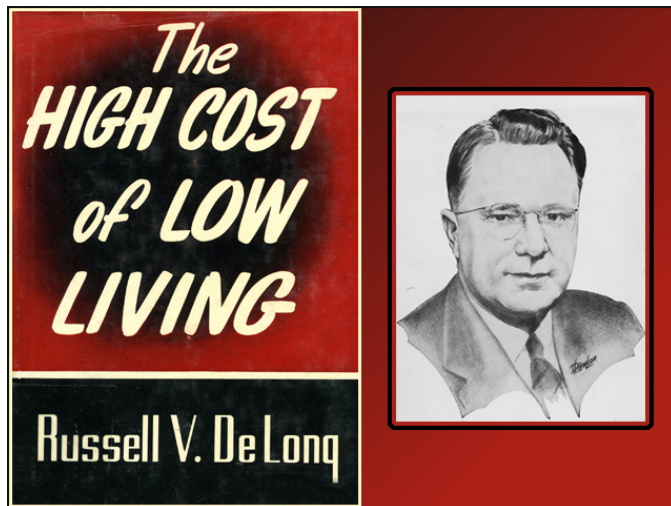


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THE HIGH COST OF LOW LIVING
By Russell Victor DeLong



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Kansas City, Missouri

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Other Books By Dr. Russell V. DeLong:
Liberalism Turns Back
The Quest For Certainty
All Out For Souls
We Can If We Will
The Present Challenge
Christian Perfection
The Seven Illnesses Of The Modern Soul
There Are No Moral Accidents
Prophecy

Printed In U.S.A. 1949

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Holiness Data Ministry
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ABOUT THIS DIGITAL FILE

This digital edition is under the copyright of Northwest Nazarene University, created with permission from Dr. George L. Lyons. Our Thanks to him for this, and for many books which he has, across the years, given to HDM through NNU. I have taken the liberty to zero-number the sermons in the book, whereas in the printed edition they were not numbered. I have also rearranged the placement of some of the text, and done a bit of editing, including a few corrections and insertion of bracketed comments. From my computer Bible program I have Edit\COPY\Pasted into the text those Scriptural Reading verses to which only the reference was made in the printed book, and in so doing I have included the verse numbers with the Scripture verses. Finally, in connection with this, please note that there was no text given for some of the sermons. -- Duane V. Maxey, Holiness Data Ministry, Surprise, Arizona, Sunday, February 15, 2009.

*** * * * ***

BOOK JACKET TEXT

Rev. Russell V. DeLong was born in New England, a son of a minister, receiving his public school education in Massachusetts cities. He has four earned degrees: the A.B., Th.B., M.A., and Ph.D., the latter two from Boston University, and the honorary D.D. from Northwest Nazarene College, Nampa, Idaho.

Doctor DeLong has been a very successful educator and minister in the Church of the Nazarene. Over a period of sixteen years he was president of Northwest Nazarene College. For many years he has been a member of the General Board of his denomination, serving as a member of the Department of Publications and Department of Foreign Missions. Dr. DeLong is now dean of the Nazarene Theological Seminary and Professor of Philosophy and Evangelism.

Dr. DeLong's services have been in demand as a speaker at a variety of gatherings, youth institutes, ministers' meetings, educational conventions, union evangelistic campaigns, commencement exercises, camp meetings, etc. He has traveled across this nation numerous times and visited Canada and Mexico frequently. He is the author of several books such as Liberalism Turns Back, The Quest for Certainty, There Are No Moral Accidents, All Out for Souls, The Present Challenge, and We Can if We Will.

He is a member of the Editorial Board of the Protestant Voice, and served for some years as a member of the Commission on Accreditation of the Northwest Association of Colleges. His sermons have appeared in such collections as The American Pulpit Series and Harper Brothers' Best Sermons.

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DEDICATION

This volume of sermons is lovingly dedicated to my wife Doris Gale DeLong who has been a source of encouragement and inspiration for nearly a quarter of a century.

* * * * *

FOREWORD

The messages contained in this book were delivered on the international radio program -- "Showers Of Blessing." The enthusiastic and widespread reception which they received at home and abroad, and the numerous requests that have come for printed copies, have led to the publication of this volume.

The subjects discussed are timely and well presented. The thoughtful reader will feel the grip of the great truths so ably presented and will be moved by the logic and soul passion of a man whose flaming personality is poured forth with the message of divine truth.

The reading of this book will in a measure explain why the author through four years of unbroken radio preaching has become one of the most popular pulpiteers on international air programs today.

T. W. Willingham
Executive Director
"Showers Of Blessing"

* * * * *

01 -- THE HIGH COST OF LOW LIVING

Scripture Reading: Luke 15:11-24

11 And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

* * *

The classic example of this type of expensive existence is exemplified in the scripture lesson, commonly called "The Prodigal Son." To most persons, the term "prodigal" has come to mean "wayward," "lost," or "strayed." But it signifies more; it really is synonymous with "wasteful," "spendthrift," "squandering." In essence it means to throw away value and receive nothing.

The young man of whom Jesus reported went from a palace to a pigpen, from sumptuous living to swine feeding, from plenty to poverty, from a father's full house to a famine-afflicted far country.

He journeyed "into a far country"; he had the thrill of travel. He "wasted his substance with riotous living"; he had thrilling pleasure. For a time he had all that nature could give travel, excitement, pleasure, food, fun -- all on a sensuous, materialistic, bodily level -- low living! For in the ascending scale of values we start with the body, go higher to the mind, and highest to the spirit. The young man forgot rational standards, ignored spiritual obligations, and wallowed in sensual activities, finally landing in the pigpen, filling his over-pampered "belly with the husks that the swine did eat." Such is always the tragic end of a person who decides to live on animal levels. It is expensive -- a "high cost for low living."

The prodigal son paid all that he had and received nothing of lasting value. His youth was dissipated, his body was weakened, his mind was soiled, and his soul well-nigh damned.

He lost the finest things in life home, mother, father, love, health, contentment, and happiness. He paid a high cost. And what did he get? A pigpen, corn husks, condemnation, hunger, pain, and servitude. Low living demands high costs.

A current popular song features this phrase, "The best things in life are free." That is only a partial truth. It really means that the best things in life cannot be purchased with money. You can't buy a home -- just a house. You can't buy love -- just lust. You can't buy a mother or a father. You can't buy peace, contentment, You can't purchase happiness -- you must so live as to merit it. Physical things won't bring you mental peace nor spiritual rest.

That's where the young man made his first major mistake. He said to his father, "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. I'm ready to really live. I'm all set now to enjoy life to the full." So -- he started out with capital he hadn't earned to get happiness he didn't merit. He wanted a thrill and a kick out of life. Well, he got both -- the "thrill" of eating with hogs in a pigs' dining room and a "kick" back of uncontrolled passion, ungoverned appetites, and unrestrained dissipation. He paid a high cost for low living.

Low living demands a high cost -- but you pay for it afterwards. Oh, yes, you do pay money for pleasure first; but the real cost comes afterward in the swine pen -- agony of body, anguish of spirit, remorse, shame, sin.

High living, too, demands a price; and you pay for it in advance -- not with money, but with merit.

Yes, the good things in life you pay for in advance; the bad things you pay for afterwards.

Virtuous living brings happiness; riotous living brings pain. Virtuous living guarantees results; riotous living brings consequences. The prodigal son sowed a wild crop and reaped painful consequences. This principle is plainly stated by St. Paul:

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting (Gal. 6:7-8).

The old colored spiritual is right, "Youse gwine to reap jest what you sow."

The prodigal son found out that he couldn't violate the laws of the body, the rules of society, the standards of morality, and the commands of God and reap good physical health, peace of mind, happiness of spirit, and the approval of God. Oh, no! He reaped pain of body, disapproval of society, anxiety of mind, condemnation of spirit, and the curse of God.

But there is a glorious climax -- the young man came to himself. It is always a great day when one sees himself as he is. He decided to leave low living and begin to climb back.

He said, "I will arise." That's the first step; get up on your feet. He then added, "I will go." Yes, make up your mind to go somewhere. Where? "To my father's house." And, "I will say." Three "wills" -- arise, go, say.

"I have sinned. I am unworthy -- I've played the fool." There is frank confession -- repentance, contrition, humility, unworthiness. "Be merciful to me a sinner."

Yes, the young man hit the bottom; but he's on the way up. Someone has said, "When a fellow strikes rock bottom, all the scenery looks good on the way up."

The father met him. He ordered his servants: "Bring forth the best robe put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

The young man was restored from low levels. He was living high again. He confessed his sin, he repented, he came back. He was forgiven and restored.

There is a high cost of low living. Don't pay it any longer. Begin to pay the price for high living. Pay it in confession, repentance, and faith in a loving Father. He will forgive your sin, restore your soul, cleanse your spirit, and give you peace and happiness.

The inspired poet wrote:

I've wandered far away from God.
Now I'm coming home.
The paths of sin too long I've trod.
Now I'm coming home.

Why don't you leave the low levels, say as the young man did, "I will arise; I will go; I will say, 'I have sinned'"?

God will hear you; He will forgive you; He will put your feet on the high road.

* * * * *

02 -- THE HIGH NATIONAL COST OF LOW LIVING

The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God (Psalms 9:17).

* * *

No nation, any more than any individual, can prosper when it ignores high ideals, moral values, and spiritual truths. Any nation that forgets God is on the toboggan slide headed for destruction. The Psalmist declares, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psalms 9:17).

The United Nations Organization, with all of its worthy objectives, has forgotten God -- in fact, has ignored God. Sessions have now been held for over two years and prayer has never been offered. The head of UNESCO (the educational, scientific, and cultural division of UNO) is an avowed atheist. It appears that we excluded God so that we might not offend Stalin. And now we have neither.

It is time we repented. Uncle Sam could well afford to lead all nations to the mourners' bench. We need God. We need HIS mercy. We need His forgiveness. Without Him we are on the road to war, destruction, and hell. We are living on low levels, and they are demanding high costs -- frightfully high costs.

A few days ago as I passed through Chicago I picked up one of its leading newspapers, and across its front pages -- eight columns wide -- in large, bold type screamed this headline, "Industries' Billion Dollar Problem -- Alcoholics." In the United States are over 50,000,000 drinkers, and 6 per cent of these are alcoholics. There are more cases of chronic alcoholism than active cases of tuberculosis. Industrialists are concerned because of the tens of millions of man-hours lost in production, running into billions of dollars of loss to the country economically. Add to this financial loss to business the hospital and medical costs for 5,000,000 alcoholics. Then add the cost of millions of innocent children deprived of fathers' and mothers' love and assistance. And on top of that add the countless gallons of tears wrung from broken hearts of disappointed parents, loving wives, and orphaned children.

And what about the moral cost? There are more young women working as barmaids in beer joints, saloons, and taverns than are enrolled in all the colleges and universities in the United States.

It is reported that we spend more than \$13,000,000,000 a year for liquor. You say, "But look at the large amount of taxes received." Yes, but for every dollar of tax some poor soul must drink twenty-five dollars' worth of liquid destruction.

Liquor breeds crime. Crime cost American people \$20,000,000,000 in 1947. The liquor tax receipts are a pittance compared with the liquor crime bill.

Liquor has filled our hospitals, crowded our insane asylums, overpopulated our jails, ruined tens of thousands of our homes, orphaned millions of our children. The high cost of low living is appalling. It is time for a new crusade to the loftier levels of high living.

American smokers are now consuming nearly a billion cigarettes a day. Sales have jumped from \$172,000,000,000 to \$352,000,000,000 within ten years. The per capita consumption of cigarettes in 1915 was 178, but today it is over 2,324 for every man, woman, and child in the United States. That means an average of nearly seven a day. In 1939 the American consumers spent \$1,700,000,000 for tobacco products, while in 1946 they spent \$3,400,000,000 -- an increase of 100 per cent in less than ten years.

In a recent year over 620,000 decrees of divorce were granted by United States judges, involving 1,240,000 principals, to say nothing of children. Our national rate now is one divorce for every two and one-half marriages. Canada reports the greatest trek to divorce courts the nation has ever witnessed. England and Wales have doubled their divorce rate. In almost every country divorce is rapidly increasing.

Gambling is reaching new highs. A total of over \$3,000,000,000 was wagered in 1947.

Yes, we are paying a high cost for low living. But, the greatest cost is not to be paid in dollars and cents; it is to be paid in blood, tears, heartaches, broken homes, blasted hopes, ruined bodies, deranged minds, demoralized spirits, and damned souls.

It is time for a new crusade. John Barleycorn must be put under control -- or, better still, executed; nicotine must be curbed; gambling must be stopped; the divorce trend must be reversed; crime must be halted. It is a colossal task. It cannot be done by social service, education, or philosophy.

The only cure is a religion that can change people. We cannot reconstruct society without first regenerating men. Social improvement cannot be permanent if approached from the outside in. It will be effective only if wrought from the inside out.

Change men and you change society. When men and women are transformed, they will reform social practices. To fight liquor, gambling, divorce, and crime from the outside and do nothing about the nature of man on the inside is as futile as trying to withstand the incoming tide with a pitchfork. To stop crime you must get at its source. Its source is in the hearts of men. You must change men's hearts. No matter how you organize bad men socially, you will have a bad society. Someone has said, "No rearrangement of bad eggs can make a satisfactory omelet."

There is only one remedy for sin the blood of Christ. St. Paul proclaimed, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." There is the solution -- new men united in a new society.

We need a genuine religious revival. The high cost of low living is bringing us to destruction. We must begin a new crusade to the levels of high, righteous living.

*** * * * ***

03 -- JESUS

Jesus of Nazareth is the greatest personality ever to appear in the arena of human activity and play His part on the stage of life. No man equals Him in depth of character, breadth of soul, width of interest, or height of influence. He is the most outstanding individual who has ever trodden the dusty highways of life or trudged up the steep, rugged hillsides of earth.

Jesus is the Great Central Figure of all time. He splits history into two parts -- B.C. (before Christ) and A.D. (in the year of our Lord).

It staggers the imagination to realize that a Child could be born in a humble home, that home to be situated in an obscure little hamlet, that hamlet to be located in a very insignificant, small country -- and yet out from that humble home, obscure village, and small country should come One the impact of whose dynamic personality should change the whole course of history, revolutionize philosophy, upset governments, revitalize religion, and transform men.

He was born in a conquered province of the Roman Empire held by the iron fist of military power and subject to the yoke of a slave-yet Jesus became the great Emancipator, setting free every man and woman of Adam's race.

He was born to a woman of lowliest station, living in the most despised city, Nazareth, from which no good had ever come. But He became the fountainhead of all goodness.

He was born in a borrowed manger in the little town of Bethlehem. His father was a humble carpenter, but he instilled in his Son the creative genius not of building a material house, but of constructing a new mansion of human beings called the kingdom of Heaven.

He lived but a brief thirty-three years. He was born a Jew-despised, lowly, ignoble. Caesar ruled a great earthly kingdom, but Christ's kingdom is greater in territory, wider in scope, and richer in purpose and has endured when the stateliest monuments and costliest palaces of Rome crumbled in the dust of oblivion.

He was not a general; yet He was to become the Conqueror of the world -- not through the brutality of military force, but by the breadth of His mighty love.

He traveled little, confining His activity to Palestine, a country forty-five miles wide by one hundred miles long. He had no modern means of high-powered propaganda. There were no railroads, no steamships, no airplanes, and no newspapers, magazines, nor printing presses.

He possessed no influential name, no wealth nor position. He had neither training nor education except what He acquired at His mother's knee or in the humble village. He lived and moved among the common people. When He died, they placed Him in a borrowed tomb. The estate He left consisted of a single seamless garment.

He was not a doctor; yet He healed the sick, opened blind eyes, unstopped deaf ears, cleansed the leper, and raised the dead.

He was not a lawyer; yet He knew the law and interpreted it and applied it to the relationships which should prevail among men. He himself became the fountainhead of righteousness, and His principles are becoming more and more lodged in the hearts and consciences of men.

