

God had answered their prayers. This was not the first time God had sent food to hungry human beings. Ravens carried food to Elijah in the wilderness. With five barley loaves and two small fishes Jesus had fed thousands of people on the Galilean hillside and they had twelve baskets of food fragments left over. For forty long years God sent manna to feed the millions of Israelites on their journey through the wilderness from Egypt to the land of Canaan.

A soldier out on the battlefield in World War I was wounded and in desperate need. But the battle raged and stretcher-bearers could not go out to get him. He was weak and hungry. An old hen strolled out on to the battlefield with the shells screaming above her. She stopped near this soldier boy and laid an egg, which he reached out and took and ate. It kept him alive.

But let us get back to the men in the rubber raft. That night a storm arose, and there were winds, lightning, and high, swelling waves. Rain came down as if from a waterfall. They had spread out their clothing about the rafts to absorb what water they could. When these were soaked they would wring them into bailing buckets. That water was the sweetest they had ever tasted. They decided to use as little as possible, and so rationed it out, so much for each man for each day. The rain cooled their bodies and washed away the salt that had accumulated on them. Their sores were cleansed, and all felt refreshed.

About three o'clock on the thirteenth morning one of the men died; and when they had satisfied themselves that he was really dead, and they had said a simple burial service, as much at least as they could remember, they rolled his body over the side of the raft into the great Pacific.

They caught a small shark, but could not eat the meat, hungry as they were. Then one day some mackerel jumped into their rafts, and they again had food to keep the spark of life aglow in their pain-racked bodies. Hundreds of finger-length fish resembling sardines gathered around their raft, and they managed to scoop up some of them and eat them.

A never-to-be-forgotten thrill came to them on the seventeenth day. They saw an airplane off to their left. They yelled until they could yell no more; they waved and tried to attract the attention of the pilot; but he did not see them, and soon disappeared. But this did encourage them to believe that they were not far from land.

On the twenty-first morning they heard planes again. Two of them came from the south-east, but the men were too weak to stand up, so they waved as best they could from a reclining position. The planes were quite near the water, but passed on and disappeared in the west. A half hour later they heard them again. They came straight for them and dived down over the rafts. To their disappointment they disappeared again. But the planes returned a bit later. They had really come for them. We shall have to imagine their feelings, for the planes carried them to kind friends, warm beds, food, and water. This seemed like heaven to them. God had answered their prayers, and those men knew it.

I once worked with a Christian physician who ran a home for friendless girls. The coal bin became empty. He called the workers together, and they prayed for a truck-load of coal. In the middle of that same week he received a letter written in a trembling hand from an aged woman in the same state, saying that she had been impressed that he needed money. Her check for two hundred dollars was enclosed. It solved their urgent heating problem.

Some time ago a well-known magazine ran a story of an orphans' home in New Britain, Connecticut, which was founded and maintained by prayer. Its manager, John Kleinberg, was earning only sixteen dollars a week when he took three tiny children into his

home. He already had two small children of his own. But he says, "We just prayed and trusted in the Lord for help!" When this story was printed there were more than one hundred children in the home, and Mr. Kleinberg had never asked anybody for anything. But unsolicited money came to him from all over the United States, hundreds of dollars each week. People everywhere sent clothing, carloads of food, a cow, hay to feed her, cabbage, and canned goods.

One day, while his home was still small, the ten dollars rent came due, and he had not one cent with which to pay it. He walked down the street praying silently. A stranger gave him ten dollars; another person, fifteen dollars. One Sunday there was no food for the children. It seemed they would surely go hungry. There was a large picnic up the street, where there were mirth and happiness and lots of food. Mr. Kleinberg prayed. It began to rain-a real downpour. In a little while there was a knock at the door, and there were two men on the porch carrying a large hamper bulging with good things to eat. The rain had spoiled their picnic, and they could not use the food. Many people thought Mr. Kleinberg an impractical visionary to try to run an orphans' home on prayer. But he declares that forty years of experience have taught him that he can depend on God to answer his prayers.

It is hard to understand how we can utter a prayer that can be heard by God in heaven, and answered according to our needs. But countless examples of answered prayer have been recorded as a rebuke to the doubtful.

When the radio was first being developed, my ten-year-old boy came home one evening with the request that he and I build a crystal set. I am not at all mechanically inclined, and had not the least idea how to go about it. But he knew, and told me just what we would have to buy. So he and I went shopping to buy the necessary parts-some wire, a small crystal, an antenna-then we must get an empty cigar box, an empty mailing tube, and some headphones. We wrapped the wire many times around the mailing tube and fastened the crystal in the bottom of the cigar box and the antenna near by. All the while, of course, I was assuring myself that we would never get anything over that crude affair. Then we attached one end of that assembled paraphernalia by wire to the electric light socket, and the other end of it we connected by wire to the bedspring for a ground wire. The headphones were attached to the proper place, and my son put them on and began moving the cat's whisker, or antenna, over the rough surfaced crystal. Soon I saw a pleased expression come over his face. He was getting something. He asked me to put the headphones on, and sure enough, I heard music coming over or through that simple contraption which we had built under his direction, the parts of which had cost us so little.

I think I would have bet almost any amount of money, had I been given to wagering, that no sound would ever come through that cigar-box radio. But I was wrong, I cannot explain just how or why, but I know it worked, simple as it was.

It is marvelous to me today, to sit in a radio broadcasting studio and listen to a program, and know that my family, hundreds of miles away, can hear the same program, as soon and as well as I can. Yet we accept it as no particular marvel. If our grandparents could come back today, and we should tell them that little box affair with some knobs on the front of it, sitting on our table, could bring in messages from New York, and London, they would be utterly incredulous.

Not long after my first experience with the simple crystal set, I was travelling west across Canada on the Canadian National Railway whose trans-continental trains were equipped with radio. We left Winnipeg at ten o'clock at night, and as we pulled out of the terminal I went into the observation car to listen in. As we sped along over the broad prairies, then covered with snow, the radio was picking up from the still, cold, night air some beautiful music and bringing it in to us, clearly and distinctly. It seemed all the more miraculous when I learned that it was coming from a broadcasting station one thousand miles away. It seemed too wonderful to be true.

Of course, we have had the radio so long now that it has lost its wonder for us. As I went to bed that night I could hardly sleep for thinking about it. I could not understand how sounds produced in Chicago could be picked up and reproduced on a fast train crossing the Canadian prairies one thousand miles away.

Television and its marvels have more recently taken the public interest. Great parades and pageants and public events can be viewed by people without their stirring from the comfort of their parlors. And these pages will be scarcely off the press before these developments will be outmoded, for programs in natural color are already proving practical and assured.

A friend of mine in whom I have the utmost confidence told me of an experience which I shall pass on to you. He and his family had moved into a new territory. They did not know a soul in the district. When they had unpacked their goods the first night, and were about ready to retire, his wife reminded him that they did not have any bread for breakfast or any flour to make any. "I cannot go to the store and buy," he replied, "for I have spent my last penny. And it is too far from our headquarters to get any money back here for several days!" "What shall we do?" the anxious wife inquired.

They disliked to ask for credit when they had just arrived in town. The minister thought of how he preached to others that God would hear and answer the prayers of His children. So, calling their little boy, they all knelt down and told their heavenly Father of their needs. Then they retired, trusting God to supply their urgent want.

The next morning, when they awoke, there was a hundred pound sack of flour on the front porch. They had not told any human being of their needs; and although they lived in this community for several years, they did not find out who put the flour on the porch. But one thing they knew-God answered their prayer.

"If radio's slim fingers can pluck a melody
From night-and toss it over a continent or sea;
If the petalled white notes of a violin
Are blown across the mountains or the city's din;
If songs, like crimson roses, are culled from thin blue air-
Why should mortals wonder if God hears prayer?"
Ethel Romig Fuller

In these times of stress and strain do you find yourself one of the growing army of unbelievers with no faith and no hope? There is still a God in heaven who rules in the affairs of men. He still hears and answers prayer.

It might be well to quote a few promises which have been left us to encourage us to pray. Whole books have been written, and more can be written, of authenticated experiences where God has definitely answered the prayers of His children.

Jesus emphasized faith as the true power in prayer. He told His disciples, "What things so ever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them." Mark 11: 24. When the disciples saw how potent were the Savior's prayers they cried, "Lord, teach us to pray."

Again, on another occasion, to show how persistent prayer should be, Jesus told the story of the unjust judge and how he was moved to action by the continual entreaty of a certain Widow who had been defrauded. He summed up the lesson of the parable by prefacing it with the reminder, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." The praying heart is not a fainting heart.

One of the most stimulating texts in the Bible, suggesting the effectiveness of the believer's prayer, is found in Luke I: 37: "For with God nothing shall be impossible." Promises like this abound in the Scriptures. The tragedy of spiritual and moral defeat in human experience is that such powerful assurances go too often untried.

21. Calf Trails

MOST OF US are following calf trails every day we live. To show what I mean by that sentence, I am quoting a poem by Sam Walter Foss that is full of food for thought. It is entitled "The Calf Path."

"One day, through the primeval wood, A calf walked home, as good calves should; But made a trail all bent askew, A crooked trail as all calves do.

"The trail was taken up next day By a lone dog that passed that way; And then a wise bell-weather sheep Pursued the trail o'er vale and steep, And drew the flock behind him, too, As good bell-weather always do.

"And from that day, o'er hill and glade, Through those old woods a path was made; And many men wound in and out, And dodged, and turned, and bent about And uttered words of righteous wrath Because 'twas such a crooked path.

"But still they followed-do not laugh. The first migrations of that calf, And through this winding wood-way stalked, Because he wobbled when he walked.

"This forest path became a lane, That bent, and turned, and turned again; This crooked lane became a road, Where many a poor horse with his load Toiled on beneath the burning sun, And traveled some three miles in one. And thus a century and a half They trod the footsteps of that calf.

"Each day a hundred thousand stout Followed the zig-zag calf about; And o'er his crooked journey went The traffic of a continent.

"A hundred thousand men were led By one calf near three centuries dead. They followed still his crooked way, And lost one hundred years a day; For thus such reverence is lent To well-established precedent."

It is an interesting story, isn't it? Enlightened though we like to consider ourselves, we are still prone to follow the beaten path, to take the well-traveled road, to go with the crowd. It seems almost unbelievable that we who live in such a highly efficient, tabulated, and card-indexed age should be so silly as to go "some three miles in one," because others have made a crooked path before us.

The power of habit and example is so strong that most of us find ourselves following the steps of grandfather or grandmother, or some hero or heroine. We do as others do. Custom influences a good many of our actions. If the world is wearing pointed shoes, we wear them, too, and pinch our feet. If some silly slang expression is going the rounds, we are apt to pick it up. We follow calf trails in our dress, our eating, our conversation, our recreation, and even in our worship. We do not like to be different. Most of us would rather be shot at than laughed at.

Superstitions are handed down from one generation to another. We nail a horseshoe over the doorway to bring good luck. We refuse to enter a house by one door and leave by another. Some people will not walk under a ladder. Some become much concerned if a black cat crosses their pathway. Many hotels have no thirteenth floor, and skip thirteen when numbering their rooms.

Galileo, the astronomer, spent twelve of the best years of his life in prison because the people of his day did not want to think for themselves, and admit that there are other planets besides our little world in the great solar system.

Poor Bruno was burned at the stake in Rome in 1600 simply because he tried to make a new trail in his day, teaching that there are other worlds than our own.

A little more than a century ago our forefathers preferred to follow the old ox trails and to ride in their horse-drawn vehicles rather than to experiment with the new railroad train.

Howe, the inventor of the sewing machine, literally starved to death before the tailors and dressmakers and housewives of his day decided to change from the old way of sewing by hand and use the new sewing machine.

The Council of Danzig, in the sixteenth century, caused an inventor of a weaving machine to be strangled so that he might not be able to perfect his invention. They thought that it would put many workers out of employment and make communities of beggars.

Farmers in the eastern part of the United States refused to use the first American iron plough. They declared that the iron would poison the land.

After a great deal of experimentation, at the risk of their lives, with a newfangled flying machine, the Wright brothers actually remained in the air several minutes in one of their early models. They wrote to the Government, asking whether the United States wanted to buy their invention. A letter came back saying, "We cannot consider your suggestion that we buy your inventions or that we send a commission to investigate them. We have neither time nor money to waste on a couple of Ohio cranks. We are not interested!"

The motor-car was none too welcome when the first high wheeled models made their appearance. One dignified newspaper editor refused to take a ride in this new contraption, because he thought it incompatible with the dignity of an editor." A well known American business man advised his nephew not to invest five thousand dollars in stock of the Ford Company, because nothing has come along yet to beat the horse. The mayor of a thriving city felt sure no woman would be "physically fit to undertake the driving of a motor-car." But Mr. Ford blazed a new trail, and built up a great business. His product did much to bring new economic prosperity to the people of America.

When Morse was experimenting with the telegraph he requested Congress to build an experimental line for him, but was told that they would as soon try to build a railroad to the moon.

When the first radio tube was put into workable form, De Forest was unable to sell his patent, and let it lapse rather than pay twenty-five dollars for its renewal.

In 1888 Buffington took out a patent for a steel-frame skyscraper. In that same year a building journal was pessimistic enough to predict that the expansion and contraction of the metal would crack all the plaster, and that in a short time only a shell would remain.

Some scientists were very much disturbed at the publicity given to Edison's electric light bulb. One of the leaders in the electrical field declared, "Everyone acquainted with the subject will recognize it as a conspicuous failure." But was it?

When rayon first made its appearance on the market, a committee of silk manufacturers declared it a passing fad. One wonders what these men would say now.

Writing about the submarine, an author of world-wide fame said, "I must confess that my imagination refuses to see a submarine doing anything but suffocating its crew and foundering at sea."

Charles Goodyear, who spent most of his life in perfecting a process which has given us rubber in its present commercial form, was considered a rubber monomaniac, but nevertheless he persevered until death took him. He stood alone for years, enduring hardship and ridicule, but the whole world is glad to use his product today.

It was not at all pleasant for Arkwright, the inventor of the spinning frame, to see his factory and the work of his hands go up in flames because people thought him abnormal.

William Carey, as a young man, was reprimanded publicly when he expressed his desire to go to a foreign field as a missionary, but this did not deter Carey from his noble purpose. With the map of the world hanging before him in his cobbler's shop, he became inspired to the need of world evangelism.

God has wonderfully blessed men and women who have the courage to stand alone, to be different. Many feel today that one cannot be a Christian and be in business, that religion and business do not mix. If we cannot do this, there is something wrong with our business or with our religion.

If you and I expect to do what Is right, we will not always be with the crowd. We may have to travel alone, at least part of the time.

22. What Is Right With the Church?

THERE SURELY have been enough books and articles written on "What's Wrong With the Church?" You will find men and women everywhere, young and old, who are ready to tell of its faults and failures, to tear it to pieces, to criticize, and to condemn. They tell us that the church has lost its old-time power. Some point to the lives of its followers and say that the so-called Christian is no better than the non-churchgoer, that he does not live up to his profession.

Some affirm that the church is only a club, and its pastors are working for money and not for the love of their fellow men. Some are free to say that the church has outlived its usefulness, and we must be seeking about for a successor.

Most of us have gone to church and have come away many times not fed. Where we expected real food we have often been offered the chaff of man-made doctrines, and we have gone home with a hunger in our hearts. We have known ministers perhaps who did not sense their privileges and opportunities. We have associated with church members who did not live the Christian life. We may have found some churches cold and unsociable. The habiliment of religion, we are free to admit, has often been used as a garb to open the doors of society or business.

But what of it? Are these faults chargeable to the church as a whole? Because a few pastors I happen to know are preaching for dollars instead of for souls, is that a sure sign that all ministers are untrue? In such cases the minister is contaminating the church; the church is not contaminating the minister.

If someone I know is a hypocrite, that is no evidence that Christianity cannot make a man sincere in his profession, honest in his obligations, and a model of deportment in his home and at his work. If we are looking for flaws, we will find them, even in the church. But counterfeit Christians only make the genuine shine by contrast.

But why look only at that side of the question? Let us ask, What is right with the church? First of all, its foundation is firm and unshakable. It was founded by Jesus, who has given the world the only perfect pattern for living. Neither Buddha, Confucius, nor Mohammed, whose followers number millions, measures up to Christ in any particular. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." I Corinthians 3: 11. The corner stone, the bulwark of the church, is right.

The objectives of the Christian religion are above reproach or criticism. Christ told His disciples to go to all the world, and tell the good news that sins can be forgiven, that there is help in Christ to live without guile or blame and that in Him there is hope of eternal life. That kind of witnessing is the Christian's task. For almost two thousand years men and women have been telling the old, old story of hope and courage and cheer in every corner of the earth. "Not to be ministered unto, but to minister," is the true Christian's motto. He who follows in the footsteps of the Master thinks of others. It was this spirit that fired Moffat, Livingstone, Carey, and Judson, and that burns in the lives of missionaries today. Greater love can no man have than the love that causes him to give his life for others. The objectives and purposes of the church will stand the closest scrutiny without indictment of its ideals.

The fruits of the church are good, and could not come from a corrupt tree. If you were moving into a new country, a territory not entered by civilization, where men were still savages, wouldn't you prefer to have the church go ahead of you? Most people who criticize the church still prefer to live where the church has done its work.

