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BESIDE THE SHEPHERD'S TENT

By B. V. Seals

Brief, warm devotions
"Helps for the Hungry in Heart"

Beacon Hill Press
Kansas City, Mo.
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DEDICATION

To my lovely wife, who first led me to Christ, and has been my faithful companion these years. She has gone into the valley of the shadow of death five times to bring children into the world to bear my name and likeness. She has stood by me through sunshine and shadows, and when the storms of life were at their crest, has buried her face on my breast. Her deeply spiritual life has been a beautiful example of all I tried to preach.

In sincere appreciation of all she means to me, I dedicate this book.

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FOREWORD

If I could have written the kind of book I would really love to write, it would have been the story of redemption, the fall and recovery of man, the greatest of all stories. It would have described man in his original beauty and purity, the climax of the creative genius of Deity. It would have beheld him falling, tumbling down millions of miles through the dark and deep abyss of sin, misery, wretchedness, and woe. Then we would have beheld his recovery through the atonement, through the vicarious sufferings of Christ on the cross; seen him brought back from near the pit, until all that was lost in the first Adam was regained in the second. We would have gotten him through all the heartaches and sorrows and into the city of God, where sin and sorrow can never come, where death will never claim a loved one, and the flowers will never fade. But that book will have to wait.

For years the benedictions and blessings of God have been accumulating in my heart and life like snow on mountain peaks, and often have begged for expression. I have waited and hoped I would find some nice, quiet den with books at my finger tips, far removed from the rush of life, making nice, clear, clean-cut channels to run my thoughts through. But, alas, I dared not, I could not wait longer! When the spring thaws come, the rivers do not wait for straight, clean channels, but come rushing down regardless of obstructions, climbing over some, going around others, cutting through some, but ever pressing on until lost in the bosom of the deep.

These meditations, I trust, have been like that. Very few of them have been written in a quiet den. Most of them have been written on planes and trains and often late at night. (However, I know that we never get credit for staying up late and writing. It's only the one that gets up early that gets credit. But I haven't written for the thought of credit.) Most of them I have written when I couldn't keep from it, as one has said, "When the fire stung me and angels stirred me up." I have received so much help from God and inspiration from the lives of others. So I have made this humble effort to pass some of it on. May God be pleased to add His blessing.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I feel that I have benefited so much from the sermons that I have heard and read that I want to hereby acknowledge my debt of gratitude to all the good preachers that have invested in my life.

I feel that my life has been a compilation of the investments of others. This book may sound a little like everybody I have ever heard. I especially want to thank Mrs. Ruth Hamblet and Mrs. Esther McNutt for the valuable assistance they have given me in doing the secretarial work in compiling the articles for this book.

Acknowledgment is due Ira Stanphil, West Palm Beach, Florida, for permission to quote from his song, "You Can Have a Song," and the Nazarene Publishing House, Kansas City, Missouri, for use of the song "My Burden Is Gone."

B.V. Seals
Seattle, Washington
February 10, 1956

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION

We hear many good sermons, but occasionally we hear one in which, as we listen, we forget the preacher and his preaching. We are caught up with his line of thought and are lifted out of ourselves. We see grand vistas of truths; we receive new insight into situations which have perplexed us, and gain solutions to problems which have harassed us. How good to hear such a sermon!

In the pages of this book I have found such sermons. In reading them I have sensed that indefinable something which in preaching we call unction, a quality so often lost in written material but herein movingly present. They are not actually sermons -- they are brief, heart touching messages, but they are packed with so much virile truth that they surpass many sermons of length.

The author, Dr. B. V. Seals, has served in numerous capacities of the church. He is an admired and loved district superintendent, has been a successful pastor, and is in much demand as an evangelist and camp-meeting preacher. He knows people and is familiar with the bright and dark sides of life. He has known the high peaks of joy and success; he has traversed the valleys of suffering and sorrow, too. Now, out of the "warp and woof" of life's experiences, he gives us these messages which draw us close to the Shepherd of our souls. How appropriate is the title, *BESIDE THE SHEPHERD'S TENT*, and how apt the subtitle, "Helps for the Hungry in Heart!"

There are freshness and uniqueness in Dr. Seal's approach. His manner of expression is vivid and direct, sometimes humorous, always interesting. Titles like "Women Go to Church, Men Go to Jail" draw immediate attention, and the flavor of the message lingers long.

If you like reading which blesses you, which makes you cry, then makes you laugh; if you like that which captivates you, then moves you, read on.

Thaine F. Sanford

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01 -- BESIDE THE SHEPHERD'S TENT

There is a kind of courage we do not admire. It is displayed by the man who says he does not need God, the church, or the preacher. That is the kind of courage that is well-nigh madness.

There is an independence that is audacity -- when a man thinks himself so self-sufficient that he can go it alone and make it without the teachings of the Word and the helpful inspiration of social worship.

Few are so strong and rugged that they can be independent, without that independence leading to isolation. And few, if any, are so weak but what they could make it if they would take full advantage of all the church has to offer. Independence was our trouble to begin with. "All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isa. 53:6). Wanderer, return to the Shepherd and Bishop of your soul.

We need, not only to return, but to keep close beside the shepherds' tents. Little boats should keep near the shore; little children should never stray far from home. If you would be safe in God's great flock, keep in close by the shepherd's tent.

"Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents" (Song of Sol. 1:8).

Loneliness has its perils in the religious life. We need the message of the church, for Christ is always saying, "Arise, come away." He, through the sanctuary, is always calling us to some higher altitude, greener pasture, or by some quieter stream. The great beauty is yet to be seen. The great harvest fields are yet to be reaped.

We need the music of the church. We cannot hum our own little tune that will satisfy the soul. We need to hear the Scriptures read in a familiar voice, yes, the shepherd's voice; to unite in holy prayer together, until our prayers will rise as incense on the altar before God. Oh, the blessed communion! How we shelter one another! What mutual protection! What strength in union! How we complement each other! We live in one another's prayers, sympathy, and love. We all join together in singing the old, inspired hymns of the Church, until we feel our hearts throb with hearty, happy rhythm. This is much like heaven.

If you want security and protection, keep close by the shepherds' tents. Then there will be someone to help you to your feet, if you fall. We have all our highest thoughts in the sanctuary and find there all our commonwealth of sympathy and love. No wonder we are admonished in God's Word to forsake not the assembling of ourselves together. In other words, keep close beside the shepherds' tents.

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02 -- HELP FROM THE SANCTUARY

The Justifying Influence of the Sanctuary

The Lord has promised to send us help from the sanctuary when we are in trouble. "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; . . . send thee help from the sanctuary" (Ps. 20: 1-2).

There will never be any real substitute for church. We are admonished not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together" (Heb. 10:25). Very few people ever backslide as long as they go to church twice on Sunday and on prayer meeting night.

The church must forever retain the soul-saving element in the services. There must be something that convicts and converts; a nice program is not enough. There must be straight gospel preaching. There should be such glorious singing as only sanctified people can do. Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour" (Matt. 5:13), it becomes worthless. I imagine few people are ever saved entirely unaided by the influence of the church.

I was a speaker in one of our camps some time ago. One evening after service Mrs. Seals and I and some of the workers went down a few blocks from the auditorium to get something to eat in a cafe. We engaged the waitress in conversation and invited her to the meeting. She thanked us for the invitation and said: "I need to go to church; I need help. I lost my little boy three months ago, and my heart is broken; I need help."

We told her she would find help in the sanctuary. She would meet a lot of lovely people; she would be able to hear a 300-voice choir, some great gospel preaching (especially when my colleague preached). She promised to come Sunday morning, which she said would be the only time she would have off. I told her it would be my turn to preach and that we would be looking for her. On Sunday morning she came, and at the close of the service was wonderfully saved. On the way home she said to one of the workers that took her home: "Do you mean to tell me that this meeting has been going on for ten days here within a few blocks of where I work? Why didn't someone tell me?" She went on to say she was sure many Nazarenes had eaten in the cafe where she worked; she had waited on their tables. They all appeared to be so happy, but she was sad and brokenhearted.

I wondered, too, why we didn't invite more people. If we would, we would find some hearts just waiting for an invitation.

We had over four thousand people in attendance Sunday night in that camp, and an altar service never to be forgotten. But one of the greatest joys of all was to see this lady saved, for we had a part in helping her.

I wish it were different, but most people do not seek God until they are in trouble. But our God will receive you, even though you are driven to Him by distress. If you are in trouble today, go to church, and the Lord will "send thee help from the sanctuary."

* * *

The Sanctifying Influence of the Sanctuary

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4: 11-13).

Every pastor and evangelist and every Sunday-school teacher and every licensed minister and every layman in the church is supposed to be engaged in promoting the doctrine and experience of holiness. Every church member should have contagious religion, should cause some person to hunger for the experience. When Jesus prayed that the Father would sanctify the disciples, one of the reasons He wanted them be sanctified, He said in His prayer, was "that the world might believe" (John 17: 21b). It is easier for the world to argue with us about our theology than it is for them to stand up against the impact of holy character or to resist the influence of a sanctified life. Sanctified people should have such joy in time of sorrow, and power in time of persecution, and poise in time of distress, that those who look on will be convinced that there is something to the experience of holiness.

Many denominations still have holiness in their statements of doctrine but have ceased to get people sanctified. We must not only continue to believe in holiness, but we must promote holiness to justify our own existence. Our credentials must still be, "People are getting sanctified and it works today."

Years ago in a church where we were then pastoring, we had a number of young people at the altar one Sunday seeking holiness. I remember one young lady still in her teens, and how she prayed! She was screaming so that her lonely little mother came to me and said, "Pastor, is this real, or is my daughter hysterical?" I listened a moment and she was praying something like this: "O God, let me die. Let me die to everything. Give me grace to live my religion at school and at home. I put everything on the altar for Thee, for time and eternity, including my dad. You know how I love my dad, but I ought to have enough religion to go to heaven, even if Dad never turns." I said to the little mother, "It sounds real to me." And a few moments later while we were singing "I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go," this lovely young lady prayed through to glorious victory and was sanctified. She later became Sunday-school superintendent in that church, attended Pasadena College, and graduated with honors, and is now a much-loved and highly honored and appreciated missionary, having served two terms.

I saw the lovely church building the other day where she was sanctified. They have enlarged it twice. It stands as a monument to the vision and faith and sacrifices of the people who built it. We are proud of the building, but we are more proud of the missionary, the product of the church.

Perhaps the biggest business any of us may have even a small part in is helping to build churches and promote an atmosphere so it will be easy for people to get sanctified and hard for them to miss it. It is not enough for us to get people saved; we must get them sanctified. May the Lord help us all to keep alive the sanctifying influence of the sanctuary!

* * *

The Rectifying Influence of the Sanctuary

I believe it would be almost impossible to overestimate the importance of the sanctuary in helping men to stand up right and go straight. I believe babies are influenced by the church while still in their mothers' arms. They hear the good old hymns, and their lives are influenced by the early impressions.

I watched my little granddaughter the other day, only three years of age, playing, and she was singing one chorus after another. Her doll fell out of the buggy, and finally the buggy turned over, but she put it all together again and never stopped singing. She changed choruses once or twice, but never did quit singing. The influence of church was working in her life already as it does for older people.

Anyone can sing when the sun's shining bright,
But you need a song in your heart at night.