He was not an author. He wrote no books, composed no poems, compiled no documents, edited no papers, nor contributed to any periodicals. The only sentence He ever wrote was a single line in the sand, which disappeared the same day. No letter of it was preserved. He never used a fountain pen nor a typewriter. We have no line, word, or syllable from His hand. And yet more books have been written about Him and His words than those of any other man.

He has affected the lives of more people than all the authors of all the ages. The story of His life has been translated into more than 1,100 languages, read by countless millions, and is the best-selling story every year.

He was not an orator; yet no man spake as this Man. His discourses have become the theme of thousands of addresses. His words are simple and clear. Very few adjectives are used; yet His sentences abound with beauty, meaning, and grace.

His sayings are hammered into polished marble, chiseled into imperishable granite, wrought into enduring bronze tablets, written in stained-glass windows of numberless churches, fashioned in rich mosaics upon temple walls, and set in arched domes of colossal cathedrals.

His words are literary gems. He stands as the unequaled Seer of all literature. Shakespeare, Milton, Emerson, bow their heads in His presence, recognizing a superior. He used every form of human speech effectively -- parable and metaphor, allegory and epigram, simile and symbol -- without diluting the thought or over-ornamenting the truth.

He was not a poet; yet He has inspired thousands of poets to utter their sublimest expressions.

He was not a musician; yet He inspired Mozart, Schubert, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Haydn, Handel, and countless others. But for Him, the great Christian hymns would remain unwritten. He inspired Lowell Mason in "Nearer, My God, to Thee," Toplady in "Rock of Ages," Watts in "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," Charles Wesley in "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," and thousands of others.

He was not an artist, nor a sculptor, nor a painter. He never handled a brush nor wielded a chisel. He was a stranger to the palette and canvas; yet He was the inspiration for Raphael, Michelangelo, Hofmann, and many others.

He was not an architect, contractor, nor builder. He was only a Galilean carpenter -- a maker of wooden plows and ox yokes. But He has inspired the noblest, most marvelous architecture known to man, He himself specialized in character engineering -- making men, human masterpieces. He took a blustering Simon and made a saintly Peter. He took a vindictive Saul and made a sin-smashing Paul.

He was not a statesman. He never held nor aspired to official position. He did not delve in politics; but He did found a Kingdom. He did give a constitution -- the Sermon on the Mount. His principles dethroned error. He was a disturber and a revolutionary. He fought evil, oppression, and tyranny. His principles laid the foundation for business based on confidence as a result of integrity.

At this hour we adore Him -- beloved Personality, Lover of the Poor, Healer of the Sick, matchless Teacher, incomparable Philosopher, Ideal of Ideals, King of Kings. But beyond all of this -- glorious Saviour!

And the angel said Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

*** * * * ***

04 -- DO YOU HAVE 20/20 VISION?

Scripture Reading: II Kings 6:15-17

15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

17 And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

*** * ***

Scientific experiments have revealed that 80 per cent of one's knowledge comes through the eye. In other words, four-fifths of all we learn is dependent upon our visual organs.

The recent war popularized the phrase "20/20 vision." Eye specialists have created tests which rate vision; 20/20 means normal. It signifies that a person can see a prescribed size of letters at a distance of twenty feet.

The human eye is a magnificent organ. It is sensitive only to ether vibrations which lie between infrared (450 trillion vibrations per second) and ultraviolet (790 trillion vibrations per second). It can detect from 150 to 160 different spectral colors and 700 different degrees of gray, from the whitest white to the darkest black. When the spectral colors are combined with brightness qualities the normal human eye can distinguish over thirty thousand shades and degrees. It is a marvelous creation, bringing light to the body and color to the mind.

Do you have 20/20 vision, or is your ability to see defective? Hindrances to normal vision may be classified under six headings:

1. Color blindness, which simply means that one sees only shades of black and is unable to visualize colors.

2. Myopia is the scientific term for nearsightedness. It indicates that the light waves come through the lens of the eye and, instead of focusing so as to meet and strike the retina, they converge and meet in front of the retina. Such persons can see things which are close to them, but are unable to perceive distant objects.

3. Hyperopia (hypermetropia) is the oculist's term for farsightedness. It is the reverse of myopia in that the light waves converge so that they meet behind the retina. Such persons can see objects at great distances, but cannot see things right at hand.

4. Astigmatism is that type of visual defect caused by the fact that the cornea is not perfectly formed. Things look all out of proportion.

5. A fifth type of hindrance is due to a cloudy or scarred cornea.

6. A final defect is caused by the growth of a cataract, which blocks the passage of light through the lens to the retina.

Any of the above ailments may deprive one of normal 20/20 vision. Each type of defect demands a specific type of correction.

Spiritual vision, too, may be defective. What people see is determined by what kind of spiritual perceptual apparatus they are using.

One type of defective spiritual vision is color blindness. Such persons always see the black. They are somber, morose, melancholy, and pessimistic. Life for them has no golden hues. They never visualize the beautiful, aesthetic things. Life is drab, gray, colorless. The rose is never seen--only the thorn. The sunrise with all its gorgeous hues is lost. No rainbow appears -- only the dark clouds. Spiritually color-blind!

Some individuals have an aggravated case of spiritual myopia. They can see things near to them. Such are able to reach for money, pleasure, position, and power near at hand which they can selfishly appropriate. But they are unable to see the needs of others, refuse to heed the appeal of foreign missions, are blind to the obligations to faraway lands or to future generations. Spiritual myopia is selfish sinfulness.

Other persons are afflicted with spiritual hyperopia. These can see nothing to be done at home, but are impractical dreamers of far-reaching activities or future enterprises. In brief, they achieve nothing -- talk much, but act little. They always shirk, never work. Tomorrow is always more alluring than today. The grass is always greener far away than in one's own yard. Spiritual hyperopia is in reality spiritual laziness.

One of the worst types of defective spiritual vision is spiritual astigmatism, the warping of the cornea. Everything is twisted; everything is out of focus, out of shape, crooked, deformed.

Have you ever stood before large concave or convex mirrors? One makes you appear to be eight or ten feet tall and extremely thin. Another compresses you into a short, fat little fellow three feet high.

A person suffering with spiritual astigmatism may emphasize incidentals and minimize essentials. The disease may take the form of constant attention to externals and little consideration of internals. It has a tendency toward legalism, or may go to the other extreme of unbridled license. Sometimes astigmatism makes one overestimate himself as a giant, or it may give one a sense of false meekness or assumed humility as a grasshopper. At times astigmatism magnifies the head, accentuates one's sense of importance. Frequently it magnifies the pocketbook, thus putting the place of money out of proportion. In brief, spiritual astigmatism magnifies or minimizes, emphasizes or neglects, accentuates or contracts, enlarges or belittles.

The fifth type of defective spiritual vision is a cloudy or scarred cornea. This results in indistinctness, indefiniteness, haziness, unsettledness, lack of certainty. Such persons are wobbly, unreliable, and wavering. What they see is unclear and may be untrue.

The final kind of defective vision is the spiritual cataract. This is a foreign growth over the iris, shutting out or diverting the rays of light. It begins small, gradually causing darkness, and ultimately total blindness.

The Holy Spirit is the great spiritual eye specialist who can correct any defect in spiritual vision. He can remedy myopia or hyperopia, nearsightedness or farsightedness. He can restore color to life for those who are spiritually colorblind. Astigmatism can be cured by the removal of spiritual crookedness. The Holy Spirit can clear up the cloudy cornea and remove sinful scars. And, finally, God can perform an operation and remove the carnal growth of a spiritual cataract and give one clear and complete vision.

St. Paul's spiritual hyperopia was corrected on the road to Damascus. Isaiah was cured of myopia in the Temple. The cataract was removed from Elisha's young companion until he saw the mountains and hills full of God's chariots. Moses was given a vision of Canaan, Isaiah of Jesus, Job of the resurrection. Luther caught a vision of justification by faith, and Wesley of sanctification and of a world parish.

God can remove defective vision and give you normal 20/20 spiritual perception.

* * * * *

05 -- SPIRITUAL VITAMINS

Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:31-35*

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

[*Here there is an error in the printed text: Matthew Chapter 6 ends with verse 34.]

* * *

"How are you?" is the question we ask upon meeting another person. The reference is to one's good health, although no answer is really expected.

The past few years have witnessed great interest in scientific diet, hygiene, nutrition, and sanitation. Courses in these subjects have been included in high school and college curricula.

Great strides have been made in medical and dental science. Infectious diseases are almost under complete control due to penicillin and the various sulfa drugs.

Counting calories is a favorite domestic pastime. Carbohydrates, proteins, and fats are carefully weighed and related in order to produce the greatest amount of energy, strength, and general robust health.

Patent medicines by the hundreds are advertised, guaranteeing to restore vim, vigor, and vitality.

One of the more recent discoveries of science is what is called vitamins. It has been found that no physical body can live on a mixture of pure protein, fat, and carbohydrates. There must be something more. If this is lacking, there are nutritional failure and disease resulting. This necessary something is called vitamins, a term first used by Casimir Funk in 1911. Since then at least five vitamins have been discovered.

Vitamin A is necessary for the growth of the body. If it is lacking a child becomes stunted, the eyes and other organs become affected, and there is general susceptibility to all kinds of infections.

Vitamin B is necessary to give balance and a sense of equilibrium. If it is lacking one develops an unsteady walk, palpitation of the heart, and finally general paralysis.

Vitamin C gives hardness to the bones, muscle strength, and good blood. The lack of this vitamin causes hemorrhages, fragility of bones, anemia, loss of weight, dizziness, and great weakness.

Vitamin D also contributes to body equilibrium and general normality. Its lack causes enlargement of the bones, especially the head, and frequently causes curvature of the spine.

Vitamin E contributes to the normal activity of reproductive functions. Its lack results in sterility.

There is a parallel between physical and spiritual health.

Lack of spiritual Vitamin A results in stunted Christians, susceptible to all kinds of religious infections of false doctrine.

Lack of spiritual Vitamin B causes lack of poise, unbalance, unsteady walk, up-and-down experiences, backslidings, and general religious paralysis.

Deficiency of spiritual Vitamin C causes weakness, uncertainty, doubt, and anemia.

Lack of spiritual Vitamin D results in big heads, distorted sense of importance, stubbornness, politics, money seeking, and crookedness.

If spiritual Vitamin E is missing, one becomes unconcerned about souls; no burden, no tears, little prayer -- sterile.

Why is it that so many Christians are weak, anemic, stunted, up-and-down, stubborn, pleasure-seeking, having no burden for souls and no tears for the lost? Why is the Church so dead and unfruitful? Lack of spiritual vitamins.

In order for any Christian to have normal, vigorous spiritual health he must have regular and sufficient supplies of the following spiritual vitamins.

Vitamin A -- Action

Just as no baby can grow without activity and exercise, so no Christian can grow without action in doing things of the Kingdom. Doing something for God is a good way to guarantee one's own growth and continued good health.

Vitamin B -- The Bible

Reading God's Book is a must for spiritual strength. Feed upon the Word and grow strong.

Vitamin C -- Christ

No one can be a robust Christian who is not possessed by Christ. He is Life. He is Bread. He is the Bread of Life. Christ in you is the enabling power to do all things. Without Him there are fainting and uncertainty. Personal communion and daily devotion are essential to good spiritual health.

Vitamin D -- Duty

The maintenance of spiritual health depends on one's keeping the ideals of the Kingdom and the laws of God before the mind. Compromising on standards leads to spiritual disease. One must see his duty and conscientiously strive to live up to his ideals.

Vitamin E -- Evangelization

One of the best ways of keeping your own spiritual health is to get interested in the needs of others. A vision of a lost world will do much to take your eyes off yourself and thus avoid imaginary ills. Be a fruitful, productive Christian. Win another to Christ.

Are you in good health spiritually? If not, what spiritual vitamins do you need?

Are you active in the church? -- Vitamin A

Do you read your Bible regularly? -- Vitamin B

Do you commune with Christ daily? -- Vitamin C

Do you show fidelity to your duty? -- Vitamin D

Do you have a dominant passion for world evangelization? -- Vitamin E

Take the above vitamins regularly and you will maintain spiritual health and grow stronger day by day.

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06 -- PLEASURE VERSUS HAPPINESS

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 11:24-25

24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

*** * ***

Are the terms "pleasure" and "happiness" synonymous? Do they mean the same thing? When you have one do you also possess the other?

It is a sound presupposition that all normal persons want to be happy. Some try to attain this blissful experience by an all-out program of pleasure-seeking. Such persons think that happiness is outside of themselves and may be discovered by a search in the external world. Their motto seems to be "Find Happiness." But they never do. At most they may get a bit of momentary pleasure.

There is a marked difference between happiness and pleasure.

Pleasure is procured objectively; happiness is discovered subjectively.

Pleasure may be purchased -- two hours' worth at a time -- at the theater or dance or ball game. Happiness cannot be bought; it must be earned.

Pleasure is transitory and fleeting; happiness is abiding and lasting.

Pleasure is affected by external things; happiness is conditioned by internal states.

Pleasure is determined by what you do actively; happiness is the result of what you are passively.

The old Greek philosophers asked, "What is the highest good in life?" Some answered, "Virtue"; others, "Happiness." Both are correct. The highest end in life is to be virtuous. And this word "virtue" in philosophy means goodness, righteousness, justice, truth, beauty, and holiness. Virtue is the sum total of all the ideal things embodied in moral character, and happiness is the inevitable by-product of virtue. These are complementary to each other. They are hemispheres and, when fitted together, make a full, rounded life composed of virtue and its resultant happiness.

What constitutes unhappiness? Lack of virtue. Discontent, condemnation, remorse, are evidences of sin. Untruthfulness, dishonesty, licentiousness, are vices. Vice produces its litter of unhappiness, while virtue creates its offspring of happiness.

What you are determines what you enjoy. And what you are explains why you suffer the consequences of sin.

Persons who are unhappy within try to cover up by an intensified search for external pleasures, hoping to find happiness -- but they never do.

The Archbishop of Canterbury was right when he said, "We all wish you happiness, but our wishes cannot give it. Nor can it come from outward circumstances. It can only come from yourselves, from the spirit that is within you. You cannot choose what changes and chances are to befall you in the coming years. But you can choose the spirit in which you will meet them."

Wise old Savonarola puts pertinent questions to us and obligingly answers them as follows:

"Would you rise in the world? You must work while others amuse themselves.

"Are you desirous of a reputation for courage? You must risk your life.

"Would you be strong morally and physically? You must resist temptation."

All these answers of Savonarola are true. But here is his great, significant, and true declaration:

"All this is paying in advance. Observe the other side of the picture: the bad things are paid for afterwards."

What a truth!

Pleasure first -- pay for it afterwards with heartaches, remorse, ruined body, weakened mind, and damned soul. Yes, some people get results; others get consequences.

Happiness is paid for in advance. You do right, act honestly, speak truthfully, live purely; and your big, permanent payday comes -- genuine happiness.

There are no bargain counters for the purchase of happiness. You pay the full price; but you receive the sterling, 18-carat product.

The devil makes it appear that pleasure can be purchased cheaply, but the initial price is the first and only the incidental cost. The ultimate price is paid afterwards -- it may be an eternal price unless you choose Christ and accept His atonement, which has paid the penalty for your sins. He not only in a negative sense pays the penalty, but in a positive way He regenerates your being so that peace takes the place of turmoil, joy for sorrow, contentment for dissatisfaction, light for darkness, life for death, and genuine happiness for unsatisfying pleasure.

Virtue, or holiness, takes the place of vice, or sin; and with it come happiness here and heaven hereafter.

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07 -- DUTIES AND RIGHTS

"This is a free country. Nobody's going to tell me what to do. I can do anything I want to." So spoke a young American lad. What he said is true, but it is both partial and relative.

We are free. I'm free. You are free. True! But when freedoms cross and come into conflict, whose freedom wins? Farrar said, "Man's liberty ends, and it ought to end, when that liberty becomes the curse of his neighbors." The cave man settled his supremacy by brute physical brawn and a stone club. He enforced his freedom;

but, as he did so, he stole the freedom of others. Might -- whether it be physical, economic, political, or ecclesiastical -- when it transcends right, deprives multitudes of freedom.

