


NOT SOMEHOW, BUT TRIUMPHANTLY

Bertha Munro

NOT SOMEHOW,
BUT TRIUMPHANTLY

Talks to Young People



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To the young people who have inspired it
this book is affectionately dedicated.

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INTRODUCTION

To make religion real and yet practical, spiritual and yet serviceable is the dilemma which faces many young people today. Dean Bertha Munro has not only successfully mastered this technique in her own life, but has been able to pass the secret on to hundreds of the students who have sat in her classes. Her solid philosophy of life, tying the fundamentals of the Christian faith with the best thought of literary history, is appealing and strong, rich and provocative.

Many of the essays included in the pages which follow were published first in *Conquest*, magazine for Christian youth. For over two years the readers followed with interest the challenge of the dynamic theme "Not Somehow, but Triumphantly." No other feature has received more favorable comment or, in the estimation of the editors, has contributed in a greater way to the lives of the readers. Many calls came that these articles might be preserved in book form for the youth of years to come. We are delighted that this has been made possible.

We trust that this volume will be a challenge to every youthful reader to look out on life with a conviction that to be a Christian is to find the secret for true success. We trust also that each shall face life with the profound conclusion that with God's help he can make it through, not with but a bare margin, not just "so as by fire," but with room to spare, with real triumph, with a feeling that he has found life's highest and life's best.

LAURISTON J. DU BOIS

● YOUR SLOGAN MAKES A DIFFERENCE

A tiny plaque in the office of the President's secretary caught my eye and my attention. It stayed with me. It challenged me and at the same time lifted me. Now that same motto is on the wall of my own office, and has claimed not only my attention but my faith: *Not Somehow, but Triumphantly.*

That slogan belongs not to me only; it belongs to every Christian, young or old. It is the legacy of Christ to us, the Christ who said as He went to the Cross, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." "My peace I give unto you."

Peace, that is it—His peace. Peace is not just a good feeling which we got at the altar and fear we may lose without knowing how or why. Peace is "the possession of adequate resources"—adequate resources for everything life can bring. It is the knowledge that with Christ we need not fail.

Let us start with the proposition that *Christians are not expected to muddle through.* They are expected to face life head-on and triumph. There is always a right way. There is *the* right way to meet every circumstance of life; and if we take the right way, we shall without fail be victorious in the long run, whatever the immediate outcome.

For a second proposition: *Life's difficulties are not watered down to fit our ability.* The problems are not given us already solved, nor even with answer appended. Christians are not spared troubles. They are thrown into a world of confused standards and irritating people

and overwhelming temptations, and are told to live like Christians.

As for the "things" of life, Christians are told "in every thing [to] give thanks," even "for all things." And they hear a veteran on ahead say, "None of these things move me"; "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Christ"; "Follow me, as I follow Christ." Then, life might be simple enough if it were just "Jesus and I"; but we do not live in a vacuum. We are always bumping up against other "people." In fact, most of the "things" that trouble us spring from these other people and our relations to them. But we hear Jesus say, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." And Paul: "Love never faileth." And Solomon: "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

So we come to our third proposition: *There is no need to be defeated*, or to live so sloppily or carelessly as to bring distress to ourselves or dishonor to the name of the Christ we serve. We must plan for a life that holds His banner high and walks a straight line onward—unshamed. It is no easy matter to trace a course through the confused, uncertain, contradictory maze of things and people that make up our world, but it is gloriously possible and simple.

For, a fourth proposition: *God will take us through if we will cooperate*. In every issue there is a right attitude that can be taken. At every turn there is a Voice saying: "This is the way, walk ye in it." We do not have to work out the strategy of victory for every situation. We have to choose once for all the will of God, get a sanctified heart, then commit ourselves to the principles of the Bible, in every questionable issue find the Christlike attitude to take, act accordingly—then let God do the rest. In other words, obey and trust.

It sounds simple. Too simple? Try it. Dare accept the challenge, and refuse to blunder, slide, and guess your life away. Dare accept God's definitions and God's solutions; and you have God's resources. *Not Somehow, but Triumphantly.*

● TRUST YOUR GREAT MOMENTS

Another slogan: Trust Your Great Moments. Our world is full of shifting standards and ideas. Many conflicting voices are calling. The great moments of your life are those moments when through all the confusion God got a message through to you plain and certain. You saw things clear in eternity's light, the light of reality. The devil will try, or has tried, to blur your vision with dust and cloudiness; but if you will be honest with yourself, you know that in those moments you saw truth. You must hold to them as to your life; they are your life.

Go back to those moments. What did you see then? You had an Isaiah's great moment when you saw *yourself*. In the Temple at worship Isaiah saw himself: a sinner needing cleansing. Somewhere at worship—at camp meeting, at a revival service, by your own bedside—that vision came to you. You had heard holiness sermons before, but that time the Spirit showed you your own heart and you saw that without His cleansing your work for God would be in vain. And as you yielded your all in full consecration you knew your nature was purged from sin. Hold fast to that moment. The enemy will fight it. Never let him persuade you that you can do God's work in your own strength or without the cleansing of the Blood.

You had a Peter's great Mount of Transfiguration moment when you saw *Jesus* and no man else. Everything besides faded from sight; you sang, "Take the world,

but give me Jesus." You knew Christ was for you and for a lost world the means of salvation, the center of living, and the touchstone of truth. You could test every thought and every act by Him. He was your way, your truth, your life. Hold fast to that moment of insight. Never let anyone persuade you that anything better ever will be found. He is Alpha and Omega.

You had a Paul's great moment when you heard Christ's *commission* for your life. He laid hold upon you with such constraint that from that hour you were not your own; you were His. You knew your life was not useless. You had a never-ending job: to make known to others His saving and sanctifying power. You had something, Someone, to live for; life had a meaning and a purpose. Hold fast to that moment, when the days seem drab and the routine presses. Look for the opportunity to turn someone from darkness to light. God will not waste your consecration.

You had a Moses' great mountain moment when, like him, you were given *directions* for your lifework. "See . . . that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." There is a specific plan for your life: don't be discouraged by circumstances into stopping short of it. Don't shrink yourself into a millionaire if God told you to become a missionary. And don't embroider a fancy career for yourself if He said, Witness where you are. Whatever He said, hold fast to His choice for you. It will prove the best.

Perhaps the moment that stands out clearest to you now is Elisha's, when he caught a glimpse of his departing teacher and was promised a double portion of his spirit to carry on his work; or John's on Patmos when he saw heaven and heard the song of the overcomers through the Blood. God still is revealing himself, even to us. Prize the moments of revelation; they are reality.

If we are to conquer, it will be by faith in our great moments. For they represent God's map of operations for us. He sees the whole.

● FACE YOUR FACTS

No thinking without a problem. So says psychology. Most of us have problems enough, but we don't care to think about them. We push our unlovely facts off into the fringes of consciousness, and there they lurk, ready to pounce upon us in some day of crisis. We know they are there and so we are never quite victorious, but we are not willing to face them squarely. If we think about them at all we think hazily—and lazily.

A newspaper cartoon represents the two hoboos, Mopey Dick and the Duke, looking at a sports coat in the show window. The Duke says, "I'd give anything for that coat, Mopey—but the twenty-five dollars it costs." It is a picture of most of us looking at the victory we should have over our own shortcomings.

But sooner or later these facts must be faced, in one shape or another. You cannot run away from a weakness, Stevenson wrote. It will dog your steps around the world and meet you at your door on your return. Better face it now, and deal with it honestly, by the help of God.

What is that fact which keeps you from having unshadowed victory? Is it a tormenting, haunting doubt? Drag it out from its hiding place. Bring it into the presence of Christ, as Thomas brought his. Ask Him about it. Hear Him say, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed," and answer, "My Lord and my God." So long as a lingering question mark exists, your faith cannot be positive and effectual.

Is it a subtle temptation that always has got you down? There is a way to victory. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will . . . make a way to escape." Find that way, and take it.

Is it a weakness? Acknowledge it; then look to Christ for His enabling. Peter was helpless on the water when he looked at himself or at the waves. None of us is strong enough to make it alone. But His "strength is made perfect in weakness."

Is it a sin? A sin of the past that rises to haunt the present? Confess it and see His look of forgiving love. A root of evil springing up? Submit to the searching of the Holy Spirit and the purging that goes deeper than the stain has gone. Is it lack of power in prayer or in service? "Lord, teach us," the disciples asked. So can we come direct to Him. We too can follow the pattern of the prayer He gave. We too can know the empowering of the Spirit He sent.

Is it an uncertainty as to the will of God? There is always a Bible principle to guide our understanding and a Spirit to lead us into truth.

Is it some circumstance of life that is irksome, or even tragic? Paul brought his "thorn" to Christ and was told, "My grace is sufficient for thee." It will be sufficient for you.

"No shoddy work or unsound timbers go in this boat," said Noah. "I have to float in it." Nor can we afford a single unfaced fact. We never could face our facts alone; but we have a God who cares, a Christ who died, a Spirit who knows and guides.

Ibsen's happy-go-lucky young hero Peer Gynt always took the way of least resistance. Whenever he tried to face an issue squarely, a huge, formless monster blocked

the path, saying, "Go around about. Go around about." The glory of the Christian way is that it leads you in a straight path. You need not "go around."

● "IT WAS THE CAT"

You remember the story of Aunt Mary's cat. Her niece, visiting her, was making a rather lame explanation for the disappearance of some candy, but was taken aback when Aunt Mary cut short her flow of excuses: "No doubt it was the cat, my dear." She went on to tell of this very expensive cat, who had cost her in the past three months—according to her cook—six cups, four saucers, seven plates, a dozen handles of cups and pitchers, a jar of preserves, a plum pudding, and any amount of other food. For the cook had a habit of blaming the cat for all her breakages and petty thefts.

As the day wore on the girl was brought to see that she too had a "cat." She played a piece of music carelessly, and laid the blame on her teacher's methods. She was late in getting ready to go out with her aunt and blamed her dressmaker, who had made a dress difficult to fasten; really she had read too long before beginning to dress. Downtown they found the grocer used his boy as a "cat," to escape blame for his own mistakes; the drygoods store used poor delivery of orders as the "cat," when actually the goods had not yet been ordered from the city.

It is human nature to justify self by shifting blame. We make lame excuses rather than frankly owning that we were wrong. Adam said, "It was the cat." Poor Eve! But she too shifted the blame.

We have some "cats" at college. No letter written home this week: "I had too many lessons to do." Honestly, I used the time for something else. No lessons done:

"Prayer meeting ran late." Honestly, I wasted half an hour talking before settling down to study. "My alarm clock," "My roommate," "The prof"—all convenient "cats."

And your pet "cats"?

"I never could apologize"—why not admit you have a mean disposition that needs the grace of God to change it?

"I had to be a sport"—why not admit that you care more for public approval than for God's?

"Everybody's doing it"—why not be honest and say you would rather be popular than have a good conscience?

"It was the cat." Alibis are easy. Aaron said, "The people wanted a god"; "There came out this calf." Saul said, "The people spared the best." But David said, "I have sinned."

Run down the list of your alibis. How do they stand up under scrutiny? "I don't see any harm in it." "I was too tired" (to go to prayer meeting). "I didn't have time" (to read the Bible). "It's hard for me" (to testify). "The teacher isn't fair to me." "Nobody understands me." "I always was timid." "My brothers are such teases." "I don't want to be different."

By our admissions or our alibis we are becoming strong men or shifty. I can be excused by my teacher or my employer or my pastor, but not by my character. Every evasion makes a mark there. "Trying to evade begets in a man a cringing spirit, and upright, self-respecting manhood is gone. Don't dodge." No alibis!

On the wall of my office is posted this motto; it could well be posted in all our hearts:

"There is but one rule of conduct for a man—to do the right thing. The cost may be dear in money, in

friends, in influence, in labor, in a prolonged and painful sacrifice; but the cost not to do right is far more dear: you pay in the integrity of your manhood, in honor, in truth, in character. You forfeit your soul's content, and for a timely gain you barter the infinities."—ARCHER G. JONES.

● A CHRISTIAN FIRST

People fall into categories. You ask them what they are, and the spontaneous answers tell the story: "A doctor," "A businessman," "A student." I know young people whose one aim is to be "regular collegians." I know men who are wage-earners—period; women who are mothers, and nothing else.