Our boys in World War II who found themselves, through various circumstances, out in the wilds of New Guinea or some other isolated region were most happy to be met by Christian natives. What a relief as they crept up to the villages of these native people to hear them singing in their native tongue the old familiar hymns of the church! You and I may find fault and pick flaws with the church at home, but we would not care to live where the church had not been at work.

I have seen dark-skinned men who have eaten human flesh around the cannibal fireside, whose lives have been changed and their faces made to shine with a light of love and hope. What brought the transformation? The church had been at work among them. The Bible had been taught to them, and its truth had changed their lives.

A group of men were shipwrecked in the South Pacific and in a lifeboat made their way toward a distant island. They wondered whether it was inhabited by unfriendly natives. On beaching their small craft, some of the men remained in the boat, and some of them cautiously explored the beach for signs of life. Two of them climbed to the top of a near-by hill. From its top they excitedly motioned for their comrades to come up with them. In the distance they saw a small church building, and they knew they were safe.

The church leads to self-sacrifice. There may be some selfish men and women listed as its followers, but real religion leads to giving. A man may give without loving, but "no one can love without giving," someone has truthfully said. When the love of Christ gets into an individual's heart, he immediately thinks of others. He is willing to give of his money, and a religion that loosens the purse strings in this selfish, materialistic age is surely not without power. The church leads men and women to give their children and themselves for sacrificial service.

When someone asked General Booth the secret of his success and that of the Salvation Army, he replied, "I will tell you the secret. God has had all there was of me. I made up my mind that God would have all of William Booth there was; and if there is anything in the power of the Salvation Army today, it is because God has all the adoration of my heart, all the power of my will, and all the influence of my life."

A father and mother of the Adventist faith who had sacrificed that their daughter might have a Christian education received word from their only child that she had been called to serve in the mission field, and that she was coming home for a visit before sailing. The daughter arrived, and the month at home passed all too quickly. Too soon the hour arrived when she must take the train. Father went out to hitch up the horse to take the daughter to the station. He was a long time getting ready, and his daughter finally went out to the barn to find the reason for the delay. Old Nell stood in the stall with the harness on, and father sat on a box, his gray head bent down between his hands, and the tears coursing down his cheeks. The girl had seldom seen her father cry.

"What is wrong, father? Don't you want me to go?" she asked.

"Yes, I want you to go, daughter; but it seems so hard. I have hitched up old Nell to take chickens down to market to sell so you could be in school. I have taken the best cow down to market to sell so you could continue your education, but this is the hardest thing I have ever been called on to do—to take my only child to the station, maybe for the last time."

"Well, father, I won't go. I will stay at home with you and mother."

At that the old gentleman rose, straightened his shoulders, smiled, and helped his daughter into the buggy. He was willing to make the sacrifice, a great sacrifice for any man to make, that others might know the good news that had meant so much to him. Soon the daughter was on her way to the mission field. Such scenes have been enacted hundreds of times.

That was in the horse-and-buggy days, you say. Yes, but fathers and mothers are making the same sacrifices today. Each year hundreds of Christian young people are turning their backs upon fame and fortune, upon comforts and pleasures and a life of ease, and are going out to the ends of the earth to carry the good news of the gospel.

Granting that the church may have its imperfections, we have nothing better to offer humanity. A writer in a recent Homiletic Review, though admitting that he has been disappointed with many things in the church, says: "When upright and broadminded and

kindly men are successful in their search and find a superior organization to supplant the Christian church of the present day, I will feel it both my duty and my privilege to leave an institution that is marred by imperfections, and give time, effort, and allegiance to the newer and better instrument for the welfare of the human family and for the bringing of the kingdom of God on earth."

"The world waits," he continues logically, "upon the forces that assert that the church has had her day, with the urgent entreaty that out of their mature thought, unhampered by outworn traditions, they will give us a new organization, whose message of hope and comfort will make us forget the message of the church, whose campaign of conquest for the betterment of the world will make the church militant seem pitiful by comparison, whose fellowship, brotherly love, goodness, inspiration, and power will cause us to wonder at the patience of the centuries that tolerated such an imperfect instrument as the church."

We have no hope and no fear of any new substitute for Christianity. A good many have been offered to us in the last two centuries, but where are they? These new thought panaceas and ideologies sooner or later go the way of all things transient and ephemeral.

It is difficult to suppose that all the hundreds of churches and religions, with their conflicting dogmas, can be right, for we are told that there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." There is undoubtedly some truth in every denominational faith, though perhaps more in some than in others. If there is one right church, every sincere, honest person would like to find it. One thing is certain—it is not necessarily the oldest church, the richest church, or the most popular church, for age, wealth, and numbers are not to be reckoned as criteria of religious faith.

23. An Old, Old Question

IT WAS EVENING, and two prisoners were being lodged in the jail at Philippi in old Macedonia. That afternoon Paul and Silas, two Christian disciples, had been taken by the frenzied multitude, because they were teaching doctrines contrary to those held and taught by the people of that community. The angry mob tore most of their clothing from them, and the authorities scourged them with many stripes. The jailer was then instructed to see that these fellows did not get away. He accordingly put them into an inner prison, or dungeon, and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Because of the flogging they had received, these two followers of Jesus were in severe pain, which was intensified by the darkness and desolation of the dungeon and the manner in which they were fastened.

As the night wore on, the guards and the other prisoners were amazed, for they heard coming from that dark, foul, inner prison the sound of singing and prayer. They had been accustomed to hear swearing, cursing, moaning, and groaning from this section of the prison. They marveled at the spirit of these men, who, though they were beaten, hungry, and cold, could sing songs of praise and rejoicing.

Paul no doubt thought of the many Christians whom he had persecuted and thrown into jail. But God did not forget His faithful servants in this foul prison.

Late that night, with songs of the prisoners falling on his ears, and with a sense of security and satisfaction at having carried out the commands of his superiors, the jailer fell into a sleep from which he was rudely awakened by the shaking of the prison walls. Staggering to his feet, he thought first of his prisoners. The doors were all open! There rushed to his mind the explicit command that he was to keep his prisoners secure. Now he was sure that they were gone! For a Roman prisoner to escape meant death to the officer in charge.

It would be better for him to die at his own hand than to be executed in disgrace for sleeping at his post. Drawing his sword, he was about to take his life, when there came from the inner prison the voice of Paul: "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here."

Could he be dreaming? The sword fell to his side, and he made a check of the prisoners. They were all there; not one had escaped, though the doors were open.

With a torch in his hand he hurried into the inner prison, and fell on his face before Paul and Silas. He begged their forgiveness for the cruel treatment accorded them, and no doubt thanked them for keeping all the prisoners inside the prison walls while he slept.

Here were two prisoners that were different. He longed for an experience like theirs, which would enable him to sing and rejoice in a time of trial and suffering.

Bringing the men out into the open court, he begged of them, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" With deep humility he asked them to show him how to gain the experience they possessed.

The jailer's query is an old, old question. It has been asked by millions of honest, earnest men and women in all ages. The answer the apostles gave the jailer is the only answer to that important question: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." There is nothing difficult or complicated about that instruction. The record goes on to say, "They spoke unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house."

Millions of young people today are asking the same question as the popular, well-to-do young man asked of Jesus, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Matthew 19:16.

The Master, full of sympathy and compassion, noting his apparent sincerity, answered, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Verse 17.

On the day of Pentecost when multitudes were touched by the preaching of Peter, many of them inquired, "What shall we do?" Peter answered, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2: 37, 38.

One of the most important interviews of all time took place one night between Jesus and Nicodemus on the slopes of Olivet. All day long Jesus had been busy teaching and healing the people. In the throngs that crowded about the Savior was a venerable man, well known for his wealth and position as a leader in Israel. He was known by the people of Jerusalem for his liberality, learning, and material resources. His heart had been touched as he watched and listened to the Teacher of Galilee that day.

At even time, feeling he could not sleep until he could talk personally with Jesus, he made his way out onto the Mount of Olives, hoping to find the Savior and talk with Him quietly and unmolested. He wanted to know the way of salvation. Jesus read his thoughts, and saw in this great ruler a seeker after truth. In plain, simple language He kindly told him, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3: 3.

Nicodemus may have hoped to discuss theology with the Master or to talk about some controversial points of doctrine. Learned though he was, he seemed for a time not to comprehend what the Savior was trying to teach him. As many do today, he was perhaps thinking of some difficult way that must be traveled to come to Christ. The Jewish leaders had made religion a burden. They had piled tradition upon tradition, until it was next to impossible to keep all the rites and ceremonies and requirements of the church. They were great sticklers for the letter of the law, and hoped to be saved by a mere keeping of the commandments and the law of Moses. The way that Christ pointed out to Nicodemus seemed too simple and plain.

Let us sum up the instruction as given by Paul and Silas to the Philippian jailer, by Christ to the rich young man, by Peter to the multitude on the day of Pentecost, and by Jesus to Nicodemus.

First of all there must be a desire in the heart to do right. Christ never compels or forces anyone. This desire may be created or begun in a number of different ways. A talk or a sermon or something we read may kindle in our hearts a desire to live right. We may see the sweet graces and virtues of the Master in the daily life of some follower of His, and because of this contact be led to resolve that we, too, will be Christians. This resolution sometimes comes when, after enjoying the pleasures of the world, we sense the emptiness of them all, and realize we are travelling the wrong way, that sin does not pay. Some event, some circumstance, or the revival of some old ideal may arouse in us a sincere wish to reform our way to life. However the desire may be created in our hearts for a new life, it comes by the Spirit of God. Every impulse to do good, to reform our conduct, is from heaven.

If that desire is strong enough, we will want to repent as Peter instructed the multitude. We will have a genuine sorrow for our mistakes, our misconduct, our sins; and then if we believe, as Paul and Silas told the jailer, we will come to Jesus and ask Him to forgive us. And in I John 1:9 we are assured, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Here a great many people feel much as did Nicodemus. He thought that surely one must do more than confess and believe. It sounded too simple. The sins of the past appeared to be mountain high—surely God would not forgive all of them just for the asking. And reasoning thus today millions miss the way of life and peace.

There are a number of encouraging texts for those who feel that they have been too bad for God ever to forgive them. I like best the one in Isaiah 1:18: "Come now, and let us reason together, said the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." That may be hard for people who live in tropical climes to visualize, but the people of the cool zones see a beauty in it, for there is nothing so beautiful as a blanket of freshly fallen snow.

I was privileged to live for more than twenty years in Canada, and in certain sections in the winter months there would be periods of snowfall alternating with thaws. Often have I come home at the close of a mild day in winter when the ground was covered with sloppy, dirty snow. Everywhere there was soot and dirt, turning the snow a grayish white, tracked and marred by man. The countryside would look rather soiled and bedraggled. Then while I slept there would fall on the earth a mantle of pure white snow. In the morning one would see a beautiful white landscape, with no soot, no tracks, nothing to mar or spoil the beauty. The grime and dirt of the day before had all been covered by the blanket of spotless white. So when we come to Christ, regardless of how vile and sinful we may have been, He will cleanse our hearts and make them as white as snow.

"For Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Thee." Psalm 86:5.

Another comforting promise is recorded 'in Isaiah 55:7: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon!" And those sins He will remove from us "as far as the east is from the west," we are told in Psalm 103: 12.

It was auction day in an old-time slave market. Men and women were being sold under the auctioneer's hammer to the highest bidders. A clean-cut, fine-looking, well-built man was on the block, and bidding for him was about to begin. There seemed to be an unusual interest in this particular slave, and a number of prospective buyers were talking to the owner. Some were examining the man on the block as they would a horse for sale.

Among the prospective buyers was a middle-aged gentleman of obvious refinement. The slave heard this man talking to his master, and a feeling of hate welled up in his heart. "I could thrust a dagger into his heart," the slave whispered to a fellow slave near by.

Bidding started, and the sale was soon made. The man paid the owner of the slave the necessary money, and received a bill of sale in return. Walking over to the slave he had just bought, with the certificate of sale in one hand and a small bag of gold in the other, the buyer extended the hand containing the bill of sale and said, "You are a free man. Here is a receipt, showing that I have paid for your freedom." Extending the other hand, he went on, "And here is money which you may use in getting a start in life. Your days of slavery are over. You are free."

"You don't mean," questioned the trembling, excited slave, "that I can now do as I please, that I no longer have a master, that I am my own boss?"

"That is exactly what I mean," replied the big hearted stranger.

The astonished, bewildered slave thought for a moment. He seemed to be speechless. Then he said, "I have a request to make of you, sir. If what you say is true, won't you let me go with you and be your servant as long as I live?"

You and I and all men were born in sin. Jesus died to make us free. He purchased our spiritual liberty. Shall we be less grateful for freedom than this slave?

When we have seen the evil of our ways, and desire to follow Christ, we come to Him, we repent, we confess our sins, and He forgives us our sins. He sets us free from the bondage of wrongdoing. Having taken these steps, and knowing what He has done for us, we will then inquire, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" We shall then delight to do His will, to follow as He leads.

To the rich young man He said, "Keep the commandments." If we love Him, we will delight to serve Him. And the keeping of the commandments will not be drudgery or slavery. And though the mere keeping of the commandments will not save us, we do know that we will show our faith and our love by our works; and it is quite plain from the teachings of the Scriptures that no one will get into heaven who knowingly and willingly disobeys any of God's laws.

"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Revelation 22: 14.

It is difficult for some people to believe that their sins are forgiven by a mere confession of them to Christ, and they mourn over the same sins and confess them time after time. They are something like a Reuben Johnson who was serving a sentence in one of our state prisons.

At the holiday time the governor of the state came down to the prison, and all the prisoners were called into the prison chapel to hear him. In orderly precision they marched in, each man occupying the seat which had been assigned him. The governor said a few words about the spirit of the Christmas season, when it was customary to give gifts, and ended his speech by saying that he held in his hands pardons for some of the men sitting in the chapel that morning. "I will read the names," he said, "and I shall be happy to have the men come forward and receive their pardons."

"Reuben Johnson," he called.

Reuben was sitting in the audience, but did not budge. It was quiet for a few seconds as everyone waited. A seatmate nudged him. "It's you, Johnson. They are calling your name."

"Is Reuben Johnson here?" the governor inquired.

Then the warden rose, and pointing in Reuben's direction, said, "It is for you, Reuben. Come on up and get your pardon."

Listlessly and in a sort of daze Johnson ambled up, reached for the pardon, thanked the governor, and returned to his seat. At the close of the brief but touching ceremony thousands of men, at a given signal, swung back into line and marched back to their cells. Reuben fell in with the rest. He could not believe it was true. He had been in prison so long, had marched out of this chapel so many, many times. One of his prison mates spoke to him. "Reuben, get out of this line. You don't have to go back. You are a free man."

With the pardon in his hand he finally fell out of line, a free man, no longer a prisoner. His debt to society was cancelled by the authority of the state.

We are pardoned when we have confessed our sins, and God says that He will remember those sins no more for ever. They are blotted out of the books of record. We should thank Him for pardon, and worry no more about those forgiven sins.

I am glad we do not have to pay a thousand pounds or any lesser sum to have our sins forgiven. That might shut out some very sincere, honest souls. We do not need some handle or degree on our name to come to Him. Our heredity won't keep us from forgiveness. No, Jesus says, "Whosoever will" may come. (Revelation 22: 17.)

Another step in the Christian's pathway is set forth in Mark 16: 16. "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved."

When Paul and Silas told the Philippian jailer the way to Christ, the record says, "He took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway!" Acts 16: 33.

Some may wonder whether our sins are washed away by the mere ceremony of baptism. No, our sins are washed away by the blood of Christ. "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood." Revelation I: 5.

Baptism is an outward ceremony which testifies to the world that we are changing our ways, and are going to live a new life. We are buried with Christ in the watery grave, and rise to walk in newness of life. "Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life!" Romans 6: 3, 4.

Baptism is a gospel ordinance commemorating the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. When we are baptized we say to the world that we have given our hearts to Christ and are crucified with Him; that is, we have crucified the old self, we have forsaken, laid aside, buried our old ways. And even as we are buried with Christ we rise to walk the new way of life with Him.

Only baptism by immersion can rightly represent or symbolize this experience. It is the only mode of baptism taught in the Scriptures.

We have now given our lives to Him for Him to direct and to guide. And He promises us in Matthew 28: 20, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

By His help we are to mix our religion with every duty and activity of our lives. Of course, some people have argued that religion and business will not mix; but if that is true, there is something wrong with either our business or our Christianity.

Two business men were chatting in the lobby of a hotel in old Hong Kong. One was a keen-eyed, ruddy-countenanced young man; the other, a portly, middle-aged Englishman.

"So you have come over here to the Orient to trade?" the older man inquired of the young sea captain. "Let's have a drink while you tell me more about your plans."

“Sorry, sir,” the young captain replied with courteous emphasis. “I never frequent bars, and I use no alcoholic beverages.”

The other man raised his eyebrows, and a cynical smile crept over his round, florid face as he remarked, “You mean you are entering the Oriental trade without whisky and rum?”

“Yes, sir, I mean just that.”

“Do you think you will be able to do business over here without taking your friends and business acquaintances into the bar for a friendly drink? If that is your plan, God help you!”