A democracy guarantees freedom to all within limits, that is, within law. Law is never justifiable in itself. Law is always the guarantor of liberty. Law protects my rights. It safeguards me from tyrants, thieves, racketeers, and all others who would transgress my private premises. My freedom is possible only because of law. It is within the framework of law that I find liberties and personal happiness.

Americans stress freedom, liberty, privilege, opportunities, and rights. We fought for the four freedoms: (1) freedom from fear, (2) freedom from want, (3) freedom of speech, and (4) freedom of worship. Yes, we most certainly insist on these freedoms. They were worth dying for -- and they are worth living for.

There are three stages in the life of a nation and of an individual: first, the stage of dependence -- our childhood; second, the stage of independence -- adolescence; and, third, the stage of interdependence.

The highest plane is the last, when we come to the realization that our best welfare is interdependent with that of others. We have personal rights, but we also have personal duties.

In fact -- ponder on this carefully -- for every right there is a corresponding duty. If I want the right to be free from fear, I must observe the duty not to impose fear on others. If I want the right to be free from want, I must observe the duty to refrain from greediness and selfishness and let others have their needs satisfied as well as my own. If I want the right to speak unhampered, I must observe the duty to let others speak unhindered. If I want the right to worship, I must observe the duty to let others worship.

Every right I have is possible only through duty. Duties guarantee rights. If I disregard my duties and transgress on the rights of others, by so doing I give them the privilege of disregarding their duties and transgressing my rights.

If I would protect my rights, I must be careful in the observance of my duties. If I insist on the right to drive my automobile sixty miles an hour in densely populated areas, thus endangering the lives of my neighbors' children, by so doing I give my neighbor the right to do likewise, endangering the lives of my children. If I would have the right, privilege, and joy of healthy children in a happy home, I must observe the duty to protect the rights of others.

The above principle is true in every phase of life, whether it has to do with property, morality, society, or religion. Every right has a duty.

Our rights today have cost sweat, tears, blood, and death. The benefits of democracy cost our forefathers a supreme price. Kipling says,

**All we have of freedom, all we use or know,
This our fathers bought for us, long, long ago.**

Our American freedoms have more recently been preserved at a tremendous cost by our boys in the armed services.

At the basis of democracy is Christianity. Democracy is a by-product of Christianity. The four freedoms are unknown in non-Christian lands.

Shortly after the fall of France, the message of a French workingman appeared in American newspapers. Here is an excerpt from it:

"We came to imagine that the proper duty of man was to arrange an easy way of life, individualistic to the point of selfishness. We looked upon the state as a universal purveyor and we always spoke of our due, seldom of our duties. Tell all this to the Americans and warn them -- of the peril that may befall Democracy everywhere when it forgets that free men have duties as well as rights."

Whenever we disregard our duties, we soon lose our rights. When we break the law, we sacrifice our liberty.

We have our rights of freedom because Christ paid the penalty for abused rights and broken laws.

America will preserve her rights only as she observes her duties to God.

Ours is a Christian nation. The Ten Commandments guarantee the highest rights and the most glorious liberties in the world. As we obey the immutable laws of God, we guarantee our continued liberties and rights. Horace Greeley said, "Liberty cannot be established without morality, nor morality without faith. The principles of the Bible are the groundwork of human freedom."

When we disregard our duties, we soon lose our rights. If all the people disobeyed the Ten Commandments and the laws of our nation, how much freedom would any of us have? Our rights would be gone. Crime would run rampant over our homes, destroying our property, ruining our children, and damning our souls.

**Freedom is found only in law. Happiness is possible only by virtuous living. George Washington said, "The consideration that human happiness and moral duty are inseparably connected will always continue to prompt me to promote the former by inculcating the practice of the latter."
Rights are preserved by duties.**

Personal bondage is a result of a personal sin. A man who violates the law surrenders his freedom. It is only as we give ourselves to something beyond ourselves that we find ourselves.

The sense of "belonging" is vital to all of us. We do belong to a moral universe, to a righteous order of things. When we relate ourselves to this eternal fitness of things, we find freedom of spirit and happiness of soul.

George Matthews expressed it thus:

**Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free.**

Yes, a captive of the right, a prisoner of the truth, a servant of the good! Duties -- yes, but also from these we find the contentment of righteousness, the thrill of truth-finding, and the joy of goodness. Privileges -- yes, glorious rights -- because I am committed to moral duties.

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08 -- CHRIST OR ALEXANDER

Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:33

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

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Alexander the Great was born in 356 B.C. He became king of Macedonia and conqueror of the Persian Empire. His teacher was the great philosopher, Aristotle. At the age of twenty, he ascended to the throne following the assassination of his father, King Philip.

Immediately young Alexander began a series of successful military conquests and was successful in defeating Darius, king of Persia, conquering Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt. Alexander set up a concept of a world state ruled by a single autocrat. Alexander was well on his way to achieving that objective when he was stricken with fever and died in 323 B.C., at the young, untimely age of thirty-three. He has been acclaimed as the greatest general and military genius in all the history of mankind. But he died at thirty-three.

Jesus was born in a manger in the little town of Bethlehem. His parents were poor and unlettered. His home was that of a humble peasant carpenter. He was educated in the workshop and at His mother's knee. He, too, founded a Kingdom. And, like Alexander, He also died at thirty-three.

Jesus and Alexander had many things in common. Both began their careers young and both ended them at the early and untimely age of thirty-three.

Alexander was born in a mansion; Jesus, in a manger. Alexander was the son of a king; Jesus, the son of a carpenter.

Alexander had the great Aristotle for his tutor; Jesus, His parents and the stars.

Both founded a kingdom -- one on power, the other on love. Alexander's was great and now is dissolved. Jesus' was small but now is colossal.

Alexander lived and died for himself. Jesus lived and died for others.

Alexander died like a worshiped king on a throne. Jesus died like a mocked King on a cross.

Alexander's life seemed like a great success. Jesus' life appeared as a dismal failure.

Alexander shed the blood of millions for his own gain. Jesus shed His own blood for the salvation of millions.

Alexander sought his life to lose it all in death. Jesus gave His life to find it again after death.

Alexander died in Babylon in splendor. Jesus died on Calvary in shame.

Alexander conquered every throne, but Jesus conquered every grave.

Alexander made himself God and died as a man. Jesus made himself man but died like a God.

Alexander enslaved all men. Jesus made all men free.

Alexander built his throne on blood. Jesus built His on love.

Alexander won all there was on earth, but lost heaven.

Jesus lost all He had on earth, but won heaven for all.

Alexander forever died. Jesus forever lives.

Alexander lived like a millionaire but died like a pauper.

Jesus lived like a pauper but, by dying, acquired eternal wealth for millions.

Alexander made history, but Jesus transformed it.

Jesus, St. Paul, John Wesley, Wilberforce, and Abraham Lincoln by their lives said, "Give all you can." Alexander, Napoleon, Caesar, and Hitler said, "Get all you can."

All men and all philosophies can be classified in two divisions -- the givers and the getters.

Jesus said, "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

There is the number-one principle of life. Seek selfishly for your own pleasure, gain, and goods, and you grow smaller and poorer. But give yourself to something bigger than and Beyond yourself, and you find yourself and grow bigger and richer.

Alexander is a dim, forgotten man. He acquired all things but lost his soul. Jesus lost all things but founded an eternal Kingdom.

Jesus and the impact of His personality have so impressed men that He has become the pivot point, the center, of all history. His life splits time into B.C. ("before Christ") and A.D. ("in the year of our Lord"). His principles are eternal and His followers are immortal.

Are you a giver or a getter? Are you a devotee of Alexander or of Christ?

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09 -- WHY DID IT HAPPEN TO ME?

Scripture Reading: Psalms 37

1 Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

3 Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

4 Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

5 Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

6 And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

7 Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

9 For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.

10 For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

12 The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.

13 The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming.

14 The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation.

15 Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.

16 A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.

17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the Lord upholdeth the righteous.

18 The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever.

19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

20 But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.

21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.

22 For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off.

23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.

24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.

25 I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

26 He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.

27 Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.

28 For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

29 The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.

30 The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.

31 The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.

32 The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.

33 The Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.

34 Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.

35 I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree.

36 Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

37 Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.

38 But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

39 But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord: he is their strength in the time of trouble.

40 And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.

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"Why did this happen to me?" is a question that is asked by all when apparent catastrophes overtake us.

Life is a strange mixture of sunshine and rain, sorrow and joy, light and darkness, pain and pleasure. We cannot control events, but we can relate ourselves to them and govern our attitudes concerning them. God's rain falls on the just and the unjust. Events at times seem to favor the wicked and increase the suffering of the righteous.

Why does God permit the evil man to prosper? And why does He allow the good man to suffer?

The answers to all of these perplexing questions must be found in relationship to God's ultimate purposes and be seen through a long-range telescope. One must not judge until all the facts are in. It is unwise to jump to premature conclusions. Today is probationary, not final. Today is fragmentary, not total. Today is only a part of the picture, not the whole.

The Psalmist recognized this fact, that one must not render a final verdict on momentary affairs, when he cried out, "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, 1% he was not" (Psalms 37:35, 36). David further admonished, "Fret not thyself because of evildoers . . . for they shall soon be cut down." But rather he exhorted, "Trust in the Lord, and do good"

Delight thyself also in the Lord Commit thy way unto the Lord Rest in the Lord." There we have the formula for contentment of spirit: trust, delight, commit, rest. The Psalmist adds, "Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth."

In other words, prosperity, minus purity, is temporary. Riches, minus religion, are effervescent. Pleasure, minus principles, is passing. Greatness, minus goodness, is spurious. The Psalmist sums it all up by saying, "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked" (Psalms 37:16).

Success in the world is judged by the size of one's bank account, the palatial home, the high-powered automobile, or the quality of clothing one wears. All of these yardsticks are temporal and temporary. According to God's measuring rod the important, eternal question is not how rich, but how righteous; not how politically powerful, but how spiritually pure; not how great, but how good.

God's measuring rods are justice, goodness, righteousness, purity, and holiness. These are eternal and everlasting. All temporal, material, and physical things are incidental. It is your attitude toward them that affects your eternal being. Wealth and poverty, pleasure and pain, greatness and smallness, sunshine or rain, are only environmental conditions that pass; but our relation to them affects our spiritual life.

We must look beyond the moment; we must see God's final purpose. We must place our confidence in the justice, goodness, and wisdom of God and reach that apex of all faith, "For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28).

The old Stoic said: "I rest content that nothing can harm me unless I myself open the door to the enemy." In other words, sickness, pain, suffering, misunderstanding cannot affect the inner self unless I open the door of my soul to such. Thank God, no evil can affect me. My reputation may be ruined, but not my character. My body may be beaten, but not my soul. My name may be besmirched, but not my spirit.

I can trust God amidst temporal events and know that ultimately all will be well. In the end the scales will balance. I can afford to wait and be patient.

My own soul is enriched by sunshine, but also by rain. Rain means clouds; clouds mean darkness. But just as a farmer must have rain as well as sunshine to produce a plentiful crop, so my own soul, if it is to be rich soil, must have the dark hours as well as the bright ones. Someone has aptly said, "All sunshine makes a Sahara desert." What good is a desert? No good. Just a barren, nonproductive, dry, fruitless expanse of land! So in life, if you want to be a desert have all sunshine. The person who has everything coming his way is repulsive and poor. But the richest person you know is that one who has gone through the dark valleys. Yes, it takes the black hours as well as the light ones.

Suppose you took any great masterpiece of painting and cut it up into inch squares, then strew them out on the table like a jigsaw puzzle. You will have squares of all colors -- white, black, purple, red, blue, golden. But every one has its place. The black is as important as the golden. It takes each to reveal the purpose of the artist. So in life, the black hour is just as important in God's plan as the golden. He is working out a mosaic, a pattern, so that your life will be rich and fruitful.

A short time before her death I visited Rev. Martha E. Curry, who was one of the greatest holiness preachers of this century. She was close to eighty years of age. Her eyes were dim; her health was poor; but her spirit was radiant and triumphant. What a victorious personality! She shouted, prayed, and wept. It was an atmosphere akin to heaven. As we were leaving, Sister Curry started to repeat a poem. It so impressed me that I said, "Just a minute. Let me write down what you are saying." Here it is, from Madame Guyon, a woman who spent years in jail in the agony of physical suffering. What a testimony and what a truth!

I worship Thee, sweet will of God,
And all Thy ways adore;
And every day I live I seem
To love Thee more and more.

Ill that He blesses is most good,
And unblest good is ill.
And all that seems most wrong is right
If it be His sweet will.

There is God's topmost philosophy. Apparent evil blessed by God is good.

God's ultimate will and purpose evaluate any human experience.
I worship Thee, sweet will of God.

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10 -- IS YOUR CROSS A MINUS OR A PLUS SIGN?

Scripture Reading: II Corinthians 4:17, 19*

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

[Here is another error in the printed text: II Corinthians Chapter 4 ends with verse 18. Thus, I have included verse 18 above. -- DVM]

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The greatest achievements have demanded the greatest costs. Handicaps have often been assets rather than liabilities. John Bunyan was put into prison. It seemed a hindrance, a cross, a minus sign. But he wrote Pilgrim's Progress and turned the experience into an asset, a plus sign.

St. Paul spent much time in jail. But, while apparently hindered in the spread of the gospel, he wrote many of his epistles and changed the minus into a plus.

Jesus himself turned seeming defeat to glorious victory. He died on an old rugged cross, but today that Cross is the emblem of victory.

To each of us there come experiences difficult to explain. Sorrow, bereavement, death, financial upsets, malicious betrayals by trusted friends, violent calamities resulting in the loss of eyes or limbs, painful diseases robbing us of health, and unjust decisions beset our pathway frequently. Such is life: the bitter and the sweet, the rose and the thorn, the sunshine and the rain.

We can take one of two attitudes. We can become restless, critical, morose, melancholy, sad, downcast, and despondent, permitting the experience to discolor our souls and shrivel our spirits. Such persons will become withering, blighting, blasting influences on others. For them the entire ordeal is a minus sign. It subtracts the good from them personally, but also makes society and others poorer.

We can take a totally different attitude. One can accept the facts, adjust to them, and turn them into steppingstones to something better. Such persons become buoyant, radiant, dynamic, and creative. They learn to turn defeats to victories, handicaps to assets. Their cross is not a minus but a plus sign.

Mr. Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War in President Wilson's cabinet, used to visit the worst casualties of the war in federal hospitals. One of the very worst cases was a man, terribly mutilated, who was wheeled around the grounds of the hospital in a perambulator by a nurse, but who still was radiant and full of spirit. Nobody expected him to live. When later Mr. Baker met somebody from the hospital he said, "Did that young man live?" And the answer was: "Did he live? I'll say he did! He married his nurse." Marveling at the capacity of women to love, Mr. Baker put the matter by until a few years later, as a trustee of Johns Hopkins University, he received a letter from the president. They wished, said the president, to do an unusual thing, to hold a mid-semester convocation to bestow the degree of Doctor of Philosophy upon a young man who, though heavily handicapped, had done one of the most brilliant pieces of work ever done at the university. His name was that of

the crippled veteran. Mr. Baker could not believe it was the same person, but it was. Both legs gone, one arm gone, both eyes gone, but still he married his nurse and qualified for the Ph.D. He turned his cross to a plus sign.

In a recent issue of the magazine *Your Life*, there appeared a remarkable, fascinating incident which gave inspiration to this address.

Turn Your Cross Into A Plus Sign

"During the war a patrol plane was forced down in the ocean, and its two occupants swam to a tiny island near by. The island was just a coral reef that rose a few feet above the surface of the water. It was about two hundred yards long, and there was not a sign of vegetation on it. At one end of the island, however, the two fliers found a rough wooden cross. It stood about ten feet high and was made of two heavy pieces of ship's timber. The base of the cross rested in a hole that was obviously dug by human hands, but there was not a grave or anything else it could be marking.

"The fliers had enough water to last three days, and that time passed quickly without a sign of a boat or plane coming near. They had, however, discovered a tiny green speck far off on the horizon. It was evidently another island, one on which there was vegetation; but it must have been at least twenty miles away.

"On the evening of the third day, the two men decided to start swimming toward the other island at daybreak the next morning.

