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The Hour of Prayer



by

GEORGE W. PHILLIPS

THE
HOUR OF PRAYER
K T A B

By Geo. W. Phillips, D. D.

VOL. I

TENTH AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

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*And only the Master shall praise us,
And only the Master shall blame;
And no man shall work for money,
And no man shall work for fame:
But each for the joy of the working,
And each in his separate star,
Shall paint the thing as he sees it,
For the God of things as they are.*

—KIPLING.

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Geo. W. Phillips

“FOREWORD”

“FOREWORD”

IF WE could reverse the flying scroll of time and cause the process of events to assume a backward trend, we should behold a contrast. Instead of seeing in the morning a familiar middle-aged figure ambling along the highway in his badly worn Dodge coupe to the studio of the Hour of Prayer, 14 miles distant from his home in the country, we should see a boy in his late teens riding his gray pony along a different thoroughfare, and in a different clime. At the end of this thoroughfare was one of the apiaries that helped in the support of the fatherless family. The early morning ride was tremendously picturesque. Now the narrow trail wound through fields of logwood; now through native villages where breadfruits and mangoes interspersed the little shacks; now it skirted the seashore fringed with palm trees, and then it struck the hills. Up and up it climbed, while below, the blue transparent ocean sang the songs of its various moods; and above, the beetling rocks impended.

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Amid these hills, before the road sank again to the sea, was a little frame building that could hardly be called a cottage. It resembled more those cabins which we find, now and then, scattered through the Sierras, the abodes of the hunters, or hermits. Though the cabin was crude, its environment was all that the soul of man might wish for. Inspiration might there be found for the poet, artist, musician, or religionist. Back of the cabin was the garden, and back of that rose the hills clothed in everlasting verdure. Over these hills in the morning spread the perennial miracle of the dawn. Such was the background. And in front, just beyond the cebia cotton trees, where the frigate birds would sometimes fold their widespread pinions, dropped the hills precipitously to a pebbly beach. Then stretched the sea with its vast blue expanses, ranging skyward, and out where the billows seemed to wash some shore celestial—out on those mystic borders—the sunset nightly painted visions of some vast apocalypse.

In that little home lived an old man, his wife, and two daughters, both past middle life, and one hopelessly crippled.

"FOREWORD"

The other day I stood again before the battered remnants of that little shack. And the same voice that spoke in the soul of Moses thousands of years ago, whispered again in my soul: "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

In my youth I had striven to time my journey on this road so as to arrive at this place at about eight o'clock in the morning, for at that time all the humble tasks of the home or garden were suspended. It was the hour of prayer. And welcome indeed was I to leave my pony by the hitching post and share with them those sweet moments. Whenever I think of the declaration about "two or three being gathered together", I think of that little company; for certainly there was always the Presence there. Along the highway proud planters might drive their prancing thoroughbreds, or haughty officials with their postilions sweep by. They would deign not even a glance; but the King of Kings held converse there.

In these days of five-foot book shelves, the library of that little home might be of interest. As far as I recall there were fewer than ten volumes. There were two volumes of Wesley's

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sermons, a book of Methodist theology, a hymnal containing some of the greatest hymns of all time, a Webster's dictionary, a copy of Pilgrim's Progress, a large family Bible, and, I think, a volume of Macaulay.

Get the picture, can you? The old man with the open Bible, the silver-haired wife, the crippled daughter and her sister, and lastly the stranger. Peace! peace! peace!

They are gone today. They are in a celestial society, a society where values are measured by far different standards than obtain on earth. They are amid the aristocracy of God. The little shrine of that long ago is wrecked. But four thousand miles distant from that tropic sunset glow their prayers come echoing back in sweet antiphonies to ten thousand hearthstones reached by the Hour of Prayer.

For when KTAB went on the air over three years ago, I suggested to those associated with me that we institute a shrine from which, each morning, should radiate the Hour of Prayer. Some regarded this suggestion rather dubiously. Would people, in an age so full of rush and crush and materialism, pause daily to think of God and pray? Would they not rather resent religion being forced upon them

"FOREWORD"

amid the secular activities of the work-a-day week? Besides, the very essence of radio broadcasting is innovation. New and strange things must be done almost daily to hold the interest of a surfeited public. Could religious meditation and prayer without a perpetually changing program, hold the public interest for even a limited period?—this was the question.

The answer to this question has been the greatest surprise, to my mind at least, that radio broadcasting has ever revealed. Almost from the first day the success of the Hour of Prayer was assured. Its audience literally numbers thousands, perhaps sometimes, without exaggeration, a hundred thousand or more. Three years had well nigh passed, when one day there was mechanical trouble and our thousand-watt transmitter had to be taken off the air. The Hour of Prayer goes on at nine o'clock. We have two trunk telephone lines in the office, and from five minutes past nine until noon, those two lines with two telephone operators could not handle the traffic. All day long and until the Hour of Prayer the next morning the calls sporadically continued.

Naturally there is a great deal of expense connected with broadcasting daily from a high

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powered station. Our little shrine would not be able to continue its activities but for the wonderful support given by the public. The contributions that have come in to assist the Hour of Prayer average not far from two hundred dollars a week. This enables us to keep the Hour of Prayer on the air and reveals also the unfaltering interest of the public in its ministry.

Most of the periods of the Hour of Prayer are taken by myself, usually four days per week; while the other periods are handled by my associates; and sometimes kind assistance is tendered by the clergymen of our city, and outlying districts.

Our readers will readily see that with all the other addresses and various duties associated with a minister's life, the labor involved is at times well nigh overwhelming. For, besides the daily Hour of Prayer, there is the Twilight Hour, which involves the daily preparation of some message applicable to the problems of the home life of America. Ten new addresses each week are not at all unusual.

I mention this that you, my readers, may be lenient in judging the little talks that follow.

"FOREWORD"

The method of procedure in their preparation was something like this: In the early morning an hour was given to quiet devotion in my little study in the country. Out of this meditative mood some central thought would rise. Around this thought related ideas would begin to group themselves. Then I would get into my car and drive fourteen miles to the studio. In the process of that drive the shaping of my thought would assume completeness. Then to the Hour of Prayer; and afterward while the subject was held fresh in my mind, I would go to the dictaphone, speak again into the record what I had just said to the public; and the messages thus spoken are printed here for you in this little volume.

Two reasons have influenced this publication. First, there have been many, many friends who have asked that some of these meditations be preserved in permanent form. Their demands have been long and insistent. Personally, I was afraid that when the emotional warmth that pervaded the atmosphere of the Hour of Prayer was lacking, the verbal utterances might seem cold, stilted, mechanical; mere form from which the spirit

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had fled. Nor am I yet convinced that this is not the case.

Yielding finally, however, to these repeated requests, I have striven, as intimated before, to preserve these little addresses in precisely their spoken form.

The second reason for its publication is this: In attempting the herculean task of our radio installation, a debt of \$85,000.00 had to be assumed. It has lain like a heavy burden aslant the soul of our church. This debt has now been reduced to something over \$18,000.00. I am dedicating this little book to the Tenth Avenue Baptist Church, an institution to which I have consecrated eleven of the most productive years of my manhood; and all the proceeds, if any, derived from its publication will go toward lifting the debt that still remains, that we may start the new year with unshackled pinions.

The reader's attention is directed to the close of the volume where there is an "Afterword."

GEO. W. PHILLIPS.

October 1928

AT THE PORTALS OF THE PALACE

I

AT THE PORTALS OF THE PALACE

SCRIPTURE

Luke XI: 1-9

HYMN

Sweet Hour of Prayer

SWEET hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
That calls me from a world of care,
And bids me, at my Father's throne,
Make all my wants and wishes known;
In seasons of distress and grief,
My soul has often found relief,
And oft escaped the tempter's snare,
By thy return, sweet hour of prayer.

Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
Thy wings shall my petition bear,
To him whose truth and faithfulness
Engage the waiting soul to bless;
And since he bids me seek his face,
Believe his word and trust his grace,
I'll cast on him my every care,
And wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer.

Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
May I thy consolation share;
Till from Mount Pisgah's lofty height,
I view my home, and take my flight;
This robe of flesh I'll drop, and rise
To seize the everlasting prize;
And shout, while passing through the air,
Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer!

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THE MESSAGE

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find;
knock, and it shall be opened unto you.—Matt.
VII: 7.

YOU observe there are two definite assurances in this glorious passage. Let us linger with them a moment before we pass.

“Shall” embodies the first assurance. “It shall be given you.” There is no equivocation, no ambiguity; it is definite, emphatic, lucid. “Ask and it shall be given you.”

“Everyone” embodies the second assurance. Here is no special privilege of the chosen few. “Everyone that asketh, receiveth.” There are no favorites. The sunlight of the promise shines on mansion and tenement: on high and low; on giant mentality, and the naivete of childhood; on the man of high prophetic vision and the humblest plodding pilgrim soul. “Every One.”

Some writer has suggested, that,—paradoxical as a hasty judgment may stamp the assertion,—the Roman Catholic Church was the great precursor of political democracy. For, said he, in the economy of the church the highest offices were not the perquisite of any

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special group or class. The son of the humblest peasant might be advanced to commanding eminence above the heads of princes' sons. This is the method in the democracy of God. "Whosoever will." The places of power are open to all men who meet the conditions laid out in the program of God.

But let us to the heart of the scripture: "ASK—SEEK—KNOCK." I think we have not here three distinct kinds of prayer. Nor yet are these three words for emphasis superimposed one on the other. I think they involve a sequential process. That sequence itself seems to embody two things:—

First, the TIME element. Sometimes our answers to prayer are so instant as to be bewildering. Three times in my own experience the answer to prayer was so immediate as to be overwhelming. But these were rare exceptions. For the most part prayer involves a long period of waiting. Why?—That's the question: "WHY"——

Let me suggest one reason you may not have thought of: We ourselves may change our minds. If all our prayers were instantly granted I think we should be like some rich people I know whose houses are cluttered up

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with a lot of things they no longer have use for. If they had had to work long and laboriously for the money with which to purchase those things, by the time the money came the impulse would have passed. Thanks be to God who keeps us waiting! Time tests. What a muddle my life would be this day if God had given me all the things I have asked him for! Oh the rashness involved in the hot, impatient quest for values of immaturity. You know, for you also have prayed for things you would not want today. God knew it all along. Validate your prayer. Pray on! Wait.

“Time is the essence.” Remember the woman and the unjust judge. She wearied not. After multiplied years the issue was as vital as when first her prayer began. Is yours a life-prayer? Has it vitality to survive the changing emphases of an expanding personality? Verily, some prayers pray on through the portals of Paradise, and are there transmuted into anthems of everlasting praise.

And, secondly, the sequence suggests an unfolding process. “ASK—SEEK—KNOCK.” May I illustrate? Somewhere in Ohio is an old mansion that is quite interesting in its history, its setting, and its antique interior.

AT THE PORTALS OF THE PALACE

The road to that mansion I know only up to the point of a certain village. Upon reaching that village street I stop; I "ASK" my way. The roads are explained. Perhaps a rough diagram is given. I start again. The second feature of my quest begins. I "SEEK". I watch the turns; look out for the landmarks; read the fingerposts; question the farmers on the way. I seek. At last, the picture spreads before me: the spacious grounds, the mighty trees, the elegant drive leading beneath the crimson ramblers to the massive oaken door. I have achieved the goal of my quest. I "KNOCK".

"ASK—SEEK—KNOCK"—that is the sequence. And just where are you, my brother? Are you "asking"? Are you "seeking"? Definitely conscious of an objective that bears the sanction of God, are you "knocking"? Then keep on. Though for years you may have been standing beside a door fast closed, pray on—"Knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Father, we thank thee that not in vain we make the quest of prayer. We thank thee that in seeking life's objectives we find ourselves.

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We thank thee that the greatest thing we achieve in the curriculum of life is not the course accomplished, but the power of selfhood enlarged in the process. That when the lesson is forgotten, the purified personality persists.

Father, many of thy children are looking wistfully toward life's deferred objectives. "Unanswered Yet" seems to be their weary song of life. Help them to see their prayers answered in the self realization of their own souls. On the journey to the palace of the King a mighty strength thus we gain so that running we grow not weary, and walking we wax not faint.

And, Father, we thank thee that in this quest we meet with thee. In praying through we find God. We learn rich lessons with God. We hold sweet fellowships with God. We walk and we talk with the King.

Give, then, for this another day, thy patience to thy people. Clarify our hopes. Strengthen our high resolves. So illuminated and sustained by thy blessed Spirit's presence, we shall move with steady step toward thy palace portals confident in the promise of ONE

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who also walked this Way of Life: "Ask, and it shall be given; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you."

AMEN.

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II

THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH

SCRIPTURE

Psalm XCI

HYMN

“In the Secret of His Presence”

In the secret of His presence how my soul
delights to hide!

Oh, how precious are the lessons which I learn
at Jesus' side;

Earthly cares can never vex me, neither trials
lay me low:

For when Satan comes to tempt me, to the
secret place I go.

When my soul is faint and thirsty, 'neath the
shadow of His wing

There is cool and pleasant shelter, and a fresh
and crystal spring;

And my Saviour rests beside me, as we hold
communion sweet:

If I tried, I could not utter what He says when
thus we meet.

Only this I know: I tell Him all my doubts,
and griefs, and fears;

Oh, how patiently He listens! and my drooping
soul He cheers:

Do you think He ne'er reproves me? what a
false friend He would be,

If He never, never told me of the sins which
He must see.

THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH

Would you like to know the sweetness of the
secret of the Lord?
Go and hide beneath His shadow: this shall
then be your reward:
And whene'er you leave the silence of that
happy meeting place,
You must mind and bear the image of the
Master in your face.

THE MESSAGE

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High
shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.—
Psalm XCI: 1.

There are some beautiful jewels in this
passage. Turning them over, one can hardly
decide which is most precious.

Sometimes the cardinal thought seems to be
embodied in the word "secret". All of God's
ultimate things are secret things. The chemist
in his laboratory surrounded by his test-tubes,
retorts and apparatus and delving into the
mystery of chemical processes,—he knows that
the ultimate in the realm of chemistry is a
tremendous secret. The biologist in his
laboratory, concentrating through his bi-focal
microscope upon some precious specimen,
delving into the realm of minutia analyzing
the structure of the protoplasmic cell, its

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cytoplasm, chromosome network, nucleus,—the biologist knows that life's ultimate mystery is a tremendous secret. The geologist, roaming the hills, with mallet and chisel, chipping and studying the rocks and fossils, striving to read the cosmic hieroglyphics written there,—the geologist knows that the ultimate cosmic story is a secret thing. The astronomer gazing up at the midnight sky, his telescope sweeping the vast depths of space, his thought soaring from galaxy to galaxy striving to read the story written in those fiery symbols,—the astronomer knows that his ultimate story is a cosmic secret. For all these solutions each man knows the great price which must be paid. Need I tell you that the great mystery of the spiritual life is not plastered on billboards on the street corners? that it does not obtrude itself upon us as we walk down the street? It is a secret, a tremendous secret. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." A price there is we all must pay.—"Ask, seek, knock." "He that dwelleth in the SECRET PLACE of the most high, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

Sometimes it seems that a yet more beautiful

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jewel sparkles in the word "abide". He shall not be merely a visitor. He shall not have a cursory contact. He shall have not merely a speaking acquaintance with God. He shall ABIDE under the shadow of the Almighty.

There is a great difference between coming in contact with a home and abiding there. I remember a few years ago, when I went to preach for my friend, Dr. D. F. Rittenhouse, at the First Baptist Church of Columbus, Ohio, one day his secretary said to me, "Mr. Phillips, why don't you take my car and travel a little around the state? Why not see some of your old friends?" So I accepted her invitation, got into her car one morning, drove down to Cincinnati and visited some friends there. The next morning, driving slowly toward Dayton, some miles from Cincinnati I heard a machine behind me. It almost crowded me off the road, and came to a dead stop at my side. "Hello, brother Phillips, you are the last man in the world I expected to see." And there was my old friend, Mr. Brownell, head of the Ault Woodenware Co. of Cincinnati. "Now you just come right along home with me; lunch will be ready." And I did. As it happened, so many of his own family were there that

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day, it was almost a family reunion. A wonderful day it was for all of us. I see the picture now: the lovely home, the wide green lawn, the soft shadow of elms and oaks—then the close of day. "Goodbye!" Loving faces on the porch assembled—"Goodbye". That day is gone. A continent sunders. My coming was but a thing of pathetic transiency. Get the contrast? "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high, SHALL ABIDE under the shadow of the Almighty."

But perhaps the most beautiful jewel sparkles in the word, "shadow." "The SHADOW of the Almighty." And that suggests to me three distinct aspects.

First: May not the shadow symbolize rest? I remember some months ago travelling from Chicago on the Southern branch of the Southern Pacific running between New Orleans and Los Angeles, and passing through the desert regions of Texas. It was not far from where the International Bridge crosses the Rio Grande. And such a day! I do not believe I have ever felt a more intense sun. There seemed not a green blade on the desert,—just scorching heat radiating from the surface like the blasting glare of a furnace. The poor

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miserable cattle one saw as one went on through those blistering stretches were pictures of abject misery; while here and there a white skeleton told a tragic tale.

At last I saw standing out like a lone sentinel on the desert, a cactus that looked almost like a forsaken cross. The shadow it threw resembled a prostrate cross. And there, trying to find shelter in that impossible pencil of shade, was a poor cow with her calf. The shadow just fell across her bony back, that was all.

Not so is the picture this passage presents. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high, shall abide UNDER the shadow of the Almighty." Covered with it; canopied with it.

But perhaps the psalmist's central thought was protection, for he goes on to say, "He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wing shalt thou trust. His truth shall be thy shield and buckler." Protection.

You know the picture. You have seen it. It may have been long years ago. On the old farm, was it? Do you remember the hen out yonder in the field with her dozen or more little yellow chicks scampering about? Then

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suddenly came falling from the sky the shadow of the passing hawk. Then the startled note, and every little yellow fragment rushes beneath the outstretched wings. Refuge.

What a picture! "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." And as long as the Christian is canopied there, no power on earth or in hell can molest his soul. The strength of his protection becomes, then, the measure of the might of God.

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes,
That soul, though all Hell should endeavor
to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

Thus saith the Lord.

Shall I say another word suggested by the shadow? What is it? Communion, I think. There the soul keeps sacred tryst with God, for "he that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH

Show us, dear Master, the pathway to thy presence. More alluring bypaths tempt our footsteps to stray. Often the secret of thy presence for our lives may lie amid the shadows of the Garden of Gethsemane. More rosy avenues may be opening before us, and comradeships foreign to thy purposes may allure. But, Master, has not experience taught us that many a pleasant highway leads ultimately into thorns, and many a brilliant comradeship to loneliness and night? Thee we would leave all to follow. Let the secret of the Lord be with them that fear him. Teach us the secret of thy presence.

And now the new day is before us. The arrows may fall thick about us today. Unknown disaster may be lurking. Thou knowest. In the shadow of thy wing we move forward unafraid. Some of us were afraid of the day. Last night as we lay awake anticipating its assaults, we shuddered at the dawn so soon to break. But by thy grace, from this moment we leave our fears behind. Welcome the day! Welcome its emergencies, for God is here. I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress: my God, in him will I trust. Thou wilt not leave us. Thou wilt move with

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us. The shadow of God this day shall perpetually be upon us, and when the evening falls thy shielding shadow shall be as wings of light. We love thee. We trust thee.

AMEN.

THE LOST GOD

III THE LOST GOD

SCRIPTURE
Job XXIII: 1-10

HYMN

I Do Not Ask, O Lord

I do not ask, O Lord, that life may be
A pleasant road;
I do not ask that Thou wouldst take from me
Aught of its load.

For one thing only, Lord, dear Lord, I plead:
Lead me aright,
Though strength should falter and though
heart should bleed
Through peace to light.

I do not ask, O Lord, that Thou shouldst shed
Full radiance here;
Give but a ray of peace, that I may tread
Without a fear.

I do not ask my cross to understand,
My way to see;
Better in darkness just to feel Thy hand,
And follow Thee.

Joy is like restless day; but peace divine
Like quiet night.
Lead me, O Lord, till perfect day shall shine,
Through peace to light.

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THE MESSAGE

Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him.—Job XXIII: 8-9.

Here is revealed one of the most distressing conditions a minister has to meet in his own life or in the life of those who seek him for spiritual aid: the vanished consciousness of God. Reading this passage suggests to me the picture of a little child and his father journeying through a deep forest. The little one has lost sight of his parent, and in the despair of loneliness, flings forth the startled cry: "Father! Father! Father!" Such was the anguish of the soul of Job when at the opening of this chapter he made the memorable outcry: "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!"

Now, there are those who lose the consciousness of God and they know very well just where and why the loss has come. Sin! Evil has cast its terrible shadow, cutting off the sunlight of the Father's presence. But

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other hearts are free from this self-accusation. Their lives are pure, sincere, devout. Like Job, their integrity is unchallenged; and yet like Job it is one long series of aggravated misfortunes. Even then these gentle spirits accept their lot without murmuring, asking in the darkness but the handclasp of His hand:

“Let but my fainting heart be blessed,
With Thy sweet spirit as its guest,
My God, to Thee I leave the rest:
Thy will be done!”

But the bitterest experience comes when even this is denied. Look at Jesus in Gethsemane. Basely betrayed and forsaken by his friends, hunted by the murderous rabble, the impending weight of Roman might ready to crush out his lone life. Then if ever—God! But no: out of the anguish of that experience comes at last the pathos of his prayer: “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?”

That is the picture of Job’s dilemma. For him God seems to have left the universe. Look in what direction he will, the world is empty. “Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the

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left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him." Let us follow him in this quest:

"I go forward, but he is not there." Some lose God because they refuse to go forward with him. My friend, God may have projected a great forward movement in the program of your life. You know. You feel the inner urge to follow your God. You are recreant to the challenge. You fail God. You lose Him. You walk alone. But another listening in protests: "That is not my picture." Like Job, you are willing to hurl your life without reserve into whatever future God may forecast for you. In vain—in vain you move to keep step with him: "I go forward, but he is not there."

Well, let us try the opposite direction: "I go backward, but I cannot perceive him." That is unfortunate; for do not some of the profoundest revelations of God come out of life's retrospections? In the calmer perspective of life's aftermath, has not many a sobered spirit bowed to confess: "Thy will, O God, was best"?

But not always. A few months ago I functioned as chaplain at the Commencement

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exercises of the University of California. Over twenty thousand were in the Stadium, and when it was over, with the throngs that passed out upon the pavements, I found a lady who was waiting to speak with me. She told me of her boy, a former student of the University, of the fine place he had made for himself in the ranks of scholarship, told me how he embodied her all in the world, told me of how at the very peak of his success he was cut down by death. Year after year I found she had been returning to the graduation exercises of the University seeing again in every boy's face the vision of her boy. "Lady", I said, "have the years brought no illumination? Have you yet been unable to find any solace for your suffering?" "No", she said; "The whole thing is as fresh and poignant this day as on the day I buried him. The fact is, from that day I lost all faith in God." Alas, like Job, that bewildered soul could say: "Retrospect has no revelation for me. I go backward, but I cannot perceive him."