“God will help me,” the young man answered without hesitation.

And God did help that young man, for in after years Robert Dollar had a fleet of vessels of his own, which traversed the seven seas with their cargoes. Captain Robert Dollar was the president of the Dollar Steamship Company, with offices in his own building overlooking San Francisco Bay, where, from his window, he could see his vessels loading and unloading, and coming and going with their precious cargoes. He was a clean man, who found time every day to read his Bible. He did not stoop to questionable practices to get business. He sacrificed no principle to make friends or turn trade his way. He was faithful to his friends, true to principle, and loyal to God. His God wonderfully blessed him and his business. So many feel today that we cannot mix religion and business. We can, and we should.

Having given our hearts to God and having determined to live for Him, we must not feel that our struggles are over, that we have nothing to do from that time on, that we can drift into heaven, or as the old song says, “go to heaven sitting down.” The devil will be constantly on our trail to discourage and dishearten. We stumble and fall perhaps and make mistakes. We have to confess those mistakes and get up and go on again. As the little babe must grow, so must the Christian, adding grace to grace, virtue to virtue, by Christ’s help. Peter tells us about this experience in 2 Peter I: 5-8: “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Keeping our eyes on Jesus as our pattern, we are to be more like Him as the days come and go, for we know that when He comes we “shall be like Him.”

To have physical health, we must have plenty of fresh air, nourishing food, and exercise. To be a good Christian, we must take time to feed on the Word, that is, to study the Bible. We must pray, talk to God and have Him talk to us; and we must do something each day to help our fellow men. We must work for others. That may be done in hundreds of different ways, but the sincere Christian will be led into paths of service according to his abilities.

We will be weaklings spiritually, or strong, well-rounded, robust Christians in proportion as we study the Word, pray, and work.

A dejected-looking little fellow of tender years sat on the curb-stone crying, unmindful of the passing throng. A teamster, passing by, noticed the little lad, and thinking he might be able to lend some aid, stopped his horses, and inquired, “Hello, sonny! What is the trouble?”

“I’m lost. I can’t find my father!” It was difficult for him to give the information between the sobs.

“Is your father a big man?” the teamster asked. “Does he have a blue suit on, and a black hat?”

“Y-e-s,” the little prodigal replied, drying his tears, “that’s my father!”

“Don’t cry any more then, sonny, for your father is looking for you. I saw him down this street. You keep right on walking down this way; and if you don’t find him, he is sure to find you.”

As if by magic, the expression on that tear-stained face changed almost instantly, and the little feet seemed not to be weary now, as he hurried along once more, for his father was down the street and looking for him.

Sometimes in this busy, upset world we lose our way. In the hustle and bustle of everyday life we may have lost sight of our heavenly Father. It seems so much easier to lose Him than to find Him again. When we try to find our way back, the road seems steep and difficult.

While we are feeling our way, looking for Him, He is looking for us. If we are in earnest, we shall surely meet Him in the way. The Father sees us a long way off, and comes to meet us, as the father did in the parable of the prodigal son. No matter how far we may have strayed from the right way, there is always a standing invitation: “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11: 28.

A weary traveler, on a hot summer day, stopped his car in front of a hotel. Tired and thirsty, he noticed in the hotel lobby a conspicuous sign above a drinking fountain: “Stoop and drink.” He could hardly wait to quench his thirst. He reached out his hand to turn on the water, but found no handle. Disappointed and a little embarrassed, he turned away and sat down near by, watching to see what others might do. Then he read the sign again, “Stoop and drink.”

Going back to the fountain, he stooped over, and immediately the cool, fresh water flowed freely. Eagerly he drank his fill and went on his way. The fountain was controlled by an electric eye. When one stooped over it an electric beam was intercepted, and the break in the current automatically opened the faucet. What a picture of the spiritual fountain at which we are all invited to drink. There is nothing for us to do but stoop and drink.

The experience of the great preacher and soul winner Spurgeon in finding Christ will be an encouragement to some. Referring to his experience he said:

“I sometimes think I might have been in darkness and despair until now had it not been for the goodness of God in sending a snowstorm, one Sabbath morning, while I was going to a certain place of worship. When I could go no farther, I turned down a side street, and came to a little Primitive Methodist chapel. In that chapel there may have been a dozen or fifteen people....

“The minister did not come that morning; he was snowed up, I suppose. At last, a very thin-looking man, a shoemaker, or tailor, or something of that sort, went up into the pulpit to preach....

“He was obliged to stick to his text, for the simple reason that he had little else to say. The text was, ‘Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.’ He did not even pronounce the words rightly, but that did not matter.... The preacher began thus: ‘My dear friends, this is a very simple text indeed. It says, “Look.” Now looking don’t take a deal of pains. It ain’t lifting your foot or your finger; it is just, “Look Anyone can look; even a child can look. But then the text says, “Look unto Me.” Yes! said he, in broad Essex, ‘many on you are looking to yourselves, but it’s no use looking there. You’ll never find any comfort in yourselves. Some look to God the Father. No, look to Him by and-by. Jesus Christ says, “Look unto Me.” Some on you say, “We must wait for the Spirit’s working.” You have no business with that just now. Look to Christ. The text says, “Look unto Me.”’

“Then the good man followed up his text in this way: ‘Look unto Me. I am sweating great drops of blood. Look unto Me. I am hanging on the cross. Look unto Me. I am dead and buried. Look unto Me. I rise again. Look unto Me. I ascend to heaven. Look unto Me. I am sitting at the Father’s right hand. O poor sinner, Look unto Me! Look unto Me!’

“Then he looked at me under the gallery, and I dare say, with so few present, he knew me to be a stranger. Just fixing his eyes on me, as if he knew all my heart, he said, ‘Young man, you look very miserable.’ Well, I did; but I had not been accustomed to have remarks made from the pulpit on my personal appearance before. However, it was a good blow, struck right home. He continued, ‘and you always will be miserable-miserable in life, and miserable in death-if you don’t obey my text; but if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved.’ Then, lifting up his hands, he shouted,... ‘Young man, look to Jesus Christ. Look!’ ...

“Oh! I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away.

“There and then the cloud was gone, the darkness had rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun; and I could have risen that instant, and sung with the most enthusiastic of them, of the precious blood of Christ, and the simple faith which looks alone to Him. Oh, that somebody had told me this before, ‘Trust Christ, and you shall be saved.’

24. Don’t Let Prejudice Rob You

ONE MORNING, several decades ago, a troubled mother said to her son, “William, there is something wrong with the water. It does not taste right. I wish you would go down to the cellar and see if there is anything in the spring.”

It was in the days before the public water board had come to this community, and a spring in the cellar supplied the drinking water. From the sandy bed of the basement a fine spring of cold, sparkling water gushed up in a never ending supply. A reservoir had been built of stone slabs, and over this was a covering of wood. A pipe line carried the overflow into a wooden tub near the kitchen door, and from here it flowed unnoticed into a near-by millpond.

To please his mother, William made his way to the cellar, and mechanically lifted the wooden door over the spring and glanced in. A dark object floating on the surface caught his eye at once. With a net he lifted it out of the water and found it to be a dead rat. It was swollen to twice its normal size, and the hair had fallen from its body. With a nauseated feeling William carried the rat out for burial.

A half century has gone since then, and with the passing of time many changes have come. A public water board came to the town, and they do not need the spring any more, although it still bubbles up with the same copious supply, flowing into the old moss-covered tub and tumbling lazily down to the old millpond.

In the hot, sweltering days of summer some of the old residents of the town come for blocks to get water from the cold, gushing spring. Some drink their fill and then carry away a supply in jugs, buckets, or other containers. The neighbors send their children to the spring for water. Those who come stop often to make remarks-“William, that is the best water in this whole country,” or “William, you are fortunate to have such a spring.”

“Help yourself,” says William. “Take all you want. It never runs dry.” But not a single drop of it does he drink. Not if he were choking of thirst would he drink from that spring, for he still sees in his imagination that puffed-up, hairless rat of fifty years ago floating on the surface of the spring.

It is almost unbelievable what prejudice will do for us. Someone has said that it “never forgives and never forgets. It never quite dies. Hit it on the head with an axe, strangle it, drown it, burn it, poison it, do what you will, and when it ought to be properly dead by all the rules of the game, it bobs up again to haunt one.”

Prejudice cruelly robs us of life’s sweetest blessings. How narrow we are at times, how biased, how stubborn, how stiff necked, how unprogressive! We take much the same attitude the old gentleman took who was sitting one evening in front of the town hall while a meeting was in progress. A passer-by inquired of him, “What is going on in there, friend?” The old fellow replied, as he struck a defiant pose, “I don’t know, but whatever it is, I’m against it.”

We are slow to change our customs, to learn new ways to do things, to investigate new truths. We prefer to follow in the paths of our forefathers, to stagnate. On new ideas we look with doubt and scorn. New truths we do not care to investigate. Our way is best. We are right, and of course the other fellow cannot be. Such prejudice usually comes from lack of knowledge. What we do not understand we oppose.

When Dr. Madden was sent in 1820 to the Cumberland Settlement as pastor of the Methodist church, he found a placard nailed on the door of his church, bearing the following words: “This church shall not be desecrated by its use as a Sunday school.” One of the women of the church had attempted to conduct Sunday school in the basement, but had been ejected by the church officials. She was meeting with the children in a building near by. The new pastor talked and pleaded with the church board for a full

year before he could get their consent to allow a Sunday school to be conducted. In these days of religious education promotion it is difficult to believe any church board was ever that stubborn.

About the same time a Presbyterian church burned, and subscriptions were being taken for the building of a new structure. On the pledge card was this statement: "I am making this pledge with the understanding that this building shall never be desecrated by its use as a Sunday school." And the smug old deacons swelled up with righteous pride as they read it.

No, we need not accept every new idea or truth that we hear. We shall not always be able to go with the crowd. But we should be big enough to hear both sides of any matter, to weigh facts, to investigate, to make fair decisions.

In religion as nowhere else we see prejudice asserting itself. We were brought up to believe certain things. Father and mother believed them, grandfather and grandmother believed them, and they must be right. We could not even think of considering any other set of ideas or religious beliefs. Every religion or doctrine other than ours is wrong, and we will have nothing to do with it. We shut our eyes, turn our backs, gather up our garments, and hurry by for fear we might be contaminated. We constitute ourselves both judge and jury, and say guilty, without even giving the witness a chance to speak. We know we are right, and shut our eyes, close our ears, jump down into the old rut, and plod on.

It was only a little over a century ago that a public utility met with strong criticism when it talked of lighting the streets of one of its cities. "This will never do," said the critics. "It will interfere with the divine plan of the world which has pre-ordained darkness during nighttime; fear of darkness would vanish and drunkenness and depravity increase. Horses would be frightened and thieves emboldened." "How silly!" we say.

When transportation was making its first real strides with the wood-burning engine, people were loud in their denunciations. A railway company was planning for a line through a certain section of the country, and its officials asked a school board whether they might use the schoolhouse for a meeting with the property owners in the community, so that some agreements might be reached for purchasing a right of way.

"Providence never intended that man should fly through space at the terrific speed of fifteen miles an hour," said these prejudiced citizens, "and we are not going to allow our schoolhouse to be used for any such purpose." In other words, they were too narrow and hidebound even to listen to the other side of the question. They were uninformed, non-progressive, and ignorant, and they were satisfied to go on in their ignorance. They did not want to be disturbed any more about the matter.

When the railway line did go through the country and the first train came puffing and snorting into town, the inhabitants for miles around drove to the little town to see the strange sight. One old couple who hitched up old Dobbin and drove in, was typical of the incredulity of the people. The iron monster had already arrived when they reached town. There it stood, smoking and hissing, surrounded by a curious throng. As the old gentleman looked it over he turned to his wife and said, "Mandy, that thing will never go." But snorting, wheezing, and puffing it moved off, much to his surprise. As it disappeared in the distance he said, "Mandy, that thing will never stop."

In my younger days I refused to eat lettuce, celery, tomatoes, and some other fresh vegetables rich in vitamin content. I liked potatoes, beans, and bread; but I was sure I did not like lettuce and celery, and was too stubborn even to try. Mother urged and begged, yes, almost threatened, for she knew these foods contained elements I needed. For many years I would not try to eat them. Who was the loser? I was, of course. As I enjoy some of these foods now I think of what I missed in my boyhood. Prejudice is an insidious thing; and to countries, communities, and individuals it has often been like the accumulated debris in a river, diverting its life-giving waters of blessing. Are you handicapped by your prejudices?

When I was a child I heard the preacher tell about a hot seething, ever-burning hell down in the bowels of the earth somewhere. In this hell, he told us, the wicked of all ages were writhing and burning in terrible pain. In this hell they would burn, we were told, for ever and ever. When an evangelistic meeting was held and the call was made for sinners to get right with God, the old minister made those fires pretty hot. I could almost hear the crackling of the flames and smell the odor of burning flesh.

In my childhood imagination I could picture some of these tormented, suffering souls crawling up to the edge of this molten, burning hell, just about to get out of it, when an attendant, one of the devil's imps with pitchfork in hand, would gleefully toss him back into the midst of millions of burning, agonizing men and women, to burn on for ever and ever.

There are millions of people who were taught this doctrine in childhood, and they still believe it. They believe it is right, and they do not want to study what the Bible says to find out whether they are correct or mistaken.

I learned later by studying my Bible that no such doctrine is taught in the Book. In the first place, it is most inconsistent with the idea of divine justice. A human being would not treat his fellow men in such an unfair way, and we certainly could not expect a loving God to do so. Here is just one argument against the unfairness of such a plan. Suppose Cain, who killed his brother, was cast into this fiery hell. He would now have been roasting and burning for about six thousand years. But suppose someone kills his brother down in this century. He would be cast in hell with Cain. For the same crime one man would have been burning six thousand years longer than the other man. Six thousand years is a long time to burn.

But the Bible is clear on this subject. It refers to death as a sleep. "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." I Thessalonians 4: 13. Jesus said, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps." John 11: 11.

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." Daniel 12: 2. How long are they to sleep in the earth? The Bible answers that question, too. "So man lies down, and rises not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." Job 14: 12. In the grave man is unconscious; he knows nothing of what is taking place on the earth. So the wise man tells us in Ecclesiastes 9: 5, "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing."

Will man ever escape this grave? Will he be resurrected? In the Bible there are a number of places that speak of a resurrection or of resurrections. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." I Thessalonians 4: 16. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth." John 5: 28, 29. Here note that there will be a resurrection of the righteous and of the wicked, of the just and of the unjust. The righteous will be taken to their reward in heaven, and the wicked will be destroyed by fire that comes down from heaven. They will be devoured and be as ashes on the earth. (Revelation 20: 9; Malachi 4: 3.) This is just one of many Bible subjects that men and women are not willing to study. They have been taught some thing contrary, which they do not wish to admit is wrong.

You may not have a Bible with you, and quoted herewith is proof that the fire comes down from heaven to devour the wicked. "They went up on the breadth of the earth and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." And the text in Malachi 4: 3 says that they are burned to ashes. "You shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet." So the wicked will be totally destroyed. How much more reasonable than the old pagan doctrine of an ever burning hell!

Noah had a message for the people of his time. But they were prejudiced. It had never rained on the earth before, and the people thought it never would. "Noah's crazy," they said. "We haven't any time to consider such foolishness." As they passed the ark in the making, I imagine they scoffed and sneered and jeeringly hastened on. But God had sent Noah to tell them about the coming Flood. His message was truth. Their unbelief did not change the truth of Noah's message. Only eight people in the then-known world believed, and were saved.

Luther had new light for the people of his day, but he found the majority of the people too prejudiced even to give his message a hearing. The mother church was right, they argued, and they would listen to none of his heresy. He nailed his theses to the door of the Castle church of Wittenberg, he talked the doctrine of justification by faith, he wrote about it, and some believed. Thousands went to their graves refusing even to listen to the heresy of this young German heretic. Who was the loser?

In my boyhood I attended a popular church near my home. Father was a deacon in the church, and mother was a very earnest, zealous Christian. A minister came to our town, rented a hall, and began to preach a strange and unpopular doctrine. One of these peculiar people came to our home and left papers for us to read. Mother was prejudiced. She was afraid to read the papers. Our church was good enough for us. The facts were that we did not know what we believed. To mother those papers were spiritual poison. She would not read a line of them. Up on a shelf behind the door they went. But curiosity got the better of mother. She wondered whether they were too terrible for her to take just a glance through them. So she took them down and began to read. They had truth in them. They contained some truth she had never heard preached in our church. She read and reread and read again. She got down the family Bible and compared the papers with the Bible, reading the texts given in the articles. They were in perfect agreement. Some of the beliefs of her church were not substantiated by the Bible. Thank God she had the stamina, the backbone, to accept truth, to stand for the right. One time mother made father some of the new-styled coat shirts. Shirts used to be sewed up part of the way in front and the only way to get them on and off was to pull them over the head.

Someone thought of the coat-shirt idea. It is so much more convenient. When dad saw those shirts he declared that he would never wear them, and demanded that mother sew them up about eighteen inches from the bottom in front. She persuaded him to try wearing one of them. Reluctantly he did. The trial convinced him of its advantages.