"'Look, Mason,' said the flier; 'we'll never be able to make that long swim without something to support us. So let's take down that cross and use it to help us keep afloat on the trip.'

"'Nothing doing,' replied Mason. 'That would be sure to bring us bad luck. You can't tear a cross down like that. It would be sacrilegious.'

"An argument ensued, and it began to look as though Mason would win his point; but the other lad insisted that his plan was the logical one to follow. 'I don't know much about religion,' he said, 'but I read something in camp last week about a little boy who called a cross a "plus sign." The writer said we should all stop regarding the cross as a minus sign and begin to think of it as a plus sign. He said that was what Jesus did. In His case, crucifixion plus resurrection equaled victory. So why can't we make a plus sign out of this cross and use it to save our lives?'

"Mason finally gave in. Early the next morning they put the cross into the water. It kept them afloat during the long swim to the other island. There they obtained food and water and were eventually picked up by a rescue plane." --
Worral G. Sonastine

Sin is man's great minus factor. It brings remorse, guilt, condemnation, and fear to the race. It dragged humanity down. It subtracted the best from life.

The cross of Christ is the symbol of victory over sin. Guilt, remorse, condemnation, and fear can be removed. The Cross is addition to life. It is man's plus sign.

In your own life Christ can turn your crosses into glorious plus signs. He can add inspiration, hope, faith, love, joy, and finally heaven. Your handicaps can become handholds to success. Your liabilities can be made assets. Your stumbling blocks can be steppingstones.

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11 -- ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN TO ANYBODY

Scripture Reading: Habakkuk 3:17-18

17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

18 Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

*** * ***

Life is no respecter of persons. We are all a part of the common heritage which includes joy, fortune, pleasure, and health. But life also bestows sorrow, misfortune, unhappiness, and pain. These, it appears, are the common lot of man.

The good things of this life are not all reserved for the good, and neither are all the bad things measured out to the bad. Saints suffer and devils rejoice. The upright endure pain while the unrighteous enjoy health. Conditions which befall a person are no barometer of that individual's moral excellence or corruptness. In this present existence the rain falls on the just and unjust; good fortune comes to the good and the bad; pain tortures the bodies of both Christian and sinner.

The presence of evil is one of the baffling problems of this temporal existence. What attitude shall we take toward it? Some attempt to convince themselves that it is nonexistent. Others make evil good. Some succumb to it. Others surrender. Some become cynical, pessimistic, and sour.

Religions treat evil differently. Philosophers view it in various manners. The Stoics bear it tearlessly; the Epicureans seek to turn it to future pleasure; the cynics scoff at it; the Christian Scientists deny it; the Buddhist endures it, hoping for personal extinction; the Hindu accepts it as a penalty for a previous sin; the

Moslem submits to it; but only the Christian exults and triumphs over it. Jesus gave the answer. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you . . . rejoice, and be exceeding glad."

St. Paul furthers this triumphant attitude when he says, "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."

The climax and apex of the Christian philosophy is this: "All things work together for good."

It is one's over-all picture that gives details significance. Cut any masterpiece of painting into inch squares. Spread them out on a table like a jigsaw puzzle. Here before you are hundreds of pieces, some white, some blue, some purple, some golden, and some black. No square has any meaning by itself. But put each part in its right spot, and the great truth of the artist is revealed. So in life, dreary days, dark hours, bright moments, golden experiences, black nights -- none meaningful by themselves, but when seen in the light of the Master Architect, God, reveal that He is following a pattern, working out a mosaic, to make your life rich and fruitful.

A desert is just a dry, desolate, unproductive place.

To grow a crop one must have sunshine but also rain. And if you have rain you must have clouds; and clouds hide the sun, causing darkness. So in your life, rejoice in the sunshine on the mountaintop, but also accept the rain and darkness of the valley.

John Vance Cheney uttered a beautiful statement when he said, "The soul would have no rainbow had the eyes no tears."

Henry Ward Beecher echoed a similar truth when he penned these lines, "Troubles are often the tools by which God fashions us for better things."

Yes, anything can happen to anybody. But what appears to happen is a providential purpose. What results from our apparent misfortune depends on our attitude toward it.

Someone has said, "Difficulties pull the trigger, What explodes depends on what you are loaded with." True. What are you loaded with? Cynicism, pessimism, or faith in the rationality and goodness of God?

A Christian philosophy can set our minds. A conquering Saviour can change our hearts. The power of the Holy Spirit can activate our wills.

Evil, pain, disaster, disappointments, financial reverses, bereavements, and sin need not defeat us. They appear as stumbling blocks. God can make them steppingstones to the mountain peaks of worthwhile achievement.

Faith in God does not provide an exemption from suffering; but, thank God, it does provide exemption from death.

Phillips Brooks admonished, "Seek not tasks equal to your powers but powers equal to your tasks." That is our solution-not release from trouble, not exemption from the common sufferings of man, but rather a power to turn trouble to trust and suffering to salvation. Unamuno, the Spanish philosopher, closes his book, The Tragic Sense of Life, with this wish, "And may God deny you peace, but give you glory!"

God will not quell the war without, but He will give you peace within and glory too.

Jesus can give you grace to make darkness light and night day. Your outlook can be changed. One has said, "There is a budding tomorrow in every midnight."

Clement of Alexandria discovered that "Christ had turned all sunsets to sunrises." Why? Because He bestows grace and power to overcome obstacles and transcend environments.

Annie Johnson Flint, the poet, put it beautifully when she wrote,

**God hath not promised skies always blue,
Flower-strewn pathways all our life through.
God hath not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.**

**God hath not promised smooth roads and wide,
Swift, easy travel, needing no guide;
Never a mountain rocky and steep,
Never a river turbid and deep.**

**But God hath promised strength for the day,
Rest for the labor, light for the way,
Grace for the trials, help from above,
Unfailing sympathy, undying love.¹**

**1. Copyright, 1927, Mrs. C. H. Morris. Renewal.
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12 -- WHICH IS MORE IMPORTANT -- WHAT BELONGS TO YOU OR WHAT YOU BELONG TO?

The three most powerful urges in man are: (1) the self instinct, (2) the sex instinct, and (3) the herd instinct. From these come the finest virtues that bloom in the garden of man's heart as well as the worst of vices.

Every person is a unique individual self, but he is also a member and a part of the race. The drive for self-preservation is great, but the sense of belonging to society is also strong. The conflict between self-interest and altruism is ever present. However, these are not mutually exclusive poles of interest. One's welfare is dependent on others, and society is best served when individuals are strong and happy. Self-interest and altruism overlap and supplement each other. In reality they are complementary to each other.

The practical and real fact is that as one gives himself to something bigger and beyond himself he finds himself. Jesus expressed this principle when He said, "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

Millions of people are primarily interested in their rights, their privileges, and their opportunities. The motto of such persons appears to be, "Give me what belongs to me." They seem to feel that the world owes them something. They demand, as did the Prodigal Son, "Give me my share." They philosophize that a certain percentage of things belongs to them, irrespective of whether they have earned or merited such. So they proceed to take what they deem is theirs, by any means, fair or foul. Taking, grasping, seizing, and getting what belongs to them is their constant concern. It results in disgusting selfishness and forms the basis for strife and war between persons and nations. Their destructive declaration is: "Give me what belongs to me or I'll take it." Exerting their right to determine what belongs to them usually results in taking what belongs to others as well. Here is the basis for constant battle. The root of the trouble is selfishness. "Give me what belongs to me whether you get what belongs to you or not."

When one is psychologically concentrated on my rights, my opinion, my money, my property, my car, and my pleasure, he is on the road to corn husks in the pigpen. Such a person wants his rights, but cares little for his duties. He wants privileges, but shuns responsibilities. When a person belongs to nothing but himself, he soon finds nothing belongs to him. That's the way with life. Jesus was right -- the number-one principle in developing personal worth is found in the text paraphrased, "He that getteth what belongs to him soon loseth it all, but he that giveth all that he has soon finds that all belongs to him." St. Paul discovered this truth when he declared, "As having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (II Corinthians 6:10). "All are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (I Corinthians 3:22, 23).

More important than what belongs to me is what I belong to.

The herd instinct is powerful. The sense of belonging to something is strong. This explains the urge, especially of Americans, to be joiners. Join everything. In "Who's Who," to be able to list a string of clubs, boards, lodges, fraternities, and societies seems to be important. Important for what? To get what belongs to me, I belong. But this is a superficial and selfish membership. There is a deeper sense of belonging -- 'to give one's self to a cause, completely and wholeheartedly; to belong because I choose to, I will to, I want to, I give myself. Here is the high plateau. Jesus reached it. St. Paul followed, as did St. Augustine, John Wesley, Wilberforce, and others. They belonged to something. And what happened? Something rich and powerful came to belong to them.

So in life as a whole: my home -- I belong to it; and, as I give myself to it, love, happiness, and joy belong to me.

My family -- I belong to it; and, as I give myself to it, respect, co-operation, and consideration belong to me.

My country -- I belong to it; and, as I give myself to it, freedom, opportunity, and privilege belong to me.

My church -- I belong to it; and, as I give myself to it, worship, fellowship, and friendship belong to me.

My Saviour -- I belong to Him; and, as I give myself to Him, peace, forgiveness, and salvation belong to me.

My God -- I belong to Him; and, as I give myself to Him, blessings, mercy, health, and heaven belong to me.

Yes, what I belong to means more to me than what belongs to me. In the last analysis, what finally comes to me, be it good or bad, is determined by what I belong to.

Let me suggest in conclusion, and in all seriousness, that you ask yourself this question and then give yourself an honest answer: To what do you belong? What have you given yourself to? What holds you? It is important that you belong to the right.

If you belong to your own self and are concerned only with what belongs to you, soon emptiness, remorse, and disillusionment will belong to you. You will be a spiritual and moral pauper.

If you belong to Satan and evil, soon shame, despair, sorrow, and hell will belong to you. You'll be a spiritual and moral apostate.

But if you belong to Christ and His kingdom, salvation, happiness, and heaven will belong to you.

Jesus, at the apex of the Sermon on the Mount, exhorted, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

Belong to the Kingdom and the Kingdom will belong to you.

**Yes, what I belong to is more important than what belongs to me.
To what and to whom do you belong?**

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13 -- THE ADVANTAGES OF ALTITUDE

Scripture Reading:

Psalms 61:1-2

**1 Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.
2 From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.**

Psalms 121:1-3

**1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.
2 My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.
3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.**

*** * ***

A sunrise viewed from a mountaintop is a thrilling, soul-stimulating experience. As the fan-like streams of light streak up from the distant horizon, silhouetting against the darkness overlaid with golden beauty on a fiery red base, one is stirred to his innermost cosmic being. The glories of nature without call to the depths of human nature within. For a moment one forgets the small, petty trifles of life and is lost in the beauty, grandeur, and magnificence of the universe.

Some years ago I had the exquisite experience of climbing to the top of Mount Hood in Oregon. With Mrs. DeLong and a friend, led by a professional guide, we reached the timber line at nine o'clock at night, four and one-half miles from the Government Hotel. We slept in tents until 3:00 a.m., arose, had breakfast, and

started the long, tortuous, difficult climb. The Summit House was a welcome retreat when reached at three in the afternoon.

It was a thrilling picture. One could see great distances. To the west was the rolling Pacific; to the north, Mr. Rainer and Mt. Adams; to the south, the Three Sisters and Mt. Shasta. Just below us and to the east the Columbia River was winding its way like a silver thread through Oregon and Washington.

The atmosphere was clear, clean, pure, and invigorating. One felt that he was literally as well as spiritually, 'sitting on the top of the world.'

The airplane also teaches many advantages of altitude. The past years I have done much of my traveling by air. Recently I left the San Francisco airport in a DC-4 52-passenger, pressurized cabin for Chicago. We climbed up over the Golden Gate at one-forty-five that afternoon and landed at Chicago at six-twenty-four that evening. For the major part of the trip we maintained an altitude of 19,000 feet and an average speed of 309 miles per hour.

Leaving San Francisco we passed over Berkeley, Oakland, Treasure Island; soon reached Lake Tahoe; in a few minutes were over the great Salt Lake and the City; in a short time passed over Omaha; and finally reached Chicago. It was a fast, exciting, high trip.

Altitude has advantages.

It lifts one up and beyond the dirty, smothering smoke of the city. Altitude gets you beyond the damp, dark, cold fog of low places. If your altitude is high enough you can fly above the dark clouds, beyond the thunder and lightning, and remain in the sunlight above the storm. Clouds are always white on top.

The higher the altitude, the greater the vision -- the longer the perspective. At the foot of the mountain one's vision is blocked by trees, bushes, and rocks. The higher one climbs, the greater his horizon. Vision is commensurate with altitude. Stay low, see little. Climb high, see much.

An airplane rides smoother at high altitudes. It gets beyond the winds and air pockets and glides majestically through the atmosphere. Altitude also increases speed. The higher up one goes, the less air resistance. Stay low and go slow. Rise higher and go faster. Lowness means roughness. Highness gives smoothness. Altitude means speed and comfort.

Altitude also causes things to look small. The higher you rise, the smaller they become. The lower you are, the larger they appear. The troublesome trifles of life are transcended by altitude. When one is groveling in the swamps and low places he is pestered by insects, bugs, mosquitoes, gnats, malaria, disease, bacteria, and innumerable irritations. A child just in the creeping stage will pick up

pins, tacks, dead bugs, and dirt. His eye level is low. When he gets to walking, it is chairs and table tops that must be kept free from dangerous little things.

A person's eye level reveals the things he sees. And what one sees, or is bothered by, is a revelation of his character. Yes, the higher one climbs, the freer he is from small matters.

Life is much like mountain climbing and airplane travel. One can stay in the smoke and fog, remain in darkness and suffer through the storm. A person can remain on his low level and have short vision and little perspective. He can be the victim of little things and little people. He can be pestered by mosquitoes, gnats, tacks, and thorns. He can breathe in spiritual and mental malaria, bacteria, and ailments of all kinds.

But it is possible to rise above and beyond the fog and smoke. One can climb and receive inspiring visions and clear perspectives! One can live above the petty, little things and be triumphant! Altitude does have advantages!

The Psalmist discovered this truth when he cried out, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I," and, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills."

The pull upward is in every soul. There is a cosmic urge to the heights. But there is also a cosmic drag and a pull downward!

Your will decides whether you will walk in the dark, slimy, sinful low roads of life or climb to the clean, pure, high roads of victorious living.

Clarence Edwin Flynn has well written:

To be a slave when one might be a king,
To walk low roads when one might walk the high,
To crawl when one might just as well take wings,
To take the slime when one might have the sky,

To mingle with those whose lives are cheap
When with the sons of God we might commune,
To have the shallow rather than the deep,
To choose the discord rather than the tune,

To dwell in swamps when one might have the heights,
To have a hovel for a heart and miss
The golden dome where one might dwell in light--
IS THERE A GREATER TRAGEDY THAN THIS?

Not only does our better self spur us upward, but Jesus bids us to come higher.

What is your altitude? Pull the stick back and climb to the heights!

* * * * *

14 -- DON'T BAIL OUT

Scripture Reading:

I Thessalonians 5:21

21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

Heb. 10:22-23

22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

* * *

A coach said to his runners, "Remember, boys, it's the finish of the race that wins." Certainly it is important to get a good start, but it is all-important to have a good finish. No one wins who doesn't finish. You may start fast, run brilliantly; but if you fail to finish, there is no prize.

So it is in the race of life. Begin the right life, start in the Christian way; but continue. Stay in the race. Finish!!

Many a racer begins a course, but falls out because of weariness, keen competition, lack of morale, or loss of the will to win. For such there is no award.

Many a person makes a good start in the Christian way but, because of trials, temptations, evil associates, discouragement, and lack of a determined will to win, drops out by the way. For such there will be no reward -- no "Well done." We must stay in the race, keep in the course, set our eyes on the goal, double up our will, and finish.

St. Paul fought to the end and said, "I have finished the course." He crossed the goal, he broke the finishing tape, and he heard the Great Umpire say, "Well done. You win. Here is your crown."