I propose the slogan, "A Christian First." No lesser category is worthy of a human allegiance. There is danger in a divided personality; one interest must be in control. When many attractions and distractions clamor for attention, some one principle must determine our decisions and attitudes. But to be like Christ is the only goal that will not shrink us. It does not displace other legitimate interests but enriches them.

There are two ways a college student may live, I have observed. One student is a "collegian": he takes courses, crowds in outside employment, dashes for a game, squeezes in private prayer, takes in a prayer meeting, manages extra activities, indulges in social functions. Another is a Christian first: a Christian studying, a Christian working in the community, a Christian engaging in sports and social activities, a Christian worshiping, a Christian making a life; throughout every day he is Christian in all his choices. It is the difference between including Christian activities in a busy schedule and having all one's activities grow out of a Christian spirit. It is so with people of every class.

A doctor? But a better doctor if a Christian first; a Christian caring for bodies in the spirit of Christ. A businessman? But a better businessman if a Christian first; a Christian buying and selling and dealing with people Christ's way. A mother? A Christian first; a Christian building a home and rearing children to the glory of Christ, the Christian never submerged in the mother. A student? A Christian first; a Christian studying and playing under the direction of Christ.

Does it seem obvious? It is surprising how many people's lives are divided into compartments. Their religion is in one, their business or studying in another, their recreation in another, their social life in another—all apparently unrelated, and all governed by different rules. Jesus wore a seamless robe; His life was a perfect whole. Wherever He was, whatever He was doing, He was Christ; one knew what sort of conduct to expect, or what spirit. He never did an inconsistent action. With the disciples He was Christ, with the Jews He was Christ, with the publicans Christ. In the synagogue, in the home, on the cross He was Christ.

We sing, "Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me." This is His beauty: the beauty of holiness—of wholeness. When love rules the heart, it is like a magnet at the core, rejecting nonessentials, attracting the essentials, and bringing them into an ordered pattern. The insane asylums are filled with disorganized wrecks whose lives came to be all helter-skelter, warring fragments.

The beauty of Jesus seen in me must be seen in my everyday living. Dr. Richard Cabot wrote a famous essay, "What Men Live By." Work, worship, love, and play he says are the essential factors. He could have added suffering, for no life is rich until it has suffered.

Christ worked. He worked with His hands as a carpenter. He worked with His mind as a thinker and a

Saviour. He was not lazy. He was building a Kingdom. He said, "My Father worketh . . . and I work." He was honest: He paid His taxes; He said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's." He was always "there"—dependable. No cringing toadying, no offensive individualism—the beauty of Jesus. This is a Christian working.

Christ worshiped. He worshiped in public. He attended church faithfully; He never became so good as not to need church. He spoke when opportunity was afforded or occasion required. He worshiped in secret: He prayed with love, passion, and self-abandon. He communed with His Father; He prayed for His friends, for the lost. He worshiped practically: He kept the Temple pure; He healed the ills of society. He worshiped with His life: wherever He went He carried the atmosphere of heaven. The beauty of Jesus: a Christian worshipping.

Christ loved. He loved His mother, providing for her but unable to spare her when God's will was at stake. He loved His friends at Bethany, sharing heart fellowship, giving sympathy always, comfort in bereavement, help in trouble—the help that comes from knowing God. He loved strangers: courteous to the Samaritan woman, creating thirst for God and salvation. He loved sinners: pure white himself, lifting Mary Magdalene from sin and shame to purity. This is a Christian loving: making others better always and happier because bringing God to them.

Christ "played": at the wedding increasing the joy of others; resting, in contact with God. Rest to Jesus was re-creation, never unrestraint or letting go. He never was off guard. Even on vacation He fed others. He never took a vacation from His religion. The beauty of Jesus is seen in a Christian playing.

Christ suffered. But adverse circumstances never upset Him; He was always in control. Arrested suddenly, He did not lose poise. Accused wrongfully and misunderstood, He did not justify himself. Crucified, He forgot himself and thought of others. A Christian meets suffering differently. He is not "caught" and panicky, not self-centered. The beauty of Jesus: a Christian suffering.

The beauty of Jesus—but how make it ours? By wanting it enough to be a Christian first. Live with Christ, look at Christ, yield to Christ in all things. So His Spirit within will make this Christian living a normal, supernaturally natural matter, free from sanctimony or strain.

A perfected Christian is not made in a day; a Christian is made every day—if he will be always "a Christian first."

Did He call Lazarus from death's abyss?

Did He turn water into wine that wedding day?

Yes, but His greatest miracle was this:

To make a Christian from our common clay.

—EDWIN MARKHAM (Used by permission)

● "CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER"

Consider One Another. God gave this slogan. See Hebrews 10:24. It is good for all the year round. It is part of being "a Christian first." Real Christians are not selfish. Christianity is away ahead of communism as a system of social welfare if we would take it seriously. But some Christians are thoughtless. It is far easier to say we love our neighbor as ourselves than to think what this means, and do it. Our slogan says, Think.

Think with others. There is a verse which tells us, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man

also on the things of others." In other words, take the point of view of others. Think how you would feel if you were in the other person's place. Give him a show. Remember that he is a person too. He is the center of a world just as you are. If you practice looking through his eyes, you will not covet his "things"; you will be glad that he is happy. More than that, you will try to increase his happiness; for you have his point of view.

And looking through his eyes you may see that he has troubles which more than balance the "things" you might have been tempted to covet. Perhaps your thought for him was worth more to him than anything money could buy. "People are hungrier for consideration than for food and drink." And understanding persons are few. Try being one.

Give time to others. Our "text" goes on to say, "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together." Of course, we know that means *church*, and it means it hard. But it also means this. Get the point of view of the other person. Don't shut yourself up in your own life; take time to visit his.

That does not mean scattering all over the pasture doing "good deeds," nor forgetting your own job in minding other people's business. It does suggest that many of us fill our lives so full of our own goals and our own activities in reaching these goals—even of our own good times—that we have no time to "consider one another." We wait until a need is forced upon us, then grudgingly accept the "interruption" or make the "sacrifice." One poet writes of

*A heart at leisure from itself
To soothe and sympathize—*

and to share. It takes just that. We should include in our program time for the outward glance: for the word,

the smile, the visit, the prayer that will find our neighbor's need before he has to tell us. We should cultivate the hospitable heart.

Act for others. God does not ask that we do everyone's work for him or spare him every hard knock. "Every man shall bear his own burden" ("load"). He does ask that we make his load-bearing as easy as possible. "Bear ye one another's burdens" ("heavy weights," or "excess baggage"). Do not pile on him the added tons of your indifference. Share what you can of his crushing weight.

And the most helpful thing you can do for him is just the prescription of our text: "Provoke to love." That is, bring out the best there is in him. Help him to be his best. We all are provoking those we rub up against: irritating them in some way by the frictions of everyday living. Our attitude determines whether we provoke to envy and anger and utter discouragement, or to hope and faith and love. We can make a person better than his best. To give a person courage is better than to give him money.

Invest in others. "Provoke . . . to good works." We go to heaven alone, yet in a sense we go together. To see my brother blessed is to be blessed myself; to strengthen him is to become stronger myself. With every soul whom I help pray through at the altar my own soul takes a firmer hold on God. For every bit of ground I help another Christian possess, a foot or so is added to my own acreage. Every spiritual advance he makes is in a sense mine; for it enlarges the kingdom of our Christ. And God has promised a special reward to those who think of others: "Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him." This is a good investment.

Love one another. How? "As I have loved you." Love is more than sentiment; love is action. And love costs. "For our sakes he became poor."

*Love is the filling from one's own
Another's cup;
Love is the daily laying down
And taking up.
Love asks not, "Must I give?" but,
"May I sacrifice?"*

—Sel.

If we "consider" long, we are likely to *do*. But we shall be the richer for it. "All that we send into the lives of others comes back into our own."—MARKHAM.

● WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The other day I received a shock. A student said to me, "I was glad I could give you a good exam." (He had made an *A*.) I had been more accustomed to hearing, "I hope you'll give me a good grade."

There are some things we give ourselves. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches."

For several years now I have "given" names to the outgoing seniors at Eastern Nazarene College; rather, I have called them by their own names: "Self-Reliance," "Faithfulness," "Sincerity." And they wonder how I know. How do I know? They have introduced themselves. Not at the opening reception when they walked down the faculty line and each pronounced a name, but little by little through four years as they filled those names with meaning. At first the name is colorless. When I call the roll, Keith Smith to me is no different from John Smith, Janet Smith no different from Mary

Smith. But gradually each name acquires a definite content. It becomes "Thoughtful," or "Dependable"; or possibly "Careless," or "Temperamental." By the end of a semester each name connotes distinct qualities.

Your name is you. John Bunyan's names tell this. In *Pilgrim's Progress*, as in the Bible, the name is the person. All the characters are real people, and every one by his words and actions has earned his name.

Some we do not admire. *Talkative* is "always ready to talk. . . . But all that he hath lieth in his tongue, and his religion is to make a noise withal." *By-ends* (or "What-Do-I-Get-Out-of-It") always goes with religion "when he wears his silver slippers and the sun is shining." *Ignorance* is "a very brisk lad," who comes down the little crooked lane from the country of Conceit. The gossipers are *Mrs. Know-Nothing*, *Mrs. Bat's Eyes*, *Mrs. Inconsiderate*, *Mrs. Light-Mind*. *Simple* says, "I see no danger"; *Sloth*, "Yet a little more sleep"; *Presumption*, "Every tub must stand on its own bottom"—they are the indifferent, the lazy, and the cocksure, respectively. *Obstinate*, the stubborn, wants his own way so hard that he will not take good advice, to leave the City of Destruction. *Pliable*, easily persuaded, easily discouraged, starts readily and turns back as readily. *Timorous* and *Mistrust*, the fearful and the worrying, come panting back: "There are lions in the way ahead"—they do not wait to see that the lions are chained.

Even good pilgrims earn different names. *Christian*, *Hopeful*, and *Faithful* have different weaknesses, different strong points, different temptations; each proves his right to his name. *Little-Faith*, *Fearing*, and *Feeble-Mind* all are sincere, yet they have small strength for themselves and none for others. But there are *Mr. Honest*, *Mr. Standfast*, and *Mr. Valiant-for-Truth*. There is *Greatheart*, friend and escort of weaker pilgrims, with

a heart of understanding for all. And there is *Help*, who pulls young Christian out of the Slough of Despond.

You make your own name. Your parents gave you the bare sound; you fill it with meaning. Just as you choose your major in college, or your vocation in life, you choose your name and complete it. After you have lived, that name you bear will forever carry the associations you have attached to it.

"Our everyday choices and decisions determine our attitudes," they tell us. "Our attitudes determine our adjustments. Our adjustments determine our atmosphere." And your atmosphere is your name, your personality. You are making a name because you are making the habits that make a life.

What you are will come out in your name. The native Africans give their missionaries names—the names which they have decided, after several months of watching, belong to them. One of the newest has the name "You Love Us and We Are Glad." A good name!

Count your name too precious to tarnish. Do not soil it by stooping to small, dishonorable acts. Even if people around you do the cheap thing, let your name stand for something fine.

Only you can hurt your name; it is in your power. No man can degrade you, no insult, no humiliation. Your name can flame like a beacon and wave like a banner. In the face of every temptation and every slur you can raise your soul so high that the offence cannot reach it. You can be magnanimous—great-souled. Your name is you.

Your name can be changed, if you have waked up to find it is not the name you want to stay known by. Jacob ("Crooked") became Israel ("Erect," "Princely"). Thomas "Doubter" became Thomas "Believer." Mark

"Unprofitable" became Mark "Profitable." "Failing" can be changed to "Success." "Fearing" or "Grumbling" can be changed to "Praising." One of our younger missionaries to India testified: "I was always finding fault with the college regulations—until the Lord sanctified me wholly. Then I found the real trouble had been my own wrong attitudes." His name "Agitator" was changed to "Leader"; "Grouchy" to "Optimistic." And we have seen now and again a beautiful name stained and dishonored by sin. Saul "Kingly" became Saul "Suicide."

One name we all bear: Christian. The disciples at Antioch lived so that they had to be called "Christian"; no other name fitted. They were like Christ. The name was new and fresh then; now people use it glibly, but many do not know its meaning. We can fill that name full of Christ. Our lives can shout His name. The name of our church too is at our mercy; what it comes to mean to the world is what you and I make it mean.