Then Job begins to look around him. "On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him." Another has reminded us that the "left" is the "sinister" position. In

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Parliament the "Left" is the opposition. That is to say, I turn my attention to the surging conflicts of life; I go where the battle for right and wrong rage hotly; I share the fierceness of the tumult; for God I know the hot wounds, the red blood. Surely he will meet me here! But no; even here "I cannot behold him."

And then as the finality of his quest, "On the right"—the region where self-expression is normal and spontaneous. May we not say: "I seek him at the place of prayer, in the sanctuary, at the Communion table, in the fellowship of his saints. In vain! In vain! 'I seek him on the right hand, but I cannot see him.'"

In such circumstances, what shall we do? Two things, I think:—

1. First, examine carefully our own spiritual life. Make sure that there exists nothing that is shutting us from God's presence.

2. Then walk unwaveringly in faith. Forget our feelings. Trust.

I was hearing some time ago of the experience of one who at the time of the California gold rush, crossed the Isthmus of Panama on his way from New York to San Francisco. Across that torrid jungle death took its tragic toll. Reaching Balboa, at last he set sail for

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the haven of the North. Days and days passed by. It was almost time to reach their goal. Land was sighted. Was it California? No; it was distant South America. Their instruments were defective. Thinking to go north they had been sailing south. They got new instruments, corrected their course, and started again. Weeks passed, and at last they plunged into a fog so dense that further progress was impossible. The order was given to let go the anchor, and after checking his calculations, the captain gave his pronouncement: "We are there! We must be standing just outside the Golden Gate."

For nearly a week, day and night, the fogs hung heavy. Then one morning the light broke through. Day dawned; and over the soft Sierras the rising sun poured out its glories through the Golden Gate.

That is faith. And through the fogs at last, O comrade heart, thy God shall guide thee to his Gates of Gold.

Guide thou, dear God, our thoughts to rest in thee. Help us not to be slaves to our feelings. Grant us the great certainties of faith, and though in the pressure and loneliness of

THE HOUR OF PRAYER—KTAB

disaster our bewildered souls cry out: "My God, my God! Why hast thou forsaken me?"—help us that the very outcry may bring its answering echo: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Then faith again will murmur as she enfolds herself in the conscious peace of God: "Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit."

Father, some of the friends of the Fellowship of Prayer have been seeking thee very earnestly. They are anxious for the certainties of salvation. They have found thee, but they do not realize it. Their entire lives reflect the beauty of men who live much in the presence of God. Reveal to them that they have found thee. Like that dear woman on the morning of the Resurrection who found her Saviour, and until he spoke thought him to be the gardener, so these are waiting for some one word that will illumine their souls. Give them that word this morning. Out of the cloud that wraps this Hermon of Transfiguration, speak thou, sweet Voice of God! Then shall the downcast visions of these sombre souls be lifted up to see no man save Jesus only.

AMEN.

THE MYSTERY OF SIN

IV THE MYSTERY OF SIN

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm LI

HYMN

In the Hour of Trial

In the hour of trial,
Jesus plead for me,
Lest by base denial
I depart from Thee;
When Thou see'st me waver,
With a look recall,
Nor for fear or favor
Suffer me to fall.

Should Thy mercy send me
Sorrow, toil, and woe;
Or should pain attend me
On my path below;
Grant that I may never
Fail Thy hand to see;
Grant that I may ever
Cast my care on Thee.

With forbidden pleasures,
Would this vain world charm,
Or its sordid treasures
Spread to work me harm;
Bring to my remembrance
Sad Gethsemane,
Or, in darker semblance,
Cross-crowned Calvary.

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When my last hour cometh,
Fraught with strife and pain,
When my dust returneth
To the dust again;
On Thy truth relying,
Through that mortal strife,
Jesus, take me, dying,
To eternal life.

THE MESSAGE

Forgive me, Friends of the Fellowship of Prayer, if this morning I lead your thought to the contemplation of one of the more sombre aspects of human life. From the nineteenth Psalm and the twelfth verse I speak. The words are these:—
Who can understand his errors?

THAN this there are few profounder questions in the word of God. "Who can understand his errors?"—

First: The WHENCE of them? Why do I do it? What is the origin of the impulse that drives me to this deadly thing?

You may not know it, but years ago I was very much interested in rabbits, and in fact bred some of the finest specimens that were ever known in America. When I went to a rabbit show, my rabbits always brought away the first prizes, and I sold a black doe for
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\$200.00—a specimen that won the first prize at every show across the entire United States.

From those rabbits I learned a good many things concerning life. For example, I had a pair of very fine brown Flemish giants. What was my surprise to find in a litter, among the little brown brothers and sisters, one that was distinctly marked with a black streak. I became interested. Where did the black streak come from? I traced the pedigree back as far as I could, and to my surprise I found generations ago there was a black buck introduced into that strain, and here after how many generations I cannot remember, came that black strain cropping up once more into the light of day.

Who can understand his errors? Who can tell out of what abysmal past the evil in my life today had its origin? Who can tell from what deadly roots, planted how many centuries ago, came the pernicious harvests in my life today?

Some time ago, a neighbor of mine worked, putting down a well on the hillside adjoining our property. Down and down the steel bit its way into the hard rock. At length the workmen struck a stream of clean, pure water.

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Deeper went the drill, fuller flowed the water. It was interesting to see water coming out of rock, and I asked the man who purported to have discovered with his instruments that subterranean stream: "Where did this water come from?" Lifting his eyes above the hill-tops, his vision seemed to sweep aslant a hundred miles of valley. "This water," said he, "comes to you from the snows of the high Sierras." Miles, weary miles, over stretches of plain, wind swept desert, forests where birds sing, on, on, to our doorsteps. From hidden sources, from summits of solitude came the current to my life.

Need I comment? From sources how many centuries away, from what secluded, unsuspected places, across what ranges of history, through what ancestral line, yes, and through what lines of social heredity came that deadly thing which appeared in my life today?

I tell you here is a problem that might engage the profoundest thought of the psychologist, the genealogist, yes, even the chemist. Hardly a profounder moral problem can engage us than that of our passage: "Who can understand his errors?"

Nor is that all. Another subsidiary question

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meets us: "Who can understand his errors?"—the WHY of them.

Why should a man, knowing what the result will be, directly against every sober judgment of his soul and the dictum of cold reason,—why should he do those things which he knows are wrong, and will ultimately produce in his own life suffering, and in the life of society multiplied evils? Did you ever hear a man ask, "Why did I do it?" Or try to reply to that question by affirming, "I don't know." How many a man today stands mutely before that question in his own life: "Who can understand his errors?"

Let us assume a situation: Have you ever stood at twilight on the bank of the river at some summer resort, and watched the moths dancing by thousands around the lamps that light the landing place? At Epworth Heights in Ohio there is a Methodist camping ground, which slopes down to the banks of the Little Miami, and here the summer parties bring their families. There was such a lamp that used to attract millions of moths. Sometimes in the morning you could go under that lamp and see thousands and thousands of little insects with scorched wings and burnt bodies.

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Let me take one little moth in my hand and speak to it. "Little moth, see, under this lamp are thousands and thousands of your little ruined comrades. Their wings are gone, their power of flight is over. Behold their charred bodies. Little moth, keep away from the flame." What if, after all, as soon as you let that moth from your fingers, it flew directly into the flame, and left its writhing form to perish with the others on the sand?

And yet is the picture overdrawn? Take this young woman: Show her history. Show her contemporaneous history. Show her across the street examples of womanhood derelict and bedraggled. "There, my girl, is sin. Its scorching flame has blasted that poor woman's life. Girl, keep away from evil." Yet that same girl will go right into the flame and leave amid life's wreckage another record of tragedy.

Or that young man. Point him to the drunkard's ruined life. Show him the endless toll of manhood's wreckage. Say to him, "Young man, keep away from the wine cup. There, among the human derelicts is sin's inevitable finality." But with the record of life before him, that young fellow shoots right into the flame. Another ruined life amid

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flotsam and jetsam which goes to glut the world's sad degeneracy.

Verily, who can understand his errors?

Friends of the Fellowship of Prayer, permit me a comment in parenthesis. Years ago I was doing some night extracting of honey near to one of my large bee yards. Outside of the extracting house was a bright, open flame, and I looked out to see a veritable swarm of bees, surging into the flame and then dropping to the ground in a writhing death. I saw there was no way to correct that dilemma,—no way but one. And so, going up to that open flame, I turned it off, and said in sort of a humorous way, "Now, if you must fly, fly to the stars." Not another bee perished.

Isn't that what the finest conscience in America is trying to do today? We have watched the young, inexperienced lives fly to the open flame of the vicious saloons. There were those whose passions and appetites could not resist the appeal of strong drink. Today, the enlightened conscience of America is crying, "Turn out the flame, turn out the flame!" And in spite of all the railings of the world's passions, appetites and greeds, the voice of

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mercy and of reason will prevail, and the holocaust of human souls shall cease.

Again I ask the question, "Who can understand his errors?"—The WHITHER of them. To what lengths will they journey? And at what finalities will they arrive?

For evil does not cease with itself. Sometimes just a thought, an evil thought, may decide a life's destiny. Are we not told, "Sow a thought and you reap an act; sow an act, and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny"? Shakespeare cries, "If 'twere done when 'tis done!" But alas, the end of an act, good or ill, is merely the beginning of a story, whose finality will never be known until God's eternal throne is reached.

Let me repeat. Every evil is a seed from which harvests grow, and from these harvests other seeds spread out to make yet greater harvests. And if a man were to see the ultimate personal and social results of that evil which for a moment enthralls and dominates his life, he would live more wisely, act with more sober deliberation.

Heavenly Father, we so often think of our-

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selves as creatures of a moment, items of a passing hour, moths which for an instant dance in the focus of that light which men call "life," and then depart; coming out of the dark, departing for an instant in the light, merging again into the dark. But help us to recall the dynamic of that moment, the portent of that instant. Far beyond and yet beyond the ranges of time, on, on, even when the stars upon our skies like burnt-out tapers pass away, for good or ill, the forces we have put into motion continue to change the character of destiny. Heavenly Father, grant us to behold our actions as they must appear in the clear light of thy omniscience. We know not, but thou knowest. We see not, but thou seest. May we learn so to gauge our conduct, that with us, as with thee, one day may bear the portent of a thousand years. And help us, O God,—even in our weariness and sense of failure help us,—to see hope, like a radiant beacon shining in Thy Cross.

"For thy love, O Christ arisen,
Yearns to reach our souls in prison.
Over every pain and loss,
Drops the plummet of thy cross.
Never yet abyss was found,
Deeper than that cross could sound."

AMEN.

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V

SHRINES OF SUFFERING

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah XL: 27-31

HYMN

Come Ye Disconsolate

Come, ye disconsolate! Where'er ye languish,
Come to the Mercy-seat, fervently kneel:
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your
anguish;
Earth has no sorrow that heav'n cannot
heal.

Joy of the desolate! Light of the straying!
Hope of the penitent—fadeless and pure!
Here speaks the Comforter, tenderly saying—
Earth has no sorrow that heav'n cannot
cure.

Here see the Bread of Life! See waters flowing
Forth from the throne of God, pure from
above:
Come to the feast of love; come, ever knowing,
Earth has no sorrow but heav'n can re-
move.

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THE MESSAGE

The heart knoweth its own bitterness.—Proverbs
XIV: 10.

FROM this passage our lives should draw great comfort. I grant you it is rather an unsuspected source from which to derive comfort. But after all, it is not so much the road we travel, though that road be thorny, rocky, precipitous. It is rather the thought that we must walk ALONE. It is not the journey in the midnight, though the skies are black with hurtling clouds, and the storm drenches and the tempest rages. It is rather that we breast the storm ALONE.

It is the singularity of suffering: the poignant thought that life has been unfair to us—this hurts. Perhaps then, your heart like mine, may draw some comfort from the text of the morning: "Each heart knoweth its own bitterness."

Have I made clear my meaning? The war was on. Winter in all its rigor gripped our Ohio village. Troop trains were in demand. Patriotism required the conservation of coal. Our large country home shrank down room by room, until we lived in just one room. Yet we had great content. Why? Because there

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was the comradeship of hardship. Ring the door bell at any home; you were ushered into a freezing atmosphere. "Come in where it's warm!" And you found the family encamped like your own, in one room.

But what if you had been singled out for hardship? The thing would have been torment.

Did you get my thought? The heart knoweth its own suffering. Why?

First, because the suffering of each heart may lie in different SPHERES.

I stand in my dormitory room at the University of Chicago, and look out upon the expanses of the Midway—blizzard-swept. The snowflakes, driven by the zero blast, pelt and cut with frightful intensity. Wistfully I look at a picture hanging on the wall of my study. It portrays a desert scene. Here and there a cactus stands sentinel. The little blossoms of the desert sage give a touch of floral beauty to the spreading sands, and the soft shadows of the cactus arms stretch eastward in pleasant silhouette. And as I look, my heart leaps out in yearning—out from the bitter blizzards—"out where the West begins!"

But there is another scene: Out on that

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same desert is a lone ranger. Pitilessly the sun has beat all day. The ache of loneliness is upon him. And as the afternoon wanes, the hot wind leaps above the burning bosom of the plains. It gathers momentum. A sand storm. Flying grains of sand cut like splinters of steel. He breathes sand, eats sand, drinks sand. The sky grows black, the trails are wiped out. He goes into his desert cabin and on the dust-covered wall is a picture that engrosses him. It is the picture of a great city, splendid buildings, wide thoroughfares, great park systems, green trees—civilization—life. It is the Midway Plaisance. "I wish I were there again—back in God's country!"

Isn't it the way of life? Our lives may lie in sundered spheres. You may not know my heart's bitterness—nor I yours. Each bears its own. Look at this employee: he goes home on Saturday night with his meagre pay envelope. His heart is bitter tonight, for so pressing are the financial needs of the home, and so pitiable is the income. Hot rebellion surges in him. He thinks of his employer—his fine home—his comfort. Meanwhile that employer—and I know him personally—is

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telling me of his own difficulties, how business has fallen off, how competition has become more pitiless, how the margin of profit has become so small only eternal vigilance can keep the enterprise solvent. With a sort of pathos he longs for the life of the workman who leaves the business cares behind him at the work-bench.

These hearts sundered by circumstances, miss the comradeship of suffering. Their problems lie in different spheres. But each heart knows its own bitterness.

But the solitude of our suffering may, in the second place, be the result of differing **TEMPERAMENTS**. "The heart knoweth **ITS OWN** bitterness"; and many a man cannot enter even approximately into the peculiar mood which makes the poignancy of suffering in his brother's soul.

For after all, the worlds to which we react are so diverse. Let me illustrate: Sixteen years ago I went to see my mother in the West Indies. I arrived there in the autumn. The rainy season was not yet over, and all nature was a riot of verdure. The cattle were in "clover"—or rather in guinea-grass, which reached sometimes above their heads. But the

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bees were starving, for the blossoms had not yet appeared.

Starving bees in a world of verdure!—Aye, but NOT THEIR WORLD!

This year I visited the same scenes, but in the early spring. The world was a riot of log-wood blossoms. The noonday was symphonious with the music of myriad bees. But for two months no rain had fallen. Beneath the blossoming trees the fields were parched and dry. The guinea-grass pastures were gnawed down to the roots, and the hungry cattle seeking shade, stood ruminating. One looked at their protruding ribs and wondered what the rumination was all about. Were they re-chewing the sea breeze?

Starving cattle in a world that flowed with nectar!—Aye, but NOT THEIR WORLD!

“The heart knoweth its own bitterness.” The world in which one soul will fatten, another starves. The sorrow that passes harmlessly over one temperament, smites another like a thunderbolt. And perhaps the deepest solitude in the world is the solitude which springs from this sense of spiritual loneliness.

O comrade heart, would it be helpful for you to remember that “your heavenly Father

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knoweth"? Then let your soul in unison with mine speak now with Him:—

Father—God, are we not told that as a father pitieth his children so thou dost pity them that fear thee? It is the sense of that sympathy our hearts are craving. There are this morning sick ones that call for healing; but ever greater than their need of healing, their fevered hands reach out to touch another that was pierced. Those there be who are very poor. Their prayer craves a little amelioration from the pressure of want. But even greater than their quest for material good, they would grasp the vision of thy glory. Triumphant in their conflict with grim want, their souls would shout:

“This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our Love,
He will come down with heavenly powers,
And bear my soul above!”

Those there be whose crosses are quite heavy and who cry out beneath the load. But profounder than their prayer for the lifting of the load—from a deeper depth of soul

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another prayer is rising. It is that thy supporting Presence may move with them along the lonely road. It is the calm assurance of thy word: "My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in thy weakness."

For those who wait upon thee now, may there be all day long the consciousness of that Presence, the music of that Voice.

AMEN.

VI

LADDERS OF LIGHT

SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis XXVIII

HYMN

Nearer, My God, to Thee

Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!
E'en tho' it be a cross
That raiseth me;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!

Though like the wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone;
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee.

There let the way appear,
Steps unto heaven;
All that thou sendest me,
In mercy given;
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee.

LADDERS OF LIGHT

Then, with my waking thoughts
Bright with thy praise,
Out of my stony griefs
Bethel I'll raise;
So by my woes to be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee.

Or if on joyful wing
Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars forgot,
Upward I fly,
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee.

THE MESSAGE

And he dreamed; and, behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it.—Genesis XXVIII: 12.

YOU have read the story. A lone traveler on the road to Haran. He is tired, conscience-stricken. He is moving amidst the labyrinth of an uncertain future. Out into new horizons and untried he moves. The sun has gone, drawing his crimson vestments within the sombre curtains of the evening cloud. Jacob has watched the mists of the twilight, thickening to spread themselves over stream

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and sward. He has heard the twilight twitterings of the bird pass into silence as the evening star arises, and the gentle dew drops cluster pendant on the leaves. And then, laying his weary head upon a pile of stones, the lonely pilgrim falls asleep. And as he sleeps, he dreams. But let me quote the scripture. "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold the angels of God ascending and descending upon it."

A ladder reaching into light. Rising from the sod of sorrow and woe and tragedy; rising into the radiance of God's presence. A ladder rising out of the night into the light.

What do I mean? The picture is like that of the great mountain, its base implanted in the shrouding fogs and shadows of the valley; but ascending upward, ever upward, until its summit stands imperaled in light.

That is the saving thing. Let me present my thought: Here is a young man of ambition. He wants to make a success of life. He starts in business. He finds a position as clerk in bank or department store or office. His ladder is planted on the earth. It rises. He succeeds. He is worth a thousand dollars, ten thousand,

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a hundred thousand, half a million dollars. His ladder is firmly established on the earth. His ambitions are mundane. Query: How high will that ladder rise? Does it stop with earth? Does it limit itself to human atmospheres? Let that ladder brave the heights; let the other end be planted by the throne of God, and immediately the mundane becomes divine. The human ambitions become transmuted with glory; the touch of celestial consecration transfigures the possession of wealth; and lo, his wealth becomes a sacred stewardship. His ladder rests one end on earth, the other by the throne of God. Life is apostolic. Wealth becomes a sacred trust. The ladder of that life ascends from world to world. And the angels of God are trysting there.

Or here is another young man with political ambitions. His chosen profession lies in the sphere of politics. He succeeds. His ladder firmly planted on the earth begins to rise. Upward, upward, until that young man's name is known in every household through the land. His oratory rings in halls of senate. Query: That ladder with its base planted on the earth, how high does it rise? Let it brave the higher atmospheres and rise toward the throne of God,

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and immediately politics become sacred. That ladder becomes a medium of divine commerce and converse. Through the medium of political activities the will of God finds articulation in a nation's life, and the halls of senate are transfigured into shrines. "The angels of God ascending and descending", and lo, the ladder of a great political career becomes an avenue for effecting an answer to the prayer, "Thy kingdom come." One end on earth, the other in glory. "The angels of God ascending and descending."

Another illustration: The organ; the wedding march; flowers; assembled guests; youth and maiden at the altar. A home is being founded. The basic impulse, what? Mundane, earthly, human, cosmic. Essentially the sex impulse. The propagation and effectuation of the race. The ladder is solidly planted on the earth. Query: How high does it rise? For remember, no ladder can stand on one end. Sooner or later it will fall. Read the dismal story in a hundred headlines. Crash! Shattered the domestic plans. Gone the gaudy programs. Why? No upper end. But let that ladder rise until it rests beside the throne of God, and the whole thing becomes

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so different. The impulse which began on earth finds consummation in heaven. The thing of human origin reaches divine climaxes. From the hearthstone there is a ladder rising to the throne of God, and lo, the angels of God begin to walk amid the haunts of men, and human hearts hold converse. Home is heaven begun. The ladder links two worlds. "The angels of God ascending and descending."

Or shall we take our nation's life? A thing of earth, earthy. Farms to be cultivated, cities to be builded, commercial enterprises to be projected, waterfalls to be harnessed, irrigation systems to be instituted, telephone lines to be strung, canals to be dug, lakes and rivers to be sailed. Firmly, solidly upon the earth the base of the ladder rests. Query: How high does it rise? Is it to be crass, deadening, damning materialism? Or is it to brave the atmospheres toward the throne of God? Let the national ideals rise, rise, until they relate themselves to things eternal, and that nation is chosen for divine apostleship. Profane history becomes sacred history. The promise to Jacob in this very chapter is fulfilled. "And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, to the east, and to

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the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

Open the highway from earth to glory!
Radiant the rungs with angels of God ascending
and descending!

Father in Heaven, give upreach to our dreams. Have we not found that our real world is the world of our yearnings, our visions, our aspirations, our hopes? Lift these up we pray thee into realms of light. May they not continue forever things of the earth, earthy. May they rise toward thy throne. May they rest upon thy throne. So shall there be an eternal partnership between the life that is and that which is to come.

Help us that our lives may be glorified by this celestial converse. Materialism smothers us. So many of thy children are this day walking the weary road to Haran. They are depressed with loneliness, bewildered with uncertainty, tormented with remorse, paralyzed with fear. Their weary brows are bruised upon the rock of an unyielding realism. God, save them by thy vision! God, up from the cruel present let thy rainbow ladders rise!

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If it be poverty, show them thy wealth; if it be sickness, reveal thine immortality; if it be sin, unveil thy cross.

So shall thine angels meet us on the way: old age becomes the highest human rung, and death a radiant passing into light.

AMEN.

THE HOUR OF PRAYER—KTAB

VII
THE PATHWAY TO AN ANSWERED
PRAYER

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke XVII: 11-19

HYMN

Still Will We Trust

Still will we trust, though earth seem dark and dreary,
And the heart faint beneath his chastening rod;
Though rough and steep our pathway, worn and weary,
Still will we trust in God.

Our eyes see dimly till by faith anointed,
And our blind choosing brings us grief and pain;
Through him alone who hath our way appointed,
We find our peace again.

Choose for us, God! Nor let our weak preferring
Cheat our poor souls of good thou hast designed:
Choose for us, God; thy wisdom is unerring,
And we are fools and blind.
Let us press on, in patient self-denial,
Accept the hardship, shrink not from the loss;
Our portion lies beyond the hour of trial,
Our crown beyond the cross.