Demas made a brilliant start, a fast getaway. But he dropped out, One of the saddest, most pathetic statements in the Bible is St. Paul's lament to Timothy,

"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." He missed the reward. He failed to finish.

St. Paul was anxiously zealous for young Timothy when he cried out, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust."

Some time ago a twenty-one passenger commercial airplane started out from Cleveland to Baltimore. It carried a full load of passengers, plus the pilot, copilot, and stewardess. After about forty minutes the pilot felt a slight tremor of the plane, a bit later a more violent shaking. One of the motors pulled away from the frame and went crashing to the ground. This was a terrible calamity in itself; but, as the motor tore away, it completely ruined the landing gear of the plane as well. So the pilot not only limped along with one motor, but had no way of bringing that many-tonned flying monster to a safe landing. His mind raced for a solution. His heart was depressed—twenty-four lives, including his own, facing almost certain death. What should he do? He decided to turn around and head for Cleveland, the home port, as well as the home of several of the passengers and himself. He radioed the port, informing them of his hopeless plight, and requested that ambulances and fire-fighting apparatus be summoned. He would endeavor to bring the ship to earth, although there wasn't one chance in a thousand that any of the twenty-four lives would escape death.

En route to Cleveland he noticed the one parachute the plane carried for emergency escapes. He could use it and save his own life. Why not? None of the other twenty-three could escape death anyway. Why not save himself? All this quickly passed through his mind. However, he decided that he would stick by the ship and not "bail out." He brought the wobbling plane over the airport, looked down and saw hundreds of people waiting and several ambulances and fire apparatus. He circled the field several times, knowing that sooner or later he must bring that heavy ship to land. He swung lower and lower and finally gritted his teeth, braced himself, and brought the plane down the runway, lifted it a bit, and let it down with a terrible thud. Many were injured, but the striking thing was that not one of the twenty-four was killed or fatally wounded.

The newspapers carried front-page accounts of the accident. One writer made this significant observation, "In all the history of commercial flying not one pilot has bailed out and left his ship," Think of it! What a record!

The moral is, the best people don't bail out. The best people stick to the ship. The best people don't turn their backs on the right, the true, and the good. The best people don't quit. The strong character is the one who follows his better self, who is true to the right, who stands by, even in the face of danger, discomfort, and possible temporary defeat.

We owe much to many. We have the heritage of godly parents. We have the open pages of God's Holy Book, the Bible. We have the benefits of the gospel. We

have the blessings of Christian civilization. We have the life-changing power of the blood of Christ shed on the cross of Calvary. We are debtors to Jesus and to parents and to friends. We owe much.

Let's not turn our backs on our benefactors. Let's not be ingrates. Don't stab your better self. Don't quit.

Be true to your inner self. Be thankful to God. Be grateful to Christ. Be loyal to right. Show fidelity to truth. Stick by the good old ship of Zion. Don't bail out.

* * * * *

15 -- A THERMOMETER OR A THERMOSTAT?

Scripture Reading: Romans 12:1-2

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

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

* * *

The mechanical age has done much to increase comforts and decrease back-breaking labor. In conditioning the atmosphere of the home, two gadgets are now essential. One is a thermometer; the other, a thermostat. The words are similar in spelling and sound and come from the same root. But there is a vast amount of difference in their function.

A thermometer may be beautiful and designed to fit into the color and interior design of the home. It probably hangs on the wall in a convenient place so that the occupants of the home can glance at it easily to ascertain the temperature of the room. A thermometer hangs alone, has no connection with anything else. It is merely affected by the hotness or coldness of the room. It has no power to make the room hot or cold. It reflects its environment and adjusts itself to it. If it is hot, the thermometer registers hot; if it is cold, it too becomes cold. Like a chameleon, it takes on the color and climate of its present environment.

A thermostat looks much like a thermometer. It also hangs on the wall and may contribute to the aesthetic coloring and design of the room. But instead of being alone and individual, it has connections, powerful connections. If it is hot, it has ways of making it cooler; and, if it is cold, it has means by which to make it warm. Instead of being affected by its environment, it changes its environment. In

brief, a thermostat does something about its surroundings while a thermometer adjusts to its environment. There is a vast difference.

A little armature on the thermostat says, "It is too cold here -- let's have a little heat. It is only 30 degrees -- let's make it 70 degrees." So the arm is moved -- an electric impulse is sent along a wire to a power plant in the basement. The thermostat says, "Start the fire. Open the drafts. Pile on the coal. Build up the steam pressure. We must change the atmosphere." Immediately the motor begins to hum, the coal begins to burn, the water begins to boil, the radiators begin to sizzle -- the atmosphere is changed. Even the thermometer notices the difference.

People can be classified into thermometers and thermostats. Thermometer personalities are chameleons, adjusters, compromisers. They always take on the color, climate, morality, and spirituality of the group they are with. They merely reflect their environment. They do nothing to change it.

Thermostat personalities are changers, reformers, leaders, transformers. They are not satisfied with the status quo. They are not complacent, unconcerned, unburdened, and indifferent. Things and conditions must improve. So they move the thermostatic armature -- this is done deliberately by the will. And something begins to happen; they have connections. They do their human part; but they also send an impulse, a prayer to God, to the powerhouse above, "We need help. Things must be different. The moral and spiritual climate must change. It is too cold, frigid, and freezing. We must have power, fire, heat to meet, burn, and change our world, our nation, our churches, yes, our homes."

Thermostats get things done. Thermometers surrender to conditions.

Churches, too, are like persons. Some are merely community thermometers; others are spiritual thermostats. One adjusts to the world, to sin, to social conditions, to the moral environment. The other throws off worldly influence, fights sin, changes social conditions, and transforms moral environments. It has connections; yes, God is its source of power.

One of the prophecies concerning conditions prior to Christ's second coming is this: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (II Tim. 3:5).

Ecclesiastical thermometers, but not thermostats. Just a form; no connections, no power. "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed" (Romans 12:2).

Thermostats can lose their power. When they do they become thermometers, merely reflecting the environment. They still look like thermostats. Their form is unchanged--still beautiful, but isolated. The connection to the powerhouse is broken. Or a bit of dirt -- a sin -- has clogged the wire; the impulse cannot get through; something may short-circuit the current.

Every soul should be a thermostat spiritually and morally. Every church should be a thermostat to change people and transform society. If the connection is broken, have it repaired today. If sin is clogging the avenues between your soul and God, have it removed this hour. "The blood of Jesus" can cleanse your heart from all sin (I John 1:7). "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8).

Let all hindrances be removed. Your will is your thermostatic armature. Move it today. Reach out for God. No longer be satisfied to be merely a thermometer. Be a spiritual and moral thermostat.

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16 -- IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO BEGIN AGAIN!

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 1:16, 18-20

16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

*** * ***

The best people are those who are always beginning again. Disappointment, upsets, reverses, losses, and defeats cannot quell their courageous, determined spirits.

The real test of a man is not his ability to go to the top, but his ability to be knocked off the top, strike rock bottom, and go to the top the second time.

Anyone can listlessly lie on the bottom and cry, "Foul play!" Anyone can blame fate, enemies, politics, or environment for failure. Anyone can grow bitter, cynical, morose, caustic, and sarcastic at things and persons. But it is the sterling soul of eighteen-carat quality that can get up from the ground, brush himself off, smile, and start for the mountaintop again.

Many a prize fighter has been knocked to the mat but has staggered to his feet, fought on, and won. Many a team has had its back to the wall, but has fought back to glorious victory.

It is never too late to begin again. It is always too late to quit.

Thomas Edison failed month after month in his effort to find the proper filament to light his incandescent lamp.. But he finally succeeded.

Madame Curie experimented for years with distressing disappointment, but kept trying new experimentations; and finally the marvelous rays of radium shot out of the darkness. Success!

Zane Grey had every story he wrote turned down for the first five years, but he didn't quit. He kept writing new stories. And now -- fame.

Admiral Byrd broke his ankle when twenty-eight and was retired by the United States Navy. He decided to become an aviator. While learning he crashed twice and once hit another plane head on. But he plodded on to world-wide fame as a courageous explorer.

At one time Carrie Jacobs Bond, a penniless semi-invalid, tried hand-painting of china, even singing songs, but met bitter failure. She next tried song writing, but the publishers would not buy. But she kept on; and today, even though she has gone to her reward, millions of human hearts are inspired by her immortal song "The End of a Perfect Day."

Abraham Lincoln was defeated repeatedly in his campaigns for public office, but finally won the presidency.

Enrico Caruso was told by his music teacher that he had no voice, but for twelve years he studied nights, working in a factory days. When his opportunity finally came, his voice cracked and he fled the building in tears. Later when he filled in for a tenor who had become ill, the audience hissed him. Yet he became the most famous artist of his generation. Fannie Hurst had her first hundred stories rejected.

General Grant graduated from West Point near the bottom of his class.

H. G. Wells was discharged from his first job.

O. O. McIntyre was fired from the New York Evening Mail.

In life it is not the man who fails repeatedly who ultimately loses, but it is the man who fails to try again who is the final failure.

Keep trying. It is never too late to begin again.

Keep climbing. Don't let temporary rebuffs stop you.

Keep coming. Someday you'll break through.

And now, to apply this to your religious life. Don't let trouble, misfortune, opposition, misunderstandings, sorrows, trials, disappointments keep you down. If you fall, get up and keep your face set toward God's plan for your life. If you fail, keep trying; victory will come. If you are defeated on one battlefield, remember it is not the loss of a battle but the winning of the war that counts.

St. Paul suffered shipwreck, beatings, jail, and, finally, beheading. But he won the crown.

Martin Luther was opposed, oppressed, rebuffed, ridiculed, and excommunicated. But he won.

John Wesley was misunderstood, stoned, and beaten. But he triumphed.

Jesus himself was rejected, despised, rebuffed, beaten, and crucified. But He is the all-conquering Victor over temptation, sin, and death.

To be temporarily set back, to be down, to be defeated need not mean final loss. It is never too late to begin again. God's promise is always to the overcomer.

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life" (Rev. 2:7).

"To him that overcometh I will confess his name before my Father" (Rev. 3:5).

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne" (Rev. 3:21).

The formula for successful overcoming is found in Rev. 12:11. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

Jesus can give you power to overcome if you will furnish the sand, backbone, and determination to fight on.

If you've failed get up, push on, trust God. It is never too late to begin again.

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17 -- FRUITS WITHOUT ROOTS

Scripture Reading: Matthew 7:24-27

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

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And now abideth thinking, doing, and being; but the greatest of these is being.

This is a true statement, but it runs counter to present-day emphasis. Whirl is king; doing is tops. The go-getter, the life of the party, the doer, rates the number-one place. Such means that the important thing is not what you are, or what you think, but what you can do.

So we have much activity. Courses in acting, physical culture, applied psychology, personal glamour thrive. Everybody wants to put on an act, make a good showing, create the right impression, make a hit, put it over, or, as Andy says, "Make an imprint." All of this deals with the outside of the cup, the external, the surface.

Thinking and being are closely related. Both are essentially parts of the person. They are internal. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." It is easier to do than be, and it is easier to act than think, and it is more glamorous. Thinking is painful, and being requires discipline.

Fruits and roots illustrate the relation between the external and the internal. Everybody wants the fruits. They are seen, are above the ground, are beautiful, pleasing, attractive, colorful, clean, sweet, symmetrical, picturesque, and glamorous. But fruits are possible only because of roots. Roots are unseen, underground, unattractive, dirty, unsymmetrical, unglamorous. Roots reach out in the earth for sustenance and moisture. They absorb the richness of the soil. This is sent up the trunk to the branches, feeds the bud, and produces the fruit.

Roots are permanent; fruits are seasonal. Roots give position and location. The deeper the roots, the greater the stability, strength, and sustenance. Droughts, winds, storms, and insects may affect the fruits. It is the roots that enable the fruits to abide. Without roots, fruits are impossible. If fruits become cut off from the roots, they soon dry up, wither away, and fall. The continued beauty of the fruits depends on the continued supply of life from the roots.

Today everybody wants the fruits; few desire roots. We want the results without paying the price for the cause.

Show, limelight, glamour, good front, affectation are all external expressions. Beauty bought at the drugstore is temporary, but beauty maintained by good health is permanent. Some people are like Christmas trees, all decked out with tinsel, bells, lights, and tied-on fruit. They look beautiful. Fruits, but no roots! The fruit is false, the glamour is artificial, and their conduct is superficial.

Every ship that sails the high seas must have ballast; the hold -- interior -- must be weighty. No matter how beautiful, streamlined, or colorful, the ship will not remain afloat unless beneath that appearance there is weight -- strength. If the inside is empty, the outside will soon sink.

Every skyscraper must have more beneath the ground than above it. Its height depends on its depth. Three-fourths of an iceberg is unseen.

The giant of the forest, lifting its head high in the sky and spreading its wings wide over the landscape, defying the winds and storms, has roots buried deep and stretching far. Roots guarantee strength, stability, age, durability, as well as beauty and dignity.

Fruits without roots are dead, artificial, tied on, make-believe, superficial, false.

To be good outside, we must be good inside. To be strong in outside activity, we must be strong on the inside. Internal strength guarantees external power and beauty too.

Jesus gave us two very dramatic, colorful incidents of fruits and roots. In the first He used very strong language.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

"Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

"Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matthew 23:25-28).

Fruits Without Roots!

Jesus closes His wonderful Sermon on the Mount with an illustration. He says:

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.

"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand;

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:24-27).

Fruits but no roots! A superstructure but no foundation! Peter exhorts: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

"And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

"And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity [love].

"For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:5-8). There we have roots and fruits.

Jesus asserted, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Genuine fruits are possible only by internal roots. You may act meek, appear joyful, talk virtuously, look good, advocate peace; but if you are not meek, have no joy, are not good, and have no peace, there are artificial fruits tied on a dead tree for effect.

No roots, no power -- just dead, hollow, corrupt, empty, eaten out by the canker-worms of hell and the parasites of the devil. A strong wind in the moral storm will cause you to fall. And such dead wood will ultimately provide the fuel for the fires of hell.

In conclusion let me suggest that you give some attention to the inner, the internal, yourself -- your SOUL. Cultivate the roots of your personality. Good roots mean good fruits.

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18 -- IS DEATH THE END?

Scripture Reading: I Corinthians 15:51-57

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

* * *

One of the oldest and most inescapable questions that has come to the mind of man is the theme of this sermon, "If a man die, shall he live again?"

Death is the stark and universal tragedy. It is a blind alley. It is a dead-end street. It comes to the old and young, the rich and poor, the great and small. It strikes at the most inopportune moment. It is not affected by the affairs of men. For this life it is the end, the period at the close of the paragraph. It is a respecter of no man. It strikes in spite of plans or appointments.

An aviator said to his chaplain, "I wish you would tell me, man to man, do we go on living?" Then he added, as he struck a match and blew it out, "Is that what happens to US?"

In spite of our colossal grasp of scientific power, we are helpless when death comes. Educational power, social power, financial power, ecclesiastical power are impotent in battle with death. Even President Roosevelt, with all the power of men, machines, and medicine, departed suddenly and so untimely, just when it seemed that the world needed him most and when his career was to be crowned with victory. But death came.

Nations, tribes, and religions have looked beyond death and placed faith in a future existence. Something within us abhors the thought of extinction. We rebel at the prospect of annihilation.

Aristotle said long, long ago, "Whatsoever that be within us that feels, thinks, desires, and animates is something celestial, divine, and consequently imperishable."

Immortality cannot be demonstrated or proved as one might do in dealing with things in a science laboratory with the aid of a microscope. It is something

deeper, richer, and more rational than matter. It is as James Martineau said so beautifully, "We do not believe in immortality because we have proved it, but we forever try to prove it because we believe it."

Yes, immortality rests on faith. What are the reasons which rationally support such a faith?

1. Any theory that makes death the end is unsatisfactory to the mind and unsatisfying to the heart. Ralph Waldo Emerson stated the same thought when he said, "Our dissatisfaction with any other solution is the blazing evidence of immortality."