David said (paraphrasing Psalms 73 a little): "I saw the wicked neighbor in an expensive house, driving a Cadillac, and enjoying plenty of money, while I lived in a rented house and drove an old jalopy that belonged mostly to the bank. He bought everything wholesale, or in large quantities, and I bought everything retail and often paid a penalty. I paid the high cost of low living. And when I saw the prosperity of the wicked, I well-nigh slipped." But the Lord took him into the sanctuary and revealed to him the end of the wicked, and He took the "slip" out of him and put the "go" in him.

How many have gone on to the sanctuary tempted and leaning a little only to be straightened up by the gospel message and the influence of the sanctuary? How many have gone there looking up and come away looking up? How many have gone there looking for a hole in the ground and come away looking for a hole in the skies? How many have gone there looking for the undertaker and come away looking for the up-taker? Many have gone feeling oppressed and come away singing about the mansion just over the hilltop. Many have gone to church feeling earthly-minded and come away feeling heavenly-minded. Many have gone to church feeling burdened and heartbroken and have come away with a keen consciousness that earth has no sorrows that heaven cannot heal. How many have gone there feeling they were doomed to failure, and have come away feeling they didn't dare fail?

I must close this right now and hurry to church, where my good pastor and his people, with the help of the Lord, will give me what I need most today. My heart is troubled and too burdened for words to describe, but I have an appointment with God in His sanctuary, and I know that "he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32.)

Today the sun may break through to me through sermon or song, and I'll be listening. I may hear the familiar voice of the Spirit whisper, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (II Cor. 12:9). I will

also prepare; I have waited so long; may He come today. And where is He any more likely to come than in God's sanctuary at the appointed, time and place? I must go now, for I dare not be late to such an important appointment as I have with God in His house.

* * *

The Edifying Influence of the Sanctuary

Our strength is not added at church, but multiplied. One can chaste a thousand; and two, ten thousand. It is good for us socially to go to church, to dress up twice on Sunday and at least once during the week. Some people actually dress up so seldom that they feel awkward. Some workmen who do not attend church hardly have a dress suit. It does a personality good to clean up and dress up. There would probably be less women wanting to trade husbands if the ones they had would dress up once in a while.

At church the finer qualities of character and soul are developed. The restraining influence of the law may keep us from murder, but the love of God keeps us from hating even our enemies. There is the edifying influence of sermon and song. People who undervalue the sanctuary do not know the injury they are inflicting upon society. The walls of the church should vibrate with music. The music should be such that everybody has some part in it. Music that only a few can sing may have some place in our program, but there must be some thing that has a larger place, singing that takes up all hearts, that makes even the dumb sing. It all seems to acknowledge the kinship of the service. It seems to say this is acceptable to God. And when we hear it we say, "Thank Heaven for voices so rich, so pure, and so consecrated!" There should be such times of outpoured blessings on our services that every old man and little child will feel that they must have some share in the grand shout. There are times when we hear through the sacred music of the church the Master calling in the sweetest voice. He has left behind the mechanism, words, and appeals to us through the mystery, the magic, and the miracle of music.

We are not only saved from our gross sins, but when we come to church we pray, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23-24). We not only come to loathe our sins, but are anxious to get rid of our faults -- and then what help we receive from others! "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." It would be impossible for me to count all the people who have contributed to my life. There would be my mother with her nights of prayer; the evangelist who pointed the way; Uncle Buddy Robinson with his lessons on love; J. T. Little with his demonstration of unselfishness; R. T. Williams with his undying devotion to the church; J. B. Chapman with his "All Out for Souls!;" and every good testimony I have ever heard. I remember Mrs. Larimore (now in heaven) saying, "It takes patience to run this race;" and Charlie Waterman with his ready testimony to everyone he meets has been an inspiration to me. I remember J. Howard Smith, my first Sunday-school superintendent. His son, Weldon, told me the other day that he didn't think his dad had failed one day in twenty years to pray for me. I remember the army of men and women who have had it much tougher than I have, yet they have pressed on through storm and strain, their faith unflinching. On and on they go. Some have unsaved loved ones and others have sorrow only heaven can heal. But all seem to whisper over their shoulder to me: "Come on. You can make it. We have. You can." Memories of good people, oh, how edifying!

I can hear the little woman down in Iowa singing "I'd Rather Have Jesus." I remember the beautiful young lady, just graduating from our college, stepping up to me and saying: "You won my dad to Christ years ago. Thanks for helping me to have a Christian home to grow up in." That helps me to know that I have helped some body.

But most helpful of all is to meet God's people in the sanctuary -- to see some elderly lady come into prayer meeting, shake the rain off her umbrella, and sit down as if to say, "Go ahead, Preacher, the devil hasn't taken my pew." Then I feel as if I can fight the devil another round. It is wonderful to meet at church those of kindred spirit that left all to follow Christ, to feel their handclasps of friendship, and to sense the determination in their spirits to make it through. Oh, the edifying influence of the sanctuary! "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Ps. 122:1).

* * *

The Glorifying Influence of the Sanctuary

The Lord said, "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me" (Ps. 50: 15). Literally it means, "My glory is in thy salvation. When I glorify myself it is by saving thy people."

The Lord is not glorified by having infinite tribute paid to Him because He is majestic. He is glorified when we say to Him: "Lord, I was lost and You found me. I was blind and You gave me sight, and I will tell the world about it. My song shall be, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.'" Thus is God glorified -- not in being offered the bouquets of His universe, but by our living so as to show men that all we are and have that is holy and good is from the Lord.

Joseph Parker said, "When the church would be considered by the world to have gone wild over religion, then it would be well on its way towards saving the world to its religion." It is not when we are cold and passive and indifferent, but when we are anointed and blessed and shouting happy, that we get the attention of the world and convince them that there is something to our religion. It is evident that the thing the Lord is supremely interested in is getting us to heaven. We hope for and perhaps claim a lot of exemptions and immunities that we have no Bible grounds for. I have known some very good people who have had a lot of misfortune. There is no substitute in God's house for God's glory. Dr. Bresee used to say, "Get the glory down."

There should be something in every Nazarene church that makes it different from the cold, formal church. You shouldn't have to be a theologian to know it is a holiness church. There should be a freedom in the singing and the earnestness and the testimony meeting and the zeal in working for God that would identify our church as being different. Isaiah said he saw the Lord high and lifted up and His glory filling the Temple. It was then and there he got the proper perspective of life. He felt his own deep spiritual need and felt his own uncouthness. It is when we see the Lord high and lifted up and His glory filling the temple that we see our own hearts as they really are.

I do mean that we should be so heavenly-minded that we are of no earthly use, and some are so earthly-minded they perhaps would be of no heavenly use. Someone has said, "God does not only want us to love, but be lovely." Many places we need better buildings and equipment, and some places better programs, but everywhere we need more of God and more of His glory. As we preach and sing and testify and pray, that unseen, indescribable something must come on us -- the supernatural that makes our efforts no longer weak and human or carnal but mighty through God to the tearing down of the strongholds and the upbuilding of His cause and kingdom. "Mercy drops round its are falling; but for the showers we plead."

* * * * *

03 -- GOD'S KIND OF LOVE

God's Kind of Love Is Greater than Eloquence

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [love], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (I Cor. 13:1).

You can compare God's kind of love with the great things of the world, and it is greater than any or all of them. Take the gift of eloquence. It is really something to be able to play upon the soul and heartstrings of men with words of eloquence. Lincoln said in his Gettysburg Address that the words spoken there would not long be remembered. But they have been. There is hardly any high school graduate but what is familiar with the entire address. My own soul has often been deeply moved by marvelous messages of our great church leaders, until I felt I could literally run through a troop and leap over a wall. But if I could eclipse all the eloquence of men, even the silver-tongued orators of the Southland, and could speak with the eloquence of angels -- if I didn't have God's kind of love, I would become as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. We have all felt the coldness of words back of which there was no holy compassion. Our preaching begins to be effective only when in the tone of our voice men recognize the Shepherd's call. When we say, "Come," it should have a caress in it.

We have heard a great deal lately about doing for God and the church, but I wonder if what we are is not more important than what we do. In fact, I think "being" qualifies for "doing." It may take a little training, but I believe there are some things that we will do naturally for Christ if we are deeply devoted to him. We will not have to be regimented into every little word we say and every little deed we do if our hearts are full of God's kind of love.

Poor old backslidden Peter was following afar off, and his heart was full of fear; but he heard the over tones of love in the voice saying, "Go tell his disciples, and Peter . . ." (Mark 16: 7). It was then he came rushing back into the fold for keeps. Whatever we want to call this thing in the thirteenth chapter of I. Corinthians, "charity," "love," or, as I prefer to call it, "God's kind of love," one thing we can be sure of is that it is the thing of supreme importance. So we should all join now in praying for God's kind of love.

There perhaps isn't anything that the world needs today any more than to have people who are filled with God's kind of love. I think it was Wesley who stood up in old Oxford years ago and

cried, "Where, I pray tell me, do the Christians live?" And I think that is the question we might well ask today and ask ourselves, "Where, I pray tell me, do the people live who have God's kind of love?"

* * *

God's Kind of Love Is Greater than Prophecy

God's kind of love is greater than the gift of prophecy. The gift of prophecy is no mean gift. It would really be something to be able to prophesy and tell of things yet to come, with terrifying accuracy. You would really have horsepower unlimited if you understood all about all the horses of Revelation. And if you could understand the seventy weeks in Daniel, his vision of the rise and fall of empires, you could about know when to expect Christ to return. General Dean, when he was a war prisoner in Korea, for three years had no contact with the outside world, yet he felt on a certain month of the first year of his captivity that General Walker had been killed, and grieved over it. He discovered when he got out that General Walker was killed the very month that he had the presentiment. He declared he had no explanation.

So it seems that there are times when men's minds can run ahead and pick up things that are yet to come just as clearly as our memories reach back into the past.

Some preachers preached back during World War I that the Kaiser was the Antichrist, but the old would-be world conqueror died in exile. During World War II some preached that Mussolini was to be the fulfillment of prophecy, but I was in Rome and could not find him, I saw only the wreck and ruin of his beautiful country that he had plunged into destruction. The Germans were ruthless in their destruction of property in their retreat through Italy. The little straw Caesar was nowhere to be found.

Many have missed it in attempting to preach as prophecy, but if I could hit it every time and did not have God's kind of love, I would still be lost. Some will say to Christ at the judgment, "Have we not prophesied in thy name?" But He will declare to them, "I never knew you" (Matt. 7:22-23). We could no more preach our way to heaven than we could climb a rope of sand, A Christian could get to heaven just as quickly through faithfulness to any other legitimate task as he could by preaching. Obedience to our task and call is necessary, but it is not at all that is necessary. On beyond that, we must have God's kind of love.

* * *

God's Kind of Love Is Greater than All Mysteries

Imagine how smart you would be if you understood all mysteries! Some people would have you think that all mysteries are in religion. They would be Christians if they could only understand all the mysteries involved. The finite mind cannot comprehend the mysteries of the infinite. There are many mysteries outside of religion. Who can understand electricity? Who can comprehend radar?

I was in a museum on one of the Hawaiian Islands and saw some little plovers, some small birds about the size of a dove. They spend the summers in Alaska and the winters on the beautiful Hawaiian Islands. They fly out across some two thousand miles of uncharted sea. They must have some little radar in their breasts to keep them on the beam through sunshine or storms. I don't understand how they do it.

I don't understand how a black cow can eat green grass and give white milk, from which we churn yellow butter. I do not understand the human eye, how we can see and our eyes photograph everything, even to delicate colors. Who can explain memory? It is claimed that our bodies change every seven years, but somehow memory survives. How can the little acorn become the mighty oak?