PATHWAY TO AN ANSWERED PRAYER

THE MESSAGE

And it came to pass that as they went they were cleansed.—Luke XVII: 14.

Is there not implied a contrast between the Master's method in the healing of these ten lepers and the method he employed in the healing of that one leper of whom we spoke a few days ago? [See Mark I: 40-41.] Then, you remember, Jesus "touched" the leper, and we laid emphasis upon the TOUCH. That man had been a solitary outcast. He was lonely, forsaken. The human touch was an incident of kindness. It was, so to speak, a restoration of contact with the human world, from which so long he had been ostracized. J E S U S TOUCHED THAT LEPER.

In the instance before us there were TEN men. They formed their own society of sorrow, so to speak. The human touch was not lacking. Methinks they lived together in sodden, social despair. Effort long since had ceased. They merely sat down, waiting for the shadows of the impending and encircling night.

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To them in answer to their cry for mercy, Jesus prescribed a different method of procedure. "Up! Go show yourselves to the priest!"—"And as they went, they were healed."

From this rather suggestive passage, two things there are I want to bring to your attention:—

First, here I find **EFFORT**: There is contrast between these men, and God's dealing with another leper far back in the old Testament. This man was Naaman, the Syrian, and to him Elisha prescribed still another method of procedure. The prophet commanded him: "Go dip in Jordan seven times." I think there was reason for this. Naaman's life was not marked by proclivities to the sluggishness of despair. Naaman was a man of action. He was the captain of the hosts of Syria, and a sort of prime minister to the kingdom which he served.—He seems to have paid comparatively small attention to the disease that was sapping his life. For him it was the task,—the **TASK**. Like our own General Grant or President Harper, being slaughtered by disease, his one great hope was to achieve his life work before the end came.

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Also, Naaman's attitude was characterized by pride,—national pride. "Are not Abanah and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the rivers of Israel?" It would be like sending a man who boasted of his Americanism to find healing in the waters of the Ganges. Have we not our own Colorado, our Sacramento, our Ohio, Missouri and Mississippi? Why go to the muddy banks of a foreign stream? That was Naaman. Naaman's pride, Naaman's provincialism must be corrected in the process of healing. "Go wash in Jordan." God said JORDAN. And Jordan it must be. "And wash SEVEN times." And so seven times into that stream he descended, washing away, not only his leprosy, but the canker of his soul.

With these lepers, it was different. They were sodden, hopeless, effortless. They were like a bundle of tramps sitting beside the bridge to eat their garnered meal. No effort for social re-habilitation. They were like a man of whom a doctor spoke to me some years ago. Said he, "His sickness is very largely the result of his unwillingness to make an honest effort to get well. I can do nothing for him until he is ready to marshal his own power and have a share in his own healing."

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That was the condition of these lepers, and to them Jesus said, "Make an effort, men. Go show yourselves to the priest." And up they rose and started. I think it was the first time in years that they ever had an objective; ever set their faces toward a definite goal. I can see them: on, on, toward the city walls; on, on, with ever quickening pace, and one leper seems to say to the other, "At last we are going somewhere." And as they hasten on, new resiliency seems to steal into their footsteps. Faster! Faster! Until methinks they leap, they run! An energy of hope, almost an intoxication of hope stirs through their sluggish arteries,—

"AND AS THEY WENT THEY WERE HEALED".

For about eight months I had preached in a church near Chicago. In that church as a member, was a fine young college woman who was pointed out to me during the first weeks of my ministry. I was told that she suffered from a sort of chronic lassitude, which people thought to be incipient tuberculosis. So many people seemed to pity her, and she had abundant pity for herself. But while I was there, the girl became interested in the work

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of the church. She seemed to take great pleasure in listening to the preaching of the gospel. She began to make an effort to get others to church. Little by little she attained a prominent place in the church's general activities, and at the end of eight months when I was leaving, she came to me with a strange testimony: "Mr. Phillips, do you know you have healed me?" "Healed you?" I said, "Why my sister, I haven't even offered definite audible prayers for your healing! Why do you say I have healed you?" Her only answer was, "Well, you have. As a matter of fact, ever since you came, and I listened to your preaching, my trouble began to disappear, and today I am perfectly well again." What had happened to that girl? I will tell you what had happened:—

"As she went, she was healed."

To how many would I, if I could, convey this message. How often recently have I interviewed those who had lost all joy, all zest, all buoyancy. Some had even lost effort and stood ready to give up the battle against overwhelming temptation; and some with tears were wondering whether they were Christians at all. They were seeking through mazes of

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Scriptural passages to find some certainty for their soul. "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!" Some had been tormented with the fear of having committed the unpardonable sin. The most radiant scripture you could unfold before them seemed to yield no light, no consolation. And I have wondered if we could get these people to think less of themselves and of their insistent spiritual problems, if we could get them to look less into themselves and more above and around themselves; if we could convert some of their subjectivism into a sort of divine "activism",—I have wondered whether healing would not come.

"And as they went they were healed."

Oh, sorrowing, doubting, suffering friend, suppose you try taking up the cause of the Master. Throw yourself with a passion of abandon into some great, divine objective, and I venture that, like the men of our text, it shall be written of you, "And as he went, he was healed."

Another thing I find in this passage is obedience; the obedience of faith. There they were, covered with leprosy, scarred, loathsome, aching. "Go show yourselves to the priest." One might have said, "Well I suppose we have

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enough to show!" Another, "They will never let us in through the city gates!" Another, "I'll never be strong enough to take the journey!" They said nothing of the sort. They gathered themselves together. "Let's go! The Master says, 'Go'. We go!"

"And as they went, they were healed."

Am I speaking to one who has lost the sense of God in his life? One for whom religion has become a sad, unsatisfying form? One who is seeking, seeking for a vanished experience as for a lost treasure? My brother, my sister, it may be the joy of your Lord will not return until you arouse yourself to meet some issue in your life. Meet it squarely this morning, won't you?

Perhaps, dear one, your pilgrimage is no farther than the back fence which separates you from your neighbor's yard. Across that fence lightnings too often have leaped. Hot words, cutting acts, sinister glances. If looks could stab, perhaps you both would be dead. And the strange thing is, you are both of you listening to the Hour of Prayer this morning. And as you listen, the arms of a loving God are outstretched to embrace you both. The balm of his reconciling love is ready for your heal-

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ing. Sisters mine, as you listen to my words, will you not resolve to make pilgrimage to the place of reconciliation? Will you not this morning clasp hands across the fence? Just as soon as the mizpah is played, go forth, and I am sure the recording angel will make record: "As they went, they were healed."

But why further details? You know, and God knows. With him let us speak:—

Father, is it a wrong unrighted, a cross relinquished, a duty to thee undone? What is the urge of thy blessed Spirit in our souls? To what objective is our God commanding us? Lord, help us to obey! Help us to makē possible the healing which we crave.

And Blessed Master, for the soul where effort has ceased, for the soul that sits in dejected acceptance of its sorrow, that will not forecast for itself a tomorrow, but lives only in regretful memories of unreturning days,—for the soul that thinks and broods, and only thinks and broods, we pray today the urge of action. Up from thine ashes, put off thy sackcloth, go! "And as he went, he was healed."

And for others who hear thy voice but will

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not go; for those who ought to speak but will not speak; for those who ought to right a wrong but will not; for those who ought to bear a message for their God, but are dumb; for all who have not faith or courage to obey thee, give thy strength, give the divine persuasiveness of thy Spirit; let them see the clear path that lies before them: God's path, the pathway of life and to life. Let them go; Lord, let us all go! Yea, Lord, in thy great strength we will arise and go! Then shall thine angels record of us,—“As they went, they were healed.”

AMEN.

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**VIII
ALONE**

SCRIPTURE READING
Matthew XXVI: 36-46

HYMN

My Jesus as Thou Wilt

My Jesus, as thou wilt!
O may thy will be mine!
Into thy hand of love
I would my all resign;
Through sorrow, or through joy,
Conduct me as thine own,
And help me still to say,
My Lord, thy will be done!

My Jesus, as thou wilt!
Though seen through many a tear,
Let not my star of hope
Grow dim or disappear;
Since thou on earth hast wept,
And sorrowed oft alone,
If I must weep with thee,
My Lord, thy will be done!

My Jesus, as thou wilt!
All shall be well for me;
Each changing future scene
I gladly trust with thee:
Straight to my home above
I travel calmly on,
And sing, in life or death,
My Lord, thy will be done!

ALONE

THE MESSAGE

And he went a little farther. Matt. XXVI: 39.

AN episode revealing life in its profoundest aspects. Do you want to know the power of this passage? Come to it when you have entered the experiences of your own Gethsemane. For do we not all some time enter the Garden gate and pray amid the dew-drenched solitudes? Then the story of Jesus in the Garden becomes like cool water to the traveler's lips. Let our hushed hearts learn some lesson this morning, and may I hope that if among the thousands who share the Hour of Prayer one soul there is bewildered in the solitudes of sorrow, the fellowship of the Master's suffering will empower that one to brave the night until the morning breaks.

"And he went a little farther." Three comments permit me:—

1

THAT LIFE'S BIG MOMENTS CRAVE BIG COMRADESHIPS. Reviewing my own life I am gripped by the truth of that statement. Whether it be that morning when I beheld the dawn glorifying with celestial opalescence the

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snows of the High Sierras, or that evening when the moonbeams drenched the vast Niagara until it spread a panorama of liquid light, or that afternoon when the slanting sun made revelry and riot amid the gorgeous depths of the Grand Canyon, or that morning when alone with memory where the transparent Caribbean lapped the cool, smooth pebbles by the wayside shore I stood and struggled with an emotion that cried:

“Break, break, break on thy cold grey stones,
Oh, sea,
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me”——

in every instance my hand went forth to seek a comrade clasp.

And is it not so in moments of great sorrow? Moments when we feel the urge of a great ideal? And was it not so in the instance of our text? Was there ever an instance when Christ expressed a deeper craving for sympathy? “Could ye not watch with me one hour?” Hence my first comment: “That life’s big moments crave big comradeships.” And now my second word is this:

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ALONE

2

THAT LIFE'S BIG MOMENTS MUST ALWAYS BE LONELY MOMENTS. "And he went a little farther." Who is it that has remarked that a prophet's first twenty years are always the most helpful, because after that he loses contact with life? True? Perhaps so from one aspect. The fact is, the first twenty years that prophet walked with the crowd. After that he left the crowd and "went a little farther."

For is not life in its process of upreach reflected somewhat in that company which stood by the ascending mountain-stairs near Colorado Springs? They started to climb. Together they climbed. Then at a certain height some stopped. They had attained their level. Others kept on ascending. But the company grew ever smaller, until at last one lone lad braved the superlative heights. He "went a little farther" and he went alone.

Before you leave it, give one more glance at that mountain stairway. Can you get the picture of the different life-levels and the degrees of loneliness? Then the final "Excelsior" and solitude?

It is life. See the scholastic world. The

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freshman class is crowded. The great scholar walks alone. See the world of ideals. Lesser visions the multitudes conceive. Companionless stands the soul of vaster range. See the world of sorrow. Our shallower sufferings are shared, for they are comprehended. Our deeper agonies the world beholds aghast and mute. Unplumbed, my brother, thy deepest suffering. By any spirit but thine own, unplumbed. Like Jesus thou hast transcended human comradeships and gone a little farther.

And now this, my final word:—

3

THAT LIFE'S BIG MOMENTS REVEAL THE PRESENCE OF GOD. Leaving human fellowships asleep Jesus moved out to find an Angel Presence. Human succor was impotent, but when the Master went a little farther he moved into the strength of God. Was it not ever thus? Was it not so with Moses on the mount in Nebo? Was it not so with Moses on Mount Sinai? Was it not so with Moses on Mount Pisgah? And with John of Patmos? And with Livingstone? And Bunyan? And Booth?

God, give us courage to go a little farther.

ALONE

Thou art waiting for us amid the deeper shadows. Call us to thyself. There are voices which thy silences are holding for us. There are visions behind the sombre veil. But thou knowest how deeply our spirits yearn for human sympathy. Teach us that we are not really losing these loves so dear to us. Teach us that we are really building the basis for a more abiding fellowship. Beyond the Garden and beyond the Cross an illuminated host may mark the footprints of our pain, and follow—follow—follow until our lonely path becomes a highway resonant with singing souls. Teach us that even our solitary sorrows may reveal to others who must sorrow after us thine Angel-Presence in the night.

And now, Father, as we pass into the day, help us to step out into larger if more lonely life. For the saving of the slumbering souls of our time, may we, like Jesus, go a little farther. For we are his disciples.

AMEN.

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IX

HANDS THAT DROOP SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah XXXV

HYMN

There Are Lonely Hearts to Cherish

There are lonely hearts to cherish
While the days are going by;
There are weary souls who perish,
While the days are going by:
If a smile we can renew
As our journey we pursue,
Oh, the good we all may do,
While the days are going by!

Going by! Going by!
Going by! Going by!
Oh, the good we all may do,
While the days are going by!

There's no time for idle scorning,
While the days are going by;
Let your face be like the morning,
While the days are going by:
Oh, the world is full of sighs,
Full of sad and weeping eyes;
Help your fallen brother rise,
While the days are going by!

HANDS THAT DROOP

All the loving links that bind us,
While the days are going by;
One by one, we leave behind us,
While the days are going by:
But the seeds of good we sow,
Both in shade and shine will grow,
And we keep our hearts aglow,
While the days are going by!

THE MESSAGE

But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.—Exodus 17:12.

HERE is one of the most human incidents in the Bible. I suppose of all the colossal figures that have moved across the stage of history, there has been no more tremendous character than Moses. And one of the unique things about the man was his ability to meet life's crises alone. Beginning at the ark of bulrushes, that infant launched upon his voyage of life alone. A great era of his career is described in one text: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." That

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great decision was the result of personal introspection. He arrived at the supreme decision alone. Twice amid the stinging sands by the pyramids of Egypt he fought life's crucial battles—and fought alone. Alone he left the court of Pharaoh and took his solitary pilgrimage to Midian. On the heights of the mountain in Midian he met his God alone. Alone he received his life commission. Alone with Pharaoh, alone in prayer on the bank of the Red sea, alone where the waters of Mara flowed; and when the decalogue was projected the significant command came to the soul of Moses, "No man may come up with thee on the Holy Mount." On Sinai's thundering crest he stood alone, and when the day's work was over and the twilight shadows fell on his life, it was a solitary figure that climbed to the crest of Pisgah, and Moses died alone, unless, perchance some angel hovering closed his eyelids in eternal sleep.

Yet here we find even this strong man meeting insuperable odds, and read the significant text, "But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other

HANDS THAT DROOP

on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun."

Are we right to conclude that even men of the most heroic proportions have their point of breaking? One of the most pathetic figures I have met is one who paradoxically speaking, is one of the strongest men it has been my fortune to know. He was Superintendent of Schools for a county in Ohio, and also held a high official position in the church of which I was minister. When I came to that church this man was pointed out to me as being a man of herculean strength. Even intellectually his proportions were heroic. One of the first suggestions made was, "If ever you need advice or a strong man to lean on, there is Professor H——". One day that man came to my study and showed me his heart. He said to me, "Mr. Phillips, one of the greatest ironies of my life has been that men and women have thought me too strong to need sympathy. They have not known how I have hungered for it." And then he recounted how in his younger years the wife of a few summers died, leaving him the little girl that was now a young lady; how, during this period as Superintendent of Schools near to Cincinnati, par-

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ents, teachers, students alike came to him for advice and help, but no one to offer sympathy; how later, because of political complications he was thrown out of his position and became a minor official in a high school; how there again an endless stream came to him for help and direction, but not one word of sympathy; how again the wedding bells rang in his life, and again they ended in the toll of the death knell, and for the second time the life of loneliness was his; how almost simultaneously he was elected as Superintendent of Schools for the county; how the endless train of people came to his office seeking help, council, direction, but not one word of sympathy. As the tale continued his voice faltered, and I saw the real man crying out for help.

Hands that droop—hands that droop! Am I right to take this principle up to the sublimest expression of personality, Jesus? For out of the darkness of Gethsemane do I not hear a cry of agony, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?"

Some time ago I read an article by Upton Sinclair on the therapeutic value in the "Laying On of Hands." He told of coming home from work all jaded, nerves raw, body

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feverish, a dull headache perhaps, and then falling exhausted, let us say, into his Morris chair. Then came his wife with gentle woman's touch, laying cool hands on his feverish forehead. The seeming inrush of personal energy! Healing in the laying on of hands. And I smiled as I read that article, for methinks there was no mystic interpenetration of personality, but merely the healing touch of human sympathy, the conscious contact of a comrade spirit.

And will you observe that when Moses permitted Aaron and Hur to hold up his drooping hands, that moment the job ceased to be a "one man job" and became an institution?

Oh, I have seen it and so have you. I cannot use one illustration because picture after picture comes flooding my mind in bewildering sequence. I cannot take one. I choose all. You have seen her, have you not?—The little mother, the dear little mother who did everything. She did the washing and the ironing, and saw that stockings were darned, and that the clothes were laid out on each bed for Sunday morning. Yes, even shoes were sometimes shined, and she did the cooking and

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washing of dishes, and her hands grew red and hard and horny, while the children had soft hands and much leisure. And people said, "What a wonderful mother! What a wonderful mother!" I grant you, friends of the Fellowship of Prayer. But I will show you a more wonderful mother, and that is the mother who leads those children to share in the tasks of the home. What is going to happen when mother dies? That home becomes a chaos. The greater task is the task of distributing the load. Aaron and Hur, get busy!

So in business, is it not? I was speaking with a business man some time ago, and he said to me, in effect: There are two kinds of executives. There is the man who is afraid of losing his job, and surrounds himself with weak characters so that in the presence of their weakness his strength might be outstanding. He bosses the job. That's number one.

But there is number two. He surrounds himself with the strongest possible personalities and rejoices if he can develop one stronger than himself to share the task with him. To that man the institution and not himself is supreme.

HANDS THAT DROOP

So even in the ministry there is an outstanding clergyman and preacher in America today, a man whose name is on almost every lip. How could that man undertake an enterprise so stupendous? How could he hold up under the work? Last week I received information to the effect that eleven men were assisting that great pulpit orator in the task of his life. Eleven secretaries reading, studying, digesting the theme that he was to present on Sunday, and turning in the result of their researches to be correlated, transmuted, if you will, in the alchemy of his own spiritual processes, stamped with the imperial image of his own personality, and given forth all radiant to a waiting world.

O, life has many, many uses for Aaron and Hur. Perhaps you and I, if we keep our hearts in lyric responsiveness to life, may be able to find a mighty function in fulfilling the command so beautifully set forth in the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah:—"Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees."

Blessed Lord Jesus, there are some of thy disciples who like thyself must bear the

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peculiar pressure of some great responsibility. The will is with us, Master; but sometimes the strain upon the resources of personality is too great for us. Our hands droop. Our hearts give way. Nothing is left us but the will—the will unbroken but impotent. There is the mother who shares this Hour of Prayer; the demands upon her life are heavy demands. Her life is almost broken, but she will not be recreant to the trust by God assigned. Perhaps she sits alone this morning and tears are on her cheek. Blessed Lord Jesus, send her today some reassuring word, some supporting arm.

And, Master, others of us hold high ambitions to assume great tasks. The cardinal achievements which we crave have never come, —may never come. Help us to remember that in proportion as we uphold a brother's hands—in such proportion does his superlative task become our task. Master, give us men to stand for big things; and Master, give us men to stand by men who stand for big things. May we not merely live to do; may we live to share. Give us that greatness of soul which is willing to forfeit personal glory in the supreme desire to behold the triumph of thy cause.

HANDS THAT DROOP

Above all, dear Lord, may every weary life this day discover new resources of strength in the sustaining consciousness that "underneath are the everlasting arms."

AMEN.

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X

THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN SYMPATHY

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew XXV: 34-40

HYMN

Was That Somebody You?

Somebody did a golden deed,
Proving himself a friend in need;
Somebody sang a cheerful song,
Bright'ning the sky the whole day long.
Was that somebody you? Was that somebody
you?

Somebody that 'tis sweet to live,
Willingly said, "I'm glad to give;"
Somebody fought a valiant fight,
Bravely he lived to shield the right,—
Was that somebody you? Was that somebody
you?

Somebody made a loving gift,
Cheerfully tried a load to lift;
Somebody told the love of Christ,
Told how His will was sacrificed,—
Was that somebody you? Was that somebody
you?

Somebody filled the days with light,
Constantly chased away the night;
Somebody's work bore joy and peace,
Surely his life shall never cease,—
Was that somebody you? Was that somebody
you?

THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN SYMPATHY

THE MESSAGE

I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came unto me.—Matthew XXV: 36.

A careful reading of these tender words of Jesus will reveal through an obscure but real line of cleavage.

Six commendations there are in this great benediction. Permit me a paraphrase: "I was hungry and a banquet was spread before me;" "I was thirsty and cool clear waters were given to my lips;" "I was a stranger and for me at twilight there was a light in the window;" "I was naked, my ragged garments were blown by the cold night breezes, and ye clothed me."

Those four items of service seem to belong in one category. They were natural ministries; food, drink, shelter, raiment. But now comes another series of services carrying no material benefits whatsoever. Rather personal and spiritual forces are set to work. "I was sick and ye visited me." "I was in prison and ye came unto me."

Jesus knew, that sometimes in the midst of life's banqueting house the soul may mean-

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while be starving. Thirst may parch the soul amid Amazons of water. Sheltered by mansions of wealth a man may feel as desolate as a midnight traveler beneath an angry sky. Or clothed in purple and fine linen his soul may shiver as though he stood in tatters and rags amid the cold night winds of the plains. Hence we choose to consider these two ministries: "I was sick and ye visited me;" "I was in prison and ye came unto me."

"Sick"! Is it not true that many a man has found healing for body and mind not in the therapeutic treatments of his physician, but in the kindly personal presence of some soul of sympathy? Is there a much larger ministry that could be rendered than that expressed in the words, "I was sick and ye visited me"?

One of the most inadvertently cruel instances that has come to my attention during my years of professional life happened about fifteen years ago in northern Ohio. I had been called upon to make an address at the Baptist State Convention in McKinley's city of Canton. Incidentally, right across from the church stood the two story frame house where the boy McKinley played, and on the hill crest to the left, reached by great granite flights,

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the mighty mausoleum where two historic forms recline in sombre state. But that incidentally.—During one of the sessions of the convention a brother in the congregation asked the privilege of the floor. He told of a splendid but obscure clergyman, a man of great ability, but whose consecration had led him to choose the humbler fields of service, giving his life in the neglected portions of the Master's vineyard. Declining years had come. Sickness had set in, and unable to continue his work, he and his wife were living alone in some out of the way community. They were in dire want. An appeal for help was made. The response to this appeal was instant and generous. A committee was appointed and financial help and brotherly sympathy were extended to those two dear souls. But too late! Before that committee arrived, word was received that death had claimed its own. Said the widowed wife, "Why didn't you come a little earlier? You would have saved his life. He was lonely, disheartened, discouraged. He was a forsaken man. It broke his heart." Ah, Jesus knew what he was talking about when he said "I was sick and ye visited me".