2. Every person with purpose has so many unfulfilled interests and legitimate desires which death interrupts that there is a demand for more opportunity for unlimited and unhindered activity in a future existence. Every creative person has much unfinished business at death. If annihilation be true, then death is "the great silencer," "the blank wall," "the universal enemy," "the reaper whose scythe leaves desolation in its wake" -- "the universal catastrophe."

3. Annihilation has no meaning to loved ones who are left after death. Sympathy in such an hour is meaningless. Suffering at the time of the passing of a mother, father, wife, or child is proportionate to love. Someone has said, "The heart which loves is the heart which aches." The greater the love, the more intense the suffering. In order to escape such agony one must crush love out of his life. If one loves none, he will suffer none at the time of bereavement. But to annihilate love is to love annihilation. Professor Perry, of Harvard, is correct when he says, "To buy immunity from suffering by crushing out love is to forfeit life's greatest good."

The finest flower that grows in the garden of man's heart is love. It is the highest product of personality. When we destroy love, we have uprooted the best that there is in ourselves. Therefore, Professor Perry concludes, "The only hope of bereavement -- is the hope that the dead will live on." Love demands immortality.

4. The value of personality rationally demands continued existence. If the universe is purposeful and if man is its finest and highest product, it is irrational to conceive of personality dying. Death appears as though the curtain has descended in the midst of a play. But with the belief in immortality the curtain of death is only the end of an act, not the end of the play; the end of a chapter, not the end of the book.

5. Continued existence after death is needed to balance the ledger. Death leaves the books completely unbalanced. If the universe is righteous, if God is just, death cannot be the end. Good, honest, truthful persons must be rewarded and the wicked must be punished. For such, time is needed; hence the rational demand for continued life beyond death.

6. The resurrection of Jesus gives final ground for belief in immortality. Because He conquered death we have faith that we too may live beyond the grave.

In conclusion let it be noted that many great thinkers-among them Plato, Aristotle, and Kant -- support the position that the very reasonableness of the universe demands immortality. Man could not have been placed here like a candle, only to be extinguished by the passing wind of death. "The human soul," Liebman says in his book, Peace of Mind, "is not a bit-player condemned to one brief line upon the stage of time and then make a final exit. The Divine Playwright surely would not have written His drama so poorly prepared all the resplendent scenery of earth as a prelude to the appearance of the hero -- Man -- only to permit him the stammering sentence of a brief moment of time this life -- and then make both him and the drama of existence ludicrous by eternal silence."

Oh, no! If life has meaning, if there is a God, if the universe is not a colossal madhouse, if there is rationality and purpose all demand, point to the inference and logically conclude that man, the highest and best in the world, must continue to live in a bigger, greater, less limited, less fettered existence.

In the last analysis it all sums to this: Annihilation is irrational. My intellect demands immortality. My heart desires it. My will chooses it. My Bible teaches it. God has promised it. Christ conquered death and made it possible.

Death is best defined as separation: physical death, as the separation of body and soul; spiritual death, as the separation of man and God.

God decreed that the soul that sinneth shall surely die. Physical death is, as Dr. Whale has weightily phrased it, "the sacrament of sin." Spiritual death, the second death, is the final and tragic separation of man from God.

Christ came to give eternal life. Man was dead in trespasses and sins -- completely divorced or separated from God. Christ came to break down the wall of partition -- separation-and bring spiritual life to man.

"If a man die, shall he live again?" Yes. He shall live as a metaphysical entity forever. Whether he shall hear God say, "Well done," or, "Thou wicked servant," depends on his probationary existence in this mortal life.

Death is not the end. You will live beyond the grave. Therefore, it is wise and prudent so to live here as to merit existence with God there.

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19 -- EVERY DAY IS PAYDAY

Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:19-34

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

* * *

"Every day is payday," said Mr. Mervel Lunn, manager of the Nazarene Publishing House, as he spoke informally at the last chapel service of the year at the Nazarene Theological Seminary. Mr. Lunn is a layman who has served a quarter of a century as the manager and builder of one of the largest and most modern of religious publishing houses. This consecrated layman, with his brilliant abilities as a business executive, could have been a \$100,000-a-year man if he had given himself to secular business enterprises. Instead, he decided to invest his life in a church organization at a very modest salary, refusing pay raises repeatedly. His one obsession and dominant passion is the kingdom of Christ. He now stands

before a seminary student body with joyful tears in his eyes and declares, "Every day is payday to the man who invests in God's kingdom." He might have said, "One clips coupons daily from investments in moral and spiritual stocks and bonds."

I would ask you this pertinent question, "What are you investing your life in? What returns are you getting?"

Jesus said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matthew 6:19, 20).

Earthly, material coupons stop. But one who invests in God's kingdom -- be it money, blood, sweat, or talents -- will clip coupons eternally, with interest compounded daily.

My own father made such an investment. In middle life he answered God's call to the ministry. He served six pastorates before he recently passed away. In each he sponsored an intensive building program. Not long before he died I was visiting with him. During the course of the conversation I remarked, "Dad, in future years after you're in heaven and I want my children -- your granddaughters -- to remember you, I'm not going to drive into a cemetery and get out by some cold tombstone and say, 'Girls, that's in memory of your grandfather.' Oh, no! When I want my girls to remember you and Mother, I shall drive to Salem past a white church in which you invested your sweat, blood, and money to build; and then to Gardner, Maine, by another church; and then to Wareham, and to Somerville, and, finally, to Waltham. Those churches are greater monuments to your memory than anything we could erect in a cemetery." Yes, he invested his all in his family and the Kingdom. Today one daughter is superintendent of a hospital; another, a minister's wife; the third, a child evangelist; and his only son, a minister of the gospel. Their labors are bringing him daily coupons in heaven. And what of his investments in the churches? Every week hundreds of men and women, boys and girls are attending church services and Sunday school. Every year scores of people are finding God. Is my dad getting returns from the investment he made on earth? Oh, yes. "Every day is payday."

My friend, in what are you investing your life? I don't refer to money only. I mean your life, your talents, your blood, your sweat. What are you living for? What are your dominant interests?

Recently a man was dying. He summed it all up this way: "What I've spent I've lost; what I've saved I leave; what I've given I have."

A wealthy Midwestern layman who had been a generous church leader lost everything in the 1929 crash: his home, his farm, his stocks and bonds --

everything. His district superintendent made a special trip to console his friend in this hour of loss.

When they met the district superintendent put his arm around the layman and said, "I'm sorry to hear of your tragedy. I regret that you have lost everything."

Interrupting the superintendent, the layman said, "Oh, but I didn't lose everything. I saved \$25,000."

"Oh," said the superintendent, "I am delighted. I was informed that you had lost everything."

"No," said the layman, "I gave \$25,000 to our church college. I saved that. I only regret that I hadn't invested \$50,000. I might have had that also."

There you have it. An investment saved! "Every day is payday" when your investment is in the Kingdom.

Recently I've had this truth impressed on my mind by several personal experiences. I was in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. A fine, outstanding young business executive, the Sunday-school superintendent of the largest Nazarene Sunday school in Canada, was introducing me. He said, "Eight years ago I was converted under the ministry of Dr. DeLong in his campaign in Regina, Saskatchewan." And now he is a leading Christian layman in a great city. "Every day is payday."

Not long ago I was in Mexico City sitting in the office of Dr. Alfredo Santin, then the district superintendent of the Central Nazarene District. Two men entered, both ministers, on their way to Guatemala. I was introduced, and one said, "Oh, I know you! I was sanctified and answered God's call to Christian service in one of your services at the Northern California camp meeting in 1935." Well -- well, it's a small world, and dividends accumulate unawares. "Every day is payday."

I conducted a revival in Somerville, Massachusetts. The last night of the campaign the Sunday-school superintendent said, "I was converted under the ministry of Russell DeLong in 1932, and now during this meeting both of my sons have been saved." Clipping coupons. "Every day is payday."

During that same meeting a young minister met me and said, "You won't remember, but I was saved in your campaign at Eastern Nazarene College in 1935 and am now pastoring a church in Maryland." "Every day is payday."

That same week in Somerville another minister, in middle life now and a pastor in eastern Pennsylvania, approached me and said, "Well, I did it. Remember at the Preachers' Conference in Pittsburgh in 1943 I was in business and fighting God's call to the ministry. I came forward following your missionary address and

settled matters. Well, I resigned my position and am now a minister." "Every day is payday."

A few days ago I received a letter from California. The writer said, "Am in a great revival campaign. Am now an evangelist. Do you remember a taxi driver who was converted in your campaign in Modesto, California, in 1935? I am that taxi driver. God is giving us the greatest revival in the history of this church with scores of people finding God." I laid the letter down and found tears trickling down my cheeks. Yes, "Every day is payday."

A seminary student arose and said, "I was converted and answered the call to preach in Dr. DeLong's revival at Bethany-Peniel College in 1944." "Every day is payday."

Mr. Lunn is right. Invest in souls, and your returns are perpetual and increasing.

The other day a letter came to the office of the Nazarene Radio League. It was from a couple. It read, "We have no children. We have a valuable estate. After hearing 'Showers of Blessing' program for several weeks we have now changed our will, for we want our money to spread the gospel around the world by radio." What a wonderful way to invest! What glorious returns!

Another man wrote, saying, "Have been blessed by 'Showers of Blessing' program and want to give a great part of my estate to spread the gospel in foreign lands."

I met a man in the Middle West where I was preaching one Sunday. He said, "I am well fixed financially. My desire is to provide an income for my only daughter through an annuity and give all of my money and property to missions, and seminary, or the radio."

If you've earned your money legitimately it means blood, sweat, nerve strain - it represents you. Don't throw it away. Invest yourself in God's kingdom.

Clip spiritual coupons forever. "Every day is payday."

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20 -- WHY NOT TRY RELIGION?

For our scriptural meditation ponder on this simple but effective remedy for sick, sinful, unhealthy personalities as discovered in the First Epistle of John, the first chapter, and ninth verse -- If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Our greatest need is a genuine revival of religion. Religion is the guarantor of morality. Morality is the guarantor of integrity, honesty, righteousness, and goodness, to say nothing of common decency. When moral standards break down and ethical practices cease, we have corruption, dishonesty, debauchery, and crime.

That hour has struck all around the world. We are at the lowest level morally in our history. Crime and irreligion are at new all-time high peaks.

The number-one problem of the hour is how to restore morality, integrity, and decency. Education, as such, is impotent. Social service lacks the dynamic. Philosophy is powerless. Politics only accentuates our chaos. Congress, committees, commissions, boards, investigations achieve no more than to reveal our evil conditions. They are helpless to effect any permanent improvement. Every day in every way we grow worse and worse.

This is not the ravings of a fanatic, but the reviewing of the facts. Statesmen, educators, sociologists, and criminologists are alarmed. Something must be done. And it may be later than we realize. Is it too late? Well, at least it is not too late to try.

What shall we try? Why not try religion? Morality minus religion is without dynamic. To make ethics effective they must be rooted and grounded in metaphysics. And metaphysics is nothing but the theoretical name for ultimate realities such as belief in God, immortality, freedom of the will, and eternal values.

If there is no God, if I am not immortal, if I have no soul, if there are no eternal values, if there is no judgment, it doesn't matter what I do. Just "eat, drink, and be merry; for tomorrow we die." But if there is a God, if I am to live beyond death, if there is a judgment, everything matters. What I do is important. My acts must line up with the immutable laws of a moral universe. Here is morality connected with religion. Religion gives morality meaning as well as power.

We need to ask some old-fashioned but fundamental questions. What are we living for? Does life have any significance? Are we more than animals? Do we live beyond the grave? Am I an immortal soul? Is there a God? Is the universe moral? Are there any immutable laws of right and wrong? Such questions are sobering, but all-important.

Books by the dozens are on sale dealing with troublesome problems of people. Why Do We Behave Like Human Beings? Why Do We Do What We Do? How to Be Happy; How to Get Along with Ourselves; Getting the Most Out of Life.

Psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and endocrinology try to give life meaning where there is none, and try to explain why we are hateful, mean, jealous, wicked, and criminal. It is all futile. Behind every anxiety neurosis is a psychosis, and

behind most psychoses is found guilt. Revealed and confessed guilt is of no value unless it can be removed and the awful mental condemnation wiped out of the conscience. Here psychiatry is helpless. It can probe the personality and reveal sin, but it has no power to forgive or remove sin.

Only God can forgive sinful acts. The basis of such forgiveness is the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. The condition of forgiveness is confession and repentance. Faith in God's mercy and power brings His kiss of complete pardon. Guilt takes wings and flies away; condemnation is removed; the conscience is purged; the mind is relieved; the heart, cleansed rain fact, the entire personality is released. A new day dawns:
the glorious sun arises anew in your life. It is invigorating, refreshing, exhilarating, satisfying, inspiring.

Yes, my friend, that is your need. It is the need of every American citizen. It is the need of every person throughout the world.
Why not try religion?

* * * * *

21 -- IS PRAYER WORTHWHILE?

Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:9-13

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

* * *

Prayer is more than meditation. It is deeper than ritual. It is more than beautiful words phrased to pious meter and intoned in solemn voice. Prayer goes beyond external conformity to adopted forms of worship. It is deeper than thought, richer than words, and mightier than pen. One of the simplest and best definitions of prayer is this: "Prayer is talking to God and God talking to me."

Is such an experience possible? Millions testify in the affirmative. The greatest of men, as well as the masses, have prayed. It does seem to be a colossal mystery how an infinite, all-powerful God could be reached by a poor, finite human being. But there are many unsolved mysteries. Yet we accept their beneficial results without first demanding full understanding.

Many of us do not understand how an automobile functions, but we don't refuse to ride. Few of us can fathom how a ship heavier than air can fly, but we accept the benefits of aviation. The radio is another baffling mystery to most of us; yet we do not refuse to listen. How can I hear a voice three thousand miles away? How can I televise a friend and transmit his features through air, stone, cement, and steel through miles of space? But I hear and see him and he hears and sees me; yet neither of us understands how.

Is prayer any more mysterious? Because you don't comprehend how, is that a valid reason why you should discard its benefits and discount the testimony of millions to its reality and value? Many of the most brilliant minds, greatest statesmen, and outstanding writers have been men who prayed.

There must be great value in prayer or it would have disappeared years ago. The reason it survives generation after generation is because men have found in prayer a source of power, wealth, and benefit.

Why is it worth while to pray? In so short an address it would be impossible to consider adequately all of its values. We shall mention nine briefly.

1. Prayer brings one into the presence of God and reveals the sinfulness of man as he views the holiness of God. The prayer of penitence brings forgiveness. Guilt is removed and condemnation is gone.

2. Prayer for cleansing brings an innermost purging of sin from the soul.

3. Following these initial experiences of prayer, one finds great moral strength to meet the battles of life by daily periods of devotion.

4. In hours of extreme emergency nothing but prayer can meet the need. Abraham Lincoln said, "I have been driven to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom, and that about me, seemed insufficient for the day."

5. Many have found that prayer was the only means of genuine help in the dark hours of sorrow and death.

6. When the lights go out and everything seems lost, prayer turns the switch, and the light of hope dispels the blackness.

7. Prayer also buttresses faith. When one is tempted to doubt the integrity of people and question the purposes of God, prayer scatters doubts and clarifies God's meaning.

8. Prayer enables God to release His power so as to change conditions relative to persons and things. Prayer is more than a subjective reflex on one's self.

It is objective in that God hears our petition and acts to answer. Lord Tennyson expressed this truth when he said, "More things are wrought by prayer than the world dreams of."

9. Prayer is intercourse and communion with God. Such intimate association enriches the soul, clarifies the mind, and activates the will.

James Montgomery wrote:

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Unuttered or expressed,
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air,
His watchword at the gates of death;
He enters heav'n with prayer.

Sylvester Horn, the great English preacher and member of Parliament, was approached by a young theologian with this question:
"Sir, what is the source of your power?"

"If I have any power," Dr. Horn replied, "it must come from my garden. Come over sometime and see it."

Shortly after, the young minister took advantage of the gracious invitation of the great divine and called at Dr. Horn's residence. He was taken to the rear of the home to a small garden not more than twenty feet wide by thirty feet long. The young man looked surprised as he viewed this small patch of flowers, and finally stammered, "But it is so small -- so narrow and so short, sir!"