Perhaps the greatest of all mysteries is the mystery of godliness in Christ Jesus, all the greater because the more sublime. We should not fail to read the Bible because we do not understand it all. We can benefit by what we do understand. We can enjoy our own little lamps, even though we cannot number the stars.

If I understood all mysteries, everywhere, in nature, in theology, in religion -- that would not be enough. Some how, somewhere, sometime, I must come to have God's kind of love.

* * *

God's Kind of Love Transcends Faith

"Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [God's kind of love], I am nothing" (I Cor. 13: 2b).

We hear a great deal today about faith, and some people would seem to think that if you have faith you have religion. But the Bible teaches that a person may have a great deal of faith, in fact even have enough to move mountains -- mountains of financial difficulties, mountains of physical impossibilities, mountains of trouble, mountains of physical handicaps; move mountains until people would be carried away with his faith, until he would build up a following because of that faith -- and yet if he didn't have God's kind of love, he would have to say with the Bible, "I am nothing."

We do not need less faith. We only need more love. I think we ought to have more faith for healing. I think we ought to have more trusting faith in the hours of perplexing problems. I think we ought to have more achieving faith that really brings things to pass for God and His kingdom. I think we ought to have more faith. I believe if God gives us a mighty revival across the land that we will see more marvelous cases of healing and wonderful victories of faith. But more important even than faith is to have God's kind of love. Perhaps if we would cultivate it more, until we are sure that there is "nothing between my soul and my Savior," it would become the foundation for a real faith in God.

As much as we need faith today (faith in the future, faith in the church, faith in leadership, faith in our government, faith in one another, faith in God), perhaps even more than that we need God's kind of love.

* * *

God's Kind of Love Is Greater than Benevolence

"Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity [love], it profiteth me nothing" (I Cor. 13:3).

There is not much disinterested benevolence today. There are not many people just doing good for the pure joy of it, without any hope of remuneration. We sometimes try to bribe people into going to church and Sunday school, but I think there is a higher incentive. There are not many people just going out to minister and bless, without any thought or hope of return. Even when we put on radio programs and advertise through other means, we want to know right away how many people came to church as a result of it, and what the church received in return. I think if we would just go out to bless, to take Christ to men, and give and give and give, that it would be the kind of ministry that God would bless. But if someone invites you home from church with him this Sunday, you know without my telling you that you are supposed to invite him next Sunday.

We know how nervous we all get around Christmas time for fear somebody will give us a more expensive present than we give him. And life goes on like that. But still there are not too many people who are magnanimous and love to give. It is still a commendable thing. There are a few who just love to give. Thank God for them.

But though I have a benevolent spirit and bestow my goods, and though I give my body to be burned -- this reveals to us the startling fact that a man might be willing to die for his religion, and yet it could be of such poor quality that it wouldn't save his soul when he had given his body for it. So let us be sure that if we die for a cause, or for religion, that it is the right kind and one that will save our souls when we have given our lives for it.

So we should remember that we could give out and burn out and still miss heaven, if we didn't have God's kind of love.

* * *

God's Kind of Love Is Kind

God's kind of love will help you to suffer along and be kind. "Charity [love] suffereth long, and is kind" (I Cor. 13: 4a).

Kindness costs the one who gives it so little and is worth so much to the one who receives it. I wonder that we don't all try to be more kind. I preached for some time before I realized you could be kind to everybody. You can be kind to a poor old lost sinner, for hell will be long and

dark and awful You can be kind to the back slider; you can be kind to the stubborn. Kindness is a real Christian virtue.

The divine formula is "suffereth long, and is kind." We usually suffer long and then give the offender a piece of our minds; but when you give someone a piece of your mind, you lose your peace of mind. Perhaps more people have been won to the church through kindness than by any other means. It is the most disarming weapon you can use. "A soft answer turneth away wrath" (Prov. 15:1).

In one pastorate, I was calling on a family one day and they told me the neighbor's wife was critically ill and no pastor was calling there. So I called on them and had prayer with them, but she was almost to the crossing of the river then and did die that night. The man called me back for the funeral. They didn't have any children and they lived very much alone. I buried his wife, and he was very heartbroken and lonely. I called on him many times and he often promised to come to church, but never did. Finally one Saturday I was in my study praying, getting ready for Sunday, and this man's face kept coming up before me. Finally, more to get it off my mind than anything else, I got in my car and drove off to his place and called on him. I thought he seemed embarrassed at my coming, but I had a nice visit with him, and prayed, and reminded him that he had promised to come to church and that I was still looking for him. The next morning he was in church. Mrs. Seals invited him home with us for dinner. After dinner we had prayer with him and I took him home. He didn't come back that night, but prayer meeting night he did. While others were testifying, he got to his feet. I knew he didn't claim to be saved, so I wondered what he would say. He said something like this: "The other day when Brother Seals came to my place I had planned to commit suicide. I was so lonely and discouraged. I was reminded I had promised to come to church, and I decided to put it off until next week and go to church." Then he began to cry. He didn't say a thing about my sermon, but he said: "When I came to church the people were all so kind to me. It seemed like everybody at church shook hands with me. Then Mrs. Seals, a total stranger to me, invited me home with them for dinner." And he said: "I went home after that and went into the very room where I intended to commit suicide and got on my knees and said, 'O God, I have found enough kindness in a world where I thought there wasn't any, until I'd like to live awhile now and spend the rest of my life with this group.' Just like a fog, something came and went all through me and now I have a desire to live again and a desire to live right." And he thanked the people for their kindness.

I sometimes wonder what might have happened if the church folk had all been busy that day shaking hands with one another and had overlooked a word of kindness to this man. May God help us all to be more kind. We can tell people the most serious things we ever have to tell them, we can deal with the most stubborn problems, the most disappointing things, but, thank God, through it all we can be kind. God's kind of love will help you to be kind.

* * *

God's Kind of Love Does Not Envy

It is worth all it costs to be sanctified wholly just to get rid of envy. The strange thing about envy is that we are tempted to be envious of people on our own level. One musician is tempted to

be envious of the success of another musician; one doctor is envious of the success of another; and so on. And, shall I say, one preacher is envious of the success of another? I believe the Bible teaches that if we are really sanctified we will get rid of envy.

In my first pastorate, I was driving over to the next town for a jail service one Sunday afternoon in an old Model T. It was just wobbling down the road, every wheel making a different track. Some fellow came up driving a big limousine, smoking a big cigar, and swished around us on the gravel highway, about covering us with dust. A young licensed preacher with me said, "Isn't that awful? You know things like that are about my greatest trial." I said, "You mean that dust? It's about to choke me, too." He answered: "No, the old sinner driving a big, fine car and serving the devil, and we are trying to serve the Lord and driving this old wreck. We will be lucky if we don't have to walk home." I took a new grip on the steering wheel of the old Ford and replied: "I don't really feel that way about it at all. I'm glad to see some better cars in circulation than this one. If I didn't know that there were some better ones somewhere, I would be terribly discouraged. If I serve God and am humble and am not envious of the other fellow having it, maybe someday the Lord will let me have one." I have surely driven my share of jalopies, and it makes them ride a lot easier when you don't envy the fellow who has a better one. Now I actually have a pretty good car myself.

If you are going to be a Christian of the first order, you don't have to keep up with "The Joneses." Just try to walk in the light and remember that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesses. Character is what counts.

I am glad the real value is not in things, for if it were, people could take things away from us, but no man can change our moral stature. We alone have to do with the destiny of our own souls. So instead of envying, we rejoice with those who rejoice. That way our lives are broader and bigger, richer and fuller. Every time fortune smiles on a friend or acquaintance, we feel kind of like we had fallen heir to it too, every time God blesses some other preacher and helps him to win souls and build the kingdom of God, we rejoice in the success of others, and have a part in it. For we are anxious and praying and hoping that they will have success, too. When they do, we have a part in their success. I pity anyone who is in distress by envy, for there is a way to get rid of it. God's kind of love envieth not.

* * *

God's Kind of Love Gets Rid of Pride

Uncle Bud Robinson said, "Pride is a peculiar disease. It makes everybody sick except the one who has it." No wonder many churches are empty today and cannot have even a Sunday night service. There has been too much display of self and not enough display of the love of Christ. One sure way to kill a church is to put up a lot of people to sing who do not know anything about it, and who are not conscious of the truth of what they are singing. If you think there is too much shouting and emotion in the church, get a choir and let them sing a lot of songs nobody can understand. Or put up a soloist that sounds about like a carpenter filing a crosscut saw; or start the ice cream freezer going in the basement, put on a few church suppers. Then you won't have any shouting and demonstration but what you can take care of.

Years ago in one of my pastorates I had three young men who were all good song leaders. But if I would have one of them lead the singing, there would be a little group that wouldn't come to the choir. If I would put up another one, there would be still another group; and so on. I never could get them all pulling at the same time. Finally one Sunday morning I just got up and told them that if they had God's kind of love they wouldn't act like that. It "doth not behave itself unseemly" (I Cor. 13: 5a).

I was pretty rough and rugged in those days and had a zeal not according to wisdom, so I said some things I perhaps wouldn't say now. I told them that they acted like children, and if they didn't quit, I was going to bring a big sand box and put it down in the corner. When they got through singing in the choir, they could go down there and take off their shoes and play with their toes in the sand while the rest of us had church.

The next Sunday morning I got up and shifted into that preacher's tone of voice and said, "The choir will now come forward." (I don't know why we have to have a preaching voice. If we would go downtown and order a bill of groceries in that tone of voice, it would frighten the merchant to death!) When I said, "The choir will now come forward," not a soul moved, and they didn't for several Sundays. But finally they started praying through and got sanctified with God's kind of love. Then they would all help, no matter who was leading, and I had people drive clear across town to hear that choir sing, for they sensed the outpoured blessing of God upon them.

There is no place in the program of God for pride and strut. Oh, that we may decrease, in order that He may increase! There isn't anything more repulsive than a life all full of egotism, or a thing much more attractive than a beautiful, sanctified, consecrated life. God's kind of love "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly" (I Cor. 13: 4b-5a).

* * *

God's Kind of Love Is Unselfish

I know we are admonished in the Bible not to judge one another, but I think if you want to examine your own heart to determine how religious you actually are, it could be measured by how unselfish you are, how much you are interested in self and how little you are interested in others. There is not much really disinterested benevolence in this world, not many people doing good just for the pure joy of it, but that perhaps is the only Christian benevolence.

If we invite people home with us for dinner this Sunday, they are supposed to take us next Sunday. We all know how nervous we get around Christmas time for fear somebody will send us a more expensive gift than we send them. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

I asked my wife one time if I could invite some friends to our place for Christmas dinner. We were too far from any of our people to have them. She said it would be all right. I went downtown where there was an old man that sacked up potatoes and weighed up sugar in the back of the grocery store where I traded. He lived in a little shack all alone down by the railroad. I went to him and said: "Dad, I've seen you here working and I know you live all alone. I have often

thought of my dad; if he were somewhere alone like this, I would like for somebody to be kind to him. I talked it over with my wife, and we want you to come to our place for Christmas dinner."

He stood up and knocked the dust off his overalls and said, "You mean me?"

I answered, "Yes. Don't worry about fixing up too much. Just come. Eats will be the main thing."