"In prison"! Perhaps we don't know what

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that means today. Prison in America today is at its worst a comfortable existence in comparison with the age of Jesus. If the walls of that dungeon linked to the world by the Bridge of Sighs, if the torture chambers of the Tower of London could tell their story, the very stones would cry out. Loneliness, suffering, hopelessness, anguish unutterable.

“I was in prison and ye came unto me.”

Withal may there not be imprisoned souls today? Those dungeoned in loneliness for example. It was some seven years ago. We had just moved to our country home. Now, two of our children have paradoxical temperaments. One boy loves the solitude, and one little girl seems to be quite unhappy unless she can surround herself with companion spirits. We had left the city and all its teeming life and gone into the lonely country. I shall not soon forget that Sunday afternoon. I did not preach in the evening, and about four o'clock in the afternoon the little one, then only four years of age, went toddling toward the road. We saw her waving at the automobiles that went by, and I slipped down to listen to what she was saying. As each machine drove past, her little voice rang out,

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"This is the house!" Then as they paid no attention to her she waited for the next. Again, "This is the house!" So on until twilight fell, then she returned to the parlor, threw herself into her mother's arms and burst into tears. "Mama, they wouldn't stop! Nobody would come!" The world had passed her by.

I wonder how many hearts today would shout that child's outcry to a cold and inattentive world that passes them by?—"This is the house!" "This is the house of sorrow, this is the house of remorse, this is the mansion of aching hearts!" Verily Jesus knew the needs of human souls when he bestowed sweet commendation upon those who gave no material ministry whatsoever. "Come ye blessed of my Father. . . . I was in prison and ye came unto me."

Some time ago, a member of one of the oldest families in Oakland, Mr. Shafter, told me a story from the early life of California. It was the story of an old clergyman who made his living on a humble farm, and spent his time ministering to the prisoners in San Quentin. He called them "My boys." Said Mr. Shafter, "Each year as that old gentleman

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harvested his apples, he picked out the choicest, most luscious and laid them aside. Being asked why he made this discrimination, he said, 'These are for my boys at San Quentin.' Always the best for 'my boys.' And when at last the old man died, his final request to those left behind were these words, 'Let me rest among My Boys.' He wanted to be buried in the convicts' cemetery so that in death as in life he might be with 'his boys'".

Does it need much of a stretch of imagination to hear that brother's final benediction from the lips of the Master?—"Well done good and faithful servant. . . . I was in prison and ye came unto me." "Lord, when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?" And the King shall answer and say unto them, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Master, thy physical form hath passed from us. That form the clouds of God have curtained. Often would thy disciples minister to thee. Their best thou mightest command. To thy footsteps their homes are open wide. For thee their tables are spread, their love out-

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poured. For thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that we love thee.

Help us then to remember thy bequest to us is the lonely suffering souls of earth. In thy place at our threshold thou hast left a homeless man. In thy place at our tables stands a hungry man. In thy place in lonely Gethsemane agonizes a forsaken man.

Master, help us to behold a reflect of thy face in every human face. Help us to hear thy call for help in every anguished human cry. Help us to feel the hand clasp of thy hand in every palsied human clasp.

Some of us have so little of material good to offer thee. Help us to remember that thou dost set eternal value on the ministry of our souls. Help us to give our life, our comradeship, our sympathy. "I was sick and ye visited me. I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

AMEN.

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XI

LIFE'S CURRENTS AND LIFE'S FOUNTAINHEAD

SCRIPTURE READING

John XV

HYMN

I Know No Life Divided

I know no life divided,
O Lord of life! from Thee;
In Thee is life provided
For all mankind and me;
I know no death, O Jesus!
Because I live in Thee;
Thy death it is which frees us
From death eternally.

I fear no tribulation,
Since, whatsoever it be,
It makes no separation
Between my Lord and me:
If Thou, my God and teacher!
Vouchsafe to be my own,
Though poor, I shall be richer,
Than monarch on his throne.

Lord! with this truth impress me,
And write it on my heart,
To comfort, cheer and bless me,
That Thou my Saviour art;
Without Thy love to guide me,
I should be wholly lost;
The floods would quickly hide me,
On life's wide ocean tost.

LIFE'S CURRENTS AND FOUNTAINHEAD

THE MESSAGE

All my springs are in Thee—Psalm 87:7.

DOES the passage bring to your mind some refreshing vision? To me it recalls specifically four adjoining properties in the West Indies: Galloway, Petersfield, Waterworks and Abbeequota. Each depends for its very life upon its own stream of water. Perhaps you can fill out the picture of spreading ponds and water lilies, of green trees, of gardens and villages, and all the scenes that cluster about the flowing stream. But some early morning while yet the dewdrops hang upon the leaves, I could take you up the mountainsides to a sort of grotto beneath the higher hills, and I could show you a living fountain gushing there. Every one of the distant streams comes back to this common fountain-head. The gardens bloom, the oxen slake their thirst, the tired wayfarer by the overhanging tree lays down his load to rest and drink; and lips parched with fever are cooled because of this far high source.

“All my springs are in Thee.”

“Did you get the thought? A few days ago, a young lady said to me: “Mr. Phillips, I

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should like to join your church, but I must confess there are pleasures that I do enjoy." And then she went on to name these pleasures one by one. And why not enjoy them? "All my springs are in Thee." No Christian wants a pleasure from which God has to be excluded, and no pleasure that draws its source from God is an impure pleasure. "All my springs"—of ambition, business, my intellectual life, my friendships—everything—"All my springs are in Thee."

Isn't it wonderful to make God the inspiration of our total life?

And the springs of God are SPRINGS OF PURITY. You have read of shipwrecked men who, when the little hoarded water was exhausted, in sheer desperation pressed their lips to the ocean, drank wildly and went violently insane. You have seen men who, in the ache of some great sorrow, sought to drown it in dissipation, or women who have thrown themselves with abandon into the swirl of pleasure? What good? That sort of thing spells DEATH. For the soul's maddening thirst is there no wellspring of satisfaction? There is, thank God.—

"All my springs are in Thee!"

LIFE'S CURRENTS AND FOUNTAINHEAD

It is for this the Hour of Prayer is striving: It is that we may learn to relate our total life to God. A good many of you, my brothers, you professional and business men,—have radios in your office and share the Hour of Prayer before plunging into the tasks of the day. Let me speak to you. Have you tried to make God the silent, but potent partner of your enterprises? Just look up to him this morning; just offer a silent prayer: "Lord, show me my life work as thou dost see it. Help me to remake it a thing glorified with God. Take my business, Master, then give it back to me, a trust. All my springs are in Thee."

And you, mother: What of the home? Can you recreate it a thing of celestial significance? Can you behold its myriad activities—its tasks, its childhood to be directed, its intellectual life, its artistic life, its social life—all—all—can you make a heap of all, and yield it to your Heavenly Father, a consecrated thing; then take it back from Him a sacred trust? Can you affirm—and mean it—"All my springs are in Thee"?

But you get my thought. And now let me hasten to say that the springs of God are

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PERENNIAL SPRINGS. They do not grow dry. In general, what is the vital difference between the pagan life so commonly lived around us—between that life and the Christian life? This: Life without God has all its good things at the beginning, and at the end sadness and disappointment, while the Christian life grows better all the way. Toward the end of the ungodly life all the springs dry up leaving old age a barren, desolate waste. The fountain of youth, of health, of hope, of anticipation,—all dry up in old age. Even the fount of friendship fails. For friends are sometimes sundered, and friends die. And life's last day is very sad.

But with the Christian the springs are quite unfailling. Every day becomes more wonderful.

“Like a river glorious is God's perfect peace,
Over all victorious in its bright increase;
Perfect, yet it floweth fuller every day,
Perfect, yet it groweth deeper all the way.”

The founts of inspiration and of power are unfailling. Life moves on from climax to larger climax, old age is crowned with glory, life's last day is its best, and death itself is life. Why?

LIFE'S CURRENTS AND FOUNTAINHEAD

"All my springs are in Thee."

O Jesus, thou hast said: "Abide in me, and I in you." The branch must abide in the vine, and the life of the vine is in the branch. The stream must abide in the source if the source is to abide in the stream. Help us to abide in thee. Help us to exclaim with joy: "All my springs are in thee!"

Give us also the joy of remembering that thou art in all our springs; that our home life expresses Christ, and our business life and our social life and our political life and our pleasure life. Haunt us with shame if we venture into any sphere where thy presence cannot go; and help us to maintain the poise of divine content in any sphere which thou dost sanctify.

The life, Master, the life for which we are praying is that which victoriously exclaims: "For me to live is Christ!" Give us this life!

But Lord Jesus, thou knowest the sadness of divided homes. Thou knowest the homes where some are striving to relate life to thee, and others have no desire for thee. Master, for these loyal but restricted lives, we pray. Minister with thy sweet tenderness.

AMEN.

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XII
THE ILLUMINATION OF DARKNESS

SCRIPTURE READING

Hebrews II: 9-18

HYMN

O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go

O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May brighter, fairer be.

O Light that foll'west all my way,
I yield my flick'ring torch to Thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in Thy sunshine's glow its day
May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me thro' pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow thro' the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to hide from Thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

THE ILLUMINATION OF DARKNESS

THE MESSAGE

. . . . Perfect through suffering.—Hebrews II: 10.

THE message this morning, friends of the Fellowship of Prayer, comes to you as the result of a conversation I had with a Christian woman some time ago. She questioned what part suffering might have to play in the perfection of the life of the Master, or in fact in any of our lives. Many of you, dear ones, may assume the same attitude. In such periods some of us grow resentful, harsh, cynical or full of gloomy questionings. Hence the choice of my subject.

And may I be permitted to address this little message particularly to those who at present are passing through life's hard places? To you let me say that my word expresses no pretty religious platitude, no mere theological theory. I am crystalizing for you the experiences of my own life. For I, like you, have followed our mutual Master to life's Garden of Gethsemane, and out of its darkness I have come like one who has seen visions. These are some of the lessons I have learned:—

First, that the period of suffering is often

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the period of profound self discovery. Sorrow evokes. A man never knows the somnolent resources of his own soul until his total self is marshalled to meet the hour of pain. A man stands forth transfigured—glorified in the hot fires of his martyrdom. For one glorious moment self-realization becomes a fact. Resources that were dormant almost to the point of atrophy spring into radiant expression. Ecce Homo! Behold the Man! "Perfect through suffering."

Is illustration necessary? How many a loose, disjointed sort of character has pulled itself together in the face of a great crisis! How many a woman, the proverbial wealthy society moth, has in the hour of disaster, when the crash came, revealed a selfhood that made the world to marvel! You never knew it was in her—no, never remotely suspected it. "Perfect through suffering!" . . . Or look at the great crises of history: Has not every one called forth its quota of super souls? Had there been no crises would these mighty spirits ever have been born? Behold our own Lincoln. Give me three words to express his biography. "Perfect through suffering."

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O Jesus! Jesus! beautiful that character in its every aspect. But in Gethsemane we behold a being of heroic proportions. "Ecce Homo!" Behold the Man. "Perfect through suffering."

Secondly, I have learned that the period of suffering reveals life's real values. In the fiery furnace of pain the dross is consumed, the gold remains. Then we know friendship from sycophancy, the fountains of abiding joy from the deceitful mirages of popular allurements, the hopes that endure from those that drift with circumstance. When life's tempests and tornadoes rage, our earthy lamps blow out, but from the clear sky swept of clouds the stars shine brighter. Ephemeral phantoms perish, reality persists and our judgment of values grows perfect through suffering.

Years ago, in a very homely picture, how this thought impressed itself upon me. I had been preaching in Wyoming—the beautiful suburb of Cincinnati. I shall always remember that dear little church, standing there on its wide lot, back of which was a miniature forest of great old trees. In front of the church was the street merging into the high-

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way to Cincinnati, and behind was the miniature forest and adjoining land more or less wooded. My study window opened in that direction, and thence my periods of thought drew their finest inspiration. In fact, I lived with those great trees. The summer passed and autumn brought its wealth of color. Then winter with its sheen of snow. Friends, can you visualize the changed picture? The leaves all gone, the twigs and branches bare; but a new world of vision opened, new vistas spread, new horizons encircled, and above unobstructed visions of the sky.

That picture has been a true portrayal of my own life. God takes from me my summer leaves that I may see his sky. To state it boldly, I am better able to live today in the world of those values, and for the world of those values which were expressed in the life of Jesus: I am better able to relinquish without regret a good many things alluring to our immature impulses. Why? Because I have learned. My sense of reality has been clarified in the revelation of sorrow.

And, thirdly I have learned that the period of suffering is the most potent revealer of

THE ILLUMINATION OF DARKNESS

God. I have found God in the message of the Holy Scriptures. I have seen Him in the dramatic trend of history—the irresistible tendency from nomad and caveman to the present opening prelude of a world democracy. I have found my God in nature, every item of which reveals to me, not a bewildering, chaotic jumble of accidents, but the ordered processes of a Mind, very much like the human mind, but immeasurably transcending the human mind. A Cosmic Omniscience, if you will. In all these things I have beheld my God. But never have I so profoundly experienced the consciousness of God's presence as when the shadows fell upon my soul. Isaiah, I suppose, meant to convey the same experience when he opened his memorable sixth chapter with the words: "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord." Was that, or not, his meaning, the fact remains: That was history. Well commented the famous Welsh preacher: "The King is dead—the Lord is risen! Eclipse—Apocalypse!"

And many a prophet, and many a minister, and many a mother, and many a spirit chosen for some special purpose is unable to reveal God until the garish day is dead, and in the

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solemn night of suffering God stands revealed.

Blessed Master, do we really know the meaning of thy cross until we bear it? Do we really apprehend thy significance until we share in thy pain? Do we really know the joy of the presence of Christ until we suffer with him?

Save us from being rebellious in the hour of sorrow. Save us from spiritual panic because of the dark. Help us to await patiently the coming of thy presence, and to be in the spiritual frame to discern thee when thou dost come. Master, some of us have missed our life's biggest opportunity by the attitude in which we met the hour of pain. Today the pain is over. Today the night is gone, and the even process of the ordered day again our lot. But we have nothing to show for the experience. Some are even looking backward to receding shadows of the night now gone, dimly conscious of a loss somewhere. Others are not so. Others have learned. To them it has been an illuminating darkness. To them it has been a priceless pain.

And Lord Christ, for those who are even now in the midst of this experience we pray.

THE ILLUMINATION OF DARKNESS

Help them to remember that thou didst for our sakes assume the processes native to our lives. Help them to recall that the magnitude and majesty of thy personality rose ever in response to the pressure which destiny placed upon thee. Thou, the Captain of our salvation, didst become perfect through suffering. Master, we are weak. Our spirits shrink. Help us—help us—Help us to follow thee.

AMEN.

THE HOUR OF PRAYER—KTAB

XIII

. . . . "AND MY SONG"

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah XII

HYMN

Dear Lord and Father of Mankind

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

In simple trust like theirs who heard,
Beside the Syrian sea,
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word
Rise up and follow thee.

Oh, Sabbath rest by Gallilee!
Oh, calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with thee
The silence of eternity,
Interpreted by love!

With that deep hush subduing all,
Our words and works that drown
The tender whisper of thy call,
As noiseless let thy blessing fall
As fell thy manna down.

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease:
Take from our souls the strain and stress;
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of thy peace.

. . . . "AND MY SONG"

THE MESSAGE

I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.—Isaiah ~~X~~^{LV}: 2.

MAY I remind you that the fundamental word of this passage is "Trust". Trust that replaces fear. Fear is spiritual paralysis. The other day I saw the picture of a bird in the desert "charmed" by a rattlesnake. There was the poor miserable creature, its wings drooping, its tail feathers bent down, its head stretched out pitifully, its eyes as big as marbles, waiting for the final death, forgetful that above it were the blue skies, forgetful of its wings. Paralyzed by fear.

The human soul may also lose the power of its pinions, forget God's great expanses, and forfeit its freedom in the paralysis of fear.

Says the prophet, "I will trust and not be afraid. . . ." In the words of the hymn so loved by Dr. Rauschenbusch,

"If our faith were but more simple
We should take Him at His word,
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of the Lord."

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Out of this attitude of faith arise three results revealing aspects of the grace of God:

God my salvation.

God my strength.

God my song.

What about your experience, friend of the Fellowship of Prayer? Is God your salvation? "Yes," you answer. "By His grace mine is a changed life. God is my salvation." Good! Is he your strength? "Yes," you say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Amen! Now, is he your song?—There, my friends, I believe is one of the weaknesses of my own life. Yesterday I came in contact with aspects of life sombre enough to cast clouds of depression over the entire day. Perpetually is my own life brought into contact with human suffering, sorrow and tears. Nor do I complain. Thank God that I may share the crosses of His children. It is a privilege. But these contacts with life tend to evolve a sober and somber attitude. The deadening materialism of the current world, the flaunted paganism of the age, the multitudinous rush down the great Broad Way—it is depressing.

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. . . . "AND MY SONG"

And yet fully do I realize that the strength of my own life, of any life, the dynamic of its ministry must be the impact of a militant optimism. My own soul with yours must learn to shout, "The Lord Jehovah is my song."

I am thinking this morning of a beautiful valley at home. Wellsprings and small lagoons scattered about beneath the welcome shadows of great trees; and surrounding are the mountains, some of them with precipitous rocks, some verdure clad, but all aspiring upward.

Put on the ledge of yon overhanging rock one whose life is full of tears, and at the sound of weeping the rocks begin to moan, and the trees to whimper; and by and by the beautiful valley, catching the groan from his heart, becomes a veritable "vale of tears."

Put on that place of outlook an impious soul, let the word of blasphemy, the foul oath be spoken, and immediately that beautiful valley becomes a pandemonium peopled with fiends. The rocks echo curses at you. The place is Hell.

Put on that place of outlook a singing soul, a Galli-Curci perhaps, a Gypsy Smith, and instantly the valley is transmuted into paradise, filled with echoing anthems as of choirs invisible.

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I wonder if the longing of this world of ours is not for the life of Christian gladness. I wonder if we might not transform this "vale of tears," could every Christian heart indeed echo the sentiment of the text, "The Lord is my Song."

And why should the child of God go singing? Many reasons. May I say, first, because of the sweetness of his fellowship with God. Love always sings. Are not the great songs of our race songs of love? It is as natural for the lover to sing as to breathe. Go ask the nightingale warbling through the darkness of the night, or the skylark that in the morning soaring to the sky, sprinkles the world with her joy; or the thrush, or bobolink that in the hot noontide finds a sheltered place and sings. Love always sings. Does anything bring forth a spontaneous expression of joy more instantly than just the vision of a face, a face that carries memories, takes you back through precious experiences of the years gone by? How many a time this spring when I returned home, did just the vision of a face bring songs of gladness to my heart.

And what will it be when we look on His face and the associations of all the Christian

. . . . "AND MY SONG"

years come flocking back in memory. Will we not join the great new song of that matchless multitude which no man can number:—

“Unto Him that loved us, . . . ” ?

“The Lord is my Song.”

Oh, there are many other reasons for this song of the Lord in our souls. Songs of deliverance, songs of victory, sweet songs of divine assurance. Yes, even in sorrow he giveth songs in the night. But I wonder whether all of these motives for song may not be embodied in the prophet's own word, “He hath become my salvation.”

Salvation always comes with singing. When Billy Bray, the Welsh miner, drunkard, degenerate,—when Billy Bray was gloriously saved, he declared that as he stepped from the Mission Hall on to the street his clogs began to sing, one crying “Hallelujah,” and the other responding, “Amen.” And so he went down the streets to the refrain, “Hallelujah, Amen, Hallelujah, Amen.”

I wonder how many Christians are making their pilgrimage to that sort of music?

I have known converted men who, the morn-

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ing after their surrender to the Lord, told me they never knew the world was so beautiful, the flowers so fragrant, the sunlight so brilliant, the trees so wondrously green. In fact, life has become for them a song, a glad song of salvation.

Nor have I ever seen a great revival without singing. Let John Brown or Gypsy Smith, or Biederwolf inaugurate a great revival in Oakland, and the whole city starts singing.

“The Lord is my Song.”

Let Wesley start a great revival or Luther or Moody with his Sankey, or Evan Roberts of the Welsh revival, and instantly song as spontaneous as a mountain stream comes gushing forth.

“The Lord is my Song.”

Father, forgive us for our moments of pessimism. Our moods are so perpetually changing. And Father, perhaps this is because we live in an ever changing environment. Today the hill-tops glow with light; tomorrow they are swathed in darksome clouds. Today it is a world of singing birds and fragrant blossoms;

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tomorrow the birds are gone, the branches bare. Today our friends smile upon us; they laud us, they acclaim; tomorrow they condemn and pass us by. Today it is health, youth, aspiration; tomorrow it is old age, memory of unreturned things. And so we falter, we waver, our inner moods mark the equation of our changing experiences.

Master, give us the poise of faith. Thou who hast overcome the world, help us also to overcome. Give us the optimism not merely of self-confidence—give us the optimism that comes from confidence in Thee. Thy strength doth not fail. Thy purpose doth not fail. Thy love doth not fail. This is our confidence, and in this confidence let us rejoice. From this hour of prayer let us move forth to the refrain: "The Lord is my Song!"

AMEN.

THE HOUR OF PRAYER—KTAB

XIV

GREEN PASTURES

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm LXXX

HYMN

The King of Love My Shepherd Is.

The King of love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his,
And he is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow,
My ransomed soul he leadeth,
And, where the verdant pastures grow,
With food celestial feedeth.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill
With thee, dear Lord, beside me
Thy rod and staff my comfort still
Thy cross before to guide me.

And so, through all the coming days
Thy love shall fail me never,
And be the theme of all my praise
Within thy house forever.

GREEN PASTURES

THE MESSAGE

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures—Psalm
XXIII:2.

HOW VIVID and how pleasing the pictures which, at the reading of this passage, rise to meet me out of memory! You see, friends of the Fellowship of Prayer, my training for the ministry of God has involved not only the curriculum of collegiate halls; it has involved also the diverse and illuminating experiences of a somewhat unusual life. Many a scriptural reference, many a figure of speech employed in the Bible has been rendered picturesque and lucid by parallelisms drawn from my own experience. The "Green Pastures" of our text presents an example.

You see, in my later boyhood I was overseer of a large ranch in the West Indies. The breeding of fine stock was one of its enterprises, and this involved the extensive production of guinea grass. The method employed was as follows: A field of, let us say, a hundred and twenty acres was fenced off, and this field cross-fenced into twelve equal pastures of ten acres each. This provided a pasture for each of the twelve months of the year. No hay was made. The

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stock was turned into one pasture, and gradually the grass was consumed down to its very roots. The cattle actually began to feel the pinch of hunger. But there, across the fence, was field number two gradually ripening to "head." Only a step between starvation and plenty. Then why the restraint? Amid those cattle many a questioning cynic must have bellowed forth his philosophy. But watchful eyes were on the herd, and when the proper day arrived the gate was opened, and—can your imagination complete the picture?

It is the evening of that day. Of this banquet newly spread the first course is over. Quiet and contentment reign! "Recumbent—Ruminating"—these two words tell the whole story. Is the picture of the passage now a little more vivid? "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."