We must be open-minded-not gullible, but willing to weigh facts before reaching decisions. Prejudice will warp our souls, rob us of numberless blessings. We must seek to know the truth, the right, and then have the courage to do the right at any cost.

25. God Looks on the Heart

I SAW AN unusual sight not long ago. It was a lovely summer day, and the countryside was extremely beautiful. As I drove into the yard on a little farm I saw a man sitting in a chair, hoeing his garden. Now, there are a good many labor saving devices these days to make work lighter, but this was a new one.

"What a lazy man I" I thought – "about the laziest I have ever seen." Had you been with me, you might have had the same impression.

On getting out of the car and walking over to greet the man, I saw a pair of crutches beside the chair. He was a semi-invalid. He could not walk. But he was ambitious, eager to do something, so he had hobbled out into the garden by the use of crutches, put a chair astride a row, and begun to hoe. When he had hoed as far as his hoe would reach he moved his chair along and hoed a few feet more. In that way he weeded his garden. How different my judgment when I knew the facts! I had judged the poor man wrongly.

We judge people mostly from what we see, and we cannot see much. "Man looks on the outward appearance," the Bible tells us, "but the Lord looks on the heart." I Samuel 16: 7. We are not able to judge a tree until the fruit appears, and we cannot judge a man or woman by looking at his or her outward appearance. We just do not know what is hidden in the heart.

After watching this man drag himself along a garden row for a while, I said to myself, "You had better be a little slow in judging men, for you don't know what is in their hearts or what may be hidden in their lives."

A mother and her three grown daughters went shopping one rainy morning. Each carried an umbrella as they boarded the tram near their home.

As they were leaving the car in the heart of the city, the mother absent-mindedly picked up the umbrella of a seatmate as well as her own. The stranger demanded her property, and in angry tones accused the mother of stealing.

The four women spent the morning hours together. The clouds drifted away, and the sun came out bright and clear. Mother had to go home early to prepare the evening meal. They planned that she should take the girls' umbrellas home as well as her own, and they would bring the parcels with them. She boarded a tram homeward bound-this time with four umbrellas. On the car she met her seatmate of the morning, who cynically remarked, "Well, you surely had good luck today!" and no one could convince her that the other woman was not in the business of collecting umbrellas.

A few years ago I met for the first time a certain man in whose work I was interested. A few days later I met him again and passed a remark, hoping to get into conversation with him. He paid no attention to what I had said, and turned away. I thought he treated me rather coolly. My opinion formed at that time was not complimentary to him. I was sure he felt himself too important to talk to me. I purposely avoided him from that time on, not wishing to force myself upon him. If he did not wish to speak to me, I would not impose my presence on him. A year or so later I learned that this man was hard of hearing, almost deaf. I had misjudged him. I discovered him to be most humble and friendly.

Not long ago I saw a member of the church to which I belong coming out of a hotel bar. Knowing him quite well, I stopped to chide him about it in an air of mock seriousness. He explained that he had been offered a ten-pound note in payment of an account and had gone in here to get it changed. He had tried every other business place nearby without success. As he was telling me the experience he said, "What kind of story do you suppose might have been started about me if some of our good church members had seen me coming out of that hotel? They might have had me drinking."

We cannot always believe what we see. One evening a friend and I were walking down the streets of Milwaukee, when: we noticed a crowd of people in a vacant store. On a platform at one end of the room two men were entertaining the people, obviously intending to sell something. We went in and crowded up to the front.

"Who will lend me his hat for a minute?" the man who was doing the talking asked. "I want to do a little trick." I nudged my friend, and suggested that he let the man have his new felt hat. He passed it up to the rostrum. The man took the hat, and with a small stick something like a baton in his hand, made a few motions and pushed the baton right up through that felt hat. I heard it tear and saw the rough edges of the felt. My friend turned red in the face. His hat was ruined.

"I am so sorry," the man said. "I have ruined this man's hat. I thought I knew how to do that trick, for I have done it hundreds of times. You wait around for a few minutes, Mister, and I will go out to the store with you and buy you another hat." He passed the hat back to my friend, and there was nothing at all wrong with it. It was just as it was when he sent it up to the platform. My eyes were surely deceived, and my ears, too. I would have vowed that the hat was ruined. If we can't believe what we see ourselves, we should be cautious about reports and stories we hear about others.

In a court of justice the judge and jury hear both sides of a case before making any decision. We ought to be as fair as that. Sometimes we hear a plausible story about some person, an organization, a church, or a nationality, and we jump to conclusions. It is best to wait until we hear both sides of a matter before we pass a verdict. One's appearance, for instance, should never be charged against his sincerity. Some of the most sincere people I have ever met have been careless in their dress and crude in their manners.

Christ is our judge, and He has not given us the responsibility of judging our fellow men. In the Sermon on the Mount the Savior warned us against climbing on to the judgment seat to judge our fellow men. "Judge not, that you be not judged: For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged: and with what measure you mete; it shall be measured to you again. And why beholds thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considers not the beam that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of your eye; and, behold, a beam is in your own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of your own eye; and then shall thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." Matthew 7: 1-5.

I am thankful that Christ is to be your judge and mine. If it were left for mankind to judge us, a good many of us would never pass the test, for man judges by what he sees, but God judges the heart.

Paul summarizes the matter for us in Romans 14: 13: "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."

26. Modern Miracles

ON JANUARY 8, 1815, two thousand men were killed and wounded in the Battle of New Orleans, two weeks after the Treaty of Ghent had been signed between the United States and Great Britain. That bloody battle need not have been fought, but the only way of carrying messages then was by slow moving and uncertain sailing vessels, and the contending generals did not know until too late that the nations had signed a treaty of peace.

At that time there were no telephones, no telegraphs, and no radios. No cables linked the Eastern and Western hemispheres. Communication between nations was slow and tedious. Messages between the colonies were carried by horse or stagecoach. Mails were infrequent and uncertain. Newspapers were few and sparsely distributed, for not many could read. Communities were, therefore, really isolated although separated by no more than one hundred miles. We have become so accustomed to the many conveniences at our command that our minds can hardly comprehend the tremendous gap between the snail pace methods of travel and communication of the nineteenth century and the lightning speed of our own marvelous times.

Today messages may be sent almost instantaneously by telephone, telegraph, or wireless to any part of the civilized world. Have you ever stopped to think that if we could shout a hello in New York, and cause it to travel through the air to San Francisco, without the aid of wires and electricity, it would not reach the West Coast for more than three hours? But the telephone puts our hello there in a small fraction of a second. Think of it-with the speed of thought the voice is shot over prairies and through forests,

channeled through cities, and hurdled over the Rockies to the Pacific Coast, and the answer comes back in the winking of an eye. The telephone not only transmits speech but carries it thousands of times faster than the speed of sound.

Some time ago an incident occurred in New York that shows the wonder and the amazing possibilities of the radio. The New York Times radio editor, who lived about twenty miles from his office, went home one day, planning to spend the evening listening to Commander Byrd's broadcasts from the South Pole area. Not wishing to be disturbed, he removed his telephone receiver from the hook. In the Times office an emergency that demanded his presence arose. The night workers could not reach him by telephone, but they must get in touch with him immediately. They sent a message to Byrd by radio, saying, "Please tell Dunlop in Brooklyn to put up his telephone receiver; the office wants to call him."

Almost instantly that message was wafted over oceans, mountains, and desolate areas of ice and snow to Byrd's camp in the Antarctic. And from frozen wastes around the South Pole came the message: "Dunlop, put up your telephone receiver; the Times wants to call you." Dunlop called his office, the whole transaction taking only a few minutes.

If our grandparents who lived a hundred years ago could come back, what shocks would await them. If they visited your home and asked the meaning of the radio on the living room table, and you told them you could turn those little knobs and receive messages, music, and programs from across the continent and from overseas, they would not believe you.

What strides have been made in transportation in the last century! If Columbus were to awaken and get a view of our ocean-going vessels, he would be dumb with amazement. These luxurious, floating hotels now cross the Atlantic in a little more than five days. Columbus set sail from Spain on August 3, and did not reach San Salvador until October 12.

It is a little more than a hundred years since the first steam locomotive made its appearance. The people of that time were skeptical of such a contrivance. An influential newspaper asked the question, "What could be more palpably absurd and ridiculous than the prospect held out of locomotives travelling twice as fast as stagecoaches? We should as soon expect the people of Woolwich to suffer themselves to be fired off upon one of Congreve's ricochet rockets as to trust themselves to the mercy of such a machine going at such a rate." One prominent merchant in Liverpool wagered that if the locomotive ever went ten miles an hour, he would eat stewed engine wheels for breakfast.

To the amazement of the unbelieving and skeptic public, the Rocket actually traveled at the rate of twenty-nine miles an hour. When the Stockton and Darlington Railway was officially opened for traffic, a man on horseback preceded the famous Engine Number One to warn the people of its approach. That horseman soon lost his job. Imagine, if you can, the contrast between one of those crude, rattling contraptions and one of our modern streamliners equipped with every modern convenience, even to bath, telephone, barbershop, and so forth. On these luxury trains we eat, sleep, listen to the radio, and see moving pictures as we skim along at a hundred miles an hour or more.

In the early 1900's the Wright brothers, who operated a bicycle shop in Dayton, Ohio, began experimenting with gliders and airplanes. They made their first flight in one of their contraptions in 1903 at Kitty Hawk, in the Carolinas. Today as a development of these early experiments great luxury liners of the air rush from place to place at hundreds of miles an hour. One can have breakfast in an Eastern city and supper in California, eating the noonday meal aloft in the Midwest. It took our forefathers weeks of dangerous, nerve-racking travel to cover the tiresome, tedious journey from coast to coast.

To Benjamin Franklin is given the credit for founding the Saturday Evening Post. If he were alive now, and should attempt to print an edition of that magazine on his old hand press, it would take him more than two thousand years to do it. Today the trees are felled, the wood is converted into pulp and paper, and newspapers are printed and on the street in a few hours. We do not often stop to think how recently many of our modern necessities were invented. Here is a list of the principal ones.

1811 Steam printing press.	1868 Typewriter.
1831 Reaper and mower.	1876 Telephone.
1836 Electric telegraph.	1877 Phonograph.
1836 Phosphorous match.	1878 Incandescent lamp.
1838 Electroplating.	1884 Fountain pen.
1839 Photography.	1893 Diesel engine.
1842 Ether anesthesia.	1895 Motor-car.
1846 Sewing machine.	1895 X-ray.
1856 Steel.	

After these came the airplane, radio, television, radar, and many other inventions. Practically every invention of any consequence has come within the last hundred and fifty years. Before that time our forefathers lived much as did Abraham and the other patriarchs of Bible days.

Try to imagine how we would be affected if we should awaken some morning to find the clock of time turned back one hundred and fifty years, and the inventions of the last century taken from us. On waking on a winter morning we would grope in the darkness, trying to find a candle, and then would come a real task, for there would be no common, everyday match with which to light it. We would proceed to build a fire in the fireplace and to get our breakfast without electric toaster, gas, or electric range. In the absence of a long list of our patented and attractively packaged breakfast foods, it would take a little longer for the good housewife to prepare the morning meal. There would be no pasteurized milk or canned fruit juices.

No morning paper would be delivered to our door. If we had an office, we would walk to our work, and on our arrival we would find no elevators running. In the office we would use an old quill pen-no adding machines, dictation phones, or inter phones.

We would not be bothered much with mail, for it would come perhaps once a week. What would we do without a telephone? No motor-car would be in readiness for running errands. For long trips reservations would have to be made for a seat in the stagecoach.

In the home the housewife would miss the electric sweeper, washer, irons, floor polisher, and other conveniences. There would be the baking and milking and churning to do. There would be no call from the baker, milkman, laundry man, or cleaner. There would be no radio in the home. All sewing would have to be done by hand. What would the modern home be with the hands of the clock of time turned back a hundred and fifty years? It might not be so convenient. In these days of modern conveniences we are a lot better off in so many ways, but we surely are no better men and women than were those pioneers of yesterday.

27. Better Off. But Not Better

DO YOU EVER relive some of the interesting days of your childhood? Who does not? My experience carries me back over a longer period than many of you who read these lines have lived, and I can see my mother blowing into a glass lamp chimney, and then wiping it crystal clear with a soft, clean cloth. How often in the evenings have I seen her get the oilcan, fill those lamps, trim the wicks, and place them about the house, ready for lighting when darkness fell.

I can see her, too, out in the yard stirring a huge kettle of apple butter with a large wooden ladle. Over an open fire she often made kettles of soap, too. Many an hour have I helped her peel and cut up apples and peaches for drying in the sun. I can never forget the aroma of the fresh-baked bread as it came from the oven, and my taste buds have not forgotten how sweet and nutlike that bread tasted. It was made from entire-wheat flour ground in the old-fashioned stone mill.

Father did the milking when he was home, but often he was away, and until I was large enough mother had to do it. There was plenty of work to be done in caring for the products of this home dairy. I can see mother now, skimming the thick cream from crocks of rich Jersey milk. What we did not use on the table mother put in a large pail, tied a rope to the handle, and let it down into the well to keep cool, for we had no ice-chest, and electric refrigerators were unknown. Every few days she churned this cream into delicious butter. How I would enjoy some of that good buttermilk with pieces of real butter floating in it. In our pantry there were always hundreds of quarts of canned fruit and vegetables, which mother had put up in glass and tin.

Father cut wood night and morning or at odd times, for it took much wood to supply heat for all the cooking. It took time, too, to keep the fires going. Mother did not have heat for cooking by the mere turning of a switch. Father made the fires, and as a boy I carried in the wood and took out the ashes.

Mother wove our carpets and kept them clean with a common house broom. Monday was usually washday. Tubs and boiler had to be filled by carrying pails and pails of water from the cistern. There were no electric washers, and clothes were rubbed clean on a washboard.

Water for baths was heated in the copper, and mother scrubbed us clean in the old-fashioned wooden tub.

Many times in the evening we sat around a glowing fire, and ate apples, nuts, and popcorn. At such times mother was not idle. Her hands were busy knitting stockings and mittens for the family. Mother made her own clothes and many of the items we children wore.

Father walked to and from his work, and in the summer cared for a large garden. I ran errands to the store and to the neighbors, for telephones were not in every home then.

There were many duties to be performed in that home of forty years ago. In spite of all this work, father and mother had time to attend church regularly. They had to walk, but they did not miss the weekly prayer meeting. We were never too busy for family worship, the reading of the Bible and prayer each night and morning. Grace was always said at the table. People took time to be sociable, too, to visit and be friendly. We have much more leisure time today, thanks to our modern inventions and conveniences. By the push of the button or the twirling of a switch we light and heat our homes. Bread is delivered by bakers daily, and we insist that it be sliced. Milk and newspapers are left on our doorsteps each morning. A telephone call brings the laundry man or dry cleaner. Fruit and vegetables are preserved fresh in deep-freeze units. Meals are quickly prepared by only a few twirls of a tin opener and the application of a little heat. We have our washing machines, our vacuum cleaners, and our modern bathrooms. We should have more time than our parents had, shouldn't we? We do have more time, but more time for what? We are much better off, but we certainly are no better. Far from it!

If some of you who read these lines live off the beaten path and do not have all the modern conveniences, take some comfort in the thought that you still have just as much time for life's worth-while things as the people of the city have.

Strange to say, with all our conveniences and our extra time, we do not have time for the necessary things. We are too busy to go to church, at least some of us are, or to worship in our homes. We do not have time to be neighborly. We cannot crowd in a few minutes a day for Bible study. We are too busy to take spiritual food or to thank God for His blessings, too busy to live and too busy to get ready to die.

We save time in so many ways. Trips that required days with the horse and buggy can now be made in as many hours by car. If we are in an extra rush, we can fly to our destination at the speed of hundreds of miles an hour. We get there sooner and get back, and then do not know what to do with the time we have saved.

If we used profitably all the time saved by our modern conveniences, we would be a better people. No doubt about it, we have a great deal more time, but more time for what?

. Have you ever stopped to think why for nearly six thousand years men went on in the same old rut, doing things precisely as their fathers before them had done, and then suddenly in one brief century the whole life of mankind was revolutionized by the increase of knowledge and by the multitude of miraculous inventions?

In Daniel 12: 4, the Lord foretold the remarkable increase of knowledge and the speed of our time. "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." If we believe the Bible, surely we can come to no other conclusion but that this prophecy is fulfilled in our day. And if so, we must be living in the "time of the end." Of course, the "time of the end" does not mean the end of time, but I believe God intended for this unusual time to impress upon our hearts the fact that we are nearing the end of time, that Jesus Christ is coming back to the world to set up His kingdom.

The disciples were just as curious as you and I would be, and they asked Him when these things would be.

Jesus answered them in that wonderful twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, in which He tells of the troubles and confusion that will precede His coming again. One of the definite things He asked them to remember was the fulfillment of the prophecies of Daniel. The second chapter of Daniel presents an outline of world history, and an understanding of its events will help us to realize where we are in the stream of time in relation to what the disciples called "the end of the world." What does it mean for you and me to face the future in these stirring times?