We prize the name of Jesus. It stands for what we know He is: for His love, His power, His faithfulness. Always the same, He can be depended on. And He is our Example.

In this bewildered world you will need your name—for yourself and for others. Don't throw it away.

What's in a name?

Just what you put into it, with the help of God.

● HONORABLE MENTION

If I can be listed in God's *Who's Who*, I shall not care very much about the fat red volume in the library.

God's honor roll is a long one and glorious, and it is growing constantly. That day of eternity when the heroes of faith will be cited for distinction must stretch

into centuries before the lists of achievements can be read to the end. The Bible contains many distinguished citations: Abraham, Moses, Paul, all the worthies of Hebrews 11. But it also has some names that are given honorable mention. Mentioned only once, they are known forever. Less dazzling and powerful, their light is as steady and sure. And some of these are "young people." Ordinary young people, too, we would say, with no outstanding gifts or graces. Yet they made God's honor roll.

There was the boy who made possible one of Christ's most astounding miracles. He was just one of the crowd—an ordinary boy who liked to eat. But he was not selfish, for he shared the little he had. Shared? Gave, rather, with uncalculating faith and trust in Jesus and love for others. For his precious fish and crackers were out of his hands; unless Jesus had done something with them he would have gone hungry like the rest.

And that is the point of the story: his eyes were on Jesus and the needs of others. What he had was of no use alone: if he kept it, it fed only himself; if he shared, it filled neither himself nor his neighbor. But when he gave it to Jesus, it was blessed by Omnipotence and multiplied to feed five thousand; and if the number had been fifty thousand or five hundred thousand, it would have reached that far. That boy has honorable mention here; and his name will be read with distinction when the credits are assigned.

But the list is not finished yet. How about *your* lunch? Your bit of money? of time? of friendliness? of love? Alone, it is useless. But in His hands—how much?

Then there was a girl, an ordinary girl, who opened the door for the miracle of a great man's healing. She, too, is unnamed as yet, except as a "maid." She was a servant and an immigrant, a humble Jew in a noble

Syrian family. But she knew God's prophet and she realized her employer's need; and she got the two together. The proud captain was healed of his leprosy and bowed to the God of Israel. Today she would have invited a sinner acquaintance to the revival meeting; or she would have testified to a friend in trouble of the deliverance to be found in Christ. She would have discovered some way to make a contact between a needy soul and a Christ of power and love.

Inconspicuous, unobtrusive, here this "maid" receives honorable mention on God's honor roll along with the widow who gave her two mites, as greater than some loudly acclaimed philanthropist. She gave something worth far more than money. "Silver and gold have I none," the disciple said; "but such as I have give I thee"—and then gave the lame man Jesus! He was not apologizing, nor feeling inferior. Nor need we, when we have Him to give.

The young man Andrew—a one-talent man who shone with no "gifts"—is listed for honors. He cannot do big things himself, but he can be a link in doing big things. He only brought his own brother to Jesus; but that brother was Peter. He testified, "We have found Christ." You can do that. You do not know who may be won by your testimony.

Andrew always was there when people were seeking Christ. One day strangers came looking for Jesus; it was Andrew who was told and Andrew who introduced them to his Lord. Just to be dependable at the altar service, always to be "there" to help sinners find the Saviour, means honorable mention from the God who notices every cup of cold water given in His name.

For all these young people there is honorable mention ahead. Some of you will have it too. But there is dishonorable mention also in the Bible. Some other

young persons flit across its pages with an act that discredits them, and are known forever by that act.

One is listed as "Foolish": the wealthy young man we call "the rich young ruler." He met Christ face to face, knew what was required of him, counted the cost, and made "the great refusal." He chose money instead of Jesus. Foolish indeed! If he lived to be old, he found himself at last a "rich fool," with his soul required and his money left behind. But I knew a young girl who walked away from an altar of prayer, refusing Christ because she was unwilling to testify—the price of salvation was too high! The next week her soul was required of her in an automobile accident.

Another is known as "Selfish." Orpah "kissed" her bereaved, godly mother-in-law, but forsook her. She went back to her good times and her gods, and was never heard of again. Ruth "clave to" the best woman she knew and to her God, and became great-grandmother of King David and ancestress of Jesus Christ. To be disloyal to the best we know is to make a poor bargain.

What act of yours will be recorded as indicative of your character and attitudes? Will it be honorable mention or dishonorable? Life is full of moments of opportunity electric with possibilities for good or evil. "There are so many bigger people"; but you count to God. His eye is on you as it was on Nathanael, another one-talent young man. "When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee," Jesus said. Saw him, and knew his sincere desire for good, and gave him honorable mention. The reading of the roll of honor will be no coldly impersonal listing of names. Our honorable mention is to be a personal presentation by our Saviour Jesus Christ. Is that honor worth the cost—to have Him proud of us?

● SO BIG

"How big is my boy? How big?" asked the mother in Edna Ferber's story, *So Big*.

"So-o-o-o big!" She answered her question, measuring proudly the width of her outstretched arms and laughing to her two-year-old son who played near her as she worked in the field.

Foiled in her own ambition for a full life, she counted on her boy to be great and do great things.

Toward the close of the story this same mother asked the question again, "How big?" Her son answered honestly, "So big," and measured a very tiny space between thumb and forefinger. "So big." The tall, handsome, clever son had proved a dwarf in soul. He had been measuring size in terms of money and popularity, and found the measuring-stick too short—like the small boy who thought he was nine feet tall, but had measured his height by his own shoe.

We all are measuring ourselves. And we shall be satisfied with pygmy stature unless we use standard measuring-sticks. Our real size depends not on our age, not on our money, not on our clothes or our books, but on our real selves, our interests, our attitudes, our aims, our choices. We can be big or little, as we choose.

In the things we call small we are determining our size and our strength. Goethe wrote,

*In life's small things be resolute and great
To keep thy muscles firm. Know'st thou when Fate
Thy measure takes, or when she'll say to thee,
"I find thee worthy—do this thing for me"?*

Change "Fate" to "God," and see that nothing is trivial or insignificant. Every act counts. We are daily determining our size—and betraying our size.

We are measured by the size of the thing by which we are offended. We can dignify a lie or an insult by paying attention to it, or we can kill it by overlooking it if we are tall enough spiritually. It was a tall man who said, "When a person has offended me, I try to raise my soul so high that the offense cannot reach it."

We are measured by the size of the thing we laugh at. There is "a time to laugh"; but not at peculiarities people can't help (and often what we think "queer" is not queer at all, only different, and we laugh only because we lack wide experience); not at the expense of the Golden Rule (and remember that someone else may be more sensitive than we, and it is never our business to make anyone into a "good sport"); not at the expense of sacred things or of a person's deepest feelings. By all such laughter we show ourselves small in our sympathies, short in our love, petty in our souls. And not at vulgar stories; not at something too cheap to laugh at *alone* (victim of mob psychology); not boisterously or unrestrainedly (weak at the controls). By such laughter we show ourselves small in moral sensitiveness.

Laugh at real humor: the incongruity between the real and the sham, between the expected and the unexpected. Laugh with people; laugh at circumstances. Laugh at yourself, your mishaps and your blunders. Laugh and think at the same time. That means you are tall enough to have perspective on life.

We are measured by the size of the thing we enjoy. "Where do we go when we're let go?" What company do we seek spontaneously? What radio programs do we choose voluntarily? What reading? We are measured—and it makes a difference.

● SOME ORDINARY DAY

Strange phrase for a slogan; yet I am trusting it will stay with you as it has stayed with me since it leaped at me out of a little poem I read months ago—leaped at me and became alive with meaning.

We are spending a year of ordinary days, three hundred and sixty-five of them. Our lives are made up of ordinary days. Yet life is no ordinary thing. If we hold our ordinary days cheap—or count them common—we shall make an ordinary life. The word to Peter was, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." Every ordinary day given to God and touched by God is a sacrament. And a life of God-blessed "ordinary days" can shake the world.

Ordinary days develop crises. It was an ordinary day of a Palestine summer when a mother's cherished son went out into the harvest fields with the reapers. Before noon he was brought back to her dying of a sunstroke. Happy for that mother that she had been in the habit of entertaining the prophet of God on ordinary days! She knew where to find him and his prayer restored her son to life. The preparation for the emergency is the habit of the ordinary.

Any ordinary day may be the day that God will choose to make extra-ordinary. "Trust your great moments" was one of our first slogans. The way to get great moments of call or commission or revelation is to keep the ordinary days open to God.

It was a very ordinary day in a tax collector's office. But the man at the desk was faithful and dependable and competent. Jesus came by and called, "Follow me"; and that day in Matthew's life became a red-letter day for him and for all who will read his Gospel as long as time lasts.

It was a very ordinary day on the farm; but God saw a young man doing a tedious job conscientiously as unto the Lord and selected Gideon for an exploit that was anything but ordinary. It was an ordinary day in the desert tending sheep—nothing could be less exciting; but Moses had a heart burdened with the need of his people, and he saw the bush burning with the presence of God. That ordinary day turned the world upside down.

Just an ordinary day with its ordinary "private devotions." It seems a simple routine. But suppose there had been no prayer time that day, with its opportunity for God to speak. Peter was on the housetop praying as his custom was, and God gave him the vision that opened the door for a "whosoever will" preaching of salvation without respect of persons. Suppose he had not been there to receive it.

An ordinary testimony meeting—but Jesus came and stood in the midst of His disciples and said, "Peace be unto you." He says He will do that every time His followers meet, to the very end of the age. He does not plan for ordinary meetings.

An ordinary prayer meeting—the three had often gone apart with Christ. But this time on the mountain Moses and Elias were present, and Christ revealed His glory. Another ordinary prayer meeting, in the garden, so ordinary that they fell asleep. But this time their Lord was in sore need of their fellowship, and they failed—failed Him and failed themselves.

For the ordinary day can prove a day of sudden temptation. It did to Peter and James and John that night of Jesus' trial. When we face one ordinary day we cannot guess what it will hold for us. To be safe, we need every morning to ask in earnest, "Lead us not into temptation." Jesus was not playing with words when He gave us the prayer. Overpowering temptation comes

unexpectedly and without warning—on an ordinary day.

It is on the ordinary day that the big opportunity comes, opportunity for success or failure. For a missed opportunity is a failure. The one difference between failure and success in life is keeping in touch daily, hourly, with God, by constant obedience. Then we shall not miss His appointments for us. With God there are no ordinary days.

Every ordinary day is precious beyond calculation. It might be the only one we shall have to give our Lord for love and service here before He comes. If we knew this ordinary day we are now beginning would be that last one, how careful we should be to live it for Him! "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch," "lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping." Alert and loving then, these ordinary days.

THE DAY BEFORE

*Sometime some ordinary day will come,
A day like this, filled to the brim
With ordinary tasks, perhaps so full
That we have little time or thought for Him;*

*And there will be no hint from silent skies,
No sign, no clash of cymbals, roll of drums,
And yet that ordinary day will be
The very day before our dear Lord comes!*

*The day before we lay our burdens down,
And learn instead the strange feel of a crown,
The day before all grieving will be past,
And all tears wiped away at last, at last;*

*When we shall bid farewell, nor see again
That bitter-sweet, lifelong companion, Pain,
But through unmerited, unfathomed grace,
Our rapt eyes shall behold our Saviour's face!*

*O child of God, awake and work and pray!
That ordinary day may be today,
And yet the setting of tomorrow's sun
Will find a billion souls still here, unwon!*
—MARTHA SNELL NICHOLSON (Used by permission)

● POSITIVE CHRISTIANS

"You don't dance? Or go to movies? How strange! Why not?"

"My church doesn't approve of it."

"Oh."

How often you've heard it! Perhaps given the answer yourself? There are some things Christian young people "don't do."

It was a good answer and a good reason; only it did not go far enough, or deep enough. Is it "our church" only that disapproves, or is it we ourselves? And if so, why?

Is it the things themselves, or just their names, that we frown on? Is it the actions, or just their labels? We rule out "dancing," but we enjoy "petting"? We have convictions against the sensational movie, but we drink in cheap radio dramas and suggestive "funnies"? Vaudeville is taboo, but not suggestive jokes and skits that are vaudeville in essence? We would not play bridge, for playing cards leads to gambling; yet we take "chances" at fairs and amusement parks and perhaps in other places? When I am asked, as I have been publicly, "Why is dancing wrong with you Christians but petting right, when both involve the same temptation and open the door to the same sin?" my answer is, "If you want to be a real Christian, you indulge in neither."