"But," said Sylvester Horn, "had you noticed how high it is?"

Too many of us devote all of our time to horizontal activities. We need vertical experiences. We must look up and beyond our unsettled, changing environment. Our garden can extend from earth to God. Horizontal social service needs the vision, dynamic, inspiration, and richness of vertical intercourse between us and God, and God and us.

Prayer means power -- vision, faith, hope, love, and communion. It is the heart of religion.

Girgensohn spoke truly when he said, "Prayer is a perfectly accurate instrument for grading the religious life of the soul. Did one only know how a man prays, and what he prays about, one would be able to see how much religion that

man has. When a man, without any witnesses, speaks with God, the soul stands unveiled before its Creator."

Why not avail yourself of the untapped resources of prayer?

* * * * *

22 -- GOD'S PROMISES ARE GILT-EDGED

From an early practice has come an expression meaning stability, reliability, soundness, sureness, and certainty. It is to refer to anything as "gilt-edged." This designation grew out of a distinction made between bonds engraved on plain paper and those on paper edged on all four sides with gold leaf. The latter had preferred claim. They were payable in gold.

Today we have two designations for stocks, common and preferred. The latter have first claim; they are given preference in case of settlement. In reality they are "gilt-edged."

God's promises are like that -- they are absolutely "gilt-edged." They are "preferred" stock. They are "gold" bonds. They are the best, choice, select, priceless, first-rate, of the first water, first class, exquisite, crack, tiptop, prime, cardinal, superfine, eighteen-carat. In all the universe nothing can compare with the promises of God for reliability, dependability, safety, surety, and stability. When God gives you an "I Promise to Pay," it is certain. When God issues an, "Owe You," one can depend on payment. Yes, His promises are gilt-edged.

Every promise of God is built upon five solid, unshakable, immovable pillars.

Pillar number one -- God's justice will not permit Him to lie or deceive.

Pillar number two -- God's omniscience will not suffer Him to forget.

Pillar number three -- God's truth will not permit Him to change.

Pillar number four -- God's goodness will not allow Him to neglect.

Pillar number five -- God's omnipotence will enable Him to perform.

What God says He means. He does not deceive or lie. When He once makes the promise, He never forgets He made it. What He promises He will do. He changeth not. If the need prompts the promise, He will not neglect; He is good and true. And what He promises He is gloriously able to fulfill; He is all-powerful.

Every promise is "gilt-edged." It is backed up by God's justice, God's omniscience, God's veracity, God's goodness, and God's power. What could be more reliable and dependable?

God's gilt-edged promises are recorded in His Holy Book, the Bible. There are thousands of them. They are there to be appropriated by us. We must draw on the storehouse, the bank of God. It is infallible, inexhaustible, superabundant. No check is ever refused. No draft is returned unpaid. The Imperial Royal Bank of the New Jerusalem, incorporated by God himself, who is President, Cashier, and Chairman of the Board of Directors, has funds available to redeem and enrich all of mankind. The poet wrote:

I have a Friend in heaven--
Jesus is His name--
A Friend who never changes,
Every day the same.

This Friend I have in heaven's land
Is rich beyond degree;
He owns the greatest bank of all,
And signs my checks for me.

They never say, in Jesus' bank,
"No funds to pay on hand."
The wealth of all the universe
Is under His command.

-- C. H. Jack Linn

God's promises are gilt-edged. Some are hypothetical. The benefit is dependent upon the fulfillment of the "if clause." When that is met, the promise is fulfilled.

Let us look at just four of the hundreds.

Here is the number-one promise to the sinner, recorded in I John 1:9. Note the "if" clause. "If we confess our sins" -- what is the promise? What happens? "God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

God said it. The five pillars support it. His justice, omniscience, goodness, truthfulness, and power will back it up. You can be forgiven -- if you confess your sins.

Here is another. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us

from all sin" (I John 1:7). Cleansing is one of God's gilt-edged promises -- "if we walk in the light."

Here is another gilt-edged promise. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). With that, God opens the whole bank -- "what ye will" and "it shall be done," if ye abide in Him.

One more of these promises should be encouraging. Jesus said: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

"If I go" -- well, He went; the promise is He'll come again. Are you looking for Him?

God's promises never fail. They are gilt-edged. Trust them. Believe them. Test them. Appropriate them. They are yours.

The hymn writer had discovered the secret, for he wrote:

'Tis true, oh, yes, 'tis true;
God's wonderful promise is true;
For I've trusted, and tested, and tried it,
And I know God's promise is true.¹

They are absolutely gilt-edged.

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23 -- WHY BE RELIGIOUS?

Is religion a help or a hindrance, a blessing or a curse, a value or a nuisance? Some persons are religious, others are irreligious, while many are nonreligious. To put the matter on a purely pragmatic, practical basis, Why be religious?

Professor Charles S. Braden sent a questionnaire to people of all ages, classes, and theological backgrounds, listing sixtyfive possible reasons why people are religious. He asked each to vote on the reason he deemed most important. The result of this poll is very interesting as well as very significant. The six top answers are:

Sixth -- Religion excites thoughtful people to believe in God and to worship Him.

Fifth -- Religion furnishes people with a moral ideal.

Fourth -- Religion stimulates a person to better things.

Third -- Religion motivates human kindness.

Second -- Religion brings help in time of stress.

First -- Religion brings meaning to life.

Such are the six outstanding benefits of religion out of a possible sixty-five. These alone would prove the case for religion's value. In a word, these by-products of religion are: (1) meaning of life, (2) help, (3) kindness, (4) aspiration, (5) ideals, and (6) worship of God. Let us consider these.

1. Religion does give meaning to life. Without it life has no purpose. Why live? To eat, drink, sleep, play, die? An animal can carry out that schedule. Religion answers the questions of the great -- who, where, why, what, and whither? Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? What am I expected to do? Whither am I going? No person has a satisfactory philosophy of life until these questions are answered.

2. Religion not only offers help in the hour of stress and strain, but it provides such assistance as needed. Comfort, solace, strength, courage, and faith all come from religion.

Edmund Burke, the great statesman, once said, "We know, and, what is better, we feel inwardly, that religion is the basis of civil society, and the source of all good and of all comfort."

3. Religion does motivate human kindness. Without it people are cold, cruel, ruthless, and tyrannical. "Blessed are the merciful." "Blessed are they that mourn." Sympathy, ability to appreciate another's sorrow, and tender consideration for another's problem are by-products of religion. "Be ye kind one to another" is a Christian admonition. Someone beautifully put it, "Kindness is the velvet of human intercourse."

4. Religion stimulates a person to better things, higher levels, and lofty achievements. Religion is a spur, a drive, a stimulus, a force to the great plateaus of moral and spiritual exploits. Without it one is satisfied to live on low levels, stay in lazy valleys, and be lethargic, indifferent, and indolent.

5. Religion furnishes moral ideals. Without it ethics is impotent. Morality must be rooted and grounded in metaphysics. Metaphysics deals with belief in God, immortality, and higher values. Religion is the practical and metaphysics the theoretical name for eternal realities. If there is no God, if we are not immortal, if there are no higher values, why be moral? Ethics must have a dynamic. Religion provides such. Morality minus religion is a feeble, futile, foolish fable. But with religion it becomes strong, powerful, rational, eternal, and real.

6. Religion causes people to worship God. This brings a sense of dependence, a feeling of humility, and a spirit of co-operation with God in making this world a better place. Religion is important. Religion if necessary.

Daniel Webster said, "Religion is a necessary, an indispensable element in any great human character. There is no living without it."

John Newton also made a significant statement when he said, "Religion is the best armor in the world, but the worst cloak." Yes, it brings strength. You need it.

Religion, before it can be completely and fully effective, must include the idea of salvation. True religion will bring triumphant salvation. You cannot be religious by just resolving to be. Wishing, thinking, and aspiring do not make one religious. To be genuinely religious one must be rid of sin. Sin binds the soul, corrupts the mind, blackens the heart, weakens the will, and prostitutes the emotions. We are lost. We must be saved from sin and its effects of guilt, remorse, and condemnation. Salvation through Christ is the only cure for sin. Religion has many benefits, but they can be realized only as one is the recipient of salvation.

Why be religious? Six benefits have been listed and considered. How to be religious is the final, important question.

The answer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Salvation is yours. When you have received Christ, you will be changed and it will be no problem then to be religious and receive all the glorious benefits of true religion.

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24 -- STANDING FOR NOTHING: FALLING FOR ANYTHING

Scripture Reading:

I Cor. 16:13

13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

Daniel 1:8; 3:16-18

8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Eph. 6:13-17

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

*** * ***

Recently as I passed a Wayside Pulpit, this pithy statement struck me: "Many fall for everything but stand for nothing."

We are living in a day when tolerance seems to be the top virtue. We are urged to be broad-minded. Don't be little, don't be narrow, don't be dogmatic, don't be intolerant. Be big, be broad, be tolerant.

And the result -- we have become so broad, taking so much ground, that we have become spread so thin that we have no strength. Breadth and shallowness go together. Depth, too, is important. If it is sacrificed for breadth it becomes a flimsy, weak covering for anything and everything. We live in an age that is superficial, light, frivolous, surface -- broad but shallow. To be broad and shallow is to be superficial, weak, and anemic.

To be deep and narrow is to be stagnant, reactionary, and fanatical.

To be broad and deep is the need of every person -- breadth of vision, breadth of love, breadth of interest but depth of spirit, depth of character, depth of principles, depth of integrity. All of this is possible by being broad-minded on incidentals and nonessentials but narrow-minded on fundamentals and principles.

Let us be as narrow-minded as the multiplication table and as broad-minded as its application to the problems of mathematics. Two times two equals four and never five. To be tolerant and sacrifice rationality is to be foolish. We know the answer, and nothing is accomplished by being broadminded and tolerant by saying, "Two times two may equal five, and if anybody wants to believe that way it is all right with me." That is utter nonsense. It isn't all right. It is wrong -- and anybody believing it will get in all kinds of trouble.

Some things are right; some are wrong. The sun rises every morning and sets every evening. The seasons come regularly. The law of gravitation functions consistently and persistently.

All scientific experiment is based on the intolerance of natural law. It is narrow -- yes, as narrow as truth. There is no place for tolerance in the realm of fact. A thing is true or false. Principles demand intolerance. Truth is intolerant. Right is intolerant. Broad-mindedness relative to principles, truth, and right is the broad road to utter ruin. Strait is the gate and narrow is the road of truth and right.

The Ten Commandments are immutable. "They are right. Tolerance does not change them. You cannot break them. They'll break you if you ignore them. They are intolerant. Moral standards are immutable. They are unchanging and unbending. Stealing is wrong. Lying is wrong. Unscriptural divorce is wrong. Sin is wrong. It can never be right no matter how broad-minded and tolerant we become. Today everything goes -- but it really doesn't if it is wrong.

We must stand for something. The man who stands for nothing falls for anything. He accepts all ideas, all fads, all theories; shifts with every wind; changes with every moral climate; turns color like a chameleon in every environment. Just a weak, spineless jellyfish!

St. Paul stood for something. Hear him say, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

The blind man was intolerant. He said, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

Daniel was intolerant. "He purposed in Ms heart that he would not defile himself" (Daniel 1:8).

The three Hebrew children stood for something; they doled the king. Listen! They said: "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Daniel 3:17-18).

Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego, and Paul stood by right and principle; and God stood by them. May God give us men who will stand -- stand for something and not fall for everything. H. I. Phillips, the popular columnist, wrote:

"America needs a little more respect for the ancient truths -- and the Word of God.

"A return to the old-time standards of character that make it easy for a man to become indignant over corruption, come to a boil over injustice and get fighting mad over a wrong.

"Restoration of the church to its place of first importance, even if it interferes with golf, baseball, and the week-end auto trip or the boating trip.

"The immediate restoration of the Ten Commandments as a guide to living."

God give us men.

Babcock* well wrote:

**"God give us men. The time demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith, willing hands:
Men whom the lust of office does not kill,
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy,
Men who possess opinions and a will:
Men who have honor; men who will not lie.
Men who can stand before a demagogue
And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking:
Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog
In public duty and in private thinking.
For while the rabble, with their thumb-worn creeds,
Their large profession and their little deeds,
Mingle in selfish strife, lo, Freedom weeps,
Wrong rules the land, and waiting Justice sleeps!**

[*Dr. DeLong mistakenly attributed this to the wrong author. Actually, "God Give Us Men" was written by Josiah Gilbert Holland (1819-1881 -- in his work "Wanted" written in 1872). -- DVM]

St. Paul exhorts, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (I Cor. 16:13). He also admonishes the Ephesians ".... and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore"

Be bold in what you stand for. Beware of what you fall for.

*** * * * ***

25 -- MODERN PARADOXES

Scripture Reading: II Corinthians 6:9-10

9 As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;

10 As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

* * *

A paradox is "an assertion or sentiment seemingly contradictory or opposed to common sense, but that yet may be true in fact" (Webster).

We find several paradoxes in the Bible. Here is one "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." And another -- "as poor, yet making many rich." And a third -- "as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

To the average person these seem to be contradictory. But they are not. The first clause of each refers to present, material, physical, temporal things; the last clause of each, to permanent, eternal, spiritual matters. The point of view shifts and the place of emphasis changes.

One might be as rich as a Rockefeller and be a pauper spiritually. One might have nothing of worldly wealth and yet possess all true value spiritually. One might sorrow over temporal losses and yet rejoice over God's ultimate purposes. Paradoxes -- yes, but not contradictions.

Nothing is so pathetic as a poor rich man, a man with a big bank account and a little soul. And nothing is so inspiring as a rich poor man, a man with a small bank account but a big spirit. It is not causally necessary that material riches and spiritual wealth be divorced. Neither does a man have to be a pauper to be a spiritual millionaire. Too often, however, material wealth has usurped the place of spiritual value. It is one's estimate of value that governs his interests. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Too often it is "God or gold."

We have noted briefly three Biblical paradoxes. Today we have many modern paradoxes. Permit me to call your attention to five.

1. We have an increase in horsepower and a decrease in man power.

In 1800 we had the equivalent of one horsepower for every person. In 1930 we had thirteen and one-half horsepower at the disposal of every man, woman, and child. Today we have over twenty-five horsepower per person. What does that mean? A horsepower is a measure of mechanical energy. It refers to the work done

when 33,000 pounds is raised one foot in one minute. Think of all the servants at modern man's disposal: automobiles, vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, washing machines -- all kinds of power, labor-saving devices.

Man's physical parts have been extended. The telescope has lengthened his sight, the telephone his voice, the automobile his legs, the radio his ears, the atomic bomb his fists. His body has been enlarged. And this "cult of the gigantic body" has been labeled "progress." But bigness does not mean goodness. The number-one modern paradox is the increase in horsepower and the decrease in man power. Here again the first refers to material and the second to spiritual. Like the rich fool of whom Jesus told us -- "increased in goods" but decreased in spirit!

2. A second strange modern paradox is the fact that, while physical life has become easier through science, moral life has become harder. We have creature comforts for the body but little spiritual comfort for the soul. Material invention has far outstripped moral achievements. Someone has even proposed that we declare a holiday for scientific invention until we bring morality up to its level of attainment. While we have increased materials, we have decreased morals.

3. A third modern paradox is the emphasis on groups and the lessened importance of individuals. Mass production requires the absorption of the individual. There is an increase in centralization of power federally, industrially, and ecclesiastically. We demand bigness at the cost of individuality. Politically, national socialism, Fascism, and Communism are examples of the importance of the state and the insignificance of the individual.

4. Today, because of the accelerated means of locomotion, we live closer together physically but farther apart socially. We rub elbows but we are segregated socially, religiously, and economically.

5. The fifth and most astounding modern paradox is evidenced by the increase of our fears and the decrease of our faith. We fear more and more, and believe less and less. We are afraid of dictators, of atomic bombs, of incurable diseases, of economic depressions, and of death. And at the same time our faith in men, in religion, and in God has decreased. What is our trouble?

It is the battle between the body and spirit, between right and wrong, between God and Satan. As we grow materially, we shrink spiritually. As we invent mechanically, we lessen morally. As we grow wealthy materially, we become poor spiritually.