I rounded up two others like that, and when they showed up at my place I hardly knew them. They were dressed like bankers, and we had a wonderful time. We had a big turkey the people had given us, for I think that was our first year in the pastorate there. U. E. Harding says the first year they give you a turkey, the second year a chicken, the third year a rabbit, and if you stay any longer than that you are on your own. I think that was our first year, so we had a big turkey. We did a good job by it. Then we got down on the floor and helped the children put their train tracks together. When we were all through, I had prayer with our guests. I never insisted on their coming to church, but the three started coming regularly, and as long as I was there I had those three to preach to, and had them as close friends.

When will the church start out to be unselfish, to pour out its life like incense on the altar of God, to seek not its own but the welfare of others, and most of all the glory of Christ? God's kind of love seeketh not her own.

* * *

God's Kind of Love Is Not Easily Provoked

How many people have, through the years, built up a good influence with their friends and loved ones, only to spoil it with one display of unholy temper? A lot of people will tell you that you cannot get so much religion but what you get mad, have spells, and throw fits. But if you don't get religion enough to keep from getting mad and having spells, the first time you have one, those same people will claim that you don't have any religion.

I was the youngest of six boys in the family. They all tried to raise me, and, as an element of self-defense, I didn't develop an uncontrollable temper -- I just didn't try to control it. It's not an easy thing to be the youngest of six boys in the family, especially a poor family. My parents seldom bought new clothes for any but the oldest one. As he would outgrow them, they would repair them and pass them down the line; and I was the last of the line. Man! I hardly knew that socks were supposed to have feet until I was nearly grown! My older brothers would wear them out, then give them to me. If I'm not all I ought to be, it's no fault of theirs, for they all tried to raise me. So even after I was marvelously converted, there were times and moments when I still felt the stir of anger. Then I would be heartbroken and feel like I might have to give up the hope of heaven that had now become precious.

Finally one day I went to an old-fashioned "brush arbor" camp meeting, intending to stay until I got the blessing. I got clear down on the front seat. They didn't make an altar call that morning, but as they were about to dismiss they said, "Does anyone have any announcements?" I

staggered to my feet and said: "I have been praying for a week to try to get sanctified and I've come over here to stay until I get the blessing. If there is anybody who can stay and pray with me, I will appreciate it, for I need all the help I can get."

I fell on the altar and they all gathered around me, praying and lifting. It sounded like music to me. I thought I might be there for days, for I had gone to the altar every night for a week when I was getting saved. But in about twenty or thirty minutes I consecrated everything for a lifetime. I put everything I knew on the altar, every ambition, every desire. Then I put on the unknown bundle, and it has turned out to be the biggest one. As life has unfolded, it at times has seemed to make some great demands on me; but I want to say here that the consecration I made there still holds good, and I've never run a deficit. There have been times I have seemed to be taxed almost beyond the limit, but God's grace is sufficient.

May God save us from that elder brother attitude of pouting when we ought to be shouting. Someone has said the literal translation of this verse should be, ". . . is not provoked," but it's strong enough to leave it just as I find it here, "[God's kind of love] is not easily provoked" (I Cor. 13:5).

* * *

God's Kind of Love Is a Cure for Evil Thinking

Some people think it is commendable or a mark of piety to be suspicious of everybody and to discern evil before anyone else does, but actually it is commendable when you think well of everyone. Uncle Bud Robinson seemed to love everybody and didn't see anything wrong with anybody. Someone, criticizing him one day, said, "Uncle Buddie, I guess you would have something nice to say about the devil." He thought a moment and said, "Well, he is a good worker."

If we have God's kind of love, we will be the last ones to believe an evil report on some brother. I would rather believe in a hundred people who were unworthy of my confidence than to mistrust one who was worthy. We will be doing tomorrow what we are thinking today, for as a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he." We must live close enough to Christ to have Him control the thought life.

God does not only want to save us from our grosser sins, but He wants to save us from our unholy thoughts. It is not enough that we refrain from murder; God wants to save us even from hate. A good daily prayer would be, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer" (Ps. 19:14).

* * *

God's Kind of Love Rejoices in the Truth

If you are sanctified the pastor can take his text from anywhere in the Bible he cares to and preach on it, and, while it may dig around you and come close and searching, you will rejoice in it and enjoy it. Even if he preaches on tithing and supports it with the Word of God, you will rejoice

in the truth. If the preacher happens to shoot into the brush where you are, don't get out of fix with the preacher; get out of the brush.

We visited my wife's mother one time in Texas. She was a dear saint of God. Just across the street they were having an outdoor revival along by the church. I said to my wife, "This will be wonderful; we will go over and just enjoy it. So often I have to preach and pull a big part of the load."

Before we went on this vacation the church board had asked me if I was going to hold a revival. I said, "Why?" "Well," they replied, "we want you to rest, and we will pay you what you would ordinarily get for a revival if you will go somewhere and rest." I wasn't used to that kind of treatment, but I really did enjoy it.

The first night of this revival we went over, I got a comfortable seat and leaned back with a kind of "Let's see you do it" attitude. A little, cross-eyed Texas preacher got up to preach. It seemed as if it didn't matter which way he had his head turned, he was always looking at me. He talked a lot about big, fat preachers sitting in a rocking chair singing "Rescue the Perishing." Man, you would have thought we were at a preachers' convention! But I looked around and as far as I could tell I was the only preacher there. I really didn't get too blessed the first service, and the second was worse! When we got home that night, I said to my wife, "Let's go on up and visit my people and come back here when this is over."

"You know what I've been thinking?" she asked. "They paid us for a meeting before we left home. We ought to do something to earn that. We have a lot of unsaved loved ones here, so why don't we get in and do personal work? They have a good preacher and singers, but no one to do personal work. Let's get in and see if we can't have a revival."

We got down by the bed and prayed for an hour that night that God would help us. The next night we went back over and I said to myself: Okay, little preacher, if you shoot where I am tonight, you will have to raise your sights a little. I've climbed up on another limb. He went ahead and preached to the others that night. When the altar call was given, I went down one aisle and my wife went down the other. We repeated that night after night and won many souls for Christ, among them her brother and his family.

Good preaching will often dig around you and will be revealing to you in your own heart, but don't pull away from it. Rejoice in the truth. Say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me" (Ps. 139: 23-24a). See if there be anything that would short-circuit the blessings of God or neutralize our influence.

* * *

God's Kind of Love Never Fails

Prophecies shall fail, tongues will cease, knowledge will vanish away, but love "never faileth." About everything in this world is fleeting and marked for decay or extinction. Time seems to gnaw with an iron tooth the very epitaphs from our tombs. Loved ones we hold dear today may

be in eternity tomorrow, leaving our hearts sad and lonely. The rose may fade from the cheeks of our loved ones, but there is one thing that will last. Love "never faileth," for it is eternal. After the mountains have melted, after the oceans have evaporated, after the stars have fallen from their silver sockets, after time is all over, God's kind of love will endure.

Although we are in a changing world, we can hold to His unchanging hand. Though our outward man perish, our inward man can be renewed day by day; and our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

The fable is told that one day three people appeared at the gates of that celestial city and applied for admission. The keeper of the gate asked, "Who is there?"

The first, robust, strong, and battle-scarred, said, "I'm Faith."

The keeper of the gate said: "Faith, we don't need you here; go back to yonder earth, where they live by faith, and help them to fight the good fight of faith."

The second one appeared and the keeper of the gate said, "Who is there?"

He answered, "I'm Hope."

The keeper of the gate replied: "Hope, we don't need you. In yonder world they live by hope. Don't let the light of hope go out; go back and hang a light of hope on the cross and on the tomb; tell all who are fainthearted to take courage and not lose hope. Up here hope is past. We don't live by hope; it has already budded, blossomed, and developed into beautiful fruition. We see and know as we are known."

The third appeared in glittering white and the keeper of the gate said, "Who is there?"

The musical voice came back, clear as crystal, "I'm Love."

The great gates began to swing open and the keeper of the gate said: "Come in, Love. We've been waiting for you. This is your home. In yonder world you were opposed and maligned by hate, subjected to misunderstandings, cruel criticisms, and hurt; but up here love rules without a rival. Love sits on the throne. Love is expressed in every word, every song, and every breeze that blows. Come on in, Love; this is your eternal home."

I think when we get to the gates of the city, our passports will depend, not only on how we lived, but on how we loved. God's kind of love "never faileth."

* * * * *

04 -- GOD'S SALVATION

Redeemed from Death Row

"Please tell my story" -- this was part of a letter I received from Codey Kelley when he was in death row at Canon City, Colorado, awaiting the day of his execution.

The way I met Codey Kelley seemed to be providential. Another minister and I were returning from the board meeting at Northwest Nazarene College and decided to go back through Colorado and through the Royal Gorge on the train. We noticed that the car ahead of us was empty until we made a stop in a little city, and then officers came on the train with about eighteen convicts and all occupied the vacant car just ahead of us. They were all in handcuffs and some of them were shackled to special deputies. I immediately said to my traveling companion, "Let's go in and talk to them and try to discover how they came to miss God and the church and become criminals." It didn't appear easy, as there were special guards at each door with sawed-off shotguns.

I watched and waited and finally the train stopped, and the man I thought was in charge of them got off and went in to get a cup of coffee. I went in and sat down beside him, introduced myself, and told him I would like to talk to the prisoners and discover how they missed it. Perhaps I might be able to help them, and also it would assist me in helping others. He was the district attorney who had prosecuted them and seemed to be a nice man. He immediately encouraged me and said there was little joy in prosecuting them. He asked me whom I wanted to talk to, and I told him the toughest one he had. He said, "We have two killers going down to be executed," and I said, "Let me talk to them."

He took me on the coach and introduced me to the first one and unshackled the deputy and placed me in the seat with the prisoner. I talked to him at length, but didn't appear to be able to help him. The officer then came and moved me to the other one, which was Codey Kelley. He was immediately friendly and easy to talk to.

He said, "Isn't it strange that the only Sunday school I ever attended was a Nazarene, and the only revival I ever attended was a Nazarene; and the only people who visited me in Walla Walla were two Nazarene ladies and one of them gave me this little Testament; and now you, a Nazarene preacher, talking to me!" He showed me, with apparent appreciation, his little Testament.

I asked him why he dropped out of the Sunday school and he said he didn't know for sure. I said, "Did any Sunday-school teacher come to invite you back?" He answered that he did not recall any coming. Then he looked out the window, and we were going down through the Royal Gorge, and he said, "If I hadn't dropped out of the Nazarene Sunday school, how differently my life might have ended!" (I wish every Nazarene Sunday school teacher could have heard that.)

I then told him he had better get ready to die and pointed him to Jesus, and finally had prayer with him as we were going down through the deepest part of the Royal Gorge. He was beautifully converted and later wrote me two letters thanking me for helping him and asking me to tell the tragic story of his life and warn other young people not to come his way. He could write only one letter each week when in death row.

One paragraph of his letter went something like this -- "I am sure I did not kill Russell Browning but I had been drinking; and you can tell all you speak to that I believe liquor is directly to blame for my tragic predicament. I have found peace with God and believe He has redeemed my soul. But I must pay with my life for what happened one night. I wish you could come and be with me, but I know it is asking too much. I am staking my faith and my soul on the verse you marked in my little Testament that the Nazarene ladies gave me. 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out' (John 6: 37a). I will be quoting the Bible as I walk those last steps. God give me strength to die like a man. Please tell my story and warn others."

I have a clipping from the Denver Post entitled "A Dying Man Gives Testimony," and in it Codey Kelley gave his wonderful last testimony.