Have I spent too much time illustrating? Forgive me. Let me remind you, first, that the exhausted fields from which the Heavenly Father leads us are sometimes the FIELDS OF SIN. The soil here is very thin and, underneath, the hard, unyielding rock. This soil in the springtime may disport alluring verdure, but with the untempered summer sun it dries

GREEN PASTURES

out pitiably, leaving the starving soul in abject hunger.

“Right” are you saying, young man, hardly yet advanced to thirty summers? Perhaps these words of mine are reaching you on the street where some radio dealer has tuned in the Hour of Prayer. Perhaps you are listening in from your hospital room or from your home where sickness has kept you. “Right,” you say: “The soil of sin is shallow indeed!” And you should know. A few brief years ago your world was full of verdure. Then it was spring. With abandon you threw yourself into the carnival of worldly pleasures. Today, after so short a time, you have found sin an exhausted field. My brother, do you know what the sinner’s experience sometimes reminds me of? Those parched fields of the long ago where all the grass had perished, and nothing was left but the thorn-covered sensitive-weed. In the morning after a night in such a field, the poor stock would come to the watering troughs with bleeding mouths. That’s the aftermath of sin; and I have beheld men and women in exactly that condition. After brief verdure a banquet of thorns!

“He maketh me to lie down in green pas-

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tures!" What a discovery for the famished soul! Out from the thorny fields of sin, into the Eden verdure of his boundless grace—he leadeth me! O comrade heart, disappointed, weary, famished, disillusioned, look up! The Good Shepherd calls for thee: "Come unto me and I will give you rest!" Life expands anew. The springtime of a finer future greets you. Leave behind the barren yesterdays, and with your Lord go forth to pastures green.

Or it may be to his green pastures he would lead us from the exhausted FIELDS OF SORROW. The fields of life for you were once so full of verdure. Friendships abounded, did they not, and hopes and joys and riches perhaps, and popularity and love? Only yesterday I had a letter from a widow in the East. The picture that letter brought back rose out of the year 1910. Brilliant husband, home of culture, happy, irrepressible children, and she a sparkling young woman in love with life. Today—what? Bereavement, sorrow, misfortune: the green fields of yesterday merely memories that seem to mock.

And yet, not so! "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want!" He will not leave my soul to famish on a blasted heath. Green pastures

GREEN PASTURES

are in my Lord's domain, and he knoweth them. To them he will surely lead the souls that trust in him. This I have learned: That ever somewhere God has a green pasture for my life. Passing through the American desert in the region of the Rio Grande, I have seen starving cattle, but looking beyond the blazing desert, I have seen the banks of that great river spread with luxuriant verdure. Looking, I have said to myself: "O that these poor starving creatures could but find a way to that! Famished soul, thy Shepherd knows the way. Hear his voice! Follow him! Arise, he calleth thee! Life for thee shall bloom again. Comfort and contentment await. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."

Sometimes into his green pastures he leads us from the exhausted FIELDS OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE. The fact is, some of us have browsed over the old fields so long that they are becoming pretty bare. "The same old thing in the same old way." Our very prayers lack freshness. They carry the urge of no living conviction. Words—just words. Our experiences, so old, and recounted so often, have become tedious even to ourselves. Our methods of Christian service have become terrible

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routine. The whole thing lacks the spontaneity of vitality. To a greater or smaller degree, this is the aspect of the total Christian Church today. The old fields are drying up. Surely God must have some larger purpose waiting for his church! Surely there are yet before us mighty ranges unexplored! God, lead us through the springtime of a Pentecost into the unfolding romances of his great expanses. Green Pastures! Green Pastures—God lead his people into pastures green!

Dear Shepherd of our souls, thou dost not forsake us when the fields of life grow sere. "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." In that firm confidence let us find rest. Let us make sure of only this: that we are among thy sheep, that we have not wandered from the flock of God; that we still have an ear to discern thy voice, and a purpose obediently to follow thee.

Master, sometimes it is the pathway which leads to these green pastures of thine—it is the pathway that we shun. For the road sometimes leads over mountains, rough and swept by storms. We are afraid of the inevitable

GREEN PASTURES

which awaits us. We lack the courage, Lord, to brave the heights with thee. We prefer spiritual poverty—and safety. Master, help us to trust thee and to follow. For, Lord, beyond thine Alpine heights are plains of peace, and there in the verdure of thy grace revealed, our souls, content, shall rest. In pastures green thy sheep shall lie.

And Good Master, if among those who hear thy servant's voice is one who from thy flock has strayed, give such a soul to know that thou art seeking him. Verily, even through the message of this Hour of Prayer may he discern thy Presence seeking—.

AMEN.

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XV
MARY AND MARTHA

SCRIPTURE
Luke X:38-42

HYMN

Take My Life and Let It Be

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to thee,
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise;
Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of thy love;
Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing,
Always, only, for my King;
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from thee;
Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as thou shalt choose.

Take my will and make it thine,
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is thine own,
It shall be thy royal throne;
Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At thy feet its treasure-store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for thee.

MARY AND MARTHA

THE MESSAGE

Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.—Luke X: 41-42.

HERE are two antipodal temperaments. Their conduct is influenced by entirely different judgments of values. Let us consider the respective life attitudes of these two good women.

Some one has suggested that in possibly only one other instance do two Biblical characters evoke such conflict of opinion, such hot partisanship of feeling. That other is the instance of Jacob and Esau. It is affirmed that in many, many of us there is a sense of sympathy for poor Esau and a strong feeling of resentment towards Jacob. He is, we feel, a sneak, a sharper, and a driver of hard bargains. Perhaps, however, this is merely surface judgment. A careful study of both characters will reveal in Esau a painful lack of those cardinal elements of leadership so requisite in one chosen to be founder of a great nation, leader of a great cause.

In the case of Martha and Mary, many of

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us are not quite sure that our sympathies are not with Martha. Why did the Master thus reprove her? What had she done worthy of censure? Even Kipling expressed that feeling in the sphere of current life, and in his own unique way, wrote a sort of rugged paean to the "Sons of Martha."

May I suggest, however, that in his mild reproof Jesus did not negative this woman's virtues, nor did he belittle those domestic qualities which contribute to the harmony, the comfort, the loveliness of life.

Perhaps not a few of our homes would profit somewhat by the touch of Martha's toil-worn hands. In fact, one has seen homes where Martha would help mightily. Years ago I knew a woman who occupied a position of prominence in the religious world. She was a fluent and interesting speaker. A lover, she was, of the beautiful things of nature. Her mind a landscape where mountains rose and rivers swept to sea. We were invited to her home, and one day availed ourselves of the privilege. We were greeted with a battery of apologies which we readily granted, for, where is the home in which irregularities will not some time or other

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obtrude? We spent a happy hour there and, before leaving, upon my asking for a drink of water it was suggested that I try the kitchen faucet. Well, my friends, I realize this is not at all chivalrous but, permit me to say, I never knew that one home would have so many dishes. There must have been enough to provide a new supply for each meal for about two weeks. I wondered why paper dishes had not been used and burned! One felt like climbing to the housetop and shouting forth an SOS for "Martha! Martha! Martha!"

God bless Martha! And let us remember that Jesus, who reacted to the beauty of the snow white lily, caught the crimson of the sunset clouds, and felt the pathos of the fallen sparrow could never have been unappreciative of this element of orderliness in the life of this untiring toiler.

There are, however, two outstanding contrasts in the story before us. We do well to consider them this morning:—

First, there was the contrast between the **MATERIAL AND THE SPIRITUAL**. Two words must not escape us. One of these words is "cumbered"; the other is "much". "Cumbered about much serving." Martha repre-

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sented the type of temperament constantly in turmoil because of the self-imposed exactions of domestic routine.

Poor Martha! I suppose when she had a guest there was the usual string of apologies because the biscuits weren't in the "pink of condition". They needed more shortening—or less. Or the pie-crust was bound to be soggy, or the cake too heavy, or—SOME-THING! Cumbered—ever cumbered with service. Her task was not a joy, but a treadmill.

Perhaps Martha was the type who never saw the fairylands painted on the twilight sky; never had time to listen to the song of the nightingale, or watch the rainbows glinting on the humming birds that danced amid the sunbeams. She never felt that she could leave the home duties long enough to walk through fields and get a breath of spring. Perhaps never felt she could take time from the dishes, the dustpan, the vacuum cleaner, the frigidaire or the sewing machine and find a moment for quiet meditation and prayer. Time for Martha meant doing, doing, doing! A plethora of objectivity. No time for intro-

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spection. No spiritual exploration. Not the world of the spirit, but the world of things was the sphere in which her life expressed itself. O Martha! Martha! there are cobwebs in your own soul that call for dusting; there are stains upon your heart which call for cleansing, and in your life a chaos craves for order! . . . I can imagine Mary to be the kind who would gather together and keep all sorts of little mementos, things of no intrinsic value, perhaps. And I can imagine Martha the kind who would houseclean and burn. Enough. I am sure you understand. And I think I am right in assuming that for Martha the Master's visit was not an inspiration, urging to higher spiritual altitudes, but another chain to hold her down to more exacting domestic duties. For Mary, Christ's coming meant a freeing of the pinions of the soul. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from her."

The second contrast suggested is that between the **TEMPORAL AND THE ETERNAL**. For note that Jesus describes Mary's "better part" as something which should not be

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“taken away” from her. It remained. It was personality’s permanent possession.

I have been thinking, friends, that as soon as things assume a material form, that moment they begin to perish. Come to our home, and you will find just as you will find in your own home, so many, many defunct things: burnt out electric globes, worn out phonograph records, the music all gone, the scratch only left; broken furniture, broken dishes, worn out stoves, worn out clothing, sometimes even a semi-invalid automobile. These things existed once merely as ideas, or shall we say,—as hopes. The day they assumed objective form—that day they began to perish. Now, please do not think I am advocating that we live in a world of pure imagination. Not at all. Even Mary must come down to the world of Martha’s “things.” I am, however, suggesting that there is another inner world whose values lie in the realm of personality, and that those who, like Mary, place supreme emphasis upon the values of the spiritual life, have gathered to themselves treasures which neither time nor circumstance can destroy. Martha’s dishes, Martha’s little cottage, Martha’s entire world

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of that distant day have gone. Oblivion has claimed them all. But Mary's aspirations, Mary's loves, Mary's spiritual refinement, attained through converse with her Master, combine to contribute to Mary's eternal selfhood. Jesus was watching the miracle of a soul's awakening. The perfection of that great thing was to him supreme. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which SHALL NOT BE TAKEN AWAY FROM HER."

Father, thou knowest how slowly at times our hearts respond to things divine. The claims of current life are so insistent, and our hot hearts so ready to yield to these claims. Father, the waves that wash amid the shallows of our being are so obvious and noisy that we forget those profounder deeps within us—deeps, alas, which no one but thee, our Creator, can fathom. It is out of these profounder reaches that the eternal selfhood of us yearns Godward. "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O God!" And in these moments of finer self-articulation—in these moments we

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discover "that better part" which cannot be taken away from us.

Father, thou knowest how often not only in our homes, but even in our churches we are so busy administering the material affairs of thy kingdom that we have no time for converse with the Friend Divine who waits. Thou knowest how often the ministers of thy grace search the scriptures rather as a text book of divine truth than as a medium through which the voice of Jesus might reach their souls. Lord, call us to sit at thy feet, that alone with thee we may learn much of thee. Master, for the dear husbands and fathers away at work we pray. May they not only, like honest, godly men, provide for the material needs of those dependent upon them; may they remember they have also a spiritual ministry to perform. May the service they render their loved ones be alike a service to soul and body. Even in their sacrificial labors may they not forget to choose for their own lives "that better part." God bless our men! God bring them into beautiful contact with Jesus. And for the mothers and sisters and wives at home we also pray. We thank thee that so many pause amid the incessant demands of home life to

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share the Hour of Prayer. Many, like Mary, are even now in the secret of the Master's presence. Enrich their lives this morning.

"Breathe through the heats of our desire
Thy coolness and thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire,
Speak through the earthquake, wind and fire,
O still, small voice of calm.

AMEN.

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XVI
THE UNHURRIED FINALITY

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm XXXIV

HYMN

Spirit of God Descend Upon My Heart

Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;
Wean it from earth, through all its pulses
move;
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as Thou art,
And make me love thee as I ought to love.

I ask no dream, no prophet-ecstasies;
No sudden rending of the veil of clay;
No angel visitant; no opening skies;
But take the dimness of my soul away.

Hast thou not bid us love thee, God and King?
All, all thine own, soul, heart, and strength,
and mind;
I see thy cross—there teach my heart to cling:
O let me seek thee, and O let me find.

Teach me to feel that thou art always nigh;
Teach me the struggles of the soul to bear,
To check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh;
Teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.

Teach me to love thee as thine angels love,
One holy passion filling all my frame;
The baptism of the heaven-descended Dove,
My heart an altar, and thy love the flame.

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THE MESSAGE

By little and little I will drive them out from before thee until thou be increased and inherit the land.

—Exodus XXIII: 30.

“I WILL drive them out before thee.”

What a heartening promise! The enemy is at length to be overcome, the end of life achieved. What a heartening promise, I say. Only to know that success awaits at the end of the enterprise. Only to know that victory unfurls at the close of the battle. Only to know that at the end of the pilgrimage the lights of the homeland will be shining. “Ten thousand years is a long, long time,” as the old song says, but if a soul is inspired by hope, sustained by love, it will keep on facing the glorious consummation to be achieved “ten thousand years from now.” “I will drive them out!” Victory waits at the end of the day.

O weary, sad and sorrowing hearts, struggling for years beneath the burden, agonizing for decades, perhaps, amidst the labyrinths of life's wilderness, crying out as you vainly follow life's elusive hopes, “unanswered yet, unanswered yet”, on the blistering desert do

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the fleeing phantoms mock you? Are you tired, hopeless, faithless? Take hope this morning. God's promise is yours. Victory waits ahead. The forces assailing your soul shall be subdued. Temptation, sorrow, failure—all. "I will drive them out before thee."

But doesn't the difficulty come in the method which the Master uses? For may it not be with your life, brother,—with your life with its moral antagonisms—as it was with the enemies of Israel in that far day? For you, as for them, may not the method of the Heavenly Father be "little by little?" "Little by little I will drive them out before thee." Ah, that is where the testing comes.

Years ago, with a great rent torn in her side, the Lusitania slowly settled to her watery grave. Crowds of people that day looked into the face of death. A lady stood at the stern dumb with fear. Thus to be hurled into eternity! Calmly a gentleman approached her. I cannot recall his exact words, but they were after this fashion: "Courage, lady, in a little while the border will be crossed. In a little while you and I will be beholding in lucid light what all the sages of the ages have died

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to learn. Courage! We are about to solve the Great Mystery." And it was so.

What do I mean? I mean if I could say to you, my friend of the Fellowship of Prayer,—"Take courage: adjust your life to God's will, dare to be a Christian. This evening will find you in your Father's house. Tonight the stars that light your sky will shine as lamps in the city of God. Tonight for your soul it will be glory!"—Could I say that, I suppose that ninety per cent of those who linger on the border of indecision would step across into definite relationship with the Kingdom of God.

But when I point you to the long course of perhaps sixty waiting years, the trail that winds uphill and down, the rocks and crags and torrents, the midnights and drenching storms, the battles and the sorrows and the heartaches and temptations—it is then the heart begins to fail, and the hands to grow nerveless. Yet for many and many a life it is the Master's method. "LITTLE BY LITTLE I will drive them out before you."

Is it not so God works in the realm of nature? Look at our own imposing Shasta, rising monumental against the western sky.

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How long did it take the Creator to carve that mighty monument? How many centuries, how many milleniums rolled their lagging courses? Look at yon mighty chain of rippling lakes that sing their song beneath the summer suns. How many eons did the Master work to spread their azure grandeur? "Little by little," step by step, while the weary centuries rolled on. Look at the coral island that lifts its fronded bosom to the warm winds of the Pacific. How many eons did the Master labor to bring that gem of loveliness from ocean's dim translucence? "Little by little," moment by moment, year by year, millenium by millenium.

So let us not fear allying ourselves with him, and adjusting our lives to the task of transforming a pagan world. The forces of the spirit must triumph in the conflict against the forces of materialism, paganism, rampant sin. Degeneracy shall give way. The emis-saries of darkness shall be driven into oblivion by the onward march of the forces of light. This world shall be brought back ransomed to the feet of the Redeemer. The mountain tops shall flash his glory; the seas shall sing his praise; the winds shall lyric the anthems of

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his triumph; and the ages shall bring to pass at last the answer to the prayer, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done!" Not in a moment, not in a generation, not in a century, but slowly, majestically, irrevocably the momentum gathers. "Little by little I will drive them out before thee."

And do we wrong to take this principle to our own spiritual selves? Holiness comes not in a day, my brother; not in a momentary experience; not a flash of blinding light. It comes through a biologic process, slowly, painfully but potentially. "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." Little by little, step by step, mile after mile, horizon after horizon moves the pilgrimage to the palace of the King.

This is God's way. Before the microphone this morning let me lift a fragrant, full-blown rose. Lo! the crimson of its petals, the wonderful symmetry of its lines and curves, the sweetness of its perfume! Or here let me bring the lily, snowy in its whiteness, immaculate in its loveliness. In rose and lily how many thousands of years of cosmic labor stand consummated? Every force in the universe: the light of all the stars, the wind,

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the sun, the rain are there, and gravity and the chemicals of the soil—all—all have wrought, and here the product of unnumbered years.

Holy Father, have we not proved that the perfection of the human soul in grace is not the task of a moment? Once we thought otherwise, but we have learned. There are heights we must attain, but in attaining them we must plod. There are territories which must be ours, but in the achieving of them we must fight hard battles. We are commanded to be "perfect as our Father who is in heaven is perfect." Father, we shudder at the distance between our present lives and thee. And yet, we are not without hope, for "it is God that worketh in us" and he will carry on his work to ultimate perfection.

Encourage us by the revelation that there is progress being made in the purifying of our lives. Even though it be "little by little" show us that we are gaining ground. It is not spiritual self-glory we crave; nor self-satisfaction, but just the consolation of knowing the Father's will is being done in us. "Little by little" though the process of life's perfection may be, strengthen us with the

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mighty hope: "We shall be like him." Not now, perhaps, but afterward.—After the labor, rest; after the fight, victory; after the baptism of suffering, the risen life with Jesus!

God give us patience to wait! God give us hope while we wait! God give us strength to struggle while we wait! God ultimately abolish the antagonisms! God give us victory over not only our sins—God give us victory over our temptations,, so that they having no longer an appeal, we may be able to say as Jesus said: "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me." God fulfill in us the promise made to this man of the long ago: "By little and little I will drive them out before thee."

AMEN.

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XVII

THE ESSENTIAL EMPHASIS

SCRIPTURE READING

John XXI

HYMN

Saviour Who Died for Me

Saviour, who died for me,
I give myself to thee;
Thy love, so full, so free,
 Claims all my powers.
Be this my purpose high,
To serve thee till I die,
Whether my path shall lie
 Mid thorns or flowers.

But, Lord, the flesh is weak;
Thy gracious aid I seek,
For thou the word must speak
 That makes me strong.
Then let me hear thy voice,
Thou art my only choice;
O bid my heart rejoice,
 Be thou my song.

Saviour, with me abide;
Be ever near my side;
Support, defend, and guide;
 I look to thee.
I lay my hand in thine,
And fleeting joys resign,
If I may call thee mine
 Eternally.

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THE MESSAGE

If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

Follow thou me.—John XXI: 22.

I HOPE, friends of the Fellowship of Prayer, that the reading of the scripture lesson this morning has given you ample background for the thought I am about to present. If, however, the background is not quite complete, please recall the emphatic protestations of Peter regarding his devotion to Jesus, and recall how in the crucial moment he denied him with oaths and curses. On the morning of our text Peter is fully restored, and shall we say, re-installed? Jesus then gives him in one illuminating flash a forecast of his future. The tender, affectionate John is also present. Immediately the impulsive Peter shoots a curious, questioning glance in the direction of this gentle spirit. "THIS MAN, Lord: What shall this man do?" Jesus swings the emphasis right back on Peter himself. "What is that to thee? Follow thou me."

This circumstance has taught me many a lesson. May I share them with you?

First, I have learned not to measure my life by another man's ABILITY. God's will for

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him and me may lie in spheres entirely different. If I am unable to do his work why make this fact occasion for discontent and idle regret? There is certainly some task my own ability may assume. What if I have not the poetic genius of Talmage; or that matchless eloquence of Gunsaulus, which, rolling wave on wave swept everything before it? What if my poor soul stands dumb with awe in the presence of Angelo's art; or despairingly I melt to impotent tears in the triumph of Handel's Hallelujah? "Master, behold these men: How much thou hast given to them!" "What is that to thee? Follow thou me."

How forcefully this was brought to me in Ohio some years ago. In the city of Middletown was located the great "Armco" plant. Among the heads of that institution were two splendid Christian men: Mr. Harlan, and a man of my own name, Phillips. The minister then of the Baptist Church in that place was my good friend, Dr. Rittenhouse. The state of Ohio was making a desperate effort to rid itself of the saloon, and these two wealthy executives were among the heaviest contributors to the temperance cause. It was an inspiration to see how those good men gave

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their lives, their influence, their gold to this great cause of moral advance. While they were doing that, Rittenhouse and I were going from village to village and from town to town campaigning for the cause. One day Mr. Rittenhouse and I met in his study, and our conversation was about the two men in question. Said Mr. Rittenhouse: "You know, George, those men, Harlan and Phillips, are marvelous men!" Said I, "Dan, when I see what they are doing financially for this thing, I feel as if I were a regular nobody." A few days after I received a long distance call from Mr. Harlan: "Mr. Phillips, come up and help us—Please—Please! My car will come down for you. We have arranged three speaking engagements for you for one evening. I will take you personally to each place." I went. Such crowds! First to a church in the suburbs, then to an improvised "tabernacle" swarming with people. In the meantime the big Methodist church in the city was filling—in fact overflowing—and the great audience was being held for our arrival. On that last run Mr. Harlan was very silent. At last he spoke: "Mr. Phillips, I am a rich man; but when I see what men like you and Mr. Rittenhouse

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are doing, I believe I should hold no price too precious to be able to acquire your ability!"

Did you get my thought? Each in his sphere indispensable. Measure not thy life by another man's ability. Assume thine own task. Live thine own life: "What is that to thee? Follow thou me!"

And again I have learned not to measure my life by another man's OPPORTUNITY. In this story two words stand forth in contrast: "Do"—"Tarry".

"Lord what shall this man DO?" "If I will that he should TARRY what is that to thee?"

Two different worlds of opportunity opened before these men. Peter's was to be the world of action—heroic, intense, dramatic. Struggling against the might of Rome, he must at length grip his cross, and die in a blaze of martyrdom. But on that world and by his very struggle and death he stamped his gospel. It was in this manner, said Jesus, "he should glorify God." John's world was to be, in contrast, a world of quiet receptiveness. His soul was to be the prism through which the light of heaven made rainbows on

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the earth. He was to receive from God, and interpret to the world, a vision of undying significance. For Peter, the world of opportunity was in the intense rush of Rome. For John, the world of opportunity was in the secluded quiet of the Isle of Patmos. One was to "Do," the other to "Tarry."