We have a church that cares for its young people. It names certain things we don't do—that is, it sets up

certain negatives—in order to clear the way, in time and in inclination, for some positives that are infinitely more valuable. It erects, without apology, bars across roads that lead to danger and spiritual wreckage.

There are practices that have proved in the past to be vampires—sucking out spiritual vigor; quicksands—sucking in the lives of young people. The church has named some of these specifically, by way of pointing out the nature of the danger. It could not list them all; for conditions and manners of living change, and with these the forms or the dress of evil. Our *Manual* was written before television. We shall find as time goes on that we must erect some bars for ourselves.

But all these negatives are in order to make way for some positives. The genuine Christian wants to amount to something for God. They say, or used to say, that the material value of a person amounts to very little—ninety-eight cents, to be exact. The human body contains enough lye and fats to make seven bars of soap, enough phosphorus for a dozen matches, enough lime to sweeten one chicken coop. Our physical value is not very high. But there is a moral and spiritual life to be won, a Christlike character to be built, a work of saving others to be accomplished. A great deal must be packed into this short life if it is to satisfy God's expectations.

"The night cometh," more swiftly than we dream—even to a young man or woman. We shall need every moment and every energy if we are to face life's end unashamed and unregretful.

A radio speaker used this phrase: "that ugly thing, a good time." He meant that the sort of thing which is usually thought of as a good time easily degenerates into evil. Coarse music dulls the ear for fine. Cheap comics spoil the taste for intellectual and spiritual development.

"Necking" and "petting" kill the capacity for one pure relationship. Gossip chokes out love. Any pursuit that dulls the relish for God and His interests is "worldliness." "If you have this, you cannot have that."

He meant also that lives devoted to "good times" lose their Christian beauty, which is self-forgetful devotion to the will of God. The one worthy rule for our choice of activities is Paul's: "Whatsoever ye do . . . do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Leave out things that will not add to His glory, that cannot be done in His name, representing His character and His interests. But more—do those things that will represent Him worthily.

The positive Christian's aim is to be a partaker with Christ: to please Him, to share His interests, to have a part in His program. For He has a program; He is conducting a far-reaching enterprise. It reaches to the ends of the earth and to the end of time, and into eternity. It is the business of getting God to men and getting men to God. If we could once catch a glimpse of the depth and height and length and breadth of that program, we should know that it is large enough to claim all our energies and all our time. Any activities that have no bearing on this major interest seem petty. Any pastime that would make us less efficient in this all-important pursuit rules itself out without question. Any recreation that does not make us stronger and more fit strikes a false note. "This one thing I do."

But this one thing is an undertaking so vast in its scope that it does not limit or narrow or cramp my powers. Rather, it enlarges my vision and stretches my horizons and releases energies and abilities I never dreamed I possessed. This is the gladness of a consecration to Christ. This is the program of a positive Christian.

To share the program of Christ you must share the nature of Christ. You must be partaker of His spirit.

And that means an operation. It means the cruel, loving knife of the Heavenly Surgeon. Only He can remove from the human heart the love of the world that fascinates, the love of self that will not, cannot, put Christ first. If at the roots of your nature there is a streak of indifference, no amount of resolving will make you a positive Christian.

To share the program of Christ you must share His presence. There is a fine Christian sensitiveness which is maintained only as we live in that Presence: a quickness to scent the approach of evil, an awareness to the voice of the Spirit prompting to good and pointing out opportunities for blessing and serving. This Presence is our one guarantee of a victorious, positive Christian life as young people—or old. It is not some vague, ethereal vision for aged saints ready to step into heaven; it was Jesus' promise and His requirement for sturdy Christian service.

Without that repeated renewing of the vision of His purpose, that day-by-day looking into His face, that moment-by-moment touch of His hand—without that constant inflow of His life into ours, there will be strain and sacrifice in this matter of being a positive Christian. With a cleansed heart and a living Christ it is the one beautifully normal way of life.

Then,

All for Jesus! all for Jesus!
All my being's ransomed powers.

Positive Christians!

● GIVE HIM THE KEYS

On a Sunday evening I was talking with one of my Sunday-school girls. It was the last service of our college revival and seekers were praying through at the altar. But I had noticed a troubled look on her face as she stood during the altar call. In fact, I had caught that same look on her face that morning in the Sunday-school class as one girl after another had testified spontaneously. It was a confused, almost despairing, hungry look. I knew her as a girl of irreproachable life and Christian character, who for four years had put many of us to shame by her conduct and spirit, and who in her senior year had professed the experience of entire sanctification. She was now a graduate student at the university.

The class session that morning had been marked by a peculiar sense of the presence of God; the unsolicited testimonies struck a note of sincerity and certainty. One particularly had the ring of heaven: a senior testified that she had been reared in a Nazarene church in a Nazarene family, had known how a sanctified person should live, had tried to live that way, had tried with all her strength; yet always when she was trying hardest some evidence of carnality would appear.

"But," she said, "some months ago I made the contact for myself and through these months I have known that carnality is gone, that my heart is clean, that the Lord does sanctify wholly." Over and over she repeated her glowing assurance, her tears streaming, her face beautiful with an inner light.

Others acknowledged a like experience; one confessed a similar need and a determination to find a similar victory. One girl said that she had professed the experience sincerely and tried to live it because her father was

a minister and she thought she must help him by backing up his preaching. But she had felt a strain and an uncertainty in her own heart. It is because of this situation which I believe is not rare among sincere young people—second- or third-generation holiness families—that I am telling you this story.

Back to our girl in the Sunday evening service. I had asked her if she was troubled about anything, and without hesitation she had answered, "Yes." It came out that there was nothing she was holding back from the Lord. No, the worldly atmosphere at the university was not getting her. She was even finding great satisfaction in explaining to her associates what our church stands for and why we believe as we do. She wished more than anything else to have the Lord's whole will done in her life. She just couldn't let go of herself. Her personality was not released and free. She felt bound, uncertain, and to that extent unrestful. "Freedom, rest," she caught up my words, "that's what I want." Not rebellion—only inability to yield. And yet a subtle, unbelieving fear. "I think I'm afraid of what it might mean." That unbelief could be Finney's "killing sin."

We prayed, but still she shook her head. "If I could feel as I felt this morning, perhaps I could do it. But now I feel dead." She shook her head despairingly as I urged her to open her heart to the Lord, and reminded her of His promise that if the door were opened He would come in and take control Himself.

She was so near to the victory of His indwelling presence, so near to relaxing her will in the strong, loving will of God—I said to her, "You need not feel great surges of emotion in order to turn over the key to Christ. You *know* that only as He has full possession of that house you call your heart can your personality attain its true fulfillment. And, knowing this, you can make

a reckless, uncalculating abandonment to Him of your ownership rights. If you held a key in your hand now, you could hand it to me. Just as simply you can hand the key of your heart to Christ."

Her face began to relax. "Pray once more, and then I'll pray." Just so simple it was, and so real. In a moment she was free and glad as I had never seen her. And the next prayer meeting I heard *her* testimony to a consciousness of inner reality.

"Give Him the key." This is our way to all true Christian victory. Try as we may to live the ideal life, even the sanctified life, there is an unreality, a strain, a weariness about it—even an insincerity—until the keys of the heart are given over to Him. He will relax the effort of duty and put in its place the secret thrill of love for Him, the exhilaration of joy in pleasing Him, the rest of simple trust and obedience. He will touch this talent, then that, and say, "You can do this for Me. I will make you able."

There are things you have seen others do for Christ and have wished you could do too, but you have held back, feeling incompetent or unworthy: a prayer, a song, a testimony, some thoughtful act, some undertaking for His kingdom. Now you will hear a Voice saying, "You try too—you can. I am here. I will help you." You will obey—timidly perhaps, almost wondering at yourself for daring—and you will find you can—you have done it! And your heart will sing.

For He is in your heart, willing and doing His good pleasure. And He is real. There is a perfect plan of God for your life which you never will know unless you give Him the keys. There is a heavenly, free breathing; there are undreamed-of accomplishments; there is the only complete satisfaction, in having given God a chance to make the most He can of your one life.

"The world has yet to see what God can do with a person who is entirely consecrated to Him." "There is no limit to the good a person can do when he does not care who gets the credit." This is what Paul meant when he said, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live."

Give Him the keys.

(I have written this very simple story for those sincere young people who are conscientious and, so far as they know, consecrated, but who still are conscious of a lack of inner victory. I write it with a prayer that the Spirit himself may lead them to this crisis act of commitment and faith. For when they commit, the Spirit comes in to control.)

● ROOMS TO LET

Room to Let—Beware. In these words a writer* warns young people against crowding out of their lives vital interests and life patterns. "While you still have *room to let*, beware lest you choose tenants whom you shall later wish to exchange, but who may refuse to give up their places."

"Rooms to Let." Our rooms to let are our selves. The rooms of our personality are waiting for tenants. We do the letting.

The Sphinx—that fabulous monster with the head of a woman and the body of a lion—posed a riddle to all passers-by. To fail to answer correctly was death. This was the question: "What creature goes in the morning on four feet, at noon on two feet, and at evening on three feet?" Traveler after traveler met death, until finally a wise man said, "The answer is man. As a baby he creeps on all fours, as a man he walks upright, and in old age he limps leaning on a staff."

*Elinor Lennen in the *Youth's Standard*

For forty centuries these strange stone figures found in Egypt, Babylonia, and Greece—slightly different in detail but alike in general features—have puzzled thinkers with a teasing idea: these creatures of the imagination *mean* something. Just what? We have come to see that the sphinx is her own riddle: "Know thyself." She herself symbolizes the rooms of the human personality. 1. There is *intelligence*: the head and breast of a woman. 2. There is passion, or the force of *physical desire*: the body of a bull. 3. There is the boldness of *action*: the paws and claws of a lion. 4. And there is patience or *forethought*: the folded wings covering the sides. These are our rooms to let: mind, physical desires, action, and the higher nature that purposes, plans, and controls.

There is another set of symbols and creatures—these Biblical—that suggest the same truth. The creatures in Ezekiel 1 have four faces: of man (intelligence), of ox (strength), of lion (action), and of eagle (the spiritual nature). These combine to express the nature of God; we are made in His image. And in Revelation 4 four living creatures praise God continually: a man, a calf (young ox), a lion, and an eagle.

We are not interpreting these symbols. We are saying that this likeness of Hebrew, Christian, Greek, Egyptian, and Babylonian thought is not accidental. We are saying that the symbols suggest the truth about the complex human personality. It is made in the likeness of God and it realizes its highest fulfillment in praising God.

These are the rooms of your personality and these you have the responsibility of letting.

Your mind, with its capacity for clear thinking, must have the right atmosphere. It must be kept open to truth: free at once from prejudice and conceit and from the feeling of inferiority. Christians should be able to

hold a sane estimate of self. Christ is our Center, not ourselves. "Eyes front!"

Your mind must have the right furnishings. It must not be cluttered with all the cheap ideas or popular propaganda of the day. In other words, you must develop a sane estimate of values and a true set of standards. Christians should choose the best; they should learn to discriminate among various levels of value: material, intellectual, social, religious.

Your mind must have the right tenants. Thoughts must be tested before they gain admittance. Christians do not let their minds become the devil's dump-heap. "Whatsoever things are true . . . lovely . . . of good report . . . think on these things."

So for the room of your *natural desires*, your capacity for deep feeling. Keep the room let. Have it tenanted. Do not allow your physical or emotional powers to become weakened. Do not let yourself become indifferent, lethargic. Live intensely. "Let God know you are paying attention" to the physical world He has put you in.

But have the right sort of tenants. Scrutinize your desires. What is their object? What do you do when you do what you really want to do? What is it that actually excites you? You can debase your feeling-faculty by indiscriminate petting, or by being stirred over trifles. And see to it that these tenants conduct themselves properly, that they pay rent, that they do not overstep their rights. Any passion or desire that is not controlled is lust. The Christian's physical desires are not in the saddle.

Your *action* faculty, your capacity for decision—keep the room well aired. Develop your power to act. Be positive, no victim of indecision. Once a decision is made, do not review it weakly; carry it out. Be no sentimentalist, satisfied with wishing well and meaning well.