If I find Codey Kelley in heaven, as I believe I will, I can say: "Lord, here is one jewel for Your crown I helped to win even though I had to do it at the eleventh hour, and had to go in under the muzzles of sawed-off shotguns to do it."

May the Lord bless every Sunday-school teacher and worker and help us all to get on with the great business of reaching souls before it is too late.

* * *

Distilled Love

Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.

Years ago in Texas when we would drive into a station and ask them to put water in our battery, they wouldn't put it in out of the regular hose, but would bring out a glass jug of distilled water -- pure water, if you please. They didn't dare put in the regular water, which was often well water, for it had chemicals and iron and different things that would cause the plates in the battery to warp and short-circuit and wreck the effectiveness of the battery.

I believe God wants to do something like that for the deep fountains of our affections and our love. Love is a strong thing, even just human love. I believe some unsaved couples are deeply devoted to each other. But I don't believe there is any fountain of affection, or love, but what is purified by the incoming of the Holy Ghost in our lives. I believe every father is a better father to his children if he has distilled, or real, love. I believe every mother is kinder, more patient, more understanding, persevering, and sympathetic, and more deeply devoted to her children if her love is distilled love. I believe every married couple are more deeply and sacredly devoted to each other because of their devotion to Christ, and because the incoming power of the Holy Ghost has distilled their affections. I believe children who are sanctified love and respect their parents in a finer way than is possible for children otherwise. I believe that on every human level our love is of finer quality. It's not selfish. We will not love in hopes of getting some thing in return. But it is love unbounded. It is disinterested benevolence. I don't even believe we serve God just for the loaves and fishes or for what we can get out of it for the moment, but I believe if we ever make it to heaven it will be because of our pure love for God. I believe the best safeguard against the

world and worldliness is the depth of our devotion to Christ. It is true that in spite of all this we may say with the poet:

Days of darkness still come o'er me,
Sorrow's path I sometimes tread;
But the Saviour still is with me,
And by His hand I'm safely led.

I do not know the exact process for obtaining distilled water, but I do know the way to find distilled love. Just go down to the altar and put everything on the altar for Christ, for time and eternity; stay there until the Holy Ghost comes in His sanctifying, purifying power, until all the deep fountains of your soul are touched and purified, or distilled.

* * *

Sealed with a Kiss

Last night we had a good altar service here in Seward, where Rev. Hopkins and his good wife are being so wonderfully used of the Lord. After the altar was full and there was no more room for everyone to kneel at the altar, little eight-year-old Bradford Cook came and knelt at the edge of the platform. (He reminded me so much of my grandson, Rock.) His father, Mr. Marcus Cook, came and prayed with him and encouraged him to put his trust in Jesus. Little Bradford touched God then, and I saw his father stoop over and kiss him twice on the cheek. I'll never forget that scene.

We never know what final and conclusive business may be transacted in an altar service. But the kiss Mr. Cook gave little Bradford was perhaps his last and final kiss. There is something wonderful and grand about a father's love for his son. It has not been glorified like a mother's love; and while we would not steal any of the glory from a mother's love, there is something strong, masculine, understanding, and enduring in a dad's love for his boy.

Early the next morning Mr. Cook and a friend of his went out hunting on the steep mountains here, right by the edge of Seward. When he kissed little Bradford last night at the altar, it was perhaps his last kiss, for I understand he went out hunting early the next morning. That kiss sealed for time and for eternity the undying love of a dad for his boy. That day while hunting, Mr. Cook slipped and fell into the arms of Jesus, although his body went over the cliff. They are up there today trying to recover his body.

Mrs. Cook and her lovely daughter and two sons are here at the parsonage. The Lord is giving her strength and courage in a wonderful way. In the tomorrows as little Bradford grows up, he will have sweet memories of a Christian dad who congratulated him on his choice of Christ, and will be waiting for him on the other side.

May the Lord strengthen every tie that binds us to Him, even though that tie be a parting promise or a farewell kiss to a loved one.

You have made the right choice, Son,
And Jesus will see you through.
My foot slipped; but don't feel too bad,
For I went doing what I loved to do.
My body will be found in the canyon,
But I will be waiting in heaven for you.

-- B. V. S.

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05 -- LIFE'S BUOYS

Careful Walking

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly (Ps. 1:1).

Every Christian should have at least two planks in his platform. One is what he will stand for, and the other is what he will not stand for. I recently made a trip from Seattle to Bremerton by ferry. The trip takes about an hour. The channel does not run straight, but is well marked with buoys. Each indicates a danger spot. In the first psalm we find some of these buoys.

First, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly" (Ps. 1:1). They say that Sergeant York captured more men single-handed than any other man in World War I. He was so far out in no man's land he was not sure which way our forces were. He placed his .45 in the back of a German officer who could speak English and asked him which way the American army was. The German indicated one direction, and Sergeant York immediately issued orders to march all the prisoners in the opposite direction -- and marched right into our camp. He figured it was safe to conclude that the German officer would give the wrong direction.

If you can get some smart, ungodly businessman to advise you on religious matters and go the other way, you will hit it every time. Even a minister who is ungodly is utterly disqualified to give counsel about spiritual things. That is where the blind lead the blind and all fall into the ditch.

When I was preparing to preach, my banker advised me against it, saying, "You can never make any money preaching." In the first he was correct (he must have been a church man), but his counsel was wrong otherwise; for one soul is worth more than all the money in the world, and I do believe God has helped me to win a few.

Don't ever seek counsel of the ungodly, except to determine which way not to go. If you are in need of counsel, seek it first of the Lord, for He never goes wrong; and next seek help from some godly person. It will surprise you sometimes how goodness and godliness guide people in the giving of right advice. It isn't only right to do right, it is smart to do right!

* * *

Cautious Standing

Nor standeth in the way of sinners.

It will be a wonderful thing if we can make it to heaven, but it will also be a great achievement if we can live so as to avoid ever standing in the way of sinners. To stand in the way of sinners seems to imply we are up in front a little, or a little ahead of them in some way -- perhaps in profession, or church affiliation, or refinement.

I was riding west out of Minneapolis one day on the Great Northern "Empire Builder," when a man seated by me offered me a drink. I thanked him and told him, "No." He went ahead and tried it, and a second time offered to share it with me. On my second refusal he turned and asked me what my business was. I looked him steadily in the eye and told him I was a minister. He immediately straightened up, put his bottle into his pocket, and said that was fine. "I'm a member of a certain church, and it's all right." I turned to him and said, "Yes, I think I know you. I have been hearing about you for years. I heard of you in Texas and California, Iowa and South Dakota and Minnesota, and imagine my surprise and delight in at last meeting you." I really strung him along, for I had more time there than I have space here. He finally said, "Man, how come? How did you hear so much about me?" I said, "Everywhere I have invited people to church and tried to get them to Christ, they tell me they would come but there is a hypocrite in the church. I had begun to doubt it, but at last I have found you. Here you are with that old bottle, and your name on a church roll! You're the kind sinners stumble over." He began to cry and said, "Oh, it's so." I helped him the best I could under the circumstances.

It is not only the church member who is a drunkard or down-and-out that stands in the way of sinners; some who are up-and-out do it too. We stand in the way of sinners when our lives are inconsistent in any way. Perhaps there isn't anything more of a hindrance than our indifference. If we have to have a magician pull a rabbit out of a hat every night to get church members to attend a revival, there is something wrong. It's a hindrance to getting other people to God. Sinners are never vitally stirred until saints are greatly burdened. "When Zion travails" is the Bible way.

Joseph Parker said, "When the church would be considered by the world to have gone mad over religion, then it would be well on its way to saving the world to its religion." We are not on our way to saving the world when we are indifferent.

I not only want to be a help in building the Kingdom, but I hope I shall not hinder by standing in the way of sinners.

* * *

Safe Sitting

Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

Sitting may here indicate idleness. It always seems that the man who is not doing anything to help save a lost world always has plenty of time to find fault with those who are. I have

observed so many people become more and more cynical with the passing of the years. It seems to come as steadily and surely as rheumatism and arthritis. They become more suspicious of everything and everybody. They seem to become blind to everything beautiful, good, and pure. They lose all sense of values, and sometimes even seem to become colorblind. Someone has said of this kind of person that if he should see a white-winged angel fly over, he would run in and get a gun and shoot it for a black-winged crow. I have seen so many people come at last to sit in the seat of the scornful that there are times when I think I would rather die young than to take the chances of getting old and critical.

When Christians criticize one another, they give the unbelieving world its best and most effective weapon to use against us. We never build up confidence with one Christian when we are running another Christian down.

Joseph Parker said: "Sneering is the sting of a wasp, the fang of a serpent, the hoof of an ass. It is never smart or noble."

I do not believe we have to become cynical with the passing of years. In fact, it should be just the opposite. We should become more understanding. Having gone down into the deep valley, we know how dark and lonely it can be. Having had our own hearts broken, we understand what others are going through when it happens to them. Having been steam-rolled with financial reverses, we are broader with our sympathies with others in trouble. We should learn by living.

I have observed enough people who seem to mellow with the miles, until they just seem to ripen for heaven. This has proved to me that it can be done. Uncle Bud Robinson was loved by the church in a wonderful way and he seemed to love everybody; but as he got closer and closer to heaven, he seemed to be more heavenly-minded.

My own mother was a grand and noble Christian all my life, and with her very last breath she said, "Isn't the Lord wonderful? Isn't He good? I could love Him forever." I kissed her and laid her back on her pillow, and even death seemed to pull back the curtains and let the light from another world shine through on her countenance. Her dying testimony seemed like the climax of a beautiful poem, the grand finale of a great musical composition, the last thrilling chapter of a good story, the coronation of a great saint.

Her road had not been easy,
But she had made it through;
And I believe if we keep blessed,
We can make it too.

* * *

The Real Channel

His delight is in the law of the Lord (Ps. 1:2).

The truly blessed person is one who can rejoice in the law of the Lord. The joy of the Lord is our strength. Dr. J. G. Morrison used to say, "Little faith; little blessing. Big faith; big blessing."

All the world is seeking happiness, but many are looking in the wrong direction. The prodigal son thought he must go a long way off to find it, but he never found it in the far country. He did find it when he returned to his father's house.

The law of God can never be fully explained in any language. It must be experienced and embraced in the heart. To be really blessed is a moral quality of the soul, such as righteousness and rectitude, and is not some transient emotion. We are glad for all of God's laws -- the law of gravitation, which holds the worlds and stars in place; the laws of nature that are more to be enjoyed and appreciated than understood; laws that control the vegetable kingdom, so that when you sow wheat, briars do not come up; the laws governing the animal kingdom, so that they reproduce, every one its own kind, destroying forever the false theory of the evolution of species.

The blessed man appreciates most the moral laws of God, that are forever unchanged, so that what was wrong and sin yesterday is still wrong and sin today. Also what was good and pure yesterday will be the same today. Many books of science change every few years. Many things that we thought were scientifically correct a few years ago, we have discovered to be wrong. God's moral law never changes. It is as dependable as the North Star. And if we set the course of our lives by God's law, we will be safe.

"His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Ps. 1:2). To delight ourselves in the Lord is our best security. The devil can dress the world up with all the attractions it has, and march it all by, but it will look cheap to the person who is happy in the Lord.

* * *

Like a Tree

The blessed person is supposed to be like a "tree, planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Ps. 1:3).