And poor indeed, would be human society if deprived of either of these men. God save us from a world where there are all men of action and no men of vision. Forever true: "Where there is no vision the people perish." God save us also, from a world where there are all men of vision, and no men of action. Each to his sphere: a place for the doer and a place for the "seer". "If I will that he should tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me!"

And may I remind your life and mine of that other contrast here;—the contrast of EXPERIENCE? Peter had just been told that he must suffer. The cross must be his tragic lot. Instantly he swings the focus over to John: "Lord, what shall this man do?" In other words: Is mine to be a singularity of suffering? Mine is to be the pathway of pain. What of him? Show me HIS cross. Reveal

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HIS woe! "Hush, Peter! That is not the question at issue. The relevant thing is to accept God's program for your own life. 'If I will that he should tarry till I come what is that to thee? Follow thou me!'"

My friend, is that the question filling your soul with deep distress? Why should you be given the hard places while others live the life of ease? Why should you be so poor? Look at the wealth of others. Why should death claim the objects of your love, while on the other portal the dread shadow has never fallen? Why should your hopes be forever deferred, while for others the avenues to life's objectives are wide open and direct? Perhaps, poor invalid, looking through the open window to the world of spontaneous, happy vigorous life—it is you who sob so pathetically: "Lord, look at their lives! Why?—Why?—Why?" Tenderly, O souls despondent I would bring to you your Master's word: "What is that to thee? Follow thou me."

But let us now to the essential emphasis: "Follow thou ME!"—that is the final focus—"ME". "Peter, take your thought from John. Look on ME. 'Follow thou ME'. Is your difficulty temptation? I was tempted and

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victorious: Follow thou me. Is it sorrow? I also drank to its dregs the cup of human woe, and faith revealed in it the sweetness of the will of God: 'Follow thou me.' Is it poverty? I also knew the ache of poverty, but by my poverty I created the spiritual wealth of life: 'Follow thou me!' Is it death? Behold Calvary! But behold I live forevermore. 'Follow thou me!'"

Father of all men, save us from comparisons that fetter our faith. Help us not to be aggrieved by the successes of our brothers, or the seeming unbroken gladness that pervades their song of life. If God ordains our life to breathe a minor strain, let us remember that perhaps God's total symphony is sweetened by that minor strain. Help us to think of life supremely in terms of God, and of the purposes of God. Fulfill for us the yearning which we so plaintively express: "Only to know that the path I tread is the path marked out for me!" Assure us that our life is not "hid from God." Amid the devious ways show us thy footprints. Let us hear thy voice in fine assurance: "Fear thou not for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God."

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This very day may be full of hard places for some of thy children. The stenographer at her desk may experience the loneliness that is so often the lot of the child of God. Others in the office may move happily and evenly in the ways of the current world. She is quite cut off and alone. Bring to her soul this day the vision of her Saviour. Bring his message to her: "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." Father, whatever the circumstance that causes unrest or bewilderment, thou knowest; and thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose soul is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Confirm our faith in thee! Confirm us in the confidence that life is something more than haphazard. Help us to discern the Heavenly Father's will. For Christ's sake!

AMEN.

MY GOD, MYSELF AND MY SALVATION

XVIII

MY GOD, MYSELF AND MY SALVATION

SCRIPTURE READING

Philippians II: 5-23

HYMN

O Jesus I Have Promised

O Jesus, I have promised
To serve thee to the end;
Be thou forever near me,
My Master and my Friend.
I shall not fear the battle
If thou art by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway,
If thou wilt be my Guide.

O let me hear thee speaking
In accents clear and still,
Above the storms of passion,
The murmurs of self-will.

O speak to reassure me,
To hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen,
Thou Guardian of my soul.

O let me feel thee near me,
The world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle,
The tempting sounds I hear;
My foes are ever near me,
Around me and within;
But Jesus, draw thou nearer,
And shield my soul from sin.

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O Jesus, thou hast promised
To all who follow thee,
That where thou art in glory
There shall thy servant be;
And, Jesus, I have promised
To serve thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow
My Master and my Friend.

THE MESSAGE

So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.—Philippians II: 12-13. (R. V.)

HERE we have one of those profound paradoxes of Paul. In fact I have often thought how interesting it might be to devote a whole week of these prayer periods to a consideration of the paradoxes of Paul. This great man has a habit of presenting at the same moment antipodal poles of truth, and you find your thought arrested—almost you might say bewildered at his flagrant and unblushing contradictions. For example: “When I am weak then am I strong?” Or again: “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and

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so fulfill the law of Christ. . . . for every man shall bear his own burden" This morning, however, let us devote our thought to the passage we have chosen: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God that worketh in you."

Seemingly contradictory statements indeed. The first affirmation that meets us here is merely a re-statement of the supreme emphasis of Paul; namely, that God is the Source of our salvation. "Not of works lest any man should boast: it is the gift of God." All of grace! "It is God that worketh in you!"

And friends of the Fellowship of Prayer, you can readily see how much more beautiful is the process involved in salvation by grace than that which would be involved in salvation by our own good works. In God's method of grace salvation ceases to be entirely an objective attainment, and involves as well loving personal relationships between the soul and God. In these personal relationships we know and love God, and knowing and loving him our souls are born anew.

Let me illustrate: Coming down from my home to the Hour of Prayer I pass by an automobile place, the chief enterprise of which

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is the manufacture of those fine trunks now so often seen attached to the backs of motor cars. Sometimes I have said to myself: "Well, I suppose I'll buy one of those things some day. Perhaps I'll get one for the next long trip I take." Let us say such a time comes. I walk up to the establishment, pay my twenty-five dollars, and walk off with my trunk. The personal element hardly enters in. It is entirely a commercial transaction. But one day a machine stops in front of the church. "You are Mr. Phillips, aren't you?" "Yes." "Well, I've so frequently seen you driving by my place. You see, I manufacture automobile trunks. I wonder if you would give me the pleasure of equipping your car with one for you?" What happens? Immediately the whole circumstance is removed from the commercial realm into the world of personality. I have not merely obtained a piece of merchandise, I have found a friend.

Or this instance: There are, I grant you, few places where service is rendered with finer courtesy than at the filling stations along the highway. Nevertheless, we have come to regard that very courtesy as a part of the technique of gasoline selling. Ten gallons, two

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dollars—you give me, I give you, a smile a piece thrown in—and that's the end. But about two years ago two lads came into my office: "Mr. Phillips, my brother and I have come over to see you. We are Episcopalians, and so is mother. But she is now quite old and frail. She can no longer go to church, but Oh, the good she gets from the Hour of Prayer and the broadcast of the Sunday services. My brother and I want to show our appreciation, and wonder whether you wouldn't drop in at our service station and let us keep you supplied with gas. You know we should just love to do it." Well, my friends, one does not like to take advantage of kindness of this sort, but when upon occasion I did drop in, it was the warmth of human tenderness—this and not material possession was the thing that gladdened.

Perhaps I have over-illustrated, but did Heaven lie at the summit of Mount Everest, and did I climb up into glory by my own unaided strength, going to Heaven would be like battling to the North Pole or some such impersonal geographic quest. Could I offer to God my good works as a purchase price of salvation, then I need have no personal rela-

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tionship with God more than I would with a merchant who hands me my goods, and takes in my money. It is a purely impersonal transaction. I give something, God gives its equivalent—that's all. But when salvation becomes a free gift bestowed by the Heavenly Father, and a free gift purchased for me at the cost of infinite love and infinite suffering—then a wonderful personal relationship is established between my God and me, and "We love him because he first loved us."

That being the case, how can Saint Paul in direct contradiction command us: "Work out YOUR OWN SALVATION with fear and trembling"? Well, friends, let us face the question squarely, and let us see whether there are not some things which only we ourselves can do in order to realize in our own lives that salvation which comes to us from God.

On my little ranch I have four beautiful young orange trees. These little trees have a sort of special place in my heart. In fact, all trees do, for trees are such helpless things! Think of it: they can't even move. The other day at Grant's Park I stood looking at those giant sequoias. I was told some of them are

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over five thousand years old. Think of it: standing on one spot for five thousand years! Some of us find it hard to stand on one spot for five minutes. . . . Yes, trees are such helpless things. They are wrenched by the storm, scorched by the drought, eaten down by the wild beasts, killed by the frost. Well, those orange trees: I have had to institute myself their guardian, and do for them what they could not possibly do for themselves. And so I have fertilized them, watered them, wired around their roots to protect them from gophers, and when the chilly winter nights come on, carefully I cover them to protect them from the frost. . . . But there are some things I can never do for those orange trees—things that they only can do for themselves. Ultimately must they not work out their own salvation? Root system, leaves, bark, pith—with every faculty all those trees must work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.

But undoubtedly you have been impressed by the strong note of individuality in the passage. "YOUR OWN SALVATION." No general formula will do. Each life is a distinct entity. "Your own salvation."—and how

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different these problems of ours! Sometimes on Sunday mornings while the anthem in our church is being sung, my own mind passes over the quiet congregation, and rests now on one face, now on another. What a diversity of situations my knowledge of some of these lives presents. Here is a young woman: I know the disappointment that has saddened her soul. This elderly man: I know the pathos of his broken home. This dear woman so recently widowed: I know the poignancy of her pain. This father seated there in quiet reverence: I know the fierceness of his inner fight with drink. This young man: I know that the crisis of his soul has come; that from it he emerges a strong man of God, or a Christian only in the name,—if even that. And then in a moment of introspection I see my own soul, and my heart goes out in prayer: "Dear God, so different the need of all of us! In the long journey to the Father's house, what various paths our lives must tread! Help each with intensity of earnestness to work out his own salvation, for it is God that worketh in us!"

So friends of the Fellowship of Prayer, let

MY GOD, MYSELF AND MY SALVATION

us now bring all our lives to him. Let us speak with him.

Father, not alone do we work. Thou art working in us both to will and to work. The very desire for the better life is the inspiration of thy Spirit; the finer will to do is the reflect of thy purer purpose for us. The very prayer that we send to thee is but an echo faint of the yearning of thy great heart toward us; and the very pain that pulses in our consciousness of failure but a meagre measure of the vicarious sympathy of God.

We thank thee that thou dost not deal with us merely in crowds. We thank thee that no life is hid from thee, no problem obscure to thine all-wisdom. Give us the comfort of this thought! Be thou this day at the bedside of the sick. Lay thy cool hand of healing on the fevered brow. There is a girl, Father, who had planned for herself an active life of noble purpose. She has arrived at the sad conviction that for her the cripple's lot remains. If such must be, kind Father, work thou even through her anguish both "to will and to work" thine unsuspected purposes. For some perhaps it is temptation, for others disappointment, for

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others the sense of some cruel injustice—but all—all Lord, thou knowest. Give thou each unit life the consciousness: “God knows! God cares! God helps!

With this empowering conviction we vow before thee this morning each with solemn purpose to work out his own salvation—working with God who worketh in us.

AMEN.

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

XIX

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

SCRIPTURE READING

Ephesians II: 10-22

HYMN

Oh, For a Closer Walk With God!

O for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heav'nly frame,
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb.

What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee.

Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and his word?

Return, O holy Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest;
I hate the sins that made thee mourn,
And drove thee from my breast.

So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb.

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THE MESSAGE

And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so that he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make.—Jeremiah XVIII: 4.

In fact, friends, the solitary fourth verse I have read is not adequate to provide the necessary background for the morning's message. Let us read the complete story. [Jeremiah XVII: 1-6].

A REMARKABLE revelation indeed. God is to bring to Jeremiah a profound unfolding of his blessed purpose. And where will that tremendous event take place? Friends of San Francisco sharing this Hour of Prayer, I think if I were there with you and if the Master came to our company and singled me out for some great revelation, saying to me, "Arise, I will cause thee to hear my words",—I think I should follow him away from the crowded streets, across the Bay and beyond until the skyline of Oakland mingled with the mists, and beyond the valleys, and beyond the summits of the Sierras, and beyond the stars until the gates of pearl swung open, and there, where streets are gold, and white robed angels

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and archangels dwell in light unapproachable, and spray of the crystal sea casts rainbows around the Throne—there I should expect to receive the mandate of my King. And after that with what zeal and zest I should come to the Hour of Prayer with my message, “Thus saith the Lord”.

But no, for this profound revelation where does God lead the prophet? Listen: “Arise, and go down to the POTTER’S HOUSE AND THERE will I cause thee to hear my words. What is this? Is it not like saying, “Arise, go down to the blacksmith shop,” or “Arise, go down to the garage, and there I will cause thee to listen to my words”? Is some profound revelation of God then to be apprehended in the world of the commonplace?

Oh, you who are looking for some mysterious, some miraculous message from your God, have you never followed him down to the Potter’s House? Have you never found God in the usual thing? Girl, have you never seen in the sweetness, the pathos of mother’s face some reflect of the heart of God? Mother, have you never as you stood above the cradle and looked down into the upturned face of your little one, beheld as it were the face of

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—Destiny? Young man, have you never looked across the street to that poor, bent and twisted piece of aged mortality and asked with reference to your own life, "When my autumn days have come what will the harvest be?" Stern man of business, have you never watched the dawn arise upon the eastern heaven and felt a longing for that fairer Dawn, that finer Day?

"If on our daily course our mind
Be set to hallow all we find,
New treasures still of countless price,
God will provide for sacrifice.

Old friend, old scenes will lovelier be,
As more of heaven in each we see;
Some softening gleam of love and prayer
Shall shine on every cross and care."

Oh, it's illuminating to take a walk with God down to the Potter's House!

Now, before we leave let us get a hurried glimpse of what is there. You may see the identical thing in the Orient today: The Indian clad only in loin-cloth and turban sitting beside the swiftly revolving disk, on which is placed a mass of clay; and, as the clay revolves, deftly his fingers fashion some beautiful vision of his heart. That was the

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picture Jeremiah saw. But alas, the clay flew to fragments beneath the potter's hands. Why?

Don't blame the revolving wheel. If the vessel is to be made the wheel must revolve. The whirl of events in our lives was not meant to destroy us. Without temptation, suffering, toil, the beautiful thing known as personality could not be fabricated. Without the wheel, character could not be made. Nor was the hand of the potter to blame. The hand of our blessed God never marred a human life. Why then did the clay upon the wheel go all to pieces? I think there must have been a snag in the clay itself. If as little children you ever made images out of clay, you will know what I mean. A piece of alien matter—a fragment of stone perhaps—and you must wreck the thing you are making and start to mold again.

And don't you know, sometimes the hand of God strikes these snags in our lives? Many a man never achieves his noblest self until he goes to pieces and God removes the impurity. Twenty-four hours after I became a Christian, I had an awful smash on the wheel. God had struck the snag. He had to remove it before the work could continue. Jesus struck a ter-

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rible snag in poor Peter's life. What an awful wreckage that disciple suffered at Pilate's Hall!

But thank God! These fragments of purified clay are precious to him. How runs the prophet's vision?—"So he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it."

A tacit acknowledgement of the validity of the religion of Jesus is found in this fact: that the world in general expects more of the Christian man than of him who makes no claim to a change of heart. Take the most notorious character: if he makes a clear confession of the wrong he has done and accepts the grace of God, the world will, as a rule, grant him a new chance and watch to see in him the miracle of divine transformation. The very act of his baptism symbolizes that the old man of yesterday is dead, and the new man of today and tomorrow has risen into life. If, however, after this vital change has been professed that man goes wrong again, the world is very grudging in its forgiveness. An example of this I had some time ago. A minister of prominence had in a moment of weakness fallen. His very sin had been committed

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by many another man of no Christian profession, and these men afterward had repented and arisen to places of trust and influence in the Christian church. Few, if any, ever recalled the ugly thing which had stained their lives in the long ago. With this Christian minister, however, it was different. For him there was no forgiveness. The world refused him a second chance. He is today shut out of the ministry. In other words, we are willing to forgive the chaos of the clay upon the clay banks. We are not willing to forgive the chaos of the clay, that goes to pieces on the potter's wheel. Cast it aside! Finis!

Not so with God! Listen again to the beautiful scripture: "So he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it." How many times forgiveness, O blessed heart of Jesus—how many times? Seven times? Nay, not seven times is the verdict of love. "Seventy times seven." Until the last residue of sin's impurity is lifted from the broken clay, and beneath the Master's touch the perfect pattern wrought. Friends, I knew a Christian man who went to pieces on the wheel so often that we all despaired of him. But every time God took that broken character

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and tried again, and today at last that man's life is being shaped into a thing of spiritual beauty.

But there is a significant expression which must not be overlooked. "So he made it again ANOTHER VESSEL as seemed good to the potter to make it." "Another vessel", mark you. That is to say God's original purpose for that life was marred. The old vision could no longer be realized. A new plan must be formulated, a new purpose projected for that life. "He made it again another vessel."

What illustrations come clambering for expression. Time forbids. Could I speak of that missionary who went to pieces on the foreign field, his prime purpose wrecked, his brilliant leadership forfeited! Could I speak of God's secondary purpose for that sad life, the making of "another" vessel, the forecasting of another plan! Could I tell of others—others—others—the new hopes rising like the phoenix from the ashes of the old, the new future shaped out of the fragments of a broken past. Perhaps, O life with memories of the unreturning—perhaps that is your story. Yet the dear Master did not leave you a discarded and forsaken castaway.

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“Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on
all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling,
pass'd in music out of sight.
Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd
it in his glowing hands;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in
golden sands,”

Hope had its re-birth. A finer future challenged, and the vessel that had been marred upon the wheel, was shaped by God into “another vessel as seemed good to the potter to make it.”

Heavenly Father, thy goodness endureth forever. How patiently thou dost deal with our weak and erring lives. Alas, how little of that patience we reveal in our contacts with others. Impatiently we cast aside the broken clay. Father, there are former friends this morning who are no longer friends. Years ago in the moment of crisis friendship failed, and from that day the one so wronged has not forgiven. The former friendship lies today a broken thing. Or perhaps it was a parent's love for his son. That love today is sadly shattered, and that boy an outcast. Father, teach these dear ones the lesson of thy love.

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Teach them to forgive as thou hast forgiven. Give them the grace to re-establish the human fellowship as thou hast re-established the fellowship divine. Give us thy forbearance. Give us thy tenderness!

Father, we thank thee for the experiences of thy love which thou hast granted us. There have been times when our friends have lost confidence in us, and we have lost confidence in ourselves. We have stood mutely before thee, too disheartened to try again, too powerless even to pray. Then have we felt the saving contact of thy presence. Then hast thou wiped the tears away and sent us back to live anew. Among those who share the Hour of Prayer is there this morning a discouraged child of thine? Is there one shattered by sorrow? Is there one frustrated by untoward circumstances? Help these sick souls to a saving consciousness of God's changeless purpose to shape or to re-shape their lives into some form of beauty. So shall we leave the place of prayer with the song of gladness: "Why art thou cast down O my soul, and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God!"

AMEN.

THE SAINTS OF CAESAR'S HOUSEHOLD

XX
THE SAINTS THAT ARE OF CAESAR'S
HOUSEHOLD

SCRIPTURE READING

Acts XVI: 14-31

HYMN

Christian, Dost Thou See Them?

[Note: This hymn was written by St. Andrew of
Crete in the year 700]

Christian, dost thou see them
On the holy ground,
How the hosts of darkness
Compass thee around?
Christian, up and smite them,
Counting gain but loss;
Smite them, Christ is with thee,
Soldier of the cross.

Christian, dost thou hear them,
How they speak thee fair?
"Always fast and vigil?
Always watch and prayer?"
Christian, answer boldly:
"While I breathe I pray,
Peace shall follow battle,
Night shall end in day.

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Christian, dost thou feel them,
How they work within,
Striving, tempting, luring,
Goading into sin?
Christian, never tremble;
Never be downcast;
Gird thee for the battle,
Thou shalt win at last.

“Well I know thy trouble,
O my servant true;
Thou art very weary,
I was weary too;
But that toil shall make thee
Some day all mine own,
And the end of sorrow
Shall be near my throne.”

THE MESSAGE

All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of
Caesar's household.—Philippians IV: 22.

WHEN we read this epistle of Paul to the
Philippians we should strive to hold
before us as a sort of background the environ-
ment from the midst of which the great
apostle wrote. In fact, this is true of our own
writing. Let our young people write home
from college, or from vacation grounds near
rippling lakes or wooded mountains, or from
travel trips amid European cities or Asiatic
shrines—each letter carries a different sort

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of "flavor". Paul is writing from Rome. Does not the very word, "Rome" flood the mind with pictures? Paul is writing FROM A PRISON IN Rome. Like Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress this epistle flutters like a dove out through the iron bars of a dungeon's grating. Keeping this in mind, the epistle will come to mean much more to you.

Strange how one will read a scripture over and over again and pass by unnoticed some passage rich in suggestiveness. Then approaching it once more, with a different mood suddenly from the seemingly insignificant a world of new meaning rises to meet you. How often have I read this epistle of the Philipians, and how often have I skipped lightly over this twenty-second verse! "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household."—What possible message could those words convey to my own spiritual life? And yet this morning as I read them again, suddenly I was arrested—held. "The saints that are of Caesar's household"—"The saints that are of Caesar's household"—the words seemed to sing a sort of haunting refrain—"The saints that are of Caesar's household!"

What a place to find saints! Who was this

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Caesar? Nero, was it not? What a place to find saints! It was a sort of hotbed of hell. When you can grow tender, fragrant lilies in the fiery sulphuric crater of the volcano, or oranges on the creaking, grinding expanses of ice that encrust the North Pole, or cause grapes and verdant garden crops to flourish on the bald and barren wind-swept rocks that rise from the depths of lonely sea—then you may expect to use, with truth, the term, “The saints that are of Caesar’s household.”

Yet here is one of the miracles of the grace of God. Dear friends, shall I again emphasize that certain kinds of life may flourish only in their own peculiar environment? How I should like to transplant to my present home some of the trees that bloomed in my boyhood. With this object in view, many years ago, I brought to my home in California seeds of the logwood and cashew. I planted them, kept the soil moist, and waited. They grew. I rejoiced. But my hope was short-lived. Trees that would in their native clime wave exultant limbs forty feet above the ground attained the height of four inches, stopped, looked out upon a cold and foreign world—and died. It was not their natural environment.

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The life was calling for its own world. That is nature's way. But Oh the grace of God! It is victorious everywhere. In joy and sorrow; in wealth and poverty; in health and sickness; in youth and old age; in shrines of holiness and where hell holds sway. Thank God for the victorious grace that makes possible the saints that are of Caesar's household!

Nor had this period of our text a monopoly upon these stalwart souls. The saints that are of Caesar's household exist today. While addressing the Y. M. C. A. conference at Seabeck last year, I had many delightful seasons of fellowship with Mr. Poteat, a brilliant young missionary just returned from China. Interesting were the stories he told me concerning the problems of the native Christians in China. I got an insight into the sufferings and sacrifices which primitive Christians must have had to endure. As again this morning there comes back to me the picture of those lonely Chinese Christians cast into a world uncompromisingly pagan, and violently hostile, the refrain of my text seems to echo their story: "The saints that are of Caesar's household—the saints that are of Caesar's household!"