28. A Look Into the Future

ONE MORNING about six-thirty I was awakened from a very sound sleep by a terrific explosion, which rocked the house and shook the bed. I was sure something dreadful had happened not far away. Jumping to my feet, I looked out the window, and about two blocks away I could see a cloud of dust rising over the trees. Hurriedly dressing I made my way in the direction of the commotion. I noticed a group of people some of them in bathrobes and dressing gowns. Ambulances and fire department apparatus were arriving with screeching sirens. As I passed buildings across the street I noticed that the plate glass had been blown out. Birds that had been sleeping in trees nearby were dead on the ground. The trees were stripped of all their leaves.

There had been an explosion in a dwelling, and the house was badly wrecked. It was found later that someone with a grudge against the occupants had planted several sticks of dynamite in the basement. Fortunately no one was killed, but several who were sleeping in the place were taken to the hospital for treatment.

In this house lived a psychic reader, a fortune-teller. In the back and also at the front of the house were large signs giving Professor Blank's office hours. For a fee he was willing, yes, he professed to be able, to tell his clients what would happen to them tomorrow, next month, or next year. But he did not seem to know anything about the explosion that was to wreck his house.

A good many people long for a look into the future, to know what will happen to them or to others. That is why millions of dollars are spent each year by honest but inquisitive souls who are trying to find out what lies ahead. That is why fortune-tellers, soothsayers, and astrologers are busy. I really think that it is a good thing we do not know what tomorrow, next week, or the coming years will bring to us.

God knew that it would not be best for you and me to know all the experiences that will come to us. "Into each life some rain must fall," the poet tells us. Few of us get through this world without trouble and disappointment. Of course, we have found out, too, that most of our troubles were not so bad as we expected they would prove to be. If we knew all the disappointments and difficulties ahead, some of us would worry ourselves into the hospital or the undertaker's establishment. One thing we do know, for God has promised, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it." I Corinthians 10: 13.

"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children," we are told in Deuteronomy 29:29. The Lord has told us all we need to know about tomorrow. Through His prophets He has given us glimpses into the future. The rise and fall of nations right down to the end of time was revealed to Daniel and to other prophets. It is a most interesting story. The history of our world from the days of old Babylon down past our own day is revealed in the second and the seventh chapters of the Book of Daniel. The second chapter tells of a dream King Nebuchadnezzar had and of its meaning.

He was the proud, haughty ruler of old Babylon, and believed that the whole world was at his feet, and that he and his heirs would rule for ever.

One night he had an unusual dream; and when morning came, try as he might, he could not recall the details. It troubled him so much that he called together all his soothsayers, his fortune-tellers, his astrologers, his wise men. I imagine he may have said to them, "Men, I had an unusual dream last night. It was most impressive. It awakened me, and afterward I could not sleep. It troubles me now. I do not remember a single detail of it. It was no ordinary dream, and it must have a meaning. I want you to tell me the dream and what it means."

They had never had a command like this. It was unreasonable. They pretended to be able to foretell the future, to have unusual wisdom, and many times they had given the king counsel. Now they were confused. He wanted them to recall for him the dream he had forgotten.

These attendants of the king had been sailing under false colors, pretending to have ability to reveal secrets, to foretell the future. They passed as supermen. They often gave counsel or advice which would be right whatever the outcome. For instance, on one occasion a king inquired of them whether he should go to war with another nation. Their reply was, "A great nation will be defeated." Which ever way the tide of battle ebbed their prophecy would be safe.

Here was a test of their ability. "Show the dream, and the interpretation thereof," the king demanded. He went even further than that by saying, "If you will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill."

They begged and pleaded with the king to tell them the dream, assuring him that they could then tell him with certainty the meaning.

He was disgusted with them, and expressed his feeling in these words: "You have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me the interpretation."

In desperation they pleaded, "There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. And it is a rare thing that the king requires, and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh." They really spoke the truth this time. No one but God could tell what would happen in the days to come.

True as their statement was, it did not make the king feel any better. They had deceived him too many times, and he would have no more of it. The Bible record says that he was "furious," and issued a command that every wise man in Babylon should be slain. Among the king's wise men was a God-fearing young man who had been taken as a captive from Jerusalem. When the word came to this young man, Daniel, that his life was to be taken, he asked why the king had been so hasty in the matter. He requested that time be given them, so he and his companions might call on God to reveal this matter to them. Time was granted, and Daniel and his three young companions prayed to God, asking that the dream might be revealed to them.

God never neglects His children in time of need. He did reveal to these young men the king's dream and the meaning, or interpretation, also. Daniel did not forget to thank God for His help, as we are so prone to do. He said, "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are His: and He changes the times and the seasons: He removes kings, and sets up kings. He gives wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding. He reveals the deep and secret things. He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him. I thank Thee, and praise Thee, O Thou God of my fathers."

Daniel went in confidently before Nebuchadnezzar, and when the king asked whether he could tell the dream and its meaning, the young man without any hesitation declared emphatically, "The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king. But there is a God in heaven that reveals secrets, and makes known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days."

Daniel assured the king that he had no wisdom above his fellows. God had answered his prayers, and had given him the dream and its meaning. Here was an opportunity for Daniel to glorify himself.

I imagine the king was a bit nervous. He was anxious to know the dream and its meaning, so Daniel began at once. He outlined to the king a brief history of our world, the rise and fall of nations, and the conquests of one country over another. He did not stop with Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom but told of other kingdoms that would arise and of the course of empires and governments right down to the dropping of the curtain on the drama of our world. Most of this prophecy, we find, has been fulfilled, just as Daniel outlined it. The study of this Book of Daniel and also of the last book of the Bible, Revelation, has given me the fullest confidence in the Bible as God's Book, and of His direction and guidance in the affairs of men and nations.

You, too, are perhaps anxious to know what Daniel told the king. He told of his time, of our days in which we live, and of years yet to come. At the time of World War II students of prophecy, and of the second chapter of Daniel in particular, knew full well that neither Hitler nor any other individual would ever succeed in setting up a world kingdom. The Bible plainly declares that it will never be.

Try to imagine the king Nebuchadnezzar robed in all his regal splendor, with every muscle taut, his attention intently focused on the young Daniel, that he might not miss a word.

Daniel begins, "Thou, O king, saw, and behold a great image." No doubt the king's eyes opened a bit wider. Yes, that was right. He had seen an image in his dream. He was an idolater, a worshipper of the gods of the Chaldeans, and he was interested in images. Daniel went on, "This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou saw till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces." Daniel put no if or but into his declaration. He was positive about it, and he knew by the expression on the king's face that he was telling the dream correctly. No doubt the monarch stopped him a few times to exclaim, "That is exactly right, young man!"

Daniel continued to the end of the dream: "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors. And the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

Nebuchadnezzar was naturally more interested in the meaning of this strange dream than in the dream itself. With what rapt attention he must have listened as young Daniel with an air of authority finished the interpretation!

In just a few sentences Daniel had outlined to the king the history of the world from the days of his kingdom down through succeeding kingdoms. Man has never been able to pack so much history into so few words. In eight Bible verses is told the whole story of our world. The touch of the divine, the finger of God, is in this record, this prophecy. We know this full well, for history tells us positively that this prophecy of Daniel's time has been fulfilled in the minutest details. Daniel said to the king, "Thou art this head of gold."

That statement pleased the king as he listened. He was a great ruler, and Babylon was a mighty empire. Practically the whole world was prostrate at his feet. It could quite fitly be called the golden kingdom.

If this had caused Nebuchadnezzar any elation, what was to follow would not sound quite so good to him, for it did not flatter him at all. "After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth!" Daniel 2: 39.

It may not have occurred to the king that his kingdom might be conquered, or come to an end. But Daniel told him that other kingdoms were to come. Nebuchadnezzar was not worried too much about it right then; and even in later years, when Cyrus laid siege to the city of Babylon, the Babylonians lost no sleep, and did little worrying, for they were confident that their city was impregnable. They had gathered inside the walls of the city enough food to supply them for decades. There were also many acres inside the walls, so that they might grow sufficient food for themselves indefinitely. From their high and sturdy walls they scoffed at Cyrus, and had ample reason for their feelings of security. The Medes and Persians had no implements of warfare to tear down their walls or to take the city. God had said, however, that enemies would take the city, and had even told how it would be done. In the seventh chapter of Daniel the prophet employed beasts to represent the same succession of world empires.

A very interesting prophecy concerning the taking of Babylon by Cyrus was made by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 45:1. "Thus said the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him. And I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two hinged gates. And the gates shall not be shut."

The river Euphrates ran through Babylon, passing under the walls on either side of the city. A wall of unusual height and thickness surrounded the metropolis, and for safety's sake the Babylonians had made walls on both sides of the river. Massive, two-hinged gates in these river walls were opened by day, so citizens could pass freely over the bridges connecting the parts of the city on each side of the river. At night these gates were closed. Cyrus knew of a coming festival in Babylon, and since he had no machines of war powerful enough to batter down the walls, he decided to use strategy. He knew that at the time of this festival the citizens would be given over to drunkenness, carousal, and dissipation, so he planned to enter the city at the height of their revelry. A large army of men were set to digging and dredging above the city, so as to turn the Euphrates from its course. On the night of the festival the river was turned from its usual bed, and the army of Cyrus marched down the muddy channel under the walls. As their leader expected, the reveling Babylonians had failed to close the river gates; and the invading soldiers marched in and surprised the garrison, taking the city without any difficulty.

It is remarkable how God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar through Daniel that his kingdom would be overthrown, and perhaps still more remarkable, that He told Isaiah the prophet a hundred and fifty years before the event that Cyrus would take the city, entering through the two-hinged gates which would not be shut. Man guesses as to what lies ahead, but only God knows the future.

It is significant to note here that drunkenness and debauchery led to the downfall of Babylon. They went into their indulgent revels as subjects of the king of Babylon, but awoke to find themselves slaves to the king of Persia.

Daniel had more to tell the king. He declared positively that after the Medes and Persians there would be "another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and subdues all things: and as iron that breaks all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou saw the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou saw the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken." Daniel 2: 39-42.

The Medes and Persians got into difficulty with the ambitious Alexander the Great who was now at the head of the armies of Greece. In a number of encounters the forces of the two nations met. Finally on the battlefield of Arbela, with Alexander's legions outnumbered twenty to one, the Persians were defeated, and Greece became the third universal empire represented in the image by the belly and thighs of brass.

The iron monarchy of Rome next took the leading place in world affairs. For a time the kingdom did have the strength of iron as mentioned in the dream, but weakness crept in, and it was later divided into ten independent kingdoms comparing to the ten toes of the image-Ostrogoths, Alemanni, Visigoths, Franks, Vandals, Suevi, Burgundians, Heruli, Anglo-Saxons, and Lombards. These became the nations of modern Europe-England, France, Germany, and so forth.

The Lord told Daniel that in the days of these kings the God of heaven would set up a kingdom. The image was to be smitten on the feet by a stone cut out without hands. We are living in the days of the ten toes of the image. Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome have come and gone. Daniel said that God would set up His kingdom on this earth in the days of the ten toes. In other words, Christ is to return to this earth as He promised. No one knows the day or hour of His return, but God has given us many signs in the Bible telling when His coming is near.

It has been estimated that there were about fifty signs given in the Scriptures foretelling the coming of the Messiah as a babe in Bethlehem and the significance of His coming. But the generation in which we live has more than five times fifty signs showing the certainty, the manner, and the approximate time of His Second Coming. Several of the dozen or more great lines of prophecy have found startling fulfillment right in our own troubled times. Happy is he who heeds these reminders that God's Word is true and puts his full trust in the divine wisdom which makes its plan so clear to men.

29. More Signs

AN ATTORNEY appeared before the court and asked that a certain case be dismissed because it was impossible for his client to be present. The judge wanted to be sure that there was some good reason for dismissal, and asked the attorney whether he had just reason for making such an unusual request. "Yes, your honor," the attorney replied. "I have several good reasons why my client cannot appear before the court. First of all, he is dead. The second reason, your honor -" Here the judge stopped him. "That is sufficient reason," he said.

In previous chapters we have given sufficient evidence that we are nearing the end of time, that Jesus is coming back to the earth again. But there are many more signs, of which we can briefly mention only a few.

One day on the Mount of Olives the disciples asked Jesus to tell them some of the signs of His coming and of the end of the world, and His response to their query is recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of the Book of Matthew. Here is a remarkable prophecy revealing the social and political events to take place as signs that His return is near.

In verse 7 He said, "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilence, and earthquakes, in divers places." The last century has witnessed the greatest wars of all time, two of them involving the whole world. Famines, pestilence, and earthquakes have been startlingly on the increase.

In the twenty-ninth verse He mentioned the darkening of the sun and the falling of the stars as signs of His return. We have but to consult historical records for the notable fulfillment of this prophecy.

The one outstanding Dark Day of history was May 19, 1780, and the great meteoric shower known as the falling of the stars took place on November 13, 1833. You will be interested in the contemporary account of these unusual happenings, or were they only happenings? They were foretold by Jesus, and they came as He predicted.

"Timothy Dwight, president of Yale, remembered that 'a very general opinion prevailed, that the day of judgment was at hand. The [Connecticut] House of Representatives, being unable to transact their business, adjourned,' but the Council lighted candles, preferring, as a member said, to be found at work if the judgment were approaching.'"Bible Readings" (1949), page 311.

"The remarkable Dark Day of May 19, 1780, is described by Samuel Williams of Harvard. The professor relates that the obscuration approached with the clouds from the southwest 'between the hours of ten and eleven a.m., and continued until the middle of the next night,' varying in degree and duration in different localities. In some places 'persons could not see to read common print in the open air, for several hours,' although 'this was not generally the case.' 'Candles were lighted up in the houses;-the birds having sung their evening songs, disappeared, and became silent;-the fowls retired to roost;-the cocks were crowing all around, as at break of day;-objects could not be distinguished but at a very little distance; and everything bore the appearance and gloom of night.' "-Id. page 310.

Man could find no reason for such darkness. The only reason we can think of is that Jesus said that there would be a time of darkness in the last days. The falling of the stars was as unusual and unexplainable as the Dark Day. There were no known natural causes or reasons for such a meter shower. It was a sign hung in the heavens to tell mankind that the world was nearing the close of time. Prof. Denison Olmsted, of Yale College, in writing about this unusual occurrence, said:

"The morning of November 13, 1833, was rendered memorable by an exhibition of the phenomenon called shooting stars, which was probably more extensive and magnificent than any similar one hitherto recorded.... Probably no celestial phenomenon has ever occurred in this country, since its first settlement, which was viewed with so much admiration and delight by one class of spectators, or with so much astonishment and fear by another class." American Journal of Science and Arts, Vol. 5 (1834), pages 363, 364.

If you care to read more about this greatest meteoric shower since time began, you will find much about it in our public libraries. It happened more than a century ago, a sign of the approaching end of all things.

There are other signs mentioned in Matthew 24. Perhaps we should mention one more, as found in the fourteenth verse. "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

The great missions movement of giving the gospel to all the world began late in the eighteenth century, and today the good news of salvation is being preached in almost every corner of the globe. Thousands of missionaries are under appointment every year; and millions of pounds' worth of religious books, papers, and tracts are being circulated in hundreds of languages. The Bible is now printed in more than one thousand languages and dialects, and for a few pence a whole Bible or portions of the Scriptures may be obtained almost anywhere. If anyone cannot afford to buy one, it is furnished free by the Bible societies. Truly the gospel is being preached to practically all the world today.

After enumerating these many signs in Matthew 24, Jesus said to His disciples, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree. When his branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh. So likewise you, when you shall see all these things, know that it [His coming] is near, even at the doors."

A very accurate word picture of our times was written by the Apostle Paul hundreds of years ago. It is found in Second Timothy, the third chapter, verses one to five: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despising of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." This surely needs no comment. Only God could have given in advance such an accurate description of our day! These conditions, you will notice in verse one, were to prevail in the last days.

The Apostle James tells us of unusual labor conditions which would exist in the time when the "coming of the Lord draws nigh." "Go to now, you rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten. Your gold and silver is rotted; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. You have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, cries: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. You have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; you have nourished your hearts, as in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and killed the just; and he does not resist you. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold ' the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be you also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draws nigh." James 5: 1-8.

Labor troubles are on the increase, strikes are common, and the conflict between employer and employed grows more acute. The laboring man feels he has been dealt with unjustly, that the rich man, the capitalist, is making unfair profits and is hoarding up his riches. The world is lining itself up in two great camps, capital and labor. The rich seem to be getting richer and the poor poorer. For a hundred years we have been on a mad quest for gold. It was discovered in California in 1849; and in the past century at the cost of suffering, peril, hardship, and the sacrifice of even life itself we have been searching for and digging the precious metal. Today we have put most of it back in the earth again, buried in huge, well-fortified vaults far beneath the ground at Fort Knox, Kentucky. It is estimated that one half of the nation's gold reserve is in this repository.

The Savior told us that no one would know the exact time of His return, so we cannot tell the day or the hour, or even the year of His coming. But He has left us so many signs that tell us with certainty that we are living in the time of the end, that He is soon to return to the earth to take His people to Himself. That time need not come upon any of us as a "thief in the night," or "unawares," for He has given us plenty of warning. May each of us be ready when He does return, for it will mean citizenship in a wonderful kingdom of glory that will exceed the fondest dreams of human happiness.