Rousseau wept over the weak, but left his own children in the foundling asylum. "Conviction, were it never so excellent, is worthless unless it convert itself into conduct."

Then let the room to respectable tenants: act justly. Not selfishly—render to all their dues. Not rashly—know why you act as you do. Act sincerely—have no ulterior motives; be transparent, dependable. Act honestly—by principle, not by apparent results.

Don't stand for slovenly housekeeping. Let your actions represent you. Don't pass as worse than you are; "the mucker pose" is a favorite one today. Don't excuse a careless, sloppy act by saying you "mean all right." Christians do all to the glory of God.

And now the wings of the sphinx, your capacity for *purpose* and *control*. This room wisely let means a balanced personality. It means the long view; it means self-discipline for worthy ends. It means character. And character is the one secret of self-preservation. Intellect controlling desires, purpose controlling action—so all the faculties work together at their best.

But the truer symbol of this fourth room is the Bible symbol, the eagle mounting up with wings*, the capacity for God. You have a spiritual nature that expresses God and worships God. Keep that room inviolate. Cherish your God-faculty. For the physically defective we have hospitals; for the mentally defective we have asylums; for the spiritually defective—what? Their tragedy is greatest. Let self-control become Christ-control. Give Him the key to this room, and He has access to all the rest.

The right Tenant in this room gives meaning and balance to the entire personality. The intellect relates

* See Ezekiel 1 and Revelation 4.

all its thinking to Calvary. Intensity of desire is controlled by the Cross and eternal values. Action is consecrated to an eternal cause. Purpose is centered in a Person to live for and die for. Never let this room to the wrong tenant; never leave it empty. Swept and garnished but untenanted, it will be overrun by seven devils. It is the temple of the Holy Ghost. It belongs to Him.

No eagle wings? Then everything is lost. Madame Curie, pure intellect, keen, unselfish, but without God; she faced dread darkness at the end. Oscar Wilde and his Dorian Gray never checked a pleasant physical desire; and at last awoke to find lines of indescribable ugliness traced on the soul. Jack London, action personified, genius, achieving impossible feats, died a young man, a suicide. But Paul, who said, "To live is Christ," realized the full powers of his personality—intellect, intensity, action, spiritual vision—and lived and died triumphant. So Wesley. So thousands of Spirit-filled lives. Yours may be one—if you let your rooms wisely.

● RESOURCES—FOR WHAT?

There are two wonderful verses in the Book of Romans which I have thought for some time I should like to explore. To do so would be like walking through the vaults of the United States Treasury or the Fort Knox gold reserve. But no. Some gigantic inflation or a repudiation of the gold standard might conceivably make those stores useless. Let us say rather, from room to room of an inexhaustible treasure store beyond the reach of inflation or collapse. For such these resources are.

Paul is cataloging the heritage of the Jewish nation; but I recall that he said also that believers in Christ are the true Israel. And as I read I recognize every

asset he has listed as belonging also to the young people of the Christian church. These riches are ours to explore, ours to own, ours to exploit, in a sense no Jew could ever know. For they have attained their full value only in and through Christ.

Here are the treasures Paul enumerates in Romans 9:4, 5. They are not meant to stay buried but to be put to use every day and always.

"To whom pertaineth," he says, "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises: whose are the fathers, and of whom . . . Christ came." This is our spending money. This is our capital for investment. Look it over.

1) The *adoption*. Calculate, if you can, what it means to be a son or daughter of the King of heaven and earth. No room here for an inferiority feeling. King's children are setters of styles, not apers. How does a holy King's son live? Can he afford to be small in his attitudes? or impure in his thoughts? And once forgiven and adopted into the heavenly family, need he listen to the devil's reminders of past, buried sins? And will his Father forget to keep him from harm and want? And how about his relations to his brothers and sisters in the family? Envious or loyal?

2) The *glory*. "Glory" is the best poor word we have to express the Shekinah presence of God. So long as that presence was with Israel she was marked as God's peculiar possession and no enemy could defeat her. That Presence is our right, our experience as sanctified Christians, our secret of victory. Live a day without it, and everything is dead, confused, tangled. Recognize His presence, court it, "practice" it, bring every problem, every activity, every question to the test of that Presence, and you cannot fail.

3) The *covenants*. Which means the word of God given, the name of God signed, the character of God behind your Christian experience. The relationship you entered into when you gave yourself to Christ was not a casual thing, to you or to God. It should have been—it can be—a covenant: an agreement binding for time and eternity. You bargain to obey; He bargains to deliver, to bless, to keep forever. Review them: those covenants with Abraham, Noah, David, and then the New Covenant sealed with the blood of Christ. They all are yours. You are quite safe when you stake everything on the faithfulness of God!

4) The *law*. About which you are rather dubious. You think you would just as soon be free from restraint. Try living in a world without the Ten Commandments! Actually, discipline is one of the greatest blessings that man can know. Without it he is a slave to every wind of caprice or passion, his own or other people's. To have lifted before us a standard of conduct in the person and will of a holy God who tells us what is right and just, what we owe to Him and to our fellows; to have a conscience that reproves or approves intelligently—this is to have the path in life made plain. Thank God for His gift of the moral law.

5) The *service of God*—or *worship*. We are made with heart as well as conscience. We will worship someone or something; we will worship through love or fear. The heathen worship things—as do some Americans! They worship through fear—as do some Americans. Wonderful to have the revelation of the true God of holiness and love, of justice and mercy. Wonderful to know that He desires a personal relationship with us, that He has made a way of approach, that we can come boldly to His throne of grace, that we can find grace to help in time of need. Wonderful that we have the

church where we can join in Christian fellowship and prayer and praise. Wonderful too that we can worship not only in the sanctuary but in the temple of our everyday living—praising, testifying, serving. Wonderful that we can bring Him day by day our sacrifice and live to please Him. The service of God! And still the riches pile up.

6) The *promises*: God made real in practical experience. For every emergency, every problem, every difficulty, every trial, every challenge there is not merely a promise but *the* promise. The two great promises for full salvation, the promise for the hour of temptation, the promise for bereavement and loneliness, the promise for weakness, the promise for earnest prayer, the promise for soul-winning, the promise for fruit-bearing—the promise for you, today, for you just as you are, just where you are. The Bible is a great checkbook full of blank checks, every one signed with the name of the Banker himself. And you are not to feel guilty in using it. He urges you to write in your special need, to make every promise yours.

Still more? Yes.

8) The *fathers*. You are not trying a new, uncertain way when you obey God; venturing on thin ice that may break under you; pioneering where no human being has gone. You have behind you that glorious line of believers, who have proved God faithful.

Finding, following, keeping, struggling—

Is He sure to bless?

Saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs

Answer, "Yes!"

You have a church whose doctrine is tested by experience. You hear the testimonies of those who have gone farther in the way and found it good. You have watched

your own father and mother live and die in victory. You have spiritual fathers and mothers on whose faith you can build. You should even be stronger for God than they were, for you are standing on their shoulders.

Surely this is all. But no, the very greatest is yet to come.

9) *Christ*. And when we say that name we say "Wonderful." In Him are hid all the treasures. The Jews possessed Him "according to the flesh"; we have Him as Saviour, Lord, Counselor, Friend, Example—All and in All. When I say Jesus I say the last word. In Him every issue of life can be faced, every problem solved, every battle won. With Him vision is cleared, horizons are lifted. Through Him we are more than conquerors here and hereafter.

God has made a supreme investment in the young people of the twentieth century. With these resources—used—the face of the world can be—should be—changed. Then, "Not somehow, but triumphantly!"

● WE SEE JESUS

This is a new and unpredictable world we are living in: "wars and rumors of wars," drafts and riots, suspicion and counter-suspicion, atom bombs and jet planes—and the scientists who know most about nuclear fission and bacteriological war are the most fearful of the future. They say that within two or three days anything can happen; and they are not guessing. It is not neurotic to be disturbed and fearful; it is sane and rational.

A strange, hard world to thrust young people into and say, Find your own footing. But it is of these very days Jesus was speaking when He asked, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Faith. Not blank pessimism—though that would be easy as all

our hopes of brotherly love and international understanding collapse. Not blind optimism—though we built the World of Tomorrow at our fairs, with seven-lane highways and transoceanic airways. *Faith*. Not faith in economic theories; they shall fail. Not faith in banks and securities; they shall cease. Not faith in the promises of nations; they shall vanish away. Faith in a Person was what He meant, faith in the Person of Jesus Christ. He never promised a world order that would not change; He did assure us of a Person who would be the same yesterday, today, and forever.

There is no insecurity for the young man—even in a mad, uncertain world—whose faith grasps Him. He is not caught in life's tangle, nor shaken by its upheavals. For his anchor grips the Rock of Ages.

That name is *Wonderful*. "If Shakespeare should come into this room," Charles Lamb said once to a group of his intimate friends, "we should all rise to do him honor. But if Jesus Christ should enter, we should all kneel and kiss the hem of His garment." He is God. But He places himself at our disposal. Do we take Him for granted and forget? Or does His deity mean deity to us? If we really believe and take Him for who He is in our common days, our hearts will be at peace should our whole world slip from under us, and we shall have comfort to share with others.

If by faith we see Jesus, it means something to us. His disciples were young men in a world of confusion and change. But they believed. And day by day as they became better acquainted with Him, they must have said wonderingly one to another, "So this is Jesus. One day I chose to follow the Stranger of Galilee—and I have *this*—Wonderful."

They saw the Transfiguration, and knew He had authority in heaven and earth. They saw the miracles, and

knew Him as all-sufficient Supply of human needs. They saw the Crucifixion, and knew Him as loving to the uttermost the whole lost world. They saw the Resurrection, and knew Him as Eternal Dynamic Power. They believed and saw and knew; and we can believe and see and know.

If we really see Jesus, it means something to our *thoughts*—to our ideas of life. It means that we accept the principle of His kingdom: life is not playing or getting, but serving and giving. For He emptied himself. No loss of things can hurt us. It means that we accept the status of God's children: we are not to worry though earth be removed; for He said our very hairs are numbered. It means that we accept His law of love: we cannot fight for ourselves nor pay back our enemies; for we have heard Him say, "Father, forgive them." We hold Christ's standards of living.

If we really see Jesus by faith, it means something to our *lives*. His disciples saw lepers healed and blind eyes opened. We too shall feel His touch transforming our dead, diseased faculties to life and health. The adulterous woman heard Him say, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." We too shall feel the load of the past fall from us and see a new path of hope open before us. That path of hope upheavals of nations cannot block. Peter felt His look in his inmost heart when He said to him, "Simon, thou shalt be called Peter, a stone." And we too shall recognize that He knows us individually as no one else does, knows our capacities and our personalities, knows the situations we shall face and the answers to them. He can do the miracle for us of remaking us into His likeness.

If we see Jesus, it means something in our *sorrows*—and we shall have these. "As under all earth runs water, so under all life runs grief." Wise old Pa Baxter (in *The*

Yearling) said to young Jody when Jody had to shoot his pet fawn, his one pal, "Life's fine, powerful fine, but 'tain't easy." Mary and Martha were young when they lost their brother. But they saw Jesus summon Lazarus from the grave. And the twelve heard Him say, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." They saw Him burst the tomb and knew He was an Overcomer. He is today transmuting all sorrow into blessing.

If we see Jesus, it means something to our *work*. His disciples, young Christians, in dismay saw Him hand the few loaves and fishes to them, with the words, "Give *ye* them to eat"; but they believed and saw the meager supply of loaves multiplying as they gave them out. We too shall feel our own inadequacy; but we shall obey and, doing our impossible little, shall find it made gloriously possible by His blessing. We shall hear Him say as He did of Mary, "She hath done what she could"; and we shall realize that He prizes our heart's devotion, that our reward is certain as we do our best in love for Him. We shall remember that He said He was coming again with praise for the faithful.

If we see Jesus, it will mean something to our *prayers*. Our hearts will break over the sins and sorrows of others; for we have seen Gethsemane. We shall believe in His authority and expect answers as the disciples did who saw the fig tree cursed and withered away. We shall know that He went to the Father and is today at the right hand of God putting His faith beside ours—the faith of the Son of God—and we shall ask with confidence.

All this, and much more, it will mean to us to see a living Jesus. "Christ," said Spurgeon, "dislikes to have us make a show thing of Him and not to use Him. Those

are poor life belts indeed that were made to exhibit in a shop, but are of no use for swimming."