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But why go to China? Not long ago a young lady came to my office. Through the radio she had been brought to yield her life to Christ. Her husband, however, had no interest whatsoever in religious things. The old environment was his native world. The old pleasures, the old friendships, the old pagan method of life. She had found Christ. She had been born anew. She longed for a new environment, new pleasures, new associations. The old life was torment. Seldom have I been more deeply touched than by that poor girl's position. She could not unite with the church of Christ; she could not without a storm of hostility even attend the house of worship. There she was: a life growing in a hostile environment. Alas, alas! God pity the saints that are of Caesar's household.

Last Sunday morning I saw another instance of this: Two young women bearing every mark of being typically the worldly type came forward at the end of the service and in humble penitence sought Christ. It required no special insight to see that these girls were strangers to things religious, and that evidently their entire range of friendships was outside the pale of the church. Were they

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from some college sorority? Hardly that. Their bearing seemed rather to suggest the theatre crowd. I strove earnestly to lead them to the Saviour, and certainly I have seen few more sincere in their quest for God. But as they left me once more, and turned their sobered faces toward their native world, I could not but forecast the antagonism that awaited them. Today my heart for them goes out in prayer: "Dear God, preserve the saints that are of Caesar's household!"

And how many of you, friends of the Fellowship of Prayer, are numbered with this class? To how many of the saints of Caesar's household do I speak this morning? Whoever you are, God bless you! God keep you! And of two things let me remind you:

First, think of your unique **OPPORTUNITY** for God! There you are at the very strategic center of things. "Ye are the light of the world." The darker the night, the brighter the light. Shine! Has God placed you in the very citadel of evil? Grip your chance. Do exploits in his name.

Secondly, think of what an **EXAMPLE YOU MAY BECOME** to lesser saints, to more timorous spirits. Said Saint Paul: "All the

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saints salute thee, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household." Why "chiefly" I wonder? Is some particular emphasis suggested? I do not know, but well there might be. Dear soul, struggling amid the storm and stress of a hostile environment, have you thought that your life may provide the inspiration for a myriad others who function in more protected spheres? Have you thought that your high standard of noble integrity may become an example which many another following shall achieve in the kingdom of God an eminence otherwise never even emulated? O Saints that are of Caesar's household, God bless you and thank God for you!

Lord, we thank thee for those who have shown us the way. For the saints that are of Caesar's household we give thee thanks. Many of us are selfish in our sorrows. We complain of the pressure of those difficulties which weigh upon our lives. We complain because life's pathway is not always smooth and pleasant. But when we behold the fortitude of those who must sustain the untempered shock of the world's hostility—it is then our murmurings are stilled, and our own weak

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lives are strengthened to accomplish the heroic. There is a man, my Father, who is very poor. Together with his loved ones he is denied many of the finer comforts which we all so crave. Yet when we behold the majesty of his life, the optimism of his attitude, the integrity of his Christian purpose, the strength of his unwavering faith in God—it is then we stand abashed in the presence of our own murmuring faithlessness. There is an old, old lady perhaps, the only Christian in the midst of an ungodly household. Necessity it may be, keeps her there. She may not be very welcome. Proud wealth and godless pleasures surround her. Alone this morning she is sitting in her room with her Bible open on her knee. Yet she is not embittered, she does not complain. She lives quietly reflecting her life ideals in the midst of a world of which she is not a part. God bless dear old mother this morning! God halo her grey hairs with his glory! God help her to see the greatness of the gospel her life is reflecting! In some hospital there is a servant of thine who has been suffering great pain. Perhaps he is in a ward surrounded by other suffering ones. But his is the greater pain. The doctors know that for him there is

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no hope; the nurses also, and they are very kind to him, for they would temper, if they could, the pain of his passing. Yet, Father, what a ministry for thee that man's life is accomplishing! What a sanctuary does his presence make that ward become! For all these great spirits may God's name be praised! And Father, help us all to regard life's tremendous difficulties as life's tremendous opportunities. Help us to thank God that we have been counted worthy to be numbered with the saints that are of Caesar's household.

AMEN.

ANDREW, SIMON PETER'S BROTHER

XXI
ANDREW, SIMON PETER'S BROTHER

SCRIPTURE READING

John I: 35-42

HYMN

Father, I Know That All My Life

Father, I know that all my life
Is portioned out for me;
The changes that will surely come,
I do not fear to see;
I ask thee for a present mind,
Intent on pleasing thee.

I ask thee for a thoughtful love,
Through constant watching wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles,
And wipe the weeping eyes;
A heart at leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathize.

I ask thee for the daily strength
To none that ask denied,
A mind to blend with outward life,
While keeping at thy side;
Content to fill a little space,
If thou be glorified.

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THE MESSAGE

One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.—

John I: 40.

POOR Andrew! It is quite humiliating to be known simply as somebody's "brother". It is rather a shock to one's pride to be located simply because of connection with a bigger man. Who wants to be merely a shadow or a satellite? Who wants merely to bask in the reflected radiance of another's life? I suppose hundreds of us experience deep fraternal sympathy for Andrew, who is introduced to the world simply as "Simon Peter's Brother."

Does our text recall to your mind any experience? To mine it does. For some years I had been in college, and during that time had made for myself a place in its activities. Then came my younger brother from the old home. I was well known upon the campus, but Edgar was a stranger, and how often did I overhear a conversation something as follows: "Who is that new man? I don't recall ever seeing him here before?" "Oh he? Yes, he's just come. Don't you know him? Why that is Phillips'

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brother." Years rolled by. I assumed the humble activities of rather obscure pastorates. My brother in the meantime had entered the legal profession. He rose to a position of prominence as a member of a legal firm with offices in the Title and Trust Building, Chicago. His wedding day arrived. I travelled some hundreds of miles to perform the ceremony, and that night among the brilliant crowd of assembled guests, again and again the question was asked with a side-long glance in my direction: "Who is that man?" And again the answer, now so different in its emphasis: "Why, that's Phillips' brother!"

Shifted out of focus, don't you see? Simply a part of the periphery. How this thing impressed me when I attended a reception given in honor of the faculty and senior class of a great Eastern university. "Who is this lady?" and "Who is this?" and "Who is this?" "She is the wife of Professor So-and-so." The wife of this great man, or this. Nearly every name mentioned represented in the realm of scholarship a character of national or even international repute. These good women the world did not know as outstanding entities. They were simply **THE WIVES** of the great—that's

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all. Perhaps, however, there are instances where the men are also being forced out of focus, and in Hollywood, I understand, many an obscure brother is known merely as the "husband" of some theatrical star. At any rate, most of us must be content to take our places with Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

But friends of the Fellowship of Prayer, it is now my serious purpose to bring Andrew out of the background, to compel him into the focus of your attention.

Please Peter, will you kindly step back? Give your brother, Andrew, the spotlight for a moment. Ladies and gentlemen, permit me to present Andrew, Simon Peter's brother! In presenting him let me read what the scriptures have to say about this man. His record is to be found in the forty-first verse of the chapter. It reads: "Andrew first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah! which is, being interpreted, the Christ." Ladies and gentlemen, Simon owes everything he possesses to this humble man. No Andrew, no Simon Peter. He was the force used of God to bring this mighty character to light. God bless Andrew, Simon Peter's brother!

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Reading this story brings to me a picture of our trip to the West Indies a few months ago. We sailed southward on the great Manchuria, and I think it was in the harbor of San Pedro where we had remained overnight that the incident happened. The last of the cargo had been taken on, the passengers were all aboard, and the hoarse whistle proclaiming our impending departure had sounded. Then what? A little tug nosed up, got hold of that mighty ship and the task began. Slowly, but with determined application of every ounce of its power that tug began to pull. How the waters churned as the inertia of that stupendous mass slowly yielded, and the opening space between ship and pier widened from inches to feet to yards. She swings loose. And now, on—on—battling, struggling toward the open sea. Then at last the Manchuria seems to awake. Her own engines begin to throb, her propellers to revolve. She's off! Goodbye, little tug—Goodbye! Back to your humble harbor! Mighty ship now out to sea, driven by your own power, guided by your own helm!

So with Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. It was that obscure and humble man who pulled the bigger man from his anchorage. It was

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he who steered him out toward the great infinity. Simon Peter might have remained forever a purposeless personality beside yon Syrian Sea, had he not been given a glimpse of the eternal horizons of God by Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

And my friends, God's Andrews are in the world today. I am now going to tell you a story true even to its minute details, and yet a story I must try to camouflage, for the "Simon Peter" of this story is today a man of prominence, and the radio is such a pitiless thing when it comes to publicity.

There was a young man, the son of a saloon keeper. His father was one of those men who, while he regarded the saloon business as a legitimate occupation, strenuously resisted the inroads of alcohol into the private life of his own family. It was all right for the saloon to grip society, but all wrong for the saloon to grip his home. This very thing happened, however, and the son developed not only the passion for drink, but also for so many of the other vices kindred to drunkenness that his father threw him out, a vagrant on the city streets. As the story was told to me, the only position this poor derelict youth could get was

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that of digging the ditch for a sewer, his mate in the task, a Negro. Quietly the black man listened to the blasphemies that poured from him all the livelong day. For what period of time this continued I do not know; but one noonday, as they opened their lunch boxes, the poor Negro ventured a word of mild reproof. As it happened, the black man was a Christian, and sitting there by the side of the street, in his own humble way he told of God's power to save. It was a new sort of language to this young man. He listened. Before the job was ended, he had himself found Christ. From this point the rest of the story is known to me personally. I heard it from no one. For the young man I knew—and I KNOW. He has become a prominent Christian leader. I must not further describe him, for I will that you shall not recognize him. Only this: the Middle West knows his name. But somewhere in obscurity is a poor old white-haired Negro. Even today, perhaps, he digs the streets. His task is done. The tug has pried the mighty liner loose from its anchorage and showed it the horizoned seas. Now for the voyage! . . . No one perhaps, but God, remembers Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

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But some day it may be God shall lead him forth for Heaven to behold, and some day, perhaps, God shall place a diadem upon the humble brow of Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

Friends of the Fellowship of Prayer, I close this morning with the statement that there are two types of great men in the world. First, there are the men who create great epochs. These are the Simon Peters. Second, there are the men who create epochal men. These are Simon Peter's brothers. God only knows which type is the more indispensable to human life.

Father, help us to the wondrous enterprise of seeking the lost. Help us to make the task of thy kingdom and not our own prominence supreme. Help us not to consider it a minor ministry to discover and bring to Jesus lives which in turn shall cast our own lives into shadowy and secondary positions. Help us to rejoice with exceeding great joy that Peter has been found, and that we have helped in the evocation of his powers.

Father, we thank thee for men and women of such moral grandeur that they can rejoice

ANDREW, SIMON PETER'S BROTHER

in the achievements of their fellows. O our Father! What would the world be without these self-effacing lives? We thank thee for the dear mothers who find their joy in seeing their children rise to places of moral influence and power. We thank thee for the mothers who are willing to remain forever unknown if only from their hearthstones might step out into life some mighty character their love has brought to Christ. We thank thee for the sisters—and the brothers, too—quite willing to take the humbler places in the world that one of their number whom they have loved and chosen might get some larger opportunity which might have been theirs but cannot be. We thank thee for our beloved fathers who toil and toil and toil until they grow bent and wrinkled and aged, that a son, dearer to them than life, might play a noble part in that finer world of tomorrow, which they, themselves, must never see. Dear Lord, when thou dost make up thy jewels, we believe that thou wilt not forget Andrew, Simon Peter's brother!

And Father, for the Simon Peters we also pray. Help them not to make shipwreck of their lives. Help them to be true, for there be those who trust them. If among those who

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share this Hour of Prayer is one life which like Simon Peter's of the long ago is in the moment of crisis proving recreant, blessed Lord Jesus, look upon him. Recall him to thyself. Help him this very morning to start again. Our prayer we offer in thy name.

AMEN.

OUT OF THE DUST

XXII OUT OF THE DUST

SCRIPTURE READING

Ezekiel XXXVII

HYMN

There Is a Peace

There is a peace that cometh after sorrow,
Of hope surrendered, not of hope fulfill'd;
A peace that looketh not upon tomorrow,
But calmly on a tempest that is still'd.

A peace which lives not now in joy's excesses,
Nor in the happy life of love secure;
But in the unerring strength the heart
possesses
Of conflicts won while learning to endure.

A peace there is, in sacrifice secluded;
A life subdued, from will and passion free;
'Tis not the peace which over Eden brooded,
But that which triumphed in Gethsemane.

THE MESSAGE

Son of Man, can these dry bones live?—Ezekiel
XXXVII: 3.

HERE is a patriot looking out upon the
past. It were as though we beheld one
of the Blue or Gray standing at twilight by
the scene of the Battle of the Wilderness and

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gazing wistfully upon the landscape where moved his comrades of life's yesterday. Or as though we stood forty years ahead of our own time when the little children on our streets today are men and women past their prime, and watching one of the veterans of the World War, now a solitary figure, looking out upon a ranging row of crosses on some field in France over which floats our starry emblem, and thinking—thinking—thinking of his comrades of the long ago.

“Son of Man, can these dry bones live?”

Where is the life without its Valley of the Past? Perhaps, dear one, last night was sleepless for you; perhaps in memory's perspective came again before you the scenes of the long ago. Mother, is it a lock of precious hair tenderly pressed between the pages of your Bible? Father, perhaps it's a boy's picture carried always nearest your heart. It is the memory of him which has carved the wrinkles so deeply. When that lad died hope died. Or do I speak to an old couple who have trodden the long road together? Perhaps, hand in hand, at the twilight hour tonight you will be looking dreamily down the vistas of

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the vanished years, and your hearts will be singing "Oh That We Two Were Maying".

"Son of Man, can these dry bones live?"

SOMETIMES THEY CAN. The fire of a vital passion may surge through them again. The dead may live. We hear a lot about dead friendships, and "how hard it is to reconcile the foes who once were friends," but may not even old friendships surge again to new and living expression? We had a friend—a neighbor. Our lives drifted into cross currents. A feud burst. She grew bitter, hateful. "Friend? Never again!" Then came sickness which seemed unto death. For a month, wife in the hospital, doctors fighting the grim battle in the valley of the shadow. Children distributed among friends. I alone in the dark, cold house. One night, a knock at the back door. A lady with a tray covered with a white napkin: "O, Mr. Phillips, I am so sorry we got angry. Let's forget. I can't stand to see you here all alone. I brought over some supper for you. You'll take it, won't you?" "Son of Man, can these dry bones live?" They can!

That is one reason why divorces are so sad. Perhaps if they had waited—and prayed—these two—the old loves would have come

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back; the precious past would some time strike a strain in hearts grown tender. Love's lost chord might have been found.

"Son of Man, can these dry bones live?"

SOMETIMES THEY CANNOT. But out of their dust new generations must arise. One prayer I ask of God as I grow older: "Father, help me not to look only upon yesterday! Help me to look toward tomorrow!" While I treasure the lingering sweetness of the faded flowers in memory's precious urn, let me not forget the beauteous blossoms which the springtime brings. Friends, like you perhaps, I have a little wisp of hair placed by with memory's sacred things. It tells me of a brother. It brings me visions of ruddy boyhood in the long, long past. We roamed the woodlands together, and drank of the forest streams, and plucked the golden oranges from the boughs, and gathered the "campanile" blossoms fanned by the gentle breezes of the Christmas morning. Then sickness laid him low. For him no more the orchard, field or forest. For him the cripple's chair—the grave. And now—a little wisp of hair. My heart is bowed with pain. . . . But lo, I hear

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the silver shout of another boy. I look out from my study. There in the bright sunlight of the morning, red locks are blowing in the western wind. "Arthur! Arthur!" No it is not Arthur. It is my own boy, so like him. Life has triumphed.

"Son of Man, can these dry bones live?"
Yes, but as new entities. Out of the darkness of night another dawn. Out of dead winter the resurrection of the spring. Out of despair new forecasts for the future. How run the lines?—

"The night has a thousand eyes,
The day but one;
Yet the light of the whole world dies
With the setting sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes
The heart but one,
Yet the light of the whole world dies
When love is gone."

Have I not seen it—souls without any further desire for life, because the heart's great hope had perished? Existence henceforth a dreary desert strewn with bones. "Son of

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Man, can these dry bones live?" "No they cannot. For me merely the regret of retrospect." Yet the morrows have come with their new interests, the heart has found healing, the old desires, hopes and loves have found new incarnations.

"Thy heart is aching with the dying year,
Yet life is singing clear,
There is no ending to all lovely things,
Hope is fulfilled, and spring returning flings
New blossoms on the bier."

Faith will not die! Hope is perennial!
Love is eternal!

Blessed God, thou makest all things new. Where is the soul among those who share this Hour of Prayer which has not felt something akin to despair? Where is the man or woman who has not sometime longed for the shrouding darkness and oblivion? Life has been one tragic landscape peopled with dead things. We have not wanted to live for there has been nothing left to live for. We have cried out to thee! Some of us have cried out in hot rebellion, some in wild despair, and some have sent their prayers to thee sobbing with pathos.

OUT OF THE DUST

And, dear God, many a heart has had only one desire: to leave it all and be with thee.

Yet thy purpose for thy children has been different. Out of the dust of the valley of bones thou hast been re-creating thy miracle of resurrection. It came! Our world became a world of life and loveliness. Through our tears we have looked up to give our thanks to God.

This, Father, is one of the recompenses of mature experience. The young have no consoling memories of outlived sorrow. For them each cloud seems to bring eternal night. Age knows that the clouds will pass away, for age has met the clouds so often. And so we pray this morning for the sorrowing ones who have no consolations of experience. Remind them that God lives and loves.

AMEN.

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**XXIII
AT THE POINT OF FAINTING**

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew XV: 21-28

HYMN

Prayer Is the Soul's Sincere Desire

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

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air;
His watch-word at the gates of death:
He enters heaven with prayer.

O Thou, by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way!
The path of prayer thyself hast trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray.

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THE MESSAGE

Men ought always to pray and not to faint.—Luke XVIII: 1.

HERE is one of the passages of scripture most frequently referred to at the Hour of Prayer. Anew we come to it this morning, and strive to regard it in a slightly different aspect. May I be forgiven for saying: My emphasis this morning is that we are to pray on until we get our "second wind"? Somewhere between the "first wind" and the second there is a fainting period. We must pray right through it and thus arrive at the objective of our prayer. That is the reason I have chosen to speak now upon the subject:

AT THE POINT OF FAINTING.

There are so many different kinds of prayers, and among them we may mention:—

CUMULATIVE PRAYER. A little pamphlet has been written entitled: "If Millions Prayed". Yes, and I think "If Hundreds Prayed". If the total membership of the church of which I am minister were to unite in intense, effectual, fervent prayer, there might come to pass a spiritual earthquake in this city. And there is the might of the Hour of Prayer. With more or less sincerity and

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—singleness of purpose hundreds each morning—
pray. Keep on praying, O my comrade soul!
Keep on praying!

Then there is CONCENTRATIVE PRAYER. The entire resources of the soul come to focus on one vital petition. The life experiences an ecstasy of spiritual passion. We break through to God—sometimes in an instant. When that moment comes we know it and God knows it, and sometimes others discern it too. “And praying, the fashion of his countenance was altered.” In such periods the life is transformed—transfigured.

Then there is also PERSEVERING PRAYER. This is the prayer that keeps steadily on its way. It holds the road day after day—through weeks, and months and years. On and on it struggles to its objective. This sort of prayer is persistent. It may not be brilliant. It may flash to no immediate goal. It doggedly holds its way. It walks and faints not, step by step toward the attainment of its ultimate objective. This is the sort of prayer Jesus is here describing. The incident he uses, you remember, is that of the importunate widow. Unswervingly she kept on laying daily her petition before the unjust

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judge until her very persistence commanded his interest on her behalf. "And", asks Jesus, "shall not God avenge his own elect who cry unto him night and day, though he bear long with them?" "Night and day", mark you. Let not those words slip your attention. "Night and day." Persevering, persistent prayer. "Men ought always to pray and not to faint."

Only two thoughts I leave with you this morning. The first may be expressed as follows:—

Where prayer ceases panic begins.

Then the soul has lost faith in its cause; or worse, lost faith in God and in the potency of prayer. Its universe crumbles. It finds itself in the bewilderment of Robert Ingersoll, when at his brother's grave he exclaimed: "Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to scale beyond the heights. We cry aloud, but our only answer is the echo of our wailing cry!"

Where prayer ceases panic begins. As long as you keep on praying you maintain, according to the measure of your faith, confidence,

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and hope, and optimism, and spiritual poise. When, losing faith in prayer, you give it up, you have abandoned your last recourse, and cast yourself adrift upon the seething, shoreless sea of doubt and spiritual darkness. Keep on praying, O bewildered soul! It is your only hope. Jesus knew. Prayer kept him poised through every crisis of his earthly life. Even when the rabble surged upon him in Gethsemane, and the betrayer's kiss stung its venom into his soul, Jesus maintained unruffled calm. Why? Because he had prayed through the tempest into peace. Where prayer ceases panic begins. Keep on praying. "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." Remember this: **THERE IS NO PLACE FOR PANIC IN THE PROGRAMME OF JESUS.**

That is the first thought I would leave with you; and here is the second:—

The point of fainting in prayer is often the point of fruition.

We faint just at the place where our hands are actually on the prize. Look at the woman of this scripture. Was it not at the very point of fainting that the answer came? Had she given up at the last, all her previous years of

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effort would have been futile. She prayed through to the prize. "Men ought always to pray and not to faint."

Some thirty years ago, before I left the West Indies, I was interested in acquiring a knowledge of bee-keeping. In fact I was seriously considering it as a life work, and to the limit of my financial ability had invested in some colonies of bees, and was studying and experimenting along the line of queen rearing. You see, a vital problem was that of being able to rear Italian queen bees as that strain produced not only a larger honey crop than the native bee, but was also much more resistant to moth, ants, and other enemies of the hive. At a certain stage in my own technical development I was called by a wealthy man to take over his large and well equipped apiary. He was ill and leaving the Island for a period. Handing me over his enterprise he remarked: "Mr. Phillips, I wouldn't bother to waste any time trying to produce queens. It can't be done I'm afraid. I've tried and tried, but have never been able to get the thing to work beyond a certain stage." "All right," I said, "now show me what you have done." Step by step we traced the process up to the point

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where he had left off. "Well," I said, "I can't see any reason for failure." "No," he answered, "I tell you it can't be done." And so he left me and went away. Again and alone I retraced the steps. Oh those young years of life! How often and with what inspiration they come back to me! I can see again the little bee-house surrounded by three hundred and fifty white-painted hives, each one of which poured forth myriads of musical fragments on the torrid air, the surrounding fields of logwood in yellow bloom, and the air a paradise of fragrance. And in the midst of it all I can see myself grappling with that unsolved problem. Eureka! I had it. There was the solution, clear as the morning light. And what had I found? I had found that that rich man had followed a perfect method right up to the very end, then within three days, sometimes within one day of the consummation of the process, had lost heart and thrown overboard the whole series of experiments. What did I do? I took hold just where he left off and when he returned the air was resonant with golden Italian bees.