In brief and in conclusion the whole paradoxical matter may be summed up in the pertinent question Jesus asked. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" And again Jesus put the matter succinctly

when referring to the rich fool whose barns needed enlarging. "This night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be?"

To be rich, powerful, great in the material, physical, temporal sense and to be poor, weak, and small in the spiritual, eternal sense is the number-one tragedy and the most alarming paradox possible. Beware!!

* * * * *

26 -- IS HEAVEN A PLACE?

Scripture Reading: Revelation 21:1-4

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

* * *

A golden voice floated out on the early evening air, "If ah had wings, ah'd fly away, fly away to hebben." An old colored mammy was thinking of a better land, free from pain, toil, dirt, heat, and disappointments. She lived in a poor Chicago flat in a crowded area. Her husband worked in the slaughterhouse, and her children played in the dirty street. It had been a sweltering day; the humidity was depressing; the temperature was still high in early evening; not a breeze was blowing. After a hard day's work, children fretful and irritated, the mother and wife of that dingy, small home sat on the front stoop and allowed her mind and heart to leave that irritating environment and wander in glorious anticipation to a better country, free from stifling heat, unbearable humidity, cramped quarters, and never-ending toil -- a place of comfort, spaciousness, happiness, and rest. And so she sang, "If ah had wings, ah'd fly away -- fly away to hebben."

For that old colored woman, heaven would be primarily a place of rest. That was her dream, her desire, her innermost craving -- -rest.

Yes, heaven is a place. Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3).

Heaven is more than a state of mind. It is more than a figure of speech. It is more than a poetic imagination. It is more than a pleasant dream. It is a definite place to which persons go to dwell with God.

Heaven is more than just a place. It is a place where we shall know our loved ones and share their companionship in unending bliss forever.

It is a place where the righteous shall be vindicated; the good shall be honored, and the truthful shall be rewarded. Heaven is a place where the injustices of earth shall be righted, where the scales shall be balanced.

Heaven makes physical death rational. Without such a future existence, death makes the universe a madhouse. Heaven gives hope to bereaved loved ones.

Heaven conserves the highest product of the universe-human personality -- and it guarantees the continued blooming of the finest flower that grows in man's garden -- love. Death is only the end of a chapter, not the end of the book.

Heaven is a place where one's present legitimate interests may be completed and fulfilled without restraint or "limitation. Renouvier said, "A man always dies before he has finished his work." Dr. Perry adds a similar statement, "Wherever there is a will at all, there is unfinished business." The urges, drives, and aspirations of the immortal soul are impossible of fulfillment here. More time is needed. An unhindered environment is demanded. Heaven is such a place.

The old colored mammy will find rest; the artist will paint the glories of the Milky Way; the engineer may build a bridge from Orion to the Pleiades; the musician will play a golden harp of a thousand strings; the conductor will direct an orchestra of 144,000 pieces; the choral master will lead a choir of 5,000,000 voices; the philosopher will revel in eternal truth; the theologian will find all the answers to his baffling problems. The capacities and tastes of all will be completely filled and exuberantly satisfied for ever.

Heaven is a place where one may work without suffering weariness. Heaven is a place where one may revel in aesthetic pleasure without the aftermath of pain. Heaven is a place of age, duration, without deterioration.

Heaven is a place free from fatigue, fear, pain, sorrow, tears, disappointments, separations, suffering, sin, and death.

No wonder the Psalmist cried out, "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God."

Dr. Perry expresses this truth beautifully when he speaks of the possibility of immortality: "One will make his life good as he goes, hoping that he may go on;

conceiving his life beyond in terms of his highest moments -- in terms of valorous achievements, its joyful insights, its magnanimity, its melting of the heart, its loving companionships, so that when he dies he will be already living in the manner most worthy of continued living, if happily his time be extended beyond the grave."

Eternal life begins here. One must begin to live a life here and now that is worthy of being eternal.

Heaven is the perfect, ideal place because it is free from sin. Nothing is there which destroys, mars, ruins, or decays.

Only persons free from sin are eligible to enter that place. St. John wrote, "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27). Jesus admonished His disciples that they rejoice because their names were written in heaven. Jesus came to bring eternal life. Such life begins here. Those who receive it are worthy to live eternally in that place -- heaven.

* * * * *

27 -- GOD IS NOT DEAD

Scripture Reading: Psalms 139:1-3, 7-12, 23-24

1 O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.

2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

3 Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

* * *

With apologies to Canon Bernard Iddings Bell, I use the title of his current book as my subject, **God Is Not Dead.**

Men in their open and defiant sin may act as though there were no God, and nations may go on in their wickedness and immoral corruption as though the universe were minus any Supreme Being; but such conduct only accentuates man's irrationality.

God's silence is not equivalent to God's annihilation. Because God does not speak does not mean either that He approves or that He has lost the power to speak. Because God does not cry out in tones of thunder and with a sword of fire wipe out human devils does not mean that He no longer cares what man does nor that He himself is dead. Silence could mean that the fury of God's wrath is piling up. Eventually God will speak and, more terrible, He will act.

The Psalmist cried out, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

To the willful sinner and moral reprobate it is a fearful truth to know that God is living.

To the Christian it is a terrible thought to imagine that God is dead. If God is dead all of the higher values are dead.

If God is dead faith is futile, hope is blasted, and love is meaningless.

If God is dead religion is a colossal myth, Calvary is merely a human tragedy, and the Resurrection is an empty tale.

If God is dead home, mother, mercy, compassion, and sympathy have lost their sweet consolation.

If God is dead death itself is God, and immortality is obliterated and flung behind the walls of oblivion forever. If God is dead heaven is the cemetery of the universe.

If God is dead nothing in life matters. Ideals are fictitious, sacrifice is wasted, suffering is useless, martyrdom is insanity, and the Judgment is adjourned ad infinitum.

If God is dead the human race indeed has reached the street called Dead End.

If God is dead there is no place for values, no guarantor of justice, no rewarder of righteousness.

If God is dead the universe is a madhouse and we are in a terrible chaotic condition -- much like the little five-year-old boy saying his prayers at night before going to bed. His father was in the army and his mother worked in a defense plant. The little fellow prayed: "Oh, dear God, bless my daddy in the war and bring him back safely. Bless my mamma while she works. And, O God, please take good care of yourself; for if anything happens to You we're in an awful mess." The boy was right. If God is dead, we are in an awful mess. But -- God is not dead.

Wicked men may flourish like a green bay tree for a while. Hitlers and Mussolinis may stride all over the earth with pompous air and tyrannical ruthlessness, and it may seem that Justice and Righteousness have abdicated. But in due season the universal laws and eternal mills begin to grind, governed by an all-powerful God. Yes, it may appear that "Truth is forever on the scaffold"; but God is quietly and silently standing in the shadows, watching o'er His own.

God's silence is not an approval of your sinful life. Because God does not rebuke does not mean that He approves. The rich fool to whom Jesus referred made the mistake of forgetting God. But he made a more tragic error of assuming that, because God had been silent for years, either He did not exist or He had forgotten him. Oh, no, at the very height of his prosperity God broke the silence and said, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

A man is irrational who forgets God. And a man is a fool who says there is no God. This is the apex of insanity. If God is dead, there is no rationality in the universe.

But He is not dead. He lives! His universe is immortal. His laws are immutable and irrevocable. You only fool yourself by thinking that you can break His laws. Oh, no, you can't break them -- but they will ultimately break you. You'd better line your life up with God and His laws. His truth and justice go marching on in spite of Caesars, Hitlers, and Mussolinis. God is not dead.

Julia Ward Howe struck the militant, victorious truth when she wrote:

Mine eyes have seen the glory
Of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage,
Where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning
Of His terrible, swift sword;
His truth is marching on.

* * * * *

Scripture Reading: Mark 16:1-7

1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

*** * ***

The man who one time was a millionaire suffers the pangs of poverty when his money is gone more than the man who has never known the comforts of wealth.

The man who one time walked with kings in their palaces, counseled with the mighty leaders of nations, and fraternized with the princes of industry feels the loss of such associations more than the person who has never known such pinnacles of power and influence.

The man who one time had radiant health, robust vitality, and abounding vigor suffers more their loss when he is stricken by disease than the person who has never known the joys of superior physical well-being.

So it is with the man who has one time known the joys of Christian living, who one time met the living Saviour' and heard Him speak "Peace" to his troubled soul, who has been freed from the pangs of condemnation, who has been liberated from the constant nagging of guilt. To have one time known the glorious hours of communion and fellowship with the Master, and then to have lost such relationship -- to have the sense of condemnation and guilt return -- and, worse, to have the additional awful feeling that one has betrayed Christ, spurned love, played traitor to the cause, double, crossed other members of the Kingdom, stabbed one's better self -- well, life is never the same any more.

Better never to have known, better to be ignorant of the joys of salvation, better never to have vowed -- but, alas, it is too late! What is done is done. The

record is written. History cannot be erased -- and memory of better clays still functions.

Peter is an example of a man who one time knew. He denied his Lord, cursed, swore, and failed His Master at the court scene, the trial, when he was needed most. As the cock crowed for the second time, Jesus looked at him tenderly; and poor old Peter "wept bitterly" as he turned his back on his best Friend and left the place of trial. Yes, Peter one time knew.

There is no more outstanding personality in the New Testament than Peter. He is mentioned 162 times -- the same as Paul. Paul was an educated, polished, cultured, refined, and scholarly individual. Peter was an uneducated, rough, uncouth, uncultured fisherman. He did not have the advantages Paul had, but there is little doubt that his I.Q. was as high. He was intelligent. Lloyd Douglas always refers to him in The Robe as the Big Fisherman. He was big -- big in every way: physically, mentally, socially. I visualize him as a man about six feet four inches tall -- rugged, tough, tanned by the constant exposure to the sun and hardened by the winds and salty sprays of the sea.

When his brother Andrew introduced him to Jesus, he immediately left his fishing nets, bade his family good-bye, and followed the Master faithfully. For more than three years he saw Jesus heal the sick, cleanse the leper, and raise the dead. He sat at His feet and heard His matchless words. He loved Him, adored Him, yes, worshiped Him.

Peter was a leader -- dynamic, quick, sincere, and courageous. He was the spokesman, brilliant and intelligent. He was ever ready to admit his wrongs and quick to repent. Yes, Peter is a lovable, admirable character -- so much like so many of us!

But he faced his great crisis. The Last Supper had been held. Judas had betrayed the Master. Jesus was a prisoner. It was all too much for poor old Peter. He followed afar off, warmed himself by the fire; and then a maid accused him of being a follower of Jesus. Instantly that carnal, man-fearing spirit took over, and he denied his Lord -- not once, but thrice. And then the cock crew -- and Peter remembered the prediction of Jesus at the Last Supper after he had boasted. Jesus also remembered. He turned from Pilate and looked tenderly at Peter. Well, that was enough. Peter wept bitterly and walked away.

Poor old Peter was troubled, condemned -- yes, completely down. They crucified Jesus -- buried Him. Peter said, "I go fishing. Back to old life! The game is over."

But the story has a glorious sequel! Very early in the morning, the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Salome went to the tomb to anoint the dead body of Jesus. To their amazement they found the tomb empty

and a young man sitting on the right side. He said, "Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen But go your way, tell his disciples that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him." What a message! A dead Man living!

But I did not quote all the message. He did say, "Tell his disciples." Yes, but he added, "And Peter." Tell My disciples and Peter. Don't forget poor old Peter. Give him a special invitation. He'll think he has committed the unpardonable sin. He'll think there is no hope for one who went so high and fell so low. But be sure to tell Peter. I want to see him again. What a message!

Friend, you who one time knew Him, He is sending a special invitation with your name on it today. He is saying, "Tell My disciples and John -- and Ruth -- and Mary -- and Peter." There is hope for you. Meet Jesus again. Come home today. Jesus calls for you -- "and Peter." Come home.

* * * * *

29 -- WHAT ARE YOU WORTH?

Scripture Reading:

Psalms 37:16

16 A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.

II Corinthians 6:10

10 As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

* * *

A man's success today is judged by the size of his bank account, the type of home he lives in, the texture of the clothes he wears, or the power of the automobile he drives. These measuring sticks are all concerned with what a person owns, not with what he is.

What one does is often used as a method of evaluating one's worth. If a person can belong to several lodges, a service club, a church, be a director of several banks, an officer of several business organizations, be appointed to numerous committees -- in brief, be a doer -- he is considered a success.

What one owns is important. But things are only and always means, not ends. They are merely instruments which should lead to intrinsic values. What one does

is important. But pure activity -- just doing, doing, doing -- is meaningless unless it leads to a good end. Activity should always be a means only.

What one is is all-important. Being is more important than either having or doing. Ultimately it will not be what you have or what you have done, but what you are, that counts.

There is a relation among having, doing, and being. What you are will determine what you do and what you have. If your objective is the acquisition of things, you will become empty. If your goal is popular acclaim through activity, you will become impoverished personally. If your purpose is enrichment of spirit and the betterment of other persons, you will become valuable.

So the question of this sermon is, "What are you worth?" with the accent on "you." Not, What is your home worth or your automobile? Not, What is the value of your social standing or your business rating? But, What are you worth?

A Wayside Pulpit carried this paradoxical question. "What would you be worth if you should lose all you own?"

Many years ago a wealthy, influential king sat at a banquet table, drinking and reveling. A hand began to write on the wall, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." Before morning he died. He owned a lot but was himself a pauper.

Suppose you were called to step into God's eternal scales of the universe. Would you weigh heavy, or are you a lightweight or featherweight? Not one pound of gold weighs in God's balances. Not one pound of flesh nor position, fame, popularity, nor office weighs in His scales. What does weigh? Just you, yourself, your soul, your spirit -- you.

I recall one of the resolutions we used in college debating, "The curse of the poor is their poverty." This of course referred to physical, material things. But there is a more acute, more tragic kind of poverty-expressed pertinently by the following:

The Really Poor Man

A man is poor:

If he is without friends.

If he has low ideals.

If he has a guilty conscience.

If he has lost his self-respect.

If his morals are questionable.

If he has lost his grip upon himself.

If he is selfish, uncharitable, or cruel.

If he has forfeited his health for wealth.

If his mind and soul have been neglected.

If he has traded away his character for money.

If his wife and family do not love and respect him.

If he has a disagreeable disposition that makes enemies or repels his friends.

If making money has crowded out the cultivation of his spiritual life.

If worldliness has caused him to lose fellowship with Christ.

If all his investments and possessions are laid up on earth and he has no treasures in heaven. -- Watchman Examiner

Haldor Lillenas, one of the greatest of living hymn writers, has expressed the truth of this sermon in his poem entitled Poverty."

Poverty

**If in my heart there is no love for those by sin defiled,
And if I lack compassion for a wayward, wand'ring child;
If I possess no strong desire to help him in his need,
To lead him back to paths of peace,
Then I am poor indeed.**

**If I have lost the tenderness, the grace I once possess'd,
If I cannot appreciate another soul's distress;
If I have not within my breast a willingness to feed
The hungry multitudes of earth,
Then I am poor indeed.**

**If I have not the strength to feel another's burden sore,
If I am blind to all the needs that clamor at my door;
If I am deaf to all the cry of hearts that break and bleed,
Without the sympathy of love,
Then I am poor indeed.**

If I cannot appreciate the good in those I meet,
If in my blindness I abhor the outcast on the street;
And if my hard, cold heart desires to crush the bruised reed--
Then know that I have lost my wealth,
And I am poor indeed.

And if I thrill not at the touch of dimpled baby hands,
Nor feel the wealth my humble home and all its love commands;
And if the finer things of life are lost in grasp and greed--
Then in my heart a beggar dwells,
And he is poor indeed!

If I have love for those who hate and tears for those who fall,
If I have mercy for the one who loves me not at all;
If I have patience with the one who holds another creed,
A heart for all the wide, wide world,
Then I am rich indeed!

When a man dies, all that he owns belongs to someone else, but what he is
he has forever.

Jesus summed up the whole matter when He asked, "What shall it profit a
man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

What are you worth?

* * * * *

THE END