The marvel of it all is that He planned to be with us too—always. He said, "I will not leave you orphans." He promised—and He kept His word—to send the Holy Spirit back from heaven. He promised to return again himself; and He will come.

This full confidence in Jesus did not come to the disciples all at once. It came as day after day they walked with Him and watched Him. And when the Holy Spirit fell at Pentecost they understood. They had faith to cast their lot with Him, and give Him an opportunity to prove himself to them. "Out of weakness" the heroes of faith "were made strong."

And if I obey He will make himself real to even me. In one situation after another I can rest my full weight on His Word, and find it not quicksand but solid rock—the Rock of Ages. And when situations change to crises, He still is there.

● CHOOSE YOUR CANDIDS

The Bible is the most graphic book ever written, the most honest, and the most universal. All of which means that every one of us will find there pictures, honest pictures, of himself—candid shots. Some of these likenesses are not flattering, as is the way of candid. But they are true. If we do not like our pictures, it will do no good to complain of the camera.

Suppose we leaf over a few of these Bible candid and identify our own. If they are disappointingly—even shockingly—frank, it may do us good to take a deep breath and a long look. Then what? "If you don't like it, change it!" That is, don't break the camera, but make the subject different.

Here is a picture with the caption "Leaky Vessel." (It might be called "Neglecter," for it is found in Hebrews 2:1-3, which talks of neglecting this great salvation, letting it ooze away "as from a leaky vessel.") This cup with an ugly crack across its side has been tossed on the dump; it is half full of dust and dead flies. The beautiful gospel truths, heard Sunday by Sunday from a faithful pulpit and calling daily from an open Bible, have been disregarded; the life is doing no one any good, and is itself a castoff thing. Not a pleasant picture, but true—candid.

Beside it is the print of another cup; this is titled "Sanctified and Meet for the Master's Use." Shining and clean, unchipped, whole, perfect, it stands there fit for service at any moment, ready to satisfy thirst with the Living Water it holds.

One of these is you. Or this third: "Letting Them Slip." This cup as yet has only a tiny crack, so small it cannot be seen. But as you pick up the cup you find a pool of water underneath. It has begun to procrastinate and let truth slip away; it too is headed for the scrap heap.

Here, close by a candid shot "Guest at the Feast," is one titled "Excused." It pictures a lonely, wistful man stumbling about in the dark outside a gaily lighted house. "Have me excused" is easy to say. The invitation has been received; but it takes energy to find the time, to prepare the banquet dress, to pay the costs. Yet to say it is to ask to be excused from life and light and joy and fellowship forever. To be pictured as "Guest" means that you have Jesus as your Host and are finding your satisfactions in Him. It was not convenient to refuse all competing attractions in order to come to His table. That trip to the altar was humiliating; that last "Yes" took all there was of you. That consecration still involves

daily self-denial. But the light of Christ's smile and the joy of His constant presence make the price you paid seem nothing. You never would exchange your candid for the other.

"The Trampled Field"—you know what it looks like: barren, bare, in the corners a few scrawny weeds; sticks, stones, ashes, scraps of paper, refuse. The takers of short cuts have beaten a hard path across it; the "profane person's" (Hebrews 12:16) life is unfenced, open to every chance influence. He lives at random. But beside this is the candid shot "A Hundredfold," the rich wheatfield. It was fenced and planted and cultivated and watered with the rains of heaven and now is yielding a bountiful harvest of yellow grain. You can choose—you must choose—you are choosing—one of these two.

Here is another shot—its caption "The Birthright Sold"—and beside it "Heirs of God." The things of to-day seem so real: its temptations, its pressures, its wants, its allurements. One little disobedience surely will do no harm, you say; the choice of your own plans just once. The narrow way looks pretty steep and long. For a laugh and fun, for a good job or a good time, for a girl or for money or for what people will say, you write "Sold" on your title to God and heaven.

"Heir to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, unfading, reserved in heaven for you"—I like this better. Good times and good success both wear out when old age and sickness and death come on—sometimes before—and then if you have title to no imperishable, secure wealth you have nothing. The "Sold-Birthright" candid is that of a pauper who willed his poverty. His inheritance was reserved for him, bought by the death of Jesus, until he turned it down.

Here, side by side, are "The Buried Talent" and "One Hundred Per Cent Gain." You know the subjects: the

one-talent man, lazy, distrustful, do-nothing; and the five- or ten-talent man who makes the most of everything he has, for God. The one-talent man can make 100 per cent gain more easily than can the ten-talent; but he also can be discouraged more easily and made to feel inferior. Watch out for the whispers of discouragement and self-pity when you are choosing between these candids.

This next pair are titled "Babies" and "Soldiers" respectively. Not hard to select here. Babies must be fed, cared for, coddled, pampered, carried by those about them. They are on the receiving end, always. Soldiers are tough of fiber, strong for themselves and for others. But soldiers are made by eating strong meat and putting on the whole armor and enduring hardness and fighting the good fight of faith—no other way to prove the title.

And here are two more, the last for today: "Self-Centered Nobody" and "Pioneer of Faith." No, the Bible does not use just this phrasing, but these are candid labels for the youth who took the well-watered plain close at hand and the man who chose the far country of the highlands of Canaan. Lot shrank himself into nothingness by living for the easy present; Abraham became father of many nations and pioneer of all who believe, by choosing the will of God without seeing the map of the entire journey.

In one sense no one can again be a pioneer of faith since Abraham has blazed the trail for us; in another sense every one of us who sets out to walk with God is a fresh pioneer and walks an untried path. The turns of the road are unknown; but it surely leads to blessing and glory. I choose the "Pioneer" candid. And you do too. For that means following in Christ's steps. He is the great Pioneer and He still walks with pioneers.

Read the Bible with your eyes open for candids. And choose—thoughtfully and prayerfully.

● CLEARNESS

Some years ago the old *Literary Digest* printed a little poem by Fannie Stearns Gifford which has stayed with me ever since. It is entitled "Clearness."

*I have loved clearness. Sea-tide over shoal—
Sky before sunrise, purer than its star—
Green light of ferns—a spring's deep silvery bowl—
Blue halo of a candle-flame—the far
White emptiness round midnight moons.*

All these

*I have loved, hoarding. And clear, simple minds—
Children with thoughts they do not know are dreams—
Men with straight eyes that no bad shadow blinds—
Women whose laughter has no barb. It seems
Such are most precious of Life's largesses.*

Only the blurred and tangled things I fear.

*O Death, I shall not care how strange you seem—
How far from Life—if you are only clear:*

*Not the sick, crowded darkness of a dream,
But clear—clear—clear—like dawn's cold verities!*

(Used by permission)

See all these with me, and feel the exhilaration of the transparent. Clearness in nature's pure and lovely things: clean, cold sea water flowing over firm, hard sand; the pure depths of sky before sunup, unblurred by dust of human activity; the clear-cut green outlines of ferns and the cool, fresh light about them; the speckless, light-shot spring water; the ring of intense whiteness around candle or moon. All these we know, and thrill to their purity.

Clearness too in human character: the open, direct mind of a child; the straight eyes of an honest, clean-

thinking man; the pure smile of a good woman. Transparency of spirit is a beautiful thing and good to meet: the childlike guilelessness that has no ulterior motives and so no mean suspicions, the sincerity which has no shifting because it has nothing to hide, the sheer goodness whose words hold no shadow, no double meaning, no subtle unkindness, no covert impurity.

There is a clearness of mind that is beautiful: the accuracy of a mathematical formula, the firm notes of a Rachmaninoff symphony, the exactness of words that are spoken with a keen sense of their meaning. To use woolly words (with only a hazy idea of their meaning) or cant expressions (borrowed as words but never experienced as facts) is to be insincere, though perhaps unconsciously; and insincerity is always ugly.

And—a step further—there is a clear vision of the unseen mysteries of life. This does not mean knowledge or familiarity. Shelley said we look up at the white radiance of eternity as through a dome of stained glass. Paul said he still saw through a glass, darkly. But faith will steady and clear our vision. To many people spiritual things are hazy, blurred, all fogs and malaria; we know that by faith we can breathe a pure atmosphere and look clearly and certainly at the things which are not seen.

We can be sure of eternal realities: sure of God, sure of a relationship with Him, sure of a place prepared for us beyond the grave, sure that the dreaded unknown death is the doorway to joy and the presence of the King. These are verities as clear as the beautiful light of dawn.

We can be sure of eternal standards of righteousness. There may be differences of opinion as to details of meaning and application; it will take time to learn to adjust our understanding and our conduct to them; but we can be certain that for every problem there is a principle

written into the structure of the universe, unchanging and unshifting. We can be more confident of these principles than we are of life. To lie always will be wrong; the Golden Rule always will be right.

We can be clear in our vision of relative values. We need to sharpen that vision, but if we keep it clear we shall be keenly sensitive to the cheapness of some of the world's grand prizes and to the wealth of fellowship with God and treasure in heaven.

We can be sure of the will of God for us individually; we can be certain of the work He has for us to do. Not all at once, perhaps, nor for all the years ahead, but surely as the days come and go. They tell us that at Khartoum in Egypt there stands a statue of General (Chinese) Gordon, looking out over the desert ("in the accents of whose mute cry for help he caught the accents of the voice of God") and bearing this inscription:

*More than all his race
He saw life face to face,
And heard the still, small voice above its thunder.*

Nothing "blurred and tangled" here, but the clear simplicity of following God's blueprint.

How gain this clearness? How keep it? Far distances are made clear by light; clearness is suffusion of light. And Jesus Christ is the Light of the World. "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Walk in His light; obey yourself into the clear, then live with Him.

*Look unto Him; thy morn shall rise
And all thy day be bright.*

And daily following and daily faith will keep it clear.

Study His character; live in His presence; make Him your pattern in spirit, in mind, in words, in actions: "be-

holding as in a mirror the face of Jesus," your spirit shall be changed into that image, and the shadows and uncertainties shall vanish.

"The dayspring [sun, rising] from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness . . . to guide our feet into the way of peace."

"God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

"And the [holy] city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

I have loved clearness. God has loved clearness and made it the atmosphere of His eternal kingdom.

● WORDS

The Lost Word is Henry Van Dyke's powerful story of the young man Hermes of early Christian days, who found himself irked by the restraints and reproaches of Christianity and made a rash wish for release from its bonds. Just then there appeared a crafty-looking old man who offered him freedom, wealth, and pleasure, all in exchange for one word, "the name of Him you profess to worship." The young man bartered away the word, and thought the bargain good. He became rich and prosperous, untroubled by any memory or any scruple. But he found his joy with his lovely wife incomplete because he had no God to thank; his farewell to his dying father unbearable because he had no God to recommend; and his love for his little son a mockery be-

cause in the child's critical illness he had no God to pray to. In his agony as he tries desperately to recall the word he had known, his spiritual father comes to him and says,

"There is a name which none can lose without being lost . . . the most precious word that ever ear has heard . . . the blessed name of God our Father."

Hermes listens to that saving word, and once more prays.

The Words We Hear

We possess that "lost word", that best of all words: "God." We live by the Word of God and by the words we hear about God. About us the Christian atmosphere of church and home is full of messages from God, as the air is full of radio messages; but we never hear either unless we tune in our receivers. I wonder how many of these good words we pick up. If we keep our ears open, they will come alive to us.

To illustrate. Last week we sang, as I had often sung before,

*I stand amazed in the presence
Of Jesus the Nazarene—*

but this time I *heard* the words, "Jesus the Nazarene." And I thought, what kind of Nazarene was He? He went to church. Yes. But He did more outside the church than in. With Him there was no self-seeking—only the will of God. He lived by prayer and by love: blessing, saving, delivering (by the power of His resurrection). The name "Nazarene" was not a popular name then either; but Jesus filled it with beauty. "Jesus the Nazarene"—I heard that word then for the first time in a song.

Sometimes it is a prayer. I heard a college professor pray this week: "Lord, bless the great world; solve its problems. And bless our small world; do for it what we ask for the great world." I heard those words fresh: "our small world." And my mind went on: what is it we want to see in the great world? Peace, by mutual understanding and unselfish concessions. Principle, not self-interest, governing the actions of men. The same, then, in the little community world of which I am a member. It takes communities to make a world. But these attitudes take God; and only God-filled lives can manifest them. Here is my world-job.