Pray without ceasing! The point of fainting is the point of fruition. Pray on, O fainting

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soul,—pray on! Your hand may be even now upon the prize. Do you need an example from the gospel itself? Let your thought go back to the lesson we read this morning. Jesus was passing through the coast of Tyre and Sydon. A woman of an alien race goes crying after him, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil!" But Jesus moves on, seeming to ignore her as completely as God so often seems to ignore his children. Is she discouraged? Not at all. The pressure of her need is greater than her pride. At last the disciples take an active hand. "Send her away, Master! She crieth after us." Jesus turns at last. He speaks: "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Is she repulsed? Not at all. Love surmounts. Faith clings. "Lord help ME!" Friends, is Jesus unkind? Is he indulging in racial partiality? Not at all. Such a thought is at violence with the whole spirit of the Master. What is he doing? He is using the instance of that woman to impress a lesson on the soul of his disciples—aye, and to impress a lesson on the soul of the Christian ages. Down the highway the prayer continues: "Lord, help ME!" At last a verdict that

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seems to sound the note of finality: "It is not meet to take children's bread and cast it to dogs." Poor woman! Her cause is lost. Lost? No! Faith accepts no adverse finality. "Truth, Lord, but the dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their master's tables." Then, behold, the woman and her Saviour standing as in a sacred illumination: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

The point of fainting is the point of fruition. Pray on, O comrade spirit! Through the darkness to the dawn pray on! Take to thy heart the message of the Master: "Men ought always to pray and not to faint."

O blessed Master, teach us to pray! There are hearts which have grown despondent, cynical, embittered. They would not have been thus overwhelmed had they continued to pray. When prayer ceased the night closed in upon them. Come thou into the dark and rescue them. Like Peter, they are sinking in the night. Lay hold of them; and, as did that saint of old, may they hear again the clarion

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of thy voice: "O thou of little faith, wherefore did'st thou doubt?"

Master, give us the humility that marks prevailing prayer. May the object of our quest be so impressive in its import that we shall be willing to sacrifice our egoism and adapt ourselves to the requirements of God. Father, we are praying especially this morning for that attorney who is struggling through a wilderness of difficulties to find the consciousness of God's presence. O heavenly Father, there are intellectual difficulties in his way, and ugly habits that twine about him like thorns, and the errors of his past hiss at him with tormenting voices. He stands this morning at the point of fainting. Help him to see that the salvation he seeks is worth the price demanded of him. Help him to hear thy mandate: "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." Help him, dear God, to pray through to victory.

For all others whom we know not, but whom thou knowest, we lift our hearts in prayer. And for the ministers of thy gospel our supplication rises. Not easily is our age being won to Christ. Sometimes we grow so weary. Our most earnest efforts end in failure. Help us

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to believe that "behind the dim unknown, standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own."

Help thy servants to remember there is no place for panic in the programme of Jesus. Help us to pray and not to faint.

AMEN.

HEAVEN ON THE HIGHWAY

XXIV HEAVEN ON THE HIGHWAY

SCRIPTURE READING

Acts I: 1-14

HYMN

Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life

Where cross the crowded ways of life,
Where sound the cries of race and clan,
Above the noise of selfish strife,
We hear thy voice, O Son of man!

In haunts of wretchedness and need,
On shadowed thresholds dark with fears,
From paths where hide the lures of greed,
We catch the vision of thy tears.

From tender childhood's helplessness,
From woman's grief, man's burdened toil,
From famished souls, from sorrow's stress,
Thy heart has never known recoil.

The cup of water given for thee
Still holds the freshness of thy grace;
Yet long these multitudes to see
The sweet compassion of thy face.

O Master, from the mountain side,
Make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
Among these restless throngs abide,
O tread the city's streets again.

Till sons of men shall learn thy love,
And follow where thy feet have trod;
Till glorious from thy heaven above,
Shall come the City of our God.

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THE MESSAGE

And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven behold two men stood by them in white apparel.—Acts I: 10.

WHAT shall I call this? A look that overlooked. While they were looking steadfastly yonder into heaven, behold two men were standing by them clothed in white apparel. They overlooked a revelation of God on earth as their vision swept the heavens like a search light. Let us consider the "heavens" typified in the intense upward gaze of these earnest souls.

First, were they seeking for the heaven of a new social order? Had they not just been asking Jesus: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Christ had entered his heavenly kingdom, would he not return immediately, with his legions of angels sweep the skies, and from some lofty throne establish the kingdom of God on earth? I think the hearts of those men were at that

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very moment overflowing with the jubilation:

“The crowning day is coming, is coming by
and by,

When the King will come with power and
glory from on high,

O the glorious sight will gladden each waiting,
watching eye,

On that crowning day that's coming by
and by.”

And while in rapture they looked steadfastly toward heaven, behold two men were standing by them in white apparel. The shining messengers of Christ were here on earth with them. Heaven stood revealed on the highway.

O my soul, hast thou seen this apparition? Wilt thou stand forever gazing into some Utopian future? The kingdom of God is with thee here and now. Behold God's messengers in white apparel. Behold the visage of thy brother man. Canst thou not see divinity struggling to express itself through his imperfect life? Behold the age amid the fogs and mists of whose iniquity the socialized gospel is beginning to shine forth like the

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streaks of dawn. Behold the little children, forerunners of tomorrow's world. To the task, my soul, to the task: for the messengers of Christ are here. His purpose stands revealed in human life. Behold, there are standing beside thee two men in white apparel!

What heavens sought these men? The heaven of a mystic future. "I go to prepare a place for you". He is gone. He will come again! "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, behold there were standing by them two men in white apparel."

Thank God for his heaven on the highway. Thank God not all his shining ones walk on streets of gold. Thank God! some plod along the pathways of human existence. I wonder whether we manage to maintain that fine balance which comes from correctly proportioning the emphases upon this present world and that other world which is to come. To take either to the exclusion of the other means spiritual disaster. For example: I remember long ago, one Sunday morning in the old deserted mountain home hearing a young man singing lustily:

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“O when, thou city of my God,
Shall I thy courts ascend,
Where congregations ne'er break up
And Sabbaths have no end?”

Yet there within half a mile was the little country church, its altar vainly waiting for his presence. He was aspiring to the courts of God in heaven, but God's earthly courts he did not see at all. He wanted to be “where congregations ne'er break up and Sabbaths have no end.” But he had no heart for one hour of worship with the humble children of God on earth. Let me not be too zealous to apply this thought. I would not be unkindly critical of any of the friends of the Fellowship of Prayer. Yet are we looking up to another kingdom in the skies and forsaking the altars of God on earth? Steadfastly anticipating the radiant hosts in heaven are we missing on our human highways those two men in white apparel?

God clarify our visions that we may behold his glory in the commonplaces of life's daily round.

Was there another aspect of heaven attract-

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ing the vision of these men? I think so: for may we not name it the heaven of a vanished joy? Life for them was this moment marked with an awful hiatus. A spiritual vacuum had been created. Jesus was gone. The opening heavens had received him from their sight, and now nothing remained but an empty world. Do you wonder they stood gazing up into heaven? Heaven held their all. Earth was an empty world for them. Everything was yonder. Friends of the Fellowship of Prayer, are there many of you this morning whose tear-stained eyes are fixed on heaven? Sister mine, is it husband whom the other world has taken? Mother, is it the little one? I am sure there are many whose hearts are crying:

“Oh for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still.”

Sad heart, looking steadfastly toward heaven, look around thee. Behold celestial forms in white apparel. Life has yet some beautiful things for thee. God has yet a purpose for thy future. There is sweetness in service. There is sympathy in the hearts of others waiting for thee. Not all of heaven has

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left the earth. Behold the shining forms of angel-presences.

“For all God’s angels come to us disguised,
Sorrow and sickness, poverty and death,
One after other lift their frowning masks,
And we behold the seraph’s face beneath,
All radiant with the glory and the calm
Of having looked upon the face of God.”

But I hasten to my final thought. I am sure it will appear a paradox to you, for truth always has an obverse side to it. Look at it from this viewpoint and it is concave. Gaze upon it from the obverse side and it is convex. But both aspects constitute the grand totality. So let me shift our viewpoint and call this heavenward vision a **LOOK THAT CAST A REFLECTION**. “And while they looked steadfastly into heaven, behold there stood by them two men in shining apparel.” And if they hadn’t been looking steadfastly into heaven, I venture they never would have noticed those two men. Earth stood reflecting back the vision of the Great Beyond. No man is fit to live this life until that life takes hold of him. No man beholds his fellowman clothed

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with divinity as with shining lineaments until he has seen him in the light of heaven. No man is empowered to live the practical life and live it beautifully until he has trod the heavenly heights with Jesus. No man has an illuminating conception of the meaning of earth until he beholds this earth flooded with that celestial meaning which pours upon it through the open portals of God's forevermore. "And while they looked steadfastly into heaven, there stood by them two men in white apparel." Look to heaven, my brother! Look to Jesus! Look! And when again you turn your eyes on earth to the round of daily things, you shall behold in it a divine significance which comes only to those whose eyes have gazed upon the face of God.

Lord Jesus, we thank thee that thou hast come to show us heaven on our human highways. How changed each item of existence when we behold it in the light of thy countenance. Thou art the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. With thy revelation before us how changed the aspect of childhood, of manhood, of maidenhood, of motherhood, of old age! How trans-

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figured our labors, our sorrows, our losses, our sacrifices. Even our crosses gleam with a radiant light; for didst thou not take the tragedy of Calvary and transform it into something forever sacred?

Lord, we thank thee that thou hast not left us comfortless. We thank thee that thou hast sent to us two men in white apparel. We thank thee that though the clouds of yon great mystery have enfolded thee so that we behold thee not, in thy good time the clouds shall again unfold, and the slow hearts of men shall warm to the vivid presence of thy glory; nevertheless, Master, teach us, O teach us, that thou hast never really left us. How truly has thy promise been fulfilled to thy disciples, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Earnestly, therefore we pray this morning that while we stand gazing steadfastly into heaven, thou wilt reveal thy presence on our streets.

"Where cross the crowded ways of life,
Where sound the cries of race and clan,
Above the noise of selfish strife,
We hear thy voice, O Son of man!

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“In haunts of wretchedness and need,
On shadowed thresholds dark with fears,
From paths where hide the lures of greed,
We catch the vision of thy tears.”

But, dear Lord, we would not blot out the
skies entirely from the range of our vision.
We thank thee that thou dost woo our glances
heavenward. We thank thee that for thy
disciples heaven grows more precious every
day, because each day its clouds enfold from
our mortal view some new comradeship, some
new love. They have passed to be with Jesus.
And our longing eyes look upward confidently
waiting the blessed consummation when

“In the morn those angel faces smile,
Which we have loved long since, and lost
awhile.”

AMEN.

“AFTERWORD”

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“AFTERWORD”

AND now, dear reader, let me speak to you personally. Through the preceding pages you have “listened in” on addresses given to the radio audiences of KTAB. I hope some thought expressed has been applicable to your own life. Now, however, let me recount for you one of the most unexpected developments of the Hour of Prayer. Let me tell you of a series of sadly sweet experiences which have come as a direct result of its ministry.

To get the logic of the sequence it is necessary for us to consider the different types who habitually share the Hour of Prayer:—

First, of course, there are the mothers. It is on their account that the period of broadcast was fixed at nine o'clock. By that time the children are away at school, the rush of the morning is over and a moment of unbroken quiet made possible.

Then there are the night workers, who before they retire for the day's rest, habitually share the Hour of Prayer.

Other small groups might be enumerated. For example, the passers on the streets where perhaps the radio stores have tuned in; now

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and then the guests in hotels or on summer camping grounds; the farmers and their families, many of whom take time from the daily toil; and sometimes even the clerks in the stores, for I am told that two or three times a week the radio department of Montgomery Ward and Company of Oakland tune in the Hour of Prayer and all through the departments of that particular floor clerks and customers may get the entire broadcast. Surely "BROADCAST" is the word that should be used. For if ever the parable of the Sower found application, it is here. "Behold a sower went forth to sow his seed, and as he sowed"—well, God knows the rest.

But perhaps one of the largest circles comprises the sick and the aged. Those kept from work by temporary indisposition, the many hundreds in the hospitals, those permanently invalided, the retired business folks, the old folks—all these comprise a comparatively permanent audience, and very often the daily Hour of Prayer is the only radio broadcast for which they have either strength or inclination.

Readily you can see where the logic of events is leading us. Many, many through its ministrations have in their last hours found peace

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with God. Some day, if time permits, I shall publish a little book of radio stories, and among them shall certainly be included the wonderful works of God manifested through the Hour of Prayer. Then in the lives of how many has the Lost Chord been found! To how many souls at life's twilight hour has been brought back the memory of childhood's God and mother's. In fact, the Hour of Prayer stands for thousands at the border line of two worlds, and the fountain of its grace is the last cooling earthly current of comfort before the soul takes of that sweeter fountain which flows from the throne of God.

And out of this has come one of the most tender human experiences. Actually hundreds have breathed a dying request that I minister in that last hour when the curtain closes on them. Sometimes in one week my associates and I have conducted twelve funerals. These represent all creeds—and none. I have even had two Jewish and one Roman Catholic funeral. Verily, "the greatest of these is love."

And where haven't these calls for ministry led us? Out into the great Valley; through the orange-groves of the south; where the

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pine trees cast their shadows on the sand-dunes of the Monterey region; where the mountains paint themselves against the blue sky of Los Gatos; where the waters of the wide Pacific roll in through the Golden Gate; amid the surrounding cities, towns and villages — such various scenes have marked the passing of the friends of the Fellowship of Prayer.

The events of the last twenty-four hours may illustrate: At about two o'clock in the afternoon two young men dropped into the office. Their father, a man of seventy-five, had just passed and had requested that I conduct his funeral. At three o'clock a telephone message came in. A mother of thirty-six had met a violent death, and her son, a high school boy of sixteen, was asking: "Please wouldn't Mr. Phillips preach mother's funeral. She used to listen to the Hour of Prayer". Arriving at my home near midnight a long distance call was waiting. "A man is dying at the Highland Hospital, wouldn't Mr. Phillips come as soon as possible." At early morning I was at his bedside. It was a colored man. The nurse told me he had only a few days at most to live. "Mr. Phillips, through the radio I have known you for months. Today I am a

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Christian man. I am at peace with God. I wanted to tell you this. I wanted you to pray with me before I die". His voice sank to a whisper. "And Mr. Phillips, will you grant me just one favor—will you say a few words at my grave when I am gone?" Such the incidents of less than twenty-four hours. Every one of these friends was unknown to me, but in each case the contact had been established through the Hour of Prayer.

Hence, in memory of these, I am closing this volume with one of the little meditations which their loved ones and I have solemnly shared in that Last Hour. Nor can I refrain from making special mention at this time of one whose passing has left in my own soul the ache of loneliness. KTAB has never had a finer friend than Mr. Hillman, first vice-president of the Standard Oil Company of California. What he did financially for this station I am not permitted to say, because he desired always to remain in the obscurity of the background, and now I must continue to respect an attitude so characteristic of him. Mr. Hillman was never a member of this church, but he remained to the end of his life a member of the Hour of Prayer. Even before

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sickness compelled him to retire from active business, he often remained from his office in the morning long enough to listen in, and on occasion invited those of his employees whose duties permitted their presence. When a few weeks ago I stood in the pulpit of his own church and looked on his recumbent form, I felt a sense of loss not easily expressed. It was then that the mizpah played morning by morning at the close of the Hour rose with deeper significance:

God be with you till we meet again!—
Keep love's banner floating o'er you,
Smite death's threatening wave before you:
God be with you till we meet again!

Till we meet! Till we meet!
Till we meet at Jesus' feet;
Till we meet! Till we meet!
God be with you till we meet again!

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SCRIPTURE READING
Revelation XXII: 1-5.

HYMN

A Little While

Oh, for the peace which floweth like a river,
 Making life's desert places bloom and smile!
Oh, for the faith to grasp heav'n's bright
 "forever",
 Amid the shadows of earth's "little while!"

A little while for patient vigil-keeping,
 To face the storm, to battle with the strong;
A little while to sow the seed with weeping,
 Then bind the sheaves and sing the harvest
 song!

A little while the earthen pitcher taking
 To wayside brooks, from far-off fountains
 fed;
Then the cool lip its thirst forever slaking
 Beside the fulness of the Fountain-head.

A little while to keep the oil from failing,
 A little while faith's flickering lamp to trim;
And then, the Bridegroom's coming footsteps
 hailing,
 To haste to meet him with the bridal hymn!

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THE MESSAGE

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow
of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.

—Psalm XXIII: 4.

FRRIENDS, no man who has himself been through the experience which saddens your hearts today, can approach an occasion of this sort without a sense of deep human sympathy. All of life's great crises are fraught with pain, and this is supremely true of the crisis called Death. There is the great Absence which on earth will never be relieved. Forever stilled the music of this voice. A life we loved has passed forever from the theatre of action; and the poignant consciousness of "the unreturning" depresses to the point of hopelessness. It is my purpose, therefore, with the help of God, to bring to your hearts the consolations of faith. Indeed, because this is one of the experiences common to all mankind, and because, in a little while, tears of love and loneliness will be shed for us also—because of this, you will permit me simply and sincerely to tell you why I am not afraid of death. Let me weave the avowals of my own

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conviction around the scripture I have read for you. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me."

First, then let me thank the psalmist for the figure he employs: "The VALLEY of the shadow;" for there are certain aspects of death quite analogous. Let us not, my friends, forget that there are beauties even in the valley. For the tired traveler where do the shadows fall most sweetly? In the valley. And where do the ferns and mosses and wild flowers spread in welcome luxuriance? In the valley. And where may we find a peace protected and unbroken? In the valley. Perhaps because I draw these pictures from valleys nestling amid the hills of my own island home, and you may recall exceptions, you do not agree with me. But this, I believe, was the picture of the shepherd psalmist when he sang: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."

I have never passed into a stage of life that did not present its own peculiar blessings. For example, when I was a little child and watched the older children plodding on to school I was afraid to leave my mother and

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launch into that large, strange world. But the day came when I made the transition, and did I find a joyless world? No. I smile to think back to the gladness of the old school days. But even then I looked at father and I thought of what a dreary world his world must be. He never played the sort of games we played. He only went to work in the morning, and in the evening—slippers, the old arm chair, his books and reading lamp. Yet the day came when I, as a man and a father, entered that world of my father's, and I discovered waiting there for me deep and quiet joys never before suspected. I discovered the joy of the Task—the Task! And who could lure me back to the shallow pleasures of boyhood's playground? Today some of us are looking with similar fearful anticipations to old age. What has it to offer besides decrepitude and tantalizing memories? O friends, if our life is at harmony with God, then may we exult as did Browning:

“Grow old along with me,
The best is yet to be,
The last of life for which the first was made.”

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And faith dares to carry its climax forward to the very limit of mortal existence and affirm that life's richest values are to be discovered in life's final experience. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me."

I grant you there come moments when the heart grows faint. Some time ago I stood beside the prostrate form of a young girl, just in her early twenties. As I looked upon her lying so silently between the casket's folds an unusual sense of depression took possession of me. Even after the services I couldn't shake it off. My feelings must have been reflected in my attitude, because a little later on as I walked along the street with eyes downcast, I was arrested by a voice: "Hello, Dr. Phillips! What's the trouble? Don't take the world so seriously." I looked up. There was a young professional man almost unknown to me. He stood smiling. "Well, friend," I said, "if you had just come from seeing a young girl over whose face should be dancing the sunlight of life lying in the stillness of death, I think you also would be serious." Seriousness stole into his tones as he replied: "Dr. Phillips, don't you believe that God's program for human life

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is perfect? Love and wisdom gave us our cradles. Love and wisdom gave us our marriage altars, love and wisdom will give us our caskets. The good God of life is the good God of death."

And may I express in the terms of this scripture my second reason for fearing no evil from the experience of death? Because it is only the SHADOW OF DEATH. For him who can say "the Lord is my Shepherd", death shrinks to become a shadow.

Forgive me a very homely illustration. My grandfather was a great horseman. He prided himself on his horses. At that time the sugar estate of which he was overseer was located some twelve miles from home, and as a rule, each Saturday night he traveled homeward over those twelve miles of mountain road. One midnight as he rode along there stood right in the way the hideous form of some unrecognized monster. The frightened horse reared backward, and refused another forward step. At last the old man retraced his course for about a hundred paces, and wheeling round shouted to the mountainside: "We are going home!" Spurring the horse, he shot forward! The monster—what? Only a

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shadow—a shadow cast at midnight by the moonbeans. Death is an imposter! Death is but a shadow, and it cannot stay the pilgrim's progress to his Father's house. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the SHADOW of death, I will fear no evil."

Or shall we use this picture?—For after all, if we face the light, even though it be the light of sunset, do not the shadows fall behind us?—Does not the day march on before?—On our little ranch is a hill where I like to go for periods of quiet contemplation. The last hour of a brilliant California day was spent there recently. For a while all the surrounding hills were radiant. Then came sunset—and for sheer exquisite loveliness few places can show anything more wonderful than the sunsets of the Golden Gate. With a sort of rapt solemnity I watched the flaming crimsons melting into softer hues. Then came the tones of rose and pink and violet. Gradually they faded. The sun was gone. The empty sky grew black, and it was night.

"This", my soul was crying—"this is the end. It is the way of life: however full of promise the morning, however radiant the day, for all at last the shades of night." As I stood

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there a new thought stole upon me: "Where is the sun? Gone to make dawnlight in a world beyond this hemisphere's horizon. While we are saying 'night', yonder it is 'morning'!" O sorrowing hearts, may this not be the human picture? While sadly we are weeping: "Beloved, it is night"! Yonder may not happier voices be crying: "Beloved, it is dawn"? While our sad hearts are crying: "Farewell, beloved!" may not brighter spirits be shouting: "Welcome, beloved"? And while in darkness we sob our sorrow: "His day is over!" beyond our human horizons may not angel forms be exulting: "His day is born anew"?

One final reason why passing through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil. "For THOU ART WITH ME." Comment is unnecessary. If God be with us, then may we walk the abysses of life and death poised in the confidence of faith. For does not that faith repose in Him whose wisdom is infinite, whose power is omnipotent, and whose love endureth unchanging from everlasting to everlasting?

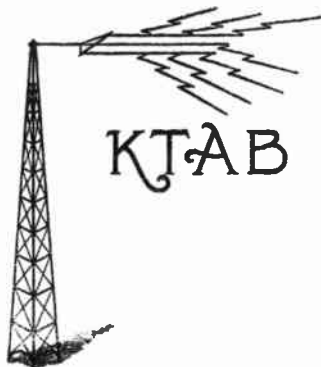
Now unto him who is able to keep you from

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stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and evermore.

AMEN.



THE DAY IS DYING IN THE WEST

When forever from our sight
Pass the stars, the day, the night
Lord of angels, on our eyes
Let eternal morning rise,
And shadows end.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts!
Heaven and earth are full of Thee;
Heaven and earth are praising Thee,
O Lord Most High!