30. Bargain Hunters

WHILE I WAS standing on a station platform recently, watching a freight train whiz by, I noticed four young men standing in the open door of an empty box car. They were getting a free ride, for they had bought no ticket, and hoped to get to their destination without paying anything.

Those young men have plenty of company. We are not stealing rides in boxcars, but most of us like to obtain something without paying the price. We are natural-born bargain hunters, it seems. Bargain advertisements usually draw a crowd.

There is one verse in the Bible we ought to memorize, but if we forget it, we can read it in Galatians 6:7. The Apostle Paul must have had some experience on this subject, because he passed on to us some very sound advice: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap."

Paul knew the human tendency to want to have a harvest without a seedtime, to reap without sowing, therefore he warned us not to be deceived about this matter.

This is one of God's laws. It is just as sure as the law of gravitation discovered by Newton, or the law of heavenly bodies, or other laws which men have discovered, and is absolutely dependable.

By study and experiment Newton discovered that an object when dropped always falls down. It never goes up. We call it the law of gravitation. That law, one of God's laws, has been working since the world was created. We can always depend on it. If I step off my doorstep, I always go down. What would happen without gravitation? When I stepped off my doorstep I would go off into space, and perhaps never return to the earth. That would be a real worry for us if there were no gravitation and we had to be fastened to something or hold to something to keep from soaring off into space. Heavenly bodies attract each other in proportion to their size and in inverse proportion as to the square of the distance between them. This is another of God's laws, which keeps the worlds in their orbits, in paths marked out by our Creator.

If we put two molecules of hydrogen and one of oxygen together, we always get the same result-water. We can depend on this being always true.

The law of Galatians 6:7 is just as sure and certain. "Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap."

When I was a boy I envied grownups who owned check books. All they had to do when they wanted money was to fill out one of these blank check. I longed for one of those magic books. I have one now, but I find its usefulness is very limited in my case. I must put the money in the bank before I can draw it out.

Did you ever wonder why some people have friends and others are friendless? To have friends, we must be a friend. It costs something to have friends, but they are well worth the cost and more. "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly." Proverbs 18: 24.

We reap as we sow physically. A strong body is not distributed to one person, and a weak one to another in a promiscuous way. If we are suffering, we are paying the price of transgression of nature's laws. If we ourselves have not transgressed, perhaps our parents before us have. We must reap a wild harvest if we sow wild oats. We may eat and drink as we please, but we must pay the bill someday. We may turn our nights into day, wining and dining and carousing; but do not be deceived, for we cannot drive any bargains here-we shall reap as we sow.

We have heard people talk about their ship coming in. But no ship will ever come in before it has been sent out.

Did you read of the young woman who wanted to marry a minister so she could be "good for nothing"? She wanted to be good without any effort on her part. A lot of us are in this class. As the old song goes, we want "to go to heaven sitting down." We want to do right, and hope to go to heaven, but we are looking for an easy road, one with no obstacles, that leads downhill. We don't want to struggle with our weaknesses. We would like to take an elevator rather than to climb step by step. We follow the line of least resistance.

We like the minister who overlooks our human weaknesses and shortcomings, and tells us that we are not so bad after all, that God is a God of love, that He is not particular, and that we may live just about as we please and in the end slip into heaven. The ministers know our weaknesses comparatively well, and so a good many of them serve us the theology that appeals to our private indulgences.

How inconsistent of me to think that I can spend my whole life, or most of it, in doing my own ways, in following' an evil course, and then expect to be taken to heaven to live throughout eternity with God! God will not compel any of us to be good. We may break His laws, go our own way, but we certainly know that the "wages of sin is death." (Romans 6: 23.)

Many people are shopping around today to find a bargain in religion-a church where there are few if any restrictions. And there are some that would seem to qualify. There are churches that will welcome you as members and ask few if any questions. You can break all the Ten Commandments and get into some religious bodies, if only your outward deportment is respectable. In fact, a good many of the popular preachers say that the commandments are no longer a code of conduct, because they were all nailed to the cross.

Notice the conclusions of the wise man: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before Him: but it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he fears not before God." Ecclesiastes 8: 11-13.

"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Ecclesiastes 12: 14.

I am glad we are not machines. We have the power of choice. Just as I choose what seeds I shall plant in my garden in the spring, so I determine what I shall do with my life. Just as I determine what I shall harvest from my plot of ground, so I decide what the harvest of my life is to be. I may have friends or be friendless; I may scatter sunshine or cast shadows.

We may serve God or the devil, live for self or others. And in the end, when we stand before the Judge of all, we may hear the words, "Well done," or, "Depart from Me." We reap as we sow.

31. Our Worst Enemy

FROM THE TIME the doctor puts drops in the newborn baby's eyes to prevent blindness, until those eyes are closed for their last long sleep, there is a battle against colds, measles, mumps, scarlet fever, diphtheria, smallpox, heart disease, cancer, and countless other diseases. Life, from the cradle to the grave, is a struggle against our enemies.

The farmer must spray his fruit trees for scale and blight. Potato beetles are ready to devour the potatoes as soon as the tender plants peek through the ground. Corn borers, boll weevils, cabbage worms, melon beetles, mosquitoes, flies, and a thousand other pests make man's life a constant warfare.

Although most of us have many friends, we have our enemies, too; even among avowed friends Jesus had His Judas, Caesar his Brutus, and Mordecai his Haman.

We cannot name all our many enemies; neither can we classify them. But who is our worst enemy? We might figure that out. Most people would place Satan at the head of the list. But we have one enemy more to be dreaded than all others, even old Satan himself. Our worst enemy is our self.

The young man Alexander reigned but a short time. His successes went to his head. His days and nights were spent in drinking and riotous living. Life seemed to be just one orgy after another. According to history, after one long drinking spree, he was invited to another, where he drank to the health of twenty of his guests, consuming twelve quarts of liquor. No wonder that he was seized with a fever and died a few days later, only thirty-two years old!

As a soldier he had been successful. He had subdued the then known world, but did not conquer his own weaknesses and passions. Thus through drink another warrior fell, and another nation lost its place in world leadership.

Some years ago Sir Edwin Arnold, on a visit to America, was speaking to the young men of Harvard. As he discussed with them wars past and conquests to come, he said, "Gentlemen of Harvard, in 1776 and 1812 you conquered your fathers; in 1861-1865 you conquered your brothers. Will you permit an Englishman to say that your next victory must be over yourselves?"

The only power that pulls us down is our self; but it is human nature to blame others for our sins, to excuse our mistakes because of heredity, environment, or fate.

When God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, He permitted them to eat of every tree save one. He told them that if they ate of this tree, they would surely die. They both disobeyed God, and partook of the forbidden fruit. When God asked Adam why, he blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent. Since that time we have charged the devil with most of our wrong deeds. He may have placed temptation in our way, but all the hosts of evil cannot force us into sin, for God is on our side, and greater are those who are for us than those who are against us.

We read in Micah 7:6 that "a man's enemies are the men of his own house." If there are weaknesses, sins, in our lives, they entered through doors which we left open.

When Lincoln was running for president someone inquired of him what he thought his prospects were for being elected. "I do not fear Breckenridge," said the great man, "for he is of the South, and the North will not support him," I do not much fear Douglas, for the South is against him. But there is a man named Lincoln I see in the papers, of whom I am very much afraid. If I am defeated, it will be by that man."

If you and I miss heaven, we can blame no one but ourselves. Jesus died for you and me, and has made ample provision for our salvation. But He does not compel any of us to be saved. We may choose to ignore His way, and be lost. We lay -undesirable stones in our characters with our own hands. We are the architects of our own lives and arbiters of our eternal destiny.

A famous blacksmith of medieval times was imprisoned in a foul and loathsome prison. His hands and feet were secured by strong chains. Being a blacksmith and hoping he might break those cruel bonds that held him captive, he examined the chains link by link, over and over again. He gave up in despair when he found his own initials on the chain. He had forged those links in his own smithy, and he knew that they could never be broken.

At one time I was permitted to visit a modern penitentiary, and was allowed to talk to a number of the prisoners. Practically every man who talked to me blamed someone else for his being behind the bars, hidden away from society. Someone had led him astray.

Ask the drunkard or the drug addict about his life, and he can show you where someone led him from the path of rectitude and gave him a push on the downward way. Ask the woman who has soiled her virtue, and she will tell you that she was lured into her life of sin. Ask your little boy why he disobeyed you, and with no trouble at all he can shift the responsibility to the boy next door.

I heard one man trying to ease his conscience by a speech like this: "Yes, I know I have an awful temper. I fly into a rage, and say things I should not say, and for which I am very sorry a short time afterward. But I inherited it from my father, and I cannot help it." Blaming a weakness of his own on his old father, who was dead and gone—a shameful confession for a man to make, wasn't it? The private diary of Leo Tolstoy was published in Paris by his daughter. One view expressed in this diary is, "Lying to others is much less serious than lying to yourself." We would not be guilty of telling a falsehood to someone else, or of trying to deceive another, and yet most of us have been guilty of trying to deceive ourselves.

We are told that there will be a company of these deceived people present when the affairs of this life are finished up, and we stand face to face with eternity. They will repeat to the Savior all the wonderful works they have done in His name. They have visited the sick, fed the poor, and in His name done many wonderful works. But they have deceived only themselves, for Jesus replies, "I never knew you."

When I say that someone else is responsible for my sins, I am deceiving myself. Others may have placed temptation in my way, they may have urged me on, but the final decision was made only by the consent of my own will. In the day of reckoning it will be found that our wrongdoing was of our own choice.

What a wonderful experience it would be if one could open the Bible at the Book of Genesis and read through to the end of Revelation and not find one single thing to condemn his actions or disturb his conscience. Such an experience is possible, but only when a person faces himself squarely and resolves through God's help to be clear before heaven in the matter of his daily choices between good and evil. For such choices needs must come, but a high moral courage and spiritual ideals will enable even the weakest contender for a good conscience to become more than conqueror as he chooses good and avoids evil.

32. An Easy Way to Miss Heaven

THE EASIEST WAY to go to hell," says one well-known writer, "is to fold your arms and do nothing." The devil is pretty well pleased, I am sure, if he can get us to join the church and then sit in the rocking chair at home and sing, "Rescue the Perishing" while those in need are dying all about US.

We do not have to commit murder, rob a bank, break the seventh commandment, worship idols, or lie about our neighbor to miss heaven. Surely breaking any one of God's commandments will bar us from that better land, but some of the things we do not do will also close the pearly gates against us.

If you were in a row-boat a mile above Niagara Falls, what would you have to do to bring about your destruction? Just put up your oars and do nothing. It would not take long for the swiftly flowing current to carry you downstream and over the falls. But no one will drift into heaven. If we are resting on our oars, we are drifting, and drifting downstream.

A rich young ruler once came to Jesus to inquire what he should do to inherit eternal life. When the Master advised him to keep the commandments, he answered, "All these have I observed from my youth." He had honored his parents, kept the Sabbath, and observed faithfully all the other precepts of the Ten Commandments. Looking with compassion on the young man, the Savior saw his lack, and advised him to go and sell his possessions and give to the poor. The Scripture record says that the young man went away sorrowing, for he had great possessions. As far as we know, the young man did not comply with the Savior's advice and counsel. We wish that this story might have ended otherwise. We are not to judge, but we would infer from the record that this young man would not find a place in heaven, not because of wrongs he had done, but because of the good he might have done and would not.

In Matthew the twenty-fifth chapter, beginning with the forty first verse, the Savior says to those on His left hand, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." What terrible crimes had they committed? What deeds could merit such punishment at the hands of the Master? The Scriptures tell us, "For I was an hungered, and you gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and you gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and you took Me not in: naked, and you clothed Me not: sick, and in prison, and you visited Me not. Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to Me."

Lost—not because of wrongs they had done, but because of the good they failed to do! A great many people are good-good for nothing in particular, and are expecting this goodness to save them. An idle Christian, however good he may be, will never get into heaven.

In the parable of the talents, recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, we are told that one man was given five talents, another two, and another one. The one who had received five talents used them faithfully, and the one who had received two did likewise, but the individual who received only one did nothing. Two of the servants were commended for what they had done. The third one was condemned, not for what he did, but for what he did not do. He had been idle while his brothers worked. An officer while making a tour of inspection of a great ocean liner in mid-ocean found a man sitting behind one of the funnels eating cheese and crackers. In answer to the officer's inquiry as to why he was eating there, he replied that he had brought some food before leaving port, and had been having his lunch there each day in this hidden, sheltered spot. "But, man," said the officer, "your meals were paid

for when you bought your ticket. You should be eating in the dining-room with the other passengers.” Are we living up to our possibilities, or are we letting privileges slip away day by day?

These are days of opportunity. Never were there so many calls for help, so many in need of assistance. There are backs breaking beneath life’s burden, hearts bowed down with sorrow and care. Sickness and death are all about us. In the very shadow of our churches there are the naked, the sick, the hungry, and those in prison. Have we ministered to them?

A number of shipwrecked sailors were drifting in an open boat in the South Atlantic. Their food was exhausted, and their water supply was gone. For days they had drifted beneath a burning sun. Their tongues were swollen, and their throats were parched with thirst. After some days of this misery a great liner appeared on the horizon; and as soon as it was close enough for the men in the little boat to shout their needs, they cried, “Give us water, for we are dying of thirst.” The big ship was all astir, preparing to rescue the shipwrecked men. But they still cried for water, and someone on the large vessel cried back, “Dip it up. Drop your buckets where you are.” It seemed to these dying men a heartless thing to say, but they heeded the command and drank to their fill of the pure fresh water. Their tiny craft had drifted opposite the mouth of the mighty Amazon, which had pushed back the briny waters of the Atlantic. They were sailing on fresh water, and at the same time dying of thirst, suffering and almost famished because of what they had failed to do. They simply had not dropped their buckets.

A lighthouse keeper neglected his lamps, and because of that neglect a ship went down, and lives were lost. A letter we intended to write was never written, and someone went without the encouragement and help we intended to give. Regrets are not always of wrongs we have done but of good and honorable things we have failed to do—the smile we should have given, the kind word unspoken, the cup of cold water that we did not give, and opportunities unimproved.

If we miss heaven, it may not be because of the grievous sins recorded against us, the sins of commission, but because of the things we have failed to do. One of the easiest ways to miss heaven is simply to do nothing. When we stand before the Judge of all the universe, the charge against us may be one of negligence.

Since we pass over life’s road but once, it is well that we give heed to the admonition found in Ecclesiastes 9:10: “Whatsoever thy hand finds to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goes.”

33. Which Church Will I Choose?

LIVING IN AN ordinary community, as we do, surrounded by neighborly, everyday people, my wife and I often find ourselves chatting with the neighbors over the back fence. Many a friendly conversation we have had in this way. One does not need to be dressed up for the occasion; in fact, all formalities are forgotten. Sitting on the back steps, or leaning against the picket fence, one can be just his ordinary, everyday self.

One evening we were comfortably seated on the back steps, and our neighbours were hoeing in their garden just across the fence, only a few feet away from us. They had not been working long before we were all rambling along pleasantly in conversation about our gardens, the weather, the children, storms, and similar topics. Finally we began to talk about religious things.

We will call our neighbors Smith for convenience. “We have changed our church membership,” Mrs. Smith volunteered, “and we are attending the new church right near us.” My wife asked them the reason for their change. We felt sure they would not change their religious views without some very good reasons for doing so.

“Well,” said Mrs. Smith, “it is a long way down to the Tabernacle church, and it is so handy to attend right here on our street. It saves petrol or bus fares, too. We have decided that we can worship here just as well as we can three miles from here, even though it is a different denomination and preaches different doctrines.”

The women went on talking, and I sat quietly, trying to listen and do a little thinking at the same time. We were going several miles to church, too, and I wondered whether we could make a change for convenience.

There rushed into my mind a conversation I had had with our dentist just a few days before. He told me that he regularly attended a certain church, which happened to be the largest in the city in membership, and also had a magnificent and costly building. It was perhaps the most fashionable and modern in the vicinity. I asked him about their cardinal beliefs, and he promptly informed me that he did not know what they believed.

“I don’t know much about the teaching of the church,” he confessed.

“Why do you go to this particular church then?” I asked, wondering at his strange confession.

His answer was frank and brief. “I go there because the best people go there, and it helps my business for me to mingle with them.”

Our neighbors were attending the church on their own street because it was handy for them, and the dentist had chosen to attend the most popular church in the city because it helped his business.

As I sat there on the back steps that evening I asked myself this same fair and reasonable question. With a church not more than a block away, why were we going all the way across the city to worship?

Some people attend such and such a church “because father and mother attended there, and their religion is good enough for me.”

Many attend some particular place of worship because the pastor is a man of charming personality, a good mixer, and an interesting speaker. In such cases I wonder whether the object of church attendance is worship or merely social recreation.

Others will tell you that they go to church to hear the music and singing. "In our church," they said, "We have the largest choir in the city, with a conductor from abroad. We have a mammoth pipe organ, our choir members wear beautiful robes, and the singing is simply wonderful."

Sentiment has a strong hold on many of us. To have been baptized, christened, or confirmed in some church is sufficient reason for our keeping our membership there through life, whether we believe in its teachings or are even acquainted with its doctrines.