Why not tune in to some of the good words that are vibrating in the air about you? Jesus said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

The Words We Speak

But the spoken words—they are dynamite. There are three words I will not speak. They are the devil's words and they embody the devil's philosophy.

1. I will not say "Luck." That word says that God does not have His wise, strong hand on the helm of life, that God is not great. Actually there is no such force as "luck" or "fate." There are no accidents, no chances, no "happen-so's." "He upholdeth all things by the word of his power." When I say—or think, "Just my luck!" or, "Fate is against me," I am using a devil's word and thinking a devil's thought. I do not have to use it. "My times are in thy hand."

2. I will not say "Why?" to God. That word says that God does not love and care and know; that God is not good. The blessed fact is that no matter how tangled the strands of my life seem to be just now, "all things work together for good" to the obedient Christian. I

do not understand, but I know whom I have believed. I will not ask "Why?"

3. I will not say "Raca" to my brother or sister. I will not speak the word of contempt, or spite, or slander, the word that would make him or her seem small. I will not indulge in the clever, unkind conversation in which "at every word a reputation dies." Before telling the spicy story I will remember those three old questions: "Is it true?" "Is it kind?" "Is it necessary?" I will remember that the "word" of contempt may be the shrug of a shoulder or the lift of an eyebrow; it is easy to "just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike."

*Boys flying kites pull in their white-winged birds;
You can't do that with words.*

Once spoken, a word reverberates to eternity.

I will steer clear of the devil's words. More than that, I will speak God's words. They too are electric with power. There are three words I will say persistently.

1. I will speak Paul's word of *faith*, "I believe God." Shipwrecked, facing death, all about him despairing, Paul's voice rings out clear and confident: "Be of good cheer: for I believe God." His word is contagious; the discouraged and wavering, hearing it, take heart.

2. I will speak Paul's "Nay" of *determination*, his "No" to all the temptations and discouragements and obstacles life can bring. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution . . . ? *Nay*, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." When the "Nay" of my determination is linked with the "Yea" of Christ's love, the enemy is routed.

3. I will speak Andrew's word of *invitation*, "Come." I will not keep to myself the saving word. I know that

in God my Father and Jesus my Saviour I have the best. Like Andrew, I will make it the business of my life to say, "Come and see."

"A word spoken in season, how good is it!" I cannot say these good words of myself. They must be put in my heart by grace; they must be made mine by the Holy Spirit. But He says, "I have put my words in thy mouth."

*Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.*

● "WHY?"

There is a "Why?" I will not say to God, a rebellious, doubting "Why?" It is a lesson learned through years of testing and proving God, a lesson learned also by observation from Job's bitter struggle that broke into light. The desperate "Why?" of Job fighting at random in the dark, the agonized "Why?" of Jesus cast off from God's presence in the blackness of sin's night on the cross—these I shall not have to say. Their victory has shown me that God is always there, and I do not need to see all the reasons; I need only to see Him.

The cynical, tempting "Why?" of Satan or the rebellious, doubting "Why?" that echoes his spirit—these are not for me. I have confidence that God knows what is best for me, that

*He loves me too well to forsake me,
Or give me one trial too much.*

I believe even that He knows what I really want better than I do myself, that He sees my tomorrows and someday I shall thank Him for the good which He is even now working out for me from what seems evil.

The "Why?" of rebellion, the "Why?" of doubt, the "Why?" even of quivering agony I will refuse by His grace. For I have Him and His sure promise and His unflinching presence. Instead of the word of doubt I will stir my soul to a word of trust: "Be of good cheer, for I believe God; and I love Him." "I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." But there is a reverent "Why?" which stems from this very faith and a "Why?" which stems from this very love. There is the lover's "Why?" and the learner's "Why?" and there is the laborer's "Why?" All these I may say, and they will bless me in the saying.

The lover's "Why?" is the "Why?" of caring, of interest, the "Why?" of the devoted heart. The lover desires to know the one he loves. The story of a happy marriage is a story of two fine persons who become better and better acquainted with each other and in every new discovery find new reasons for loving. The way to know God better is to love Him more; and we shall know Him better as we ask Him loving questions.

Why did He—why does He—love me? One of my Sunday-school girls testified the other day that she had been asking God why He had loved her as He had. And she said she had found two reasons. First, because of who He is. God is Love and He delights to give love and kindness and blessing. He delights to find those who will put up no barriers against His love. It is His nature to delight to make good and to make happy. I give Him joy as I let Him bless me. Second, because of what He sees in me. Not that I am worthy, but that I am worth much to Him. Human personality He made in His own image, worth saving, so infinitely worth saving that He gave His Son to make salvation possible. He loves me because of what He sees He can develop in me, because of the marvelous response to His love He

can draw forth from my spirit. He has eternity to enjoy that fellowship.

Unless once in a while I ask a lover's "Why?" and hear God's answer, I may be an unappreciative Christian.

The learner's "Why?" is the "Why?" of intelligent thinking, the "Why?" of the consecrated mind. All education begins with a question; in a sense, education is a progress from one faced problem to another. Children's sometimes embarrassing questions are their growing pains. "Why am I here?" is the inevitable question of those who think at all. The worldling waits too late and asks this "Why?" in the mood of despair and suicide. He has lost his way and wasted his moral fiber and spiritual energies. The serious-minded Christian will ask the question early in order to establish his goals and direct his conduct. If he says this "Why?" humbly and trustfully, he will receive an answer that will fill his life with deep meaning and satisfaction. He will receive a blueprint that will keep him joyfully busy through all the years—few or many—that he has on earth. Have you asked God that learner's "Why?" Have you heard Him answer?

1) You are here to develop a holy character that will make you at home in heaven, ready to live with a holy God and holy people and holy angels, and enjoy the fellowship. Only persons of that sort live there—and you expect to live forever. You are here to practice for the activities of heaven, to acquire skill in the kind of life they live there. We do not know all the details of that existence, but we do know that it is a life of joyful obedience to God's command. We would not expect to play on the first team in a public game without some practice; God does not expect us to dash helter-skelter into the next stage of life. It is a step up to a higher level. We are spending time here to prepare.

2) You are here to use all you have for the kingdom of Christ; that is, you are to win as many souls as you can from the power of Satan to trust in Christ for salvation. His everlasting Kingdom is made of souls—redeemed souls—and you have a share in building it.

We cannot give other persons “a reason for the hope” that is in us until we have given ourselves that reason. We are to love God with all the mind; and we develop mentally as we ask sincere questions. Unless at some time I ask the learner’s “Why?” I may be an unintelligent Christian.

The laborer’s “Why?” is the “Why?” of self-scrutiny. Why did I fail in that job I attempted? Were my motives not right? or my methods? or my timing? or my industry? Or did my patience give out? Have I any attitudes that hinder? Have I any resources that I have not used or used to the full? I must not give up in discouragement. If it was a right thing to do, there must be a right way to do it and I can find the way. If it was not the right thing for me to attempt, I can discover the thing I should accomplish. If I made a false start, I can learn God’s time and place and method. Or, perhaps, Why did I succeed better this time than last? (though this “Why?” has its dangers). If certain methods and attitudes succeeded, they may be worth trying again, so far as they are applicable to new situations. God puts no premium on haphazard work done in His name. He expects intelligent service performed intelligently. Without an occasional laborer’s “Why?” I shall be a relatively unproductive Christian.

Dr. Henry Van Dyke in his *Legend of Service* tells of the three would-be lovers of the Lord who were tested by Him. All three were sent the same difficult order to fulfill. The first questioned “Why?”; the second “How?”; but the third, who asked eagerly “When?”, pleased the

Master by his loving trust. The rebellious, doubting "Why?" is outlawed. But through the reverent, submissive, teachable, earnest "Why?" we can be guided by the Holy Spirit into all truth. Triumphant Christians are thoughtful Christians.

● NO WORLDLINESS

I heard someone in prayer the other day ask that God might help us to see actions as "black or white, not just gray," meaning, of course, that we might have clean-cut notions of right and wrong, stronger convictions, a keener sensitiveness to sin as sin. The prayer was a wise one. For the tragedy of our age is that we have lost this sense of sin. There is no clear line between sin and righteousness, between the world and the Christian.

Yet God from the beginning has made the dividing line very clear. His way has been the way of separation. Abel's offering was right; Cain's offering was wrong, dead wrong. The Israelites were God's children, and were protected; Pharaoh's hosts were God's enemies, and were drowned. Christ's disciples were to be "perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven"; the Pharisees were "of your father the devil." Jesus said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." He said men must leave all to follow Him. There is no halfway house, no middle ground, no No Man's Land. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

To be worldly is to live for time and sense rather than for eternity and God's program. "The world passeth away, and the lust [things] thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." If you care too much about what your group thinks, you can't care enough about what God thinks. If you follow the crowd, you can't follow Christ.

But where is the dividing line? What is "worldliness"? There are many ideas as to what makes a person worldly: almost as many ideas as there are religious groups—perhaps as many as there are individuals. Dress—or some item of dress. Amusements—or some one type of amusement. And the person who frowns on the short skirt may wear the necklace; the person who won't attend the movies may listen to radio trash; the person who condemns dancing may indulge in "necking"—or vice versa. Until skeptics say, "It's all relative," "There are no fixed standards," "It's all in the way you were brought up."

They are wrong. There is spirituality, and there is worldliness; and there is a gulf between. Worldliness has best been defined as "interest in things of time to the exclusion of things of eternity." "The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Any pursuit or attitude that makes God less real in my life is to that extent worldly. Any activity is worldly that makes His presence less recognizable and His Spirit less dominant. A student or a businessman buried in his work can be as worldly as a society girl drowned in pleasure. It is not the name of the action but the nature of it that makes the wrong.

It is popular to decry "negatives" in religion. But the Christian must know how to say "No." Some negatives are the condition for anything positive. I have to say an eternal "No" to Satan before I can say many "Yes's" to God. There are practices, diversions, activities that will fill my mind with trash and stain it with filth; yet my God is holy and I must be holy. At the entrance to the Christian life stands a great negative: "No" to the unholy and the unclean. And there are forms of entertainment that will fritter away time and energy that should be given to God and His service. The ques-

tion is not only, "What harm is there in it?" Rather, "Does it keep me from something better?"

There are forms of amusement that the finest Christians of other days have found not conducive to the highest type of spirituality. And there are their successors of our day; different in name, but quite as dangerous rivals of God's program. The principle is the same. I would take counsel with the best Christians I know rather than with the poorest samples of religion.

Worldliness is deeper than surface conduct. It expresses itself in conduct, but it is a thing of the spirit. The soul itself knows its worldliness; not even its friends are certain, though they can guess. It is a matter of the heart and its loves and its motives. Worldliness estranges the heart from God.

Centuries ago in a garden, God walked with a man and a woman. As long as they obeyed His "No", they enjoyed His fellowship, separated to Him and His love. As soon as they chose their own way and their own pleasure, they walked alone, separated from God. They had become worldly. They thought "it didn't make any difference." But it lost them God.

● NOT COMMON

"What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." "Not common." Cleansed by His blood, so not common, not cheap, not ordinary, not casual. I shall be cheapening God if anything in my life or activity is common in my eyes. The work He has given me to do is not common, but pregnant with possibilities; the days He has lent me are rich with opportunities, dedicated to Him. "Not common"—it comes as a fresh inspiration and a fresh challenge; and I hold it before you as a flaming signal: Cleansed, so "not common."

You work shoulder to shoulder with ordinary, perhaps rough or profane men and women at a prosaic secular job. To you it is not common; God has placed you there and has said you can make it beautiful by the love and honesty and faithfulness with which you do it; you can make your performance a testimony to the glorious possibility of a holy life through the power of God. "Not common," this job; for God needed a holy life shining there and He chose you.

Time is so ordinary a possession that we let it slip through our fingers unnoticed or perhaps even find ourselves bored with an extra evening on our hands and talk about "killing" time. If cleansed, "not common," even your time. If you find yourself fooling away time, spending it carelessly or even unworthily, send up a wireless to the skies: "Not common, Lord—help me to find a holy use for these moments."

Moments in church—those few moments while the congregation are gathering in—"not common." Use them to breathe a prayer for a needy friend, or to open the windows of your soul to heaven, or to check on the Spirit's presence in your heart to make you a blessing in the service. Those moments of the altar-call, "not common"—keep them holy unto the Lord, at the disposal of the Holy Spirit for a prayer that has a grip in it.