First of all, the Christian is supposed to be alive. It seems a person only begins to really live when he becomes a Christian. Some seem to be only half alive and are even social liabilities in any group. Others are alive and alert to everything. Everything registers with them. Some should wake up and live.

A tree should be beautiful and symmetrical. Too many emphasize one point, and even exaggerate it, but the real test is to be a well-balanced Christian. If we make that our goal, it will keep us working at it a lifetime. A lady once gave me a compliment, and I have had so few it's easy for me to remember it. She said, "I am happy to have you pastor my family, and to have my children sit under your ministry, for I feel that they will grow up to be well-rounded Christians." I am glad for that, and have tried to make that a guide to my preaching. Anyone who majors on

minors can never be consistent; for if we give some one point in our lives great emphasis, we are never able to get all the other points in our lives up on a level with it in our ethics.

Faithful in fruit bearing. I have a British friend I greatly love and admire. I heard him preaching recently and he said, "Too many churches are like Yellowstone Park; the park has a thousand geysers, but only one Old Faithful." I think we would all agree the supreme need of the church, as far as human help is concerned, is for more faithful people.

A tree that is planted indicates stability, too. "By the river" must mean an inexhaustible source of supply of strength. This man will enjoy prosperity, too; not just temporal, but prosperity in the things of eternal worth. His leaf will not wither -- no need to dry up and look back on better days.

I love trees. I think it would be wonderful to be like one. I think my wonderful Christian mother was a great example. I heard a poem one time by a good friend about a lone pine, and when I hear it I always think of my mother, for she stood alone for so many years before any of the family were saved. The poet said as a boy he looked out the bedroom window and watched a lone pine in a storm. Later he wrote this beautiful poem, and I am using it by special permission from him.

* * *

THE LONE PINE

I watched you last night
In the light of God's flashlight
As you wrestled in the arms
Of the hard-breathing wind;
Your plumes were tossing wildly,
The wind screaming like a madman;
You wrestled in silence,
Save I thought I heard you groan once or twice.
I crept off to bed sad.
But, lo, in the morning your feet
Were still planted on the hilltop,
And the tired wind clung to your plumes, whimpering,
And my chin came up.

* * * * *

06 -- WITNESSES UNTO GOD

A Servant of the Lord

The "Oriental Limited" was pulling out of the Union Station in Minneapolis. I could feel the steady pull of the powerful diesel engine as it took off with the fifteencoach train, with no apparent effort at all.

My colored porter, Mr. Warden, suddenly appeared in the doorway of my bedroom, and smiling down upon me where I was lying on the davenport reading, said: "Yo look like yo needs another pillow. One's not enough fo a big man like you." I smiled back at him. He was gone only for a minute, and then he was back with another pillow. As he was about to leave, I said: "Mr. Warden, if we fellows who travel a lot were ever to decide that we were deserving of the kind of treatment you fellows give us, it would ruin us forever." And then I added, "But I reckon our wives will soon disillusion us when we get home!"

At the mention of "wives" he turned back, leaned his tall, straight form against the door. I could see the sprinkle of gray hair at his temples. There were deep lines around his mouth, but when he smiled, I knew what had put them there! I found out that his wife was practically an invalid. He told me in detail exactly what he did at home the few days between trips. He left the house in perfect order, and with groceries and every thing his wife might need. He mentioned the fact that his mother had been a great Christian woman, and had inspired him with her godly life.

Then describing his wife, he said: "I sometimes look at her, with her smile, and her sweet spirit, knowing she has been practically an invalid for years, and I say to her, 'Honey, I don't see how you can do it -- I know that I never could.' She always answers back, 'Yes, you could, dear. For the good Lord would help you just as He does me.'" He mentioned that she had been converted under D. L. Moody's preaching, and never for a day had given up her faith in Christ.

As he talked, I felt the uplift of his noble spirit. How patient and untiring were his efforts to please and to serve! And he is doing it for an indefinite reward. When I get off in Seattle, he doesn't know whether I will give him a dime or a dollar. (But I know it will be a dollar. The noon mealtime went by while I was writing this article, and I'll give him the money I would have spent for lunch. I'm too heavy anyway!)

I thought, If only I could serve God and humanity as faithfully as these porters serve these poor, homesick travelers! They do it not knowing if they will receive blessings or curses. We know that not even a kind word or a cup of cold water will go unrewarded by Christ.

There are not many ways we can serve God directly. He doesn't need any help in creation. He has enough worlds and stars for a while. The salvation of souls is the only unfinished task that engages the heart and mind of God. To help the Lord in this, I shall give myself fully and without reserve. I will serve without discrimination and without thought of immediate reward. If the rich and self-sufficient will not let me help them, I will go to the poor and brokenhearted, and point them to One who is able to save and to help.

Right now I think I had better quit talking about serving, and go talk religion to that fine-looking, young deputy sheriff who conversed so friendly with me at breakfast. God grant that someday I'll hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:21).

He has no hands but our hands
To do His work today;
He has no feet but our feet

To guide men in His way;
He has no tongue but our tongue
To tell His love to man.
And if we fail? Oh, if we fail,
He has no other plan!

-- Selected

* * *

A Modern Paul Revere

It was a calm afternoon in a beautiful little Western city nestled in a lovely valley, completely surrounded by majestic mountains. A young man was dashing up and down the streets on the best horse that could be hired at the local livery stable. On and on he rode, block after block, and street after street. The horse was ever urged on until the foam was flying from the bridle-bit, and there was a white circle of lather outlining the edge of the saddle blanket.

The young man astride the horse had dark, curly hair, a square chin, and a manly profile. He was the very personification of courage and earnestness. No Paul Revere was ever more sure of his mission than was this young man. As he passed little groups on the street corners here and there, and even individuals walking home from the office, he turned in his saddle and, using his hand as a megaphone, he cried out in a voice that always commanded attention, "Come to the revival at the big tent tonight -- come to the revival at the big tent tonight."

This crusading Paul Revere was Rev. John T. Little, pastor of the Church of the Nazarene in the neighboring town of Ashland, Oregon. He had come to introduce the gospel of holiness in the thriving county-seat town of Medford. The time was a little over thirty years ago. He had made the necessary preliminary arrangements, such as securing a lot, erecting a tent, seating and lighting it -- in fact, everything but the advertising had been taken care of. The meeting was to begin that night. A group of praying people were coming from Ashland to help him. The matter of advertising had been overlooked; but John Little was not the kind to be defeated, so he aroused the city with his Paul Revere ride and got them out to the meeting.

That was years ago, and others have helped to hold campaigns and have made their contributions, one way and another, until today we have in Medford one of the finest churches in our movement. It has perhaps the most strategic location of any church in this city that now has approximately twenty thousand population. The building is one of the most commodious and well-arranged to be found anywhere. It is beautifully landscaped, and you walk right into the main auditorium from the side walk, without even one step to climb.

The church now has a membership of well over three hundred, made up of some of the finest people in Medford. Last spring at their Easter rally they had about seven hundred in Sunday school. They gave for all purposes last year just under forty thousand dollars. The church is highly respected in the city, and they have had a good radio ministry for some ten years. They have a thriving Sunday school, a wonderful group of young people, and are carrying on continuously an

aggressive program of evangelism in the community. The church has taken in during the last three years ninety members on profession of faith, to say nothing of the others that have come by transfer.

This church is really doing a big business in the salvation of souls, but like all others, had to have a beginning; and it was started by a neighboring pastor who had a burning zeal to do something for God and a lost world. We may have to change our methods a little, but may the spirit of John T. Little live on in our hearts today, and may God help us to be worthy of our lineage! May the next generation benefit as much from our efforts as this generation has benefited from the past. To do this will require the very best of us all. There are still many cities, towns, and villages where this could be repeated, and if we were determined enough to do it we would find a way.

* * *

They Are Here, Now!

"They are here, now," was a paragraph in the middle of a letter from my sister. She was referring to a Nazarene layman and his wife who had just stepped into their home to call in the interest of the Church of the Nazarene. They had just moved to a city in California and I had told them about a wonderful Church of the Nazarene in that city. I had contacted the pastor about them, anxious for them to have a church home. They had attended one Sunday and said: "There were people to peddle, about sticking out the windows. And the big, fine pastor brought a wonderful message." While she was still writing to me about the church, she suddenly stopped and said: "A Nazarene couple are here, now, to see us. They are here, now." How that rejoiced my heart, for I have prayed for my sister and her husband for years!

They were Christians when they were first married, years ago, but didn't have any Church of the Nazarene in their community and didn't have much help, spiritually, so after a few years went back on the Lord. Her husband went back to drinking and their home was about wrecked. I was heartbroken over their situation for years, for I just about worshipped my sister. I had five brothers but only one sister and I thought so much of her. We were planning to leave the West Coast to go back East when I got a great burden for them before going. My wife joined me and we fasted for about a week and then went up to call on them. They were living out on the desert for his health.

We had been there only a few minutes when he brought out a little Bible my mother had given him when they were married. He said, "I've been reading this for a week and trying to pray, trying to get back to God." I was about like the people praying for Peter to get out of jail when they wouldn't believe it when he showed up at the gate. That night I read to them about the crucifixion of Jesus and then we had prayer together. I called on him to pray. Oh, how he repented! He said: "O Lord, You saved me years ago when I wasn't worth saving, when I was an orphan boy. The only good years of my life were when I was a Christian. But I come, now with my stomach ruined with liquor, my nerves shot, just about a mental and physical wreck, but I cast the broken pieces of a misspent life at Your feet. And, O Lord, if You'll only look my way once more I'll get up from here and serve You the rest of my life."

You can guess the rest of it. The Lord came down with enough glory that night to save a lost world, it seemed. I felt as though I had been saved all over again. My sister prayed through, too. We shouted until the coyotes howled around on the desert and their pet bulldog jumped up and ran around the outside of the house, barking. My brother-in-law said, "He even feels better." What a wonderful time that was! But they've moved around -- never had a church home. He was critically ill in northern California and a good Nazarene pastor there called on him very faithfully in the hospital. How faithful the Church of the Nazarene has been to help me with my loved ones! I deeply appreciate it. And now, how heart-warming it is to know that a Nazarene layman and his wife, as well as the pastor, are united in helping them! I feel safe about them now. They're in good hands.

The great Church of the Nazarene is awakening to the possibilities of personal evangelism. I feel that the best days of our church are just ahead. I feel almost like framing that part of my sister's letter that says, "They are here, now." God bless them for their faithfulness -- that good Nazarene layman and his wife!

* * *

The Tragedy of Uselessness

"Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away" (Matt. 21: 18-19).

We see the character of Christ revealed in this story. He went on His way to the Cross to give His all. But on His way He became hungry, and found this fig tree failing to yield fruit. He could not keep from condemning the tree for its failure to do its part when He was giving His all.

Some people think they would like to have a pastor who is in "dead earnest," free from the love of money, and dead to the things of the world. But if you had that kind of pastor, he would expect the same kind of devotion and consecration of his people; and unless you would be willing to go along with him, it might not make too good a combination.

Christ always looked for the fulfillment of the divine plan in everything. The divine plan was that the fig tree was to bear fruit. There was no fruit, therefore the word of destruction was spoken. Christ's life at that moment was too full of divine concern and earnestness to stand any disappointment. He came to the fig tree searching for fruit and, finding nothing but leaves, His word of destruction was backed by the same power as His word of blessing.