The size and the cost of a church building make a strong appeal to a certain class, and large crowds attract others. Not a few long to worship in a quiet, meditative way, and love ritualistic services. There are possibly as many who will not attend a religious meeting unless there is much emotional manifestation, the so-called baptism of fire and spirit, exclamatory amens and hallelujahs, and much bodily exercise.

You and I have the right to choose where we wish to worship God and the manner of worship. And because individuals are exercising this right we have hundreds of different religious organizations.

Some church groups today are preaching doctrines which tickle people's ears. They pat us on the back and tell us to go on in our own ways, to have a good time, and to do just as we please, for we are all going to get into heaven in the end. But such is not the teaching of Jesus Christ. We cannot live for the devil here, and expect the Lord to take us to glory in the sweet by-and-by. This sort of loose religious teaching draws large crowds in these modern times. We are all bargain hunters, and we want a bargain in religion, too.

The sensational appeals strongly today, and because of this many ministers have resorted to striking and startling ways for drawing the crowds. Bingo games, suppers, bazaars, dances, and other forms of public amusement are used to bring people to the church. Not long ago the newspapers reported a boxing bout as having been used to draw a crowd to a Sunday night service. Someone has said, "The less religion a church has, the more oyster soup it takes to run it."

I like to believe that there are a large number of true-hearted, conscientious church-goers who are worshipping with the denomination of their choice because down deep in their hearts they believe that their particular church is following in the footsteps of the Master, living up to His teachings more closely than any other.

Father and mother could have been wrong in their religious beliefs, and still they may have been right. We should not necessarily pick the church where the biggest crowds go, for right has usually been in the minority. We cannot depend on outward forms and ceremonies, for the Lord "looks upon the heart." The church which best meets our understanding of what the Bible teaches may be conveniently close to our home, or it may be miles away. What, then, should be the guiding principles in this matter of church affiliation?

The religion that requires no sacrifice will in the end prove disappointing; a faith that is not worth sacrificing for is not worth having. Many of our forefathers were willing to die for their faith, and we should be ready to do as much.

The church I attend is quite a distance from my home, although there are a number of churches within a few blocks of the house. There is nothing imposing or ostentatious about the building. It is an ordinary structure. I have heard better singing in other churches. It is not the most popular church in the city by any means. Some of my own blood and kin think I am crazy for belonging to this particular denomination. To keep its varied activities going draws heavily on my salary. Why do I belong to this church in preference to others? It is not hard for me to answer.

I am not bigoted enough to think this particular denomination is right because I belong to it, but from the study of my Bible I have come to the conclusion that this denomination is the only one that is striving to live up to the doctrines of the Bible, taking the Bible only as its foundation of faith. I know that other churches declare that they do this; in fact, most of the different Protestant denominations claim to be founded on the Word of God. It is not hard for us to see that, varying in their teachings as they do, they cannot all be right. The Orthodox Jews accept only the Old Testament. The Roman Catholic Church includes the Apocryphal writings in its Bible and upholds church traditions as its authority. Several modernist groups deny the Bible is an inspired volume.

Most Christians are presumably seeking to follow the Master and hoping to live with Him in heaven throughout eternity. We will never get into His kingdom, however, if we do not follow Him here. You and I ought to know what we believe, and not take any man's word or theory for the foundation of our faith. It matters not what your church may be called if it is not founded on God's Word; and if it is not living up to all its teachings, or endeavoring to do so, you are in the wrong church.

You say, "I want to be in the right church, but how can I know which is the correct way? How can I tell the right church?"

If you want to know a genuine ten-pound note, you would not try to study all the counterfeits that have been made; you would seek to know the things to look for in the genuine note coming from the Note Printing Branch. The Bible gives us the characteristics of the true church.

An owner of a store in Old Mexico was showing me some precious stones she had bought direct from the mines. She had gone down into the country, and brought them back with her. She handled them tenderly and talked of their beauty and value. To me they did not look different from ordinary glass. I asked her whether she had ever been fooled. "I was a few times," she replied. "They deceived me once or twice. But I know a real stone now." She knew the qualities of a real diamond.

The miner who thinks he has struck precious metal takes a nugget to a chemist or assayer, who applies the test for gold. He can give the miner positive information.

Ask a banker whether a ten-pound note is genuine, and he will use a magnifying glass and apply certain tests. In a short time he can give you a definite answer.

God has outlined in His Word definite tests to be applied in our search for His church-the true church. You would like to know what these tests are, for eternity is at stake. You cannot afford to be wrong.

Speaking of the remnant church, or the Christian organization that will be in existence when Christ returns to the earth the second time, John, in Revelation 12: 17, says, "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Students of prophecy agree that when a woman is spoken of in prophecy a church is symbolized. In Revelation 19: 10 John tells us that "the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy." In looking for the true church, then, we must seek one that is keeping all God's commandments and has the Spirit of prophecy.

How many churches today profess to keep the moral law, commonly known as the Ten Commandments? Most of them will tell you that the law was done away, that these commandments were nailed to the cross, and that we are not required as Christians to keep them any more. Most of the members of these churches will not admit, however, that we may now lie, steal, commit adultery, or murder. They feel that it is important to keep nine of the commandments, but the fourth one, or the Sabbath commandment, they say is no longer binding on Christians.

John tells us in this same book that the people who will finally get into heaven will be commandment keepers. "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Revelation 22: 14.

We need not be puzzled or confused by the many different sects in the world today. God tells us how to find the one that meets His ideals: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

If someone tells you that he loves the Lord and in the same breath that he does not keep His commandments, think of this text in I John 2:4: "He that said, I know Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." "If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." John 14:15; 15:10.

It is quite clear from the foregoing texts that God's church will take His Word as its only rule of faith, and will earnestly endeavor by His help to keep all His commandments.

To keep all the commandments requires obedience to them just as they were given at Sinai, and as they have been observed for thousands of years. The fourth, or Sabbath, commandment, which makes the seventh day of the week a holy day in commemoration of God's rest from the work of creation, has never been changed. Jesus and all His disciples kept that day sacred.

Although millions of honest people have faithfully worshipped on Sunday, the first day of the week, and God has accepted them because the meaning of the Sabbath was obscure to them, He has had thousands of witnesses to His unchangeable law in every age. There are several religious denominations in the world today that keep the seventh-day Sabbath as a day of worship.

But we have seen that "the testimony of Jesus Christ," otherwise known as "the Spirit of prophecy," is to be another distinguishing mark of God's church just before Christ comes the second time. Many sects have arisen in every age claiming this gift of prophecy among them. God has given instruction in His Word as to how a true prophet may be identified. One of the most striking of these is found in Isaiah 8: 20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

There have been true and false prophets in every age of the church, but it is not difficult to distinguish one from the other. A study of the gift of prophecy in the church cannot be undertaken in this volume, but the publishers will be glad to supply you with the Bible teaching on this subject.

It is clear, however, that God's true church just before Jesus comes will have these well-defined features. It will observe God's true Sabbath and will have the guidance of His appointed prophet, whose counsels will always be "to the law and to the testimony!"

In answering the question, Which church shall I choose? two things stand out. If one wishes to follow God's counsel, he must find the people who are keeping His commandments and worshipping on the seventh-day Sabbath. To make the identification still more assured, he will seek the church that has had the gift of prophecy restored to it so that God may give guidance to His church during the perils of these last days.

34. Surprised?

AFRIEND OF MINE was driving his car across a long bridge, following several slow-moving cars and trucks. As he had approached the bridge he had noticed a large neatly lettered sign saying it was unlawful for cars to pass on the bridge, but he was in a hurry, and anxious to travel a bit faster than the traffic; and since there were no cars approaching from the opposite direction, he pulled out and passed several vehicles.

At the far end of the bridge a motor-cycle officer was on duty, and asked him to stop. The policeman reprimanded him for his disobedience, and took out pad and pencil to write up a ticket for the lawbreaker.

"Couldn't you read that sign on the far end of the bridge?" the officer asked.

"Yes, officer," my friend replied, "I did read that sign. I knew when I pulled out to pass those trucks that I should not do it. I was fully aware that I was breaking the law. I thought of all that, but there was one thing I did not think about."

"What was that?" the man in blue inquired.

"I didn't expect to meet you at this end of the bridge."

No, he had not counted on that. He thought he might break the law and go unpunished, as we mortals so often do. He did not expect that he would get caught in his lawbreaking. A good many people have broken the laws of the land and have not been apprehended in their disobedience. It is a surprise to them, and they are dismayed when they are caught.

This bridge we call life, over which we travel the short span between birth and death, is soon crossed. And we need not be surprised if we find someone at the end of the way to cheek up on us for breaking God's laws, and to ask us about our speeding, our cutting in, and our breaking out of the line of traffic.

At the approach of the bridge is the sign, God's Ten Commandments, short, simple, and comprehensive. The first four commandments tell us of our duty to God, and the last six of how we should relate ourselves to our neighbor, our fellow man. If you and I break any one of these Ten Commandments, and do not ask God for forgiveness for our wrongdoings, we shall someday stand without excuse, for there will be someone at the end of the bridge. Not many people have been struck dead here for breaking the commandments, but God does tell us in His Word that "the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6: 23.) If man had not sinned in the Garden of Eden, he would have lived on for ever. But sin brought death.

A logical question for any young person to ask, is "What is sin?" The Bible answers the question for us. "Sin is the transgression of the law." I John 3: 4. If God had not given us a law, we would not know right from wrong. It is a standard of life by which we may know how to relate ourselves to Him and to our fellow men.

So many times young people have said to me, "How am I to know what is right and what is wrong?" I am glad we do not have to guess about that. God's law, the ten-commandment law, tells us. This law is a looking glass, a standard, a guide.

The law bothers some people, because it is like the policeman on the bridge. It cheeks up on us, points out our shortcomings. If we have a dirty face, the mirror tells us about it. The next thing to do is to wash our face, then cheek with the mirror again. We could, of course, get silly about it and break the mirror, so it could not remind us any more that our face was soiled. But our face would be dirty just the same. Some people do not like to face facts.

A European monarch of the Middle Ages looked out from his castle window over the burying ground of his ancestors, and the sight bothered him. He was reminded daily that someday he would have to be buried there, too. Because he did not like to think about it, he had another castle built, so he would not need to look out over the graveyard. That did not postpone his funeral. At any rate, it did not change the fact that he had to die someday.

Most Christian churches admit that the law is God's standard for us, and yet their theologians declare that the law was done away or nailed to the cross when Jesus was crucified, and therefore has no claim on us. This idea, if true, would throw discredit on many Bible teachings.

Some may ask, "Doesn't the Bible teach that the law was abrogated, or done away with?" When Christ died on the cross the law of ceremonies which pointed to Christ and His death, often referred to as the law of Moses, was done away with, for there was no more need for it. Jesus made it very clear, however, in Matthew 5: 17, 18 that the law would never be done away with, that is, the Ten Commandment law. "Think not," He said, "that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled!"

In spite of this teaching that the law was nailed to the cross, almost any Christian will tell you that we ought to keep all the commandments. We should not worship idols or have other gods. We should not take God's name in vain. We must not kill or steal or commit adultery or lie or covet. A good many of these same people will tell you, however, that you do not need to keep the fourth commandment, for it was done away with. Here is what this four commandment says:

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shall not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Ex. 20: 8-11.

A young man was talking to me about this matter recently. He said that when he was ten years old he went to his mother one day and asked her which was the seventh day of the week. He had been learning the commandments in Sunday school.

"Saturday is the seventh day of the week, of course," she answered.

"Well, mother," he went on, "if Saturday is the seventh day, then why do we go to church on Sunday, for the Bible says the seventh day is the Sabbath."

"Harry," she answered, "you can ask more questions than all my other children put together. What puts these silly questions in your mind?"

The questions were not silly. He was only a boy, but he could see that something was wrong. They had been teaching him a commandment, saying he should keep the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath, and yet he was going to church on the first day. It just did not make sense, even to a ten-year-old.

When he got a bit older he studied into the matter for himself, and found that the Bible gives no command for worshipping on the first day of the week; but that Saturday, or the seventh day, is the day God originally set apart and blessed, and that it has been kept by some people in all times and ages right down to the present.

If the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath that God instituted and blessed, you will naturally wonder why practically all Christian churches keep the first day of the week, or Sunday, for the Sabbath. Can the majority be wrong about this matter? Well, we do know that the majority has often been in the wrong. Right has usually been in the minority.

I do not want to appear to preach to you, but I would like to answer some questions which I know come to your mind.

For four thousand years before Christ, and for some time after He lived here on earth, practically all Christians did keep the original seventh-day Sabbath. Jesus kept the Sabbath, and after He was crucified, He rested in the tomb on the Sabbath day. Luke, in writing about the matter, says that they buried Him on the preparation day, and that He lay in the tomb on the Sabbath, and that they came on the morning of the first day planning to anoint Him. (Luke 23: 54-56; 24: 1.)

In the sixteenth chapter of Mark and the first and second verses it is said: "When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun." In other words, on the morning of the first day of the week; the Sabbath, or the seventh day, was already past.

When we want to have our own way we begin to make excuses and alibis. So when you ask some Christian people why we are keeping the first day, they say, "Why, didn't you know Christ changed the day?" But they cannot give you a single text to prove this statement. Christ did not change the day. In fact He said that not "one jot or one tittle" of the law would be changed as long as heaven and earth existed. (Matthew 5: 18.) No, you can read the Bible through from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find one single text telling that the Sabbath has been changed or the law changed. One man was so sure of this that he offered one thousand dollars for a text of this kind. No one ever asked for the money.

God in His Word, thousands of years ago, said that man would seek to change His times and His laws. (Daniel 7: 25.)

He also says that when He comes back to the earth again there will be a people here who will be keeping the commandments, and that He will take them to heaven with Him. (Revelation 22: 14.)

Some people will argue, too, that one day is just as good as another, and that God is not particular which day we keep for a Sabbath. With men this might be true, but God blessed the Sabbath and set it apart, and He expects us to worship on that day.

Soon after Christ's time there were non-Christian people who worshipped on the first day of the week, which they called Sunday. And in the year 321 the Roman emperor Constantine passed a law commanding his people to keep the first day, or Sunday, as a rest day instead of the seventh day. Gradually some Christians, who feared to disobey the laws of man, and take the consequences, began to worship on Sunday. Today most Christians are worshipping on this day for which there is no Scriptural authority.

The Catholic Church assumes the responsibility for changing the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. You may read it in their catechism.

"Q. How prove you that the Church hath power to command feasts and holy days?"

"A. By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of; and therefore they fondly contradict themselves, by keeping Sunday strictly, and breaking most other feasts commanded by the same church." - HENRY TUBERVILLE, "Abridgment of Christian Doctrine," page 58.

"Q. Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?"

"A. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her;—she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority." -STEPHEN KEENAN, "A Doctrinal Catechism," page 174.

"It [the Roman Catholic Church] reversed the Fourth Commandment by doing away with the Sabbath of God's word, and instituting Sunday as a holiday." -N. SUMMERBELL, "History of the Christian Church." (1873), page 415.

"The Catholic Church, . . . by virtue of her divine mission changed the day from Saturday to Sunday. "Catholic Mirror, official organ of Cardinal Gibbons, Sept. 23, 1893.

"Question. Which is the Sabbath day?"

"Ans.-Saturday is the Sabbath day.

"Question. Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?"

"Answer. We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday." -PETER GMERMANN, "The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine" (1946 ed.), page 50.

I quote from Cardinal James Gibbons in "The Faith of Our Fathers," page 108, edition of 1879: "You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify." Protestants are surely not consistent, for they declare the Bible to be their rule of faith, and yet observe the first day of the week for the Sabbath when there is no Bible command for it. Our Catholic friends do not take the Bible as their only rule of faith, but believe the church has the authority to change even God's laws.

Some Protestants do admit that there is no Scriptural authority for keeping holy the first day of the week. Here is a statement from a Protestant writer:

"The Lord's Day is not sanctified by any specific command or by any inevitable inference. In all the New Testament there is no hint or suggestion of a legal obligation binding any man, whether saint or sinner, to observe the Day. Its sanctity arises only out of what it means to the true believer." -J. J. TAYLOR (Baptist), "The Sabbath Question," page 72.

Isaac Williams, an Anglican, makes the following statement:

"And where are we told in the Scriptures that we are to keep the first day at all? We are commanded to keep the seventh; but we are nowhere commanded to keep the first day.... The reason why we keep the first day of the week holy instead of the seventh is for the same reason that we observe many other things, not because the Bible, but because the church, has enjoined it." - "Plain Sermons on the Catechism," Volume 1, pages 334-336. Another Protestant says:

"It is quite clear that, however rigidly or devoutly we may spend Sunday, we are not keeping the Sabbath. The Sabbath was founded on a specific, divine command. We can plead no such command for the obligation to observe Sunday. There is not a single sentence in the New Testament to suggest that we incur any penalty by violating the supposed sanctity of Sunday." -It. W. DALE, M.A. (Congregationalist), "The Ten Commandments" (1871), pages 106, 107.

We might quote many other authorities from other churches. A number of arguments are presented to prove that it is not necessary to keep this fourth commandment. Men may try to argue away the commandments, but God says in John 14: 15, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." In the space allowed for this subject in this volume we cannot hope to consider these manmade

arguments. If you wish to study further along this line, write the publishers of this book for more information. They will gladly send it. Decide above all else that you will do what God wants you to do rather than follow the example or commandments of men. And above all, be fair enough to consider all the facts before making any decision. Do not let prejudice close your mind to the facts.