"Not common," those few moments you could spend in calling on a shut-in or inviting an acquaintance to church, or writing a letter, or caring for a neighbor's children—do it to Him and He will bless it. "Not common," the moments of your full days, to be spent merely in getting the chores done or earning the living or going through the motions even of church work. Every one of these, consecrated to God and accepted on His altar, can be—is to be—used by Him, purified and energized

by His presence and for His glory. This is our faith; this is His assurance.

"Not common," your prayers. Not words tossed into the air as a cheerful hope. Not the vain repetitions of a Christian prayer-wheel. Prayer, an audience with the King of heaven; prayer, an entrance into the throne room, a coming straight to the mercy seat. Prayer getting the ear of God because the Spirit makes intercession and the Son represents us at the Father's right hand. "Not common"—refuse to mock God with a prayer you do not care much about yourself.

"Not common," we ourselves; for His property, His representatives. It makes a difference how we dress and how we act, what we say and where we go. The tones of our voices, the glances of our eyes, the songs we sing, the books we read, and the thoughts we think—none need be cheap or heedless. "Not common" now.

"Not common" now in our friendship, not free to throw ourselves into the company of those who are careless and purposeless, except as we touch them to save them. Not that we consider ourselves above them, but that, bought with a price, our lives are too precious to throw away or to debase or to stain with evil.

"Not common"—honored by fellowship with the Son of God. "Crucified with Christ," He liveth in us, and the life we now live we live by the faith of the Son of God. Christ is not common.

"Not common"—but only if completely His, owned and possessed by Him. Whatever is His, He makes holy; for He is holy. Follow the steps and make certain that you qualify.

1. *Stamped* with His ownership. Jesus has bought us back from Satan with His life's blood, and we have recognized His claim. The priceless ransom shows us that God does not hold us cheap—shall we put ourselves

on the bargain table and think of ourselves as poor stuff?

2. *Searched* by the Spirit. Worth more than the worlds, but so stained in the deeps of our natures as to be useless to a holy God; capable of heights of devotion and service, but marred by a streak of coarseness that is one with the cheap things of earth. To say "not common" will not make it so; the Spirit must show us the ingrained stain and create in us a deep dissatisfaction with a double nature.

3. *Sanctified* by the Blood. Deeper than the stain has gone can be the purging of our spirits from unworthy earthly loves and earthly motives, so that our deepest urges are at one with God's nature and God's will.

4. *Sealed* for His use. The Spirit witnesses to the cleansing. He tells us we are acceptable for His purposes. Now we are to carry out in daily living the terms of our consecration and present our bodies a living sacrifice. "Not common"—can we live on a lower plane than our highest vision of His holiness? Can we be less than our best for God? "Not somehow, then, but triumphantly"—through His grace.

● ONLY BEGINNINGS

"There is no finality in this life, only beginnings."

The sentence is quoted from an editorial which stresses the New Year's opportunities for forgetting the past and going forward with life. But whatever the date, now is the time to remember that nothing you do is an end; every act, every thought, is a beginning.

*Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow forever and forever.*

Everything you do sets in motion a current that will sweep on into eternity, piling up good or evil as it goes.

There is no finality of influence. "I didn't notice you were there, Jim"—apology for a careless oath of discomfort uttered one early winter morning in the eighties at McGill University, Montreal, where a few men practicing football were shivering in the cold—the words did not evaporate and die. They caught the attention of the young theological student James Naismith to whom they were addressed, and stayed with him all his days as a sermon on his unconscious influence as a Christian. In addition they set him to thinking out a game which could be played indoors in cold weather, and so became the beginning of basketball, the most widely popular sport in the world.

Every word or deed, however casual, exerts an influence which goes on and on, gathering momentum until it bursts into eternity, then on and on through the ages.

To think too closely of the eventualities of influence would make one morbid in attitude and stilted in conduct. But to be careless of its beginnings is to throw away one's life. The only safe course is to commit our thoughts and words and doings to the guidance and control of the Holy Spirit, trusting Him to dictate our beginnings and overrule their working into good.

There is no finality set to work done. Everything you do in the name of Jesus and for His sake has eternity in it. It is a seed sown that will certainly bear fruit. It is a beginning of salvation for souls and building for the Kingdom. For God has promised to bless it. Unseen perhaps by men,

*Enough that He heard it once:
We shall hear it by and by.*

You are not seeing results? They will come if you are faithful. Prayers have been answered in glorious fulfillment long after the one who prayed was in his grave.

Meantime, the example of your testimonies and consistent living and steady faith has caught fire in other lives.

There is no finality of failure—unless you will it. The disciples had toiled all night and had caught nothing. But Jesus said, "Cast the net on the other side." And they drew it to land full of fishes. Every day you may have a direct suggestion from the Spirit as to His thought for your plan of action that day; every day may open a channel of blessing into some life, or lay the foundation for some Kingdom enterprise. The years will carry it on to start you out in eternity with a wealth of capital.

That woman missionary who had faith for the incorrigible Zulu boy and pleaded for him earnestly week after week, month after month while the others were discouraged, until at last he became established, and today is one of the most successful native evangelists—she knows now that every prayer, every plea, every affirmation of faith was a beginning, its ending merged in eternity.

There is no finality set to "ordinary" Christian living. Today by your faithfulness to duty you are beginning a solid foundation for obedience to the will of God which Satan cannot overturn in the day of crucial test that is ahead. Today by your regular attendance at Sunday school and church services you are beginning a Christian character which will not crumble into worldliness and self-indulgence when the subtle temptations of busy, care-beset middle age come on. Today by your quiet refusal to listen to an unkind story you are beginning a personality of beauty and an atmosphere of blessing that will spread love and healing wherever you go. Today by teaching a group of children you may be beginning a church in Africa or India. Today by your regular keeping of your devotional hour you are beginning an everlasting friendship with God. Today by patient con-

tinuance in well-doing you are beginning heaven for yourself and for others. These all are gracious things; but they must have beginnings.

There is no finality of despair; hope always can begin afresh. The Christian hope is an anchor that steadfastly holds within the veil. Worry is barren; hope is productive. So worry is ruled out: the door to the past we close, for just ahead is the future's door—wide open. There is no dead-end street for the true wayfaring Christian.

You remember Poe's breath-taking story of a cruel torture device practiced by the Inquisition. The victim was placed in a room so constructed that little by little its walls closed noiselessly in on him until finally they crushed him. Day after day he watched in horrified fascination the smooth walls draw nearer and nearer, aware that there was no escape. It is the image of the one who will not accept Christ and eternal life. Every moment he breathes is a paralyzed approach to destruction.

But once lift your hand and your will like the Cape Verdean native with a definite, "I choose Jesus," and you have entered upon an ever-enlarging existence. The walls of your world will stretch and open up into endless life, and every day will add fresh distances. In His presence is fullness of life.

Life is not a few blank years and months; life is the beginning of eternity.

● SIDE-HOLDS AND SLOGANS

As a boy, Bliss Perry, beloved Harvard professor, was tormented by a sense of inferiority. He was excessively timid when swimming, skating, and most of all when fighting. But one day an old Cornish butcher taught him a "side-holt," a wrestling grip which meant sure victory in his bouts with his schoolfellows. More than that, the

secret of victory gave him confidence in himself and saved his spirit.

There are other "side-holds" in life. Some of these Bliss Perry learned later. There is an intellectual side-hold. As a student in Williams College, Perry found that he could usually win in debates. For he had a "side-holt": longer, more thorough preparation. When he knew his opponent would stop with two hours of study, he studied four; when his opponent studied ten hours, he took twenty. In study there are no trick schemes for learning. Honest work is the side-hold that gives confidence.

There is a moral side-hold. Logan Pearsall Smith when a boy—so Perry heard—said to some youngsters, "It's wrong to do that."

They looked at him, whispered together, then asked, "It's what?"

"It's wrong," he repeated.

"How do you spell it?"

And he shouted back, "I spell it—spell it with a W. W-R-O-N-G. Wrong!"

One sure secret of success in life is to spell the unfashionable word *wrong*, and shout it bravely. If you live by convictions you can always be confident of coming out on top. Truth never can be worsted, in the long run.

There is a spiritual side-hold. When teaching at Williams, Perry grudged the time spent in the daily chapel services. He complained that European scholars were farther ahead than American because they were subjected to no such waste of time; they saved a half-hour each day. But his father reminded him that if one is turning a grindstone, every minute is equally valuable; if one is "doing a man's work" it is the "inspired

moments" that count. Wisely invested moments give the confidence of adequate spiritual resources. For success in life, contact with God is the necessary "side-holt." It is the secret of superior wisdom and superior strength.

In the dark days of World War II we had much to say about "V for Victory." At times it was almost like whistling to keep our courage up. But "the secret of the Lord" is more than courageous whistling. It is a certain "side-holt" by which we can throw the enemy every time: "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Whatever life's changes or surprises or perplexities, the things that cannot be shaken are yours. "Jesus Christ" is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever," and He always will come to your aid when you need Him, if you have kept the connection clear. "Christ in you" is your sure hope.

"My word shall not pass away." This is His assurance that every promise on which you ever have leaned your weight will hold in the strain. Every bit of waste in your life will be transmuted into a gem; for the promise is that "all things work together for good" to His lovers.

You have received "a kingdom which cannot be moved"; that is, if you have invested in things you cannot lose. The world cannot hurt you or rob you or cheat you if all you have is invested in Christ and His kingdom. Within, set up the Kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy; no power can take that from you. Without, build that Kingdom by saving and helping other souls; you cannot lose that investment.

Certain of victory, you can do more than ward off the enemy; you can take the offensive. A victorious life is more than just enduring or barely holding the fort.

Two slogans Jesus gave us: directions for the offensive. (Perhaps you had forgotten that a "slogan" was

the war cry or gathering word of a Highland clan in Scotland.) These are calls to rally us to battle for our Lord.

"Salt of the Earth." A Christian's best fighting is his living. Our corrupt world needs moral standards placed before it. Lot almost saved Sodom; but he gave up and gave in. Keep your savor; make it realized in the environment in which you live. You may save those around you from perdition. How? Keep Christ real in your own life. Trust and obey Him. Grow in grace. Don't forget your "side-holt."

"Light of the World." The light shines brightest in the dark. Our world needs to repent; but it has no sense of its need. You must take the bushel off your light and let it shine. Your light aglow will make their darkness evident. How? Stay alive to God.

A missionary to the Cape Verde Islands tells how the young national preachers use every means, even crazy schemes, to get the gospel to the Roman Catholics steeped in midnight darkness. And Christ does not let them down. For He promised that if He was lifted up He would draw all men to Him. If we care enough—again, if Jesus is real to us and His gospel is precious—we shall find our own ways to let the light shine.

And the glory of it all is that the more we let it shine, the brighter it burns. The darkness cannot put it out. The more victories we gain, the stronger our confidence and the more intimate our knowledge of Christ. With Jesus we shall win—always.

Robert Louis Stevenson tells of the game the boys used to play at night on the Edinburgh streets. They would button under their coats a bull's-eye lantern, and walk along casually, chuckling to themselves over their secret—then suddenly open their jackets and flash out the light to dazzle an unsuspecting passer-by. We too

are lantern-bearers. Our purpose is different. Our glow of satisfaction is not a chuckle of mischief; but every one of us who has the Light in his soul knows the confident joy of that inner radiance. He carries in his heart a precious secret, the secret of Jesus. And he must use it.

● TUNING FOR HEAVEN

*Since I am coming to that holy room
Where with Thy quire of saints forevermore
I shall be made Thy musick, as I come
I tune my instrument here at the dore
And what I must do then, think here before.*

Written by an English poet almost three hundred years ago, as the archaic spelling suggests, the lines give us our slogan: Tuning for Heaven. Tune our instruments for Christ's heavenly orchestra? Of course. We do not consider ourselves such skilled performers that we can harmonize if our instrument is off key. But we are to be His music; it is we ourselves who will make up that orchestra; our own spirits and attitudes are the instruments to be tuned.

Strike the key, then, the absolute pitch of heaven. See to it that your spirit is adjusted; that what you will have to "do then," in those long shadowless days of eternity, you are "thinking here before." Make certain that your spirit creates no discord with the theme of His music.

Tune to the master A: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to . . . enter . . ." (Revelation 