The same was true when Christ drove the money changers out of the Temple. Some have criticized Him for this; but I am sure that if we could have been there, beheld His look, heard the tone of His voice, and felt the force of His prayers, we would have understood that He could not do otherwise than drive the ruffians out of the house they had polluted.

This experience with the fig tree was no exception in the life of Christ; His attitude toward uselessness always was to condemn it. He said, "If the salt have lost his savour . . . it is

thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matt. 5:13). The same law is operating here as did in connection with the fig tree. He took the same attitude toward the man who had buried his talent, then came and laid it before the Lord, saying, "There thou hast that is thine" (Matt. 25:25). The judgment was, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness" (Matt. 25:30). The man had failed to do what he was supposed to do.

The only excuse for all our efforts and the existence of all our institutions is that they fulfill the divine plan and bear fruit. How quickly the tree was withered away; and how suddenly the man may wither away who fails to fulfill the divine plan in his life! A tree without fruit is like a man without manhood, a servant without service, or a Christian without consecration. Notice this: the opportunity for the fig tree to bear fruit had passed forever. He who said, "Let there be light: and there was light," said, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever," and immediately the fig tree withered away.

Each of us has his time and opportunities for service and fruit bearing; but if we pass them by, the time will come when our opportunities of service will be gone forever. Those who are constantly saying, "I pray thee have me excused," will someday find the Lord has excused them, and given the cross and the crown to another. There seems to be no place in God's program, or in His Church, for uselessness. Oh, the tragedy of lives today -- so many people are good, but just "good for nothing" -- empty, useless!

It adds joy and dignity to life to be needed. When people find they have no further purpose in the world, then is when they jump off a bridge! Few ever have been able to do it when heavy responsibilities were upon them. To be workers together with God, to have a part in bringing the lost in, to help in sending the gospel around the world, to share with Him and feel a little touch of the Master's hand as we labor with Him in pulling lost souls out of the mire and out of the fire, makes life worth-while. The most humble task is glorified and full of romance when the service is rendered for the Lord. Even a cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple will not lose its reward. Life is worth while when we are seeking to fulfill the divine plan and bear fruit for Him!

* * *

The Sinfulness of Indifference

"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2:4).

The sinfulness of indifference is a very subtle thing. Had the church at Ephesus been guilty of some outbroken sin, it would have been easy for them to discover their need and perhaps correct it; but since it was that their love had grown cold, it brought forth the divine accusation. All of us have heard people admit in their testimonies that they had seen better days, which is just another way of saying they didn't love the Lord as they once did. I wonder what the Lord thinks when He hears us admit that we do not love Him as we used to, when really we ought to love Him more every day.

The sinfulness of indifference is obvious; first, because it violates the command of God. The first commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut. 6:5). To do anything less than that is to violate the command of God. To be halfhearted in our religion is to miss it entirely. If religion is worth anything, it is worth everything.

Again, indifference violates our obligation to God. No one can be a Christian and ignore his obligations. I am not thinking now of the monthly bills (telephone, lights, etc.) -- you have to pay these or the service will be cut off. I am thinking of moral obligations that children have to their parents, that Nazarenes have to the church, and that all Christians have to God; obligations you could dodge except for your sense of moral obligation. When we are indifferent, we violate our obligation to God, for we owe Him everything. We are His by the right of creation; He made us. We are His by the right of redemption; He bought us. We are His by right of preservation; in Him we live and move and have our being. We belong to God in three ways. We have an obligation to God because of His ownership of us; and to be indifferent violates that obligation to God.

When we are indifferent about the salvation of others and about things of eternal value, we cast contempt upon God. When the Lord Jesus talked about going to heaven, He said, "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out," and, "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off" (Matt. 5:29-30) -- that is, get to heaven at any cost. His teaching was that it would pay us to miss hell and make it to heaven at any cost. And yet when we are indifferent as to the lost about us, we make it appear that, if we are right, God must have been overanxious when He gave heaven's brightest Jewel to redeem the most undeserving.

When we are indifferent, we violate all of our covenant vows to God which we made in our consecration; not only so, but indifference renders all of our religious service hypocritical. For a person to preach, or sing, or testify, and claim with his lips to love God with all of his heart, when he really doesn't, makes his religious services hypocritical even to the point that at times it is obvious -- and God always knows it.

Were I to come home from a trip and tell my wife I had been thinking of her all the time I was gone, that every day my every thought was of her; then start unpacking a suitcase full of things I had bought for myself, and away down at the bottom pull out a little ninety-eight-cent gift I had bought for her, telling her I loved her with all my heart, do you think I'd fool her? So when we have time and money for everything, every kind of gadget on earth, every kind of convenience, and no time, no money for God's cause or kingdom, do you think we can fool the Lord and make Him think we love Him with all our hearts?

Indifference leads to idolatrous attachment to the things of the world. If we love Christ as we should, the things of this world will look cheap.

Finally, indifference is sinful because it is inexcusable. We may have faults which we cannot help, but no one needs to be weak at the point of love, for it is not based upon our talents, -- but upon our devotion. We are told in the Bible that if we draw nigh unto God He will draw nigh to us; so every man can be as religious as he wants to be. As someone has said, "We are actually

what we would like to be." If we love Christ as we should, that will solve many of our problems. We will want to go to church twice on Sunday; we will want to go to prayer meeting; we'll be anxious to pay our tithes for, the support of the church and the salvation of the lost. "Uncle Bud" Robinson said that when the church backslides, it is then that we write great books of rules and discipline; but when we love God with all of our hearts, we don't require much discipline.

Let's all take inventory. Do we love Christ as we did at one time? Are we as thrilled in His service as ever? Would we go as far across town on a dark, stormy night to pray for some hungry soul as we did at one time? If you find yourself lacking in love for Christ and need a motive for loving Him, I would say, "Behold His condescension, His humiliation, His blood and sweat in the garden, His groans on the cross, His undying love for thee." And when we think of how much He loved us and how little we love Him, shame and confusion should cover our faces.

Happy is that man who when stripped of all false refuge and of all temporal blessings, even as Job was, who when hidden in God's sanctuary and shut up as it were face to face with the Lord, can say, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee" (John 21:17). If we can say that, and know that God knows it, then ten thousand accusing voices from the very caverns of hell cannot defeat our testimony. God grant that each of us may be able truthfully to say, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

* * *

"What Is Love? I Never Had Any!"

It happened last night -- a tragedy beyond words to describe! A woman in black with auburn hair, with tear streaks in the rouge on her cheeks, indicating that she wept bitterly before she took the fatal step -- she had reached the point of no return. She turned on the gas in the kitchen range as she sat at the table on which was a picture of her little girl. She had written a note to her mother before she turned on the gas and said, "Don't let my kids grow up like I did." The police said it was suicide. Then she had written a postscript to her note, "What is love? I never had any." These were her last thoughts and the last words she ever wrote.

I spent a restless night and prayed for our churches here in Seattle. I found myself half praying for her, but it is too late for that now. She died there alone. But I believe the God that marks the sparrow's fall was looking on.

I wonder if anyone ever invited her to church. I wonder if any Sunday-school teacher ever invited her to Sunday school. I wonder if she ever heard a testimony. It is hard for us to comprehend, but the generation who live while we live will die while we die, and have only such opportunities of salvation as we give them.

How awful those last hours must have been to drive her to such despair! She was dying for love, but had searched in vain, perhaps in the wrong place. Could she but have known how much Jesus loved her, it could have transformed her life completely.

There is no good ending to this story. It ended wrong. God help us. No wonder Jesus said, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in" (Luke 14:23). He wanted all to hear; He wanted all to know how He cared.

* * *

Ready to Preach

I had a dream the other night that started off as if it were going to be one of my familiar nightmares. I usually dream of trying to get ready to preach and get to church. I dreamed I had been busy all afternoon and was walking over to a tabernacle where a large crowd was waiting to hear me preach. A young couple was walking along with us, and one of them turned to me and said, "Doc, are you ready to preach?" I said, "'As much as in me is, I am ready'" (Rom. 1:15). Then I said, "That would be a good text, and I'll preach it tonight." I went ahead and dreamed the entire sermon. I don't usually get them that easily. I was saying over and over again that the important thing for all of us in the preparation for life is our heart condition. We can no more run a loan company without capital, or fight a war without ammunition, than we could preach or live without the right heart preparation.

One time when I was pastoring, I overheard my two boys talking one Saturday. The younger said to the older, "Dad is going to preach a good sermon Sunday, I'll bet you." The older boy said, "What makes you think that?" He answered, "He has been getting fixed up with the entire family all week." That may be more of a slam than a compliment, but I don't care. When I stand up to try to point men to home and heaven, I need all the help I can get. And I must know there is nothing between my soul and my Savior.

Perhaps it is a greater problem to get ourselves ready than it is to get a sermon ready. We are prepared to preach, to live or die, only in harmony with our heart level. "As much as in me is, I am ready." And only to that extent are we ready.

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07 -- GOD'S WARNING

The Edge of the Wedge

In a recent camp meeting, I heard the Reverend Mr. Logan from London, England, one of our inter nationally known evangelists, refer to something that separates us from Christ as the "edge of the wedge." I am indebted to him for the title for this little meditation.

All my life I have heard that it is the little foxes that spoil the vine. The significance, of course, is that they are small enough to get through the fence and also to go undetected. And it is true that in our Christian lives it is the small and apparently insignificant things that become our peril, rather than the big and obviously wicked things. The very fact that they are small causes them to become the "edge of the wedge" in separating us from Christ. The keener the edge, the more effective the wedge, and the very smallness of some things is the occasion of their danger. Many

things could be mentioned that become the "edge of the wedge," -- but I will mention only three, and perhaps not in their proper order.

First, worldliness. Just as the spirit of the world comes into the church, the spirit of Christ will be crowded out. Many denominations have gone down this well-beaten path to the ecclesiastical bone yard. I think we should just be stubborn and refuse to go down such a well-marked path, and force the devil to think of some new way or new trap.

I heard an evangelist say recently that many people talk about laying up treasures in heaven and sing about a mansion just over the hilltop, but appear to be pretty well dug in down here. I shall never contend for a more liberal position in our attitude toward worldliness, for worldliness will get on well without any help from me. I believe we are in far greater danger of cold formality than we are of fanaticism.

Carelessness may also become the "edge of the wedge," carelessness about the Sabbath and about the faithful attendance upon the means of grace, permitting things to keep you home on Sunday night. I heard one pastor who had coaxed his people to come on Sunday night, threatened them if they didn't, and did about everything else he could think of. He finally stood up one Sunday morning and said: "All of you people who think you have a reason that will be acceptable to God for staying home tonight, get on your knees and tell God and stay home. Don't be making any more alibis to me, nor asking me what I think about it. I'm turning this matter over to God." Needless to say, his attendance was better that night. For many of the people I have seen lost to the church and the kingdom of God, the "edge of the wedge" was, first of all, carelessness about getting to church on Sunday night. Many people could trace it back to that. And anything, even though it appear to be small, which makes it easier for us to stay home from church on Sunday night may be the "edge of the wedge."

Prayerlessness. To pray less, in a world that is getting worse, is dangerous. Others who are lost today could trace it all to the time and place when there was a letup in their prayer life. In these days of rush when we must get up earlier, go faster, stay at it longer, we must still find some time and way to pray and wait in His presence until there shall come a great cairn in our souls. Then, and only then, will we have untroubled hearts in a troubled world. Only by prayer and meditation and faithfully reading God's Word will we come to have spiritual poise. Let's all watch out for the "edge of the wedge" and be cautious about anything that will make us even a little less religious.