35. Are We Travelling a Dead End Road?

WAS ABOUT to drive into a certain street when I saw this sign: "Dead-end Street"; in other words, it would not take me through. If I entered it, I would come to a stopping place where I could go no farther. I had seen dead-end roads and streets before, and I had usually avoided them.

Some people tell us that this life is a dead-end road. But is death the end of our existence? Is the grave an entrance into heaven, hell, or purgatory? Will you and I live again, or does this life end it all—in other words, are we travelling a dead-end road? We leave our loved ones in the cemetery after death. Is there any hope that we shall see them again?

It has been estimated that every hour of the day five thousand people pass out of this life, leaving behind broken hearts and homes. To every family in every age and in every country on the globe comes the monster of grief and sorrow. And whether you and I think about it or not, we, too, must go this way.

No one has ever returned from this realm of mystery and silence. Some who have died promised before death to send messages back to their loved ones.

Harry Houdini, the great magician, before death promised his wife, if there were consciousness after death, he would send some message back to her. She has waited in vain.

Clarence Darrow, the noted criminal lawyer, promised a dear friend, Claude Noble, that if possible, he would return in spirit form, and thus prove to the world that dead people are alive and conscious after death.

At death Mr. Darrow's ashes were thrown in a lagoon in Jackson Park, Chicago. That was in 1938. Every year since that time, on the anniversary of Mr. Darrow's death, this friend, Mr. Noble, has been on the bridge across this lagoon. Standing or kneeling on the bridge, he has invited Darrow to return and knock from his hand an object which he held.

Mr. Darrow has not returned. No voice has spoken; no spirit has knocked the object from Mr. Noble's hand. There has not been the slightest demonstration of any kind.

Man has made a great many wonderful discoveries, but his explorations have not taken him beyond the grave. He has tried and tried, but tried in vain. Must we remain in darkness, then, about man's condition after death.

No, not if we believe the Scriptures, for God has revealed to us the truth about life after death. Life is not a dead-end road.

God says death is but a sleep. In Psalm 13: 3 we read, "Consider and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death."

In I Thessalonians 4: 13 Paul says, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."

A great many people believe, or say they believe, that at death their loved ones go to their reward in heaven or hell. There is no Scriptural proof for this belief. If there were, it would disprove other cardinal doctrines.

In the eleventh chapter of John is recorded the story of the resurrection of Lazarus. The sisters sent for Jesus to come to Bethany, for Lazarus was very ill. Jesus was delayed, and Lazarus died. In the eleventh verse Jesus said to those with Him, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep."

The disciples could not understand what He meant, and they replied, "Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well." Verse 12.

Then in verse 13 we read, "Howbeit Jesus spoke of his death: but they thought that He had spoken of taking of rest in sleep."

In verse 14 the Master explained that He was speaking of his death. "Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead." He thus identified death as a sleep.

Job spoke of death as a sleep also. We find it in Job 7:21: "Now shall I sleep in the dust." And in another place he said:

"Man lies down, and rises not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." Job 14: 12-14. "If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness." Job 17: 13.

Is there to be an awakening from this sleep? Will you and I live again, or shall we sleep on throughout eternity?

In the beginning God made man from the dust of the ground, as recorded in Genesis 2: 7: "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

It was God's plan that this should be man's home, in Eden, as long as he obeyed God. But man disobeyed by eating of the forbidden fruit. "The wages of sin is death," we are told in Romans 6: 23. And, of course, "sin is the transgression of the law." I John 3:4. When man disobeyed God he sinned, and God had decreed that the penalty of sin should be death. So death came to the world. Jesus then offered to give His life in man's stead, that man might have eternal life. He came to this earth and died, that you and I might live for ever on this earth, which was created for man.

In John 14: 1-4 Jesus very definitely assured His disciples that He was going to prepare a place for them, and for all who love Him. Then He promised that He would come again and take the faithful believers to Himself.

Paul writes more about this coming in I Thessalonians 4: 16, 17: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

No, this life is not a dead-end road. The grave is a quiet resting place where we sleep for a time until the resurrection morning. We might take pleasure in the thought that our loved ones who have died are enjoying the bliss of heaven. However, it would not be so pleasant for us to think that they might not be there but that they might be in an ever burning hell.

When Jesus comes the second time the wicked will be destroyed or killed by the brightness of His coming. (Read 2 Thessalonians 2: 8.) Those who have served and obeyed Him will be taken to heaven with Him.

Of course, there must be a judging of mankind, for we shall be rewarded according to our works. It is hardly consistent to think that we can serve the devil all our lives here, and then be sent to heaven to live with God throughout eternity. That would not be reasonable, would it? On the other hand, if we live for God here, we shall live with Him hereafter.

God will destroy sin and sinners from this world, and will restore this earth to its former Edenic beauty. This earth will finally be our home if we are faithful.

Some people wonder whether we will be real beings in a real world, or spirit beings, without bodies, floating about through space.

We are told in I Corinthians 13: 12 that we shall know one another, our loved ones, and friends. We are going to build houses and really live in them, plant vineyards and eat the fruit. (Isaiah 65: 21.)

A partial description of the new earth is given in Revelation 21. In this land there will be beauties untold, and "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Revelation 21: 4.

God desires that we shall all have a part in this glorious reward. Ample provision has been made for you and me to be there. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3: 16. Since He died for us should we not desire, yes, determine that we will live for Him? I do not think that anyone will want to do right just to get to heaven, but because we love Him we will delight to obey and serve Him.

I am thankful that God did not leave us in darkness about the future, about life after death. There is abundant proof in the Bible that we shall live again. Life is not a dead-end road.

36. A Second Chance at Life

IF YOU HAD your life to live over again, how would you spend that life? So many times I have heard both old and young expressing the wish that they might go back again and begin life anew. They would like the privilege of meeting the same problems and temptations, of facing again the same privileges and opportunities. We all feel that if we could live our lives over, there would be great transformations-no wasted opportunities, no unkind words, no dissipations, no selfishness, no sin. We would profit by the mistakes of the past.

There is a teaching abroad in the land-and its teachers profess to back up their theories by quoting the Bible-that man is to have a second chance. They say that there is to be a thousand year period in which we may relive these lives, have another opportunity to change our ways, to make wrongs right, to prepare for eternity.

They tell us that this millennium, or period of a thousand years, is to be a time of great prosperity. All mankind-yellow, brown, black, and white-will live together peacefully and harmoniously as one big family. There will be no national barriers, no rivalry among nations. Trade restrictions will be removed. War will be a thing of the past, for we shall love the Lord supremely and our neighbors as ourselves.

The sinner would like to think that he can go his sinful way until the time of this millennium when he will have an opportunity to change his ways and live for God and his fellow men. The racketeer would like to believe that he can continue his unholy traffic, and then in the millennium have his sins all forgiven and have a chance to live right. The gangster would like to believe that God is so good that He would not punish him for his wickedness, but give him another trial. And the "morally good" man and woman, who have not committed murder or robbed a bank, but who have made no profession of Christianity, obtain great comfort from the teaching that there will be a time when everyone will turn to God, and it will become easy to live the Christian life.

What does the Bible teach in regard to this thousand-year period? When is it to begin, and when will it end? How will it affect us as individuals? These are interesting questions. If this doctrine be true, why worry about living right now? We might as well have our fling, and then when the millennium begins change our ways and live right. But no conclusion could be more untrue.

The Bible does not teach that all mankind will at some time turn to God en masse, and that Christ will come and reign over us for a thousand golden years of peace. There is no Bible authority for the teaching that we are going to have a second chance.

The Lord plainly teaches us that conditions in our world are not going to get better but will grow worse and worse. In 2 Timothy 3: I we are told that "in the last days perilous times shall come." James tells us in the fifth chapter of his epistle of a piling together of riches by the rich, and of the oppression of the poor in the last days. This condition of the extremely rich and of the suffering, dissatisfied poor would exist, says James, when "the coming of the Lord draws nigh." Christ plainly taught when He was here on this earth that He would return. Just before that time He said there would be wars, famines, pestilence, and earthquakes. In Matthew 13 we are told that the wicked and the righteous will live here on the earth side by side, as the wheat and the tares or weeds grow together in a field until the time of the harvest. At Christ's coming these two classes are to be separated.

In the last days of this earth's history the majority of mankind will not have turned to God, but will be disloyal, and prove untrue, as taught in 2 Timothy 3; Matthew 24:12,37-39; and Luke 17:28-30. There will never be a utopian era of righteousness and happiness and peace on this old globe until Christ returns, destroys sin and sinners, and creates a perfect new earth.

But does not the Bible speak of a millennium? Yes, it assuredly does, but that will not be a time to relive old lives and patch up mistakes of the past. The word millennium is made up of two Latin words-mille, meaning "thousand," and annus, meaning "year." So millennium means "a thousand years."

You will find this thousand years spoken of by John the Beloved in the twentieth chapter of the Book of Revelation. God here gave John a picture of this time, telling him what would mark its beginning, and what would happen during the thousand years, as well as what event would mark its close. Read this chapter of your Bible through in order to get the picture.

At the beginning of this vision John saw an angel descend from heaven with a chain in his hand, and the angel "laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years." Revelation 20: 2. So this event, the binding of Satan, marks the beginning of the millennium.

At the same time John saw thrones, and those sitting on the thrones were those who had lived for God and who "had not worshipped the beast." (Verse 4.) Some of these righteous people had had a resurrection, for the fifth verse says that the rest of the dead lived not again until the end of the thousand years, or millennium. This resurrection of the righteous at the beginning of the millennium is spoken of by John as the "first resurrection," so we conclude that there will be another resurrection later. Let us examine the proof for it. Jesus plainly taught (John 5: 28, 29) that there would be two resurrections. From Revelation 20: 6 we conclude that it was the righteous who would be raised in this first resurrection at the beginning of the millennium. If the righteous dead were raised to life then, we must look for the resurrection of the wicked at some other time. So at the beginning of this millennium, or thousand years, Satan is bound and the righteous dead are raised.

In the fifth verse John says, "The rest of the dead," whom we must conclude are the wicked dead, "lived not again until the thousand years were finished." So the resurrection of the wicked must mark the close of this millennium.

How and when will this first resurrection take place? You will find the answer in your Bible. In I Thessalonians 4:16,17 we read: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Here we see that at Christ's second coming the righteous dead will have a resurrection, and the living righteous will be taken with them to heaven, where John (Revelation 20) sees them living a thousand years in heaven with God.

The righteous will be taken to heaven with Christ. The wicked who are living at the time of Christ's coming will be destroyed by the brightness of His coming, and "the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried." Jeremiah 25: 33. With the wicked all dead, and the righteous taken to heaven, the earth will indeed be a desolate place. These are the circumstantial chains with which Satan is to be bound. He may roam the world at will for a thousand years, with no one whom he can tempt or deceive. As our hands are sometimes tied by circumstances, so he will be bound here upon the earth in its chaotic state.

At the close of the thousand years the wicked will come forth from their graves, as pictured by John in Revelation 20: 5. By their resurrection the chains that bind Satan will be broken. He will "be loosed out of his prison." Verse 7. He goes out to deceive the nations once more. The Holy City, New Jerusalem, now comes down from heaven. (Revelation 21:1,2.) The righteous return to earth to make this their home. Satan rallies his forces, the wicked, and organizes them to attack the Holy City. Then fire comes down from heaven, and devours Satan and his host, and purifies the earth. (Revelation 20:7-9; 21:1.) It was God's original plan that this earth should be man's home, and His plan will be carried out. "The meek shall inherit the earth." Psalm 37: 11.

So, although the millennium is not a time of probation or of a second chance, we shall be in one of the two classes. We may spend that thousand years in heaven with God, or among the dead on the earth. At the close of the thousand years shall we be inside the city with God's children, or on the outside to be destroyed by the fire which will be rained down from heaven?

You and I pass over this way only once. We cannot go back and make amends. It is God's desire that now in this time of probation we shall decide to serve Him. We may if we will. It is a choice that we must make if we would find that happiness that God intended mankind should have enjoyed if sin and evil had not alienated him from Eden and its privileges. Life will be a dead end road only if we neglect to choose the clear path Christ marked out all the way to Eden restored.

37. The End of the Way

BENNY LOCKE served as an engineer for fifty-seven years on the Lackawanna Railway, and during all these years not one mark was registered against him by his superiors. He was industrious, punctual, and thoroughly dependable. Being a Christian, he always removed his cap as he entered his engine to begin his run, and offered a prayer to God for protection and guidance.

We will let him tell in his own words of one experience: "Number six was twenty-five minutes late out of Seranton, one day, and I had my little prayer as usual when I stepped into the cab. After I had asked for the safety of our train, I said, 'Lord, help me to bring her in on time.' It was a stiff climb up the Pocono Mountains for the first part of the trip, and it never seems so steep as when you are late. I couldn't gain a second on the way up, but after we dipped over the summit, things began to break just right for me. It was a beautiful day, with the air perfectly clear, and we almost flew down the mountain. I just held her steady and let her go. At last the old train shed at Hoboken loomed ahead, and as we pulled under the edge of it, I looked at my watch, and we were just on the dot. As I stood wiping the sweat off my face, there was a tap with a cane on the side of my cab, and when I looked out the window there stood the president of the railway all smiles, and he said to me, 'A good run, sir! A very good run!' That meant more to me than anything else that could have happened." Someday we shall all come to the end of the run, and pull into the great terminal station. May we then hear the

Master say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have made a good run." That will be our experience if we have done our very best.

Far up in the highlands of Switzerland, close by a mirror-clear lake, surrounded by snow-clad mountains, and away from the beaten and well-known paths of tourists, a lone traveler came upon a beautiful and well-cared-for estate. Entering the meticulously kept grounds, the traveler met the caretaker, who showed him around the extensive, flower-filled, and lovely gardens.

"Is your master here?" inquired the traveler.

"No, he is away," the gardener answered.

Noting the wonderful gardens the wayfarer was curious. "How long has he been gone?" he asked.

"About twenty years now," the servant answered.

"I suppose you hear from him often?" the questioner continued.

"Not once has he written me."

"From whom do you get your pay then?"

"From the master's agent in Maitland," was the reply.

"Does the agent come often to tell you what has to be done?"

"No, he has never been here either."

"Pray tell, who does come then to oversee things?"

"It is very, very seldom that anyone comes here, since we are off the beaten path."

"And still you have kept the gardens, every nook and corner, of the whole estate in such perfect order? Everything looks as if you were expecting your master today or tomorrow!"

"Yes, I keep everything as though he were coming today, sir," said the proud and faithful gardener.

We have no assurance of what a single day may bring us. These are uncertain times. If we can work on the plan of the gardener in our lives, we need have no fear for what may come to US.

When the great explorer Shackleton was on his quest for the South Pole, he was at one time driven back and compelled to leave some of his men on Elephant Island, though he promised that he would return for them. When he endeavored to get back he found a sea of ice between him and the island. What should he do? He had promised, and he must keep his word.

He tried to reach them but failed. He tried again and again, but without success. Beyond the ice were his trusting companions, who had every confidence in him. They had only a few supplies with them. At that time of the year it seemed folly to hope for any favorable change in the weather, and he was told that there was absolutely no hope of getting his little boat, the Yalcho, through the great ice barrier to Elephant Island.

He could not be inactive. He must reach his men, so at the risk of losing his boat and the lives of his crew, he pushed in nearer to the island, and unexpectedly there came an opening in the ice. He hurried in, rescued his men, and in an hour was back again with all on board. Had he been delayed only a few minutes, his frail vessel would have been destroyed by the crashing of the ice as it closed in.

When the men were sure that they were beyond danger, and the nervous tension was over, Shackleton said to one of the rescued companions, "Well, you were packed and ready, weren't you?"

"Yes," came back the reply, "we never lost hope; we believed you would come for us, even though circumstances were unfavorable. You had promised, and we expected you; so each morning we rolled up our sleeping bags and packed all our equipment, that we might be ready." And now they were all safe and homeward bound, happy that they had been packed and ready, prepared daily. The story is a perfect spiritual object lesson for all today who believe God's Word.

For six thousand years the world has been under the curse of sin. Satan has held dominion over the earth during all that time, bringing sorrow and wretchedness and woe into the lives of its inhabitants. The only way out of this misery, the only path, to peace and true happiness, has been in the plan of salvation so clearly laid down in the Bible. Millions have found that happiness in yielding their lives to Christ for His control. Those who have known this fellowship find joy in contemplating the promises that He who made possible the way to happiness here is coming back to earth in this very generation to restore to the world its original harmony. In that world of the future there will be no obstacles to peace, nothing to offend or annoy, no shadow on contentment.

If we rightly relate ourselves to that event of all events, the return of Christ in person to this world to receive His waiting people and to cleanse the earth from its curse, we shall be like Shackleton's men in the midst of the bleak Antarctic wastes—all packed and ready for their great leader's return. Before He left this world for the heavenly courts Jesus solemnly warned His disciples', "Be you also ready: for in such an hour as you think not the, Son of man comes." When that event takes place happiness will not be the end of the way, but only the beginning of a glorious experience.