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08 -- GOD GIVES HIS REWARDS

Congratulations or Contempt

"And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly" (Luke 22:61-62).

Messages we can read in the eyes of people are often more impressive than words. Jesus looked on Peter -- not a word, just one look. And Peter went out and repented. But in that look there was a message. I think it went something like this. "Peter, when I found you, it was love at first sight. I saw your square chin and clear-cut features as clearly as though your face had been chiseled out of the Black Hills of South Dakota. Your eyes were like windows looking out from a great soul. Your hands were calloused. Your face was bronzed by the winds. Your heart was hardened by sin. But I loved you in spite of all that. I changed your heart, and gave you a new hope. Now you have let Me down. I didn't forsake you, but you left Me. Oh, how disappointing now to see you, still broad-shouldered, but cringing beneath the accusation of a little maid! Peter, I am heartbroken with disappointment, but still I love you. You can change, but My love will forever remain unchanged. For I am the same yesterday, today, and forever."

No wonder Peter repented and came back into the Christian faith for time and eternity! He was won with just one look.

Sometimes when discouraged, we can look into the eyes of a son or daughter, and their eyes seem to say: "Dad, I love you so much that I am blind to most of your faults. I think you are grand and always will live clean and pure and honorable." Then we forget to be discouraged. If a look of a loved one can do us such lasting good, how much more encouraging is it to know that Thou God seest us! You know all our weakness, and yet You love us.

It is equally shocking and distressing to have some one look on us with a look of contempt, but someday that will be the eternal portion of every lost soul. Three worlds will look on, and it will be a look of contempt. And voices will say, "You rejected the atonement. You waited too long. You deserve your lostness."

Then there is the look of approval. Many men dare and die just to have some great throng in some arena of life look with approval. But the climax of all will be when we stand in His presence, and He looks with a look of love and approval.

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Mansions over the Hilltop

When Joseph Parker had been preaching in and around London for fifty years, he was out late one night meditating and reminiscing and writing. He said some thing like this: "For fifty years now I have had an unbroken ministry in this great city. I have tried to be faithful in winning souls." (We know how untiring he had been. Besides preaching fifty years, he had written Parker's People's Bible Commentary, some twenty-seven volumes, and many other books.) He went on to say that now as he looked back he thought the one thing that had helped most to keep him going was a dream he had had of a little cottage by the riverbank, where there were birds and trees, and flowers growing up over the gable, that someday he would go there and rest in the shade of the trees. But he said: "Alas, it has been only a dream. But it helped. Tonight while others sleep, the roar of London is in my ears. I cannot preach tonight, but I write tonight so the next generation can read tomorrow, and I'll not only try to evangelize this generation, but the next, too."

I thought as I read his reminiscing that it has not been a dream cottage by the river that has helped to keep me going, but I have set my sights a little higher and my dream has been of a mansion over the hilltops where we will be reunited with loved ones gone before -- where the sun will never set, and there will be no night there.

Tonight the roar of Seattle is coming through my window. I seem to hear the call of the beautiful city, and I pray for the many who are lost, and I write a little in hopes that some tomorrow may read and be helped, and that Christ may come to mean to them what He means to me tonight. He is indeed my Strength in time of weakness, my Light for every dark valley. He hath measured His love for us in the extravagance of His creation and His vicarious sufferings. I am thinking tonight of that place of many mansions; and until we cross those portals, may the Lord help us all to be true and carry on.

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It's Fun to Be Faithful

This thought came to me as I sat on the platform during a revival meeting recently when the congregation was made up of the faithful few of the church. "There is a great inner joy in being faithful."

It's fun to come to the revival when others with only a casual interest have gone to some other activity. It's fun to keep the revival going until they get back. It's fun to come on time and keep the singing alive until others arrive. It's fun to pay my tithe every week, so the church will be operating for the people who occasionally decide to make a contribution. It's fun to go to church twice on Sunday, so if a sinner comes Sunday night he can find God. It's fun to be faithful to the whole leadership of our great church and every part of its program, so that we can tell God we helped in every way we could. Thank God for the faithful!

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09 -- GOD'S KIND OF GIVING

"All Things" -- Forgiveness

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also- freely give us" -- forgiveness? (Rom. 8:32.)

"Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." We should never lose the ability to rejoice over the fact our sins are forgiven. One thing I deplore in humanity is man's inability to forgive. But what I like about God is His ability to forgive. What a long life hatred has! Time will heal many wounds, but time can not put hell out.

The worst kind of hatred seems to be religious hatred. It was so with Cain -- manslaughter at the altar. Nothing can be as cruel as the religious knife. He who is inhumanely pious about things

of no importance is a child of Cain at heart. When we dig a pit for another man, we are certain to be buried in it before the sun goes down.

God has promised and provided forgiveness for all who come to Him in repentance. When we have violated the law of God and man, and stand condemned, God will bestow the kiss of pardon.

Someone was heard to say his greatest thrill was when he saw a certain star football player make a touch down. In commenting on the remark, an evangelist said, "The greatest thrill I have ever known was when the Lord rolled my sins into a football and kicked them so far the devil has never been able to find them."

Some people have been thoughtless or unkind enough to remind us of the past; but God never has.

The burden that once I carried is gone;
Of all my sins there remaineth, not one.

* * *

"All Things" -- Purity

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us" -- purity? (Rom. 8:32.)

After we are converted and have come to love God and hate sin, have been changed from power of Satan to power of God, there is still something in the heart that is not subject to the law of God.

How well I remember the shock when I first felt it stirring! I was grieved, and said, "With this in my heart I'll never make it I will have to give up the thought and hope of heaven that is now so precious to me." But I heard a voice saying, "Christ suffered without the camp that He might sanctify." God not only has forgiveness for acts of disobedience but has provided cleansing from pollution.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt 5:8) -- not only in a beautiful sunset, or a blooming flower; not only in majestic mountains and twinkling stars; but we shall see God in His providences, as the Shepherd of stars, and One who marks the spar row's fall. We shall see Him when our hearts are broken and we are blinded with tears. We shall see Him when everything else is gone. Purity of heart will give poise in adversity and enable us to maintain the supremacy of God amidst the storms of life.

Is there anything we need more than purity of heart, and is there anything God is more anxious to give? "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13.)

* * *

"All Things" -- Grace

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us" -- grace? (Rom. 8: 32.)

"As thy days, so shall thy strength be." I do not believe in eternal security, that a person once saved can never be lost; but I do believe that the Christ who saved us is able to keep us.

The Apostle Paul was a beautiful example of the keeping power of Christ. He fought so many battles, won so many victories, until one day he seemed to climb to some great height or pinnacle of victory and look around for more battles to fight and victories to win. He hurled out a challenge on the wind: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8:35.) Shall tribulation? Oh, no, it will only drive us to Christ for shelter. Persecution will but emancipate our spirits. Nakedness will cause us to put on His robe of righteousness. When famine, comes, we will have the true Bread of Life. In the day of peril, Christ will come walking on the storm tossed sea. The edge of the sword is never keen enough to sever immortal ties or to separate us from the love of God.

Never until omniscience is found to be mistaken, omnipotence feeble, eternity measurable, shall a shadow fall across the flight of upward hope.

"For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12).

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"All Things" -- Comfort

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us" -- comfort? (Rom. 8:32.)

We appreciate not only the power but also the pity of Christ. He comes to us when we are assailed by all the powers of hell, when the enemy's darts of death are flying thick and fast, and He steps between and bares His breast to the storm and takes the blow that was intended for us. He drives off the powers of the enemy and then becomes our Good Samaritan and, stooping over our broken and bleeding forms, He ministers; and we see a hand tremble and a tear fall, and we behold not only the power but the pity of Christ.

When your hurt is so deep that there is no balm, when every star is gone, when the loneliness of your heart gnaws like hunger, when there are a vacant chair and a missing voice, I point you to One who can give comfort.

When you go over your problem again and again, only to find your problem is bigger than your answer, then add God Even Christ, in the Garden, cried, "My God, why?" and He was divine.

We may never know why some things, but we can know that God is there. And there is comfort in knowing the One who knows all.

We know the Lord is too wise to make a mistake, and too good to do wrong.

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"All Things" -- Hope

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us" -- hope? (Rom. 8:32.)

I heard dear old Brother White tell about an experience of his in the early days of the Civil War. He and some other young men were trying to get from California back to the South. They were riding their horses across the Arizona desert and were: being pursued by Yankee soldiers, but finally all their water was gone and their horses barely able to walk. The young man riding next to him was sick and delirious. Time and again he would fall from his horse and Brother White would help him up again. Finally, the young man begged them to go on and refused to try to mount again. Suddenly in the distance, they heard the barking of a friendly dog. The young man was sufficiently inspired to try again and found friends, water, and life.

Think what we have to give us hope -- God as our Father, Christ as our Elder Brother, the Holy Ghost as our Comforter, and heaven as our home! We have hopes that are as bright as the promises of God. There is the hope of reunion when all earth's broken ties are mended and when sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Take this world, but give me Jesus. I wouldn't take the world for the hope I have of seeing Christ and spending eternity with Him.

* * *

"All Things" -- Joy

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us" -- joy? (Rom. 8:32.)

Jesus said, "Be of good cheer" (Matt. 14:22). That is what Christianity would do in the world; it would make us all glad. It would make us sing songs in the night. Christianity never darkened any man's heart or put out the fires of his imagination.

Christianity is a religion of joy, but who would think it to look at some audiences? Men have a church look and a business look. At business they are alert and sparkling with enthusiasm, anxious to please, turning on the full power of their personalities. But at church their faces are in "neutral." Where would you find a more pitiful-looking crowd of people? What wonder if people run away from us! God never intended it to be so. Joy should be reflected in our lives.

Joy is a protective influence. The glad heart can never go far wrong. The great big soul that has in it the angel song can never do anything unworthy. Gladness sends men home to sing their loudest and sweetest songs. The sweetest singing I have ever heard in this world was at home where our boy would sing "My Home, Sweet Home." Oh, sweet memory! Blessed be God for such indestructible memories!

Christ can take away the burden, destroy night and fear, and the accusing voice. Christianity always wants to kill another fatted calf, light another lamp, lift another burden, dry another tear, heal another broken heart, and increase the music of heart and home until the earth shall be a symphony of praise to our God. Amen.

* * *

"All Things" -- Heaven

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us" -- heaven? (Rom. 8:32.)

I like to think of earth as a dressing room for heaven. If some angel should look in on this old earth where war has covered our hills with graves and blinded us with grief and where sin holds sway, he would hardly think it a friendly place to prepare people for heaven. The earth is the seed plot from which we will gather the golden grain to fill the granaries of the skies. Here the trees are grown for the City of God. These are the quarries from which the rocks will be hewn for the Cathedral of the Skies. And man, born under the curse of sin and cradled in the neighborhood of demons, will one day sing songs tuned to redemption's scheme.

Jesus has gone to prepare a place and is also getting us ready. As our interests here decrease, our interests over there increase. Some lights are going out here, but heaven is more luminous than before.

Blessed is the man who in reckoning up his gains can enter death as one item. There will be no sin to mortify, no ignorance to becloud judgment, no rebellion to enslave the heart, no evil in selves or companions, no improper desires. But Christ and the redeemed of all ages and loved ones that have gone on before will be there.

Oh, I would not want to miss walking up the streets of gold with the saints of that Blood-washed throng playing on their harps of gold!

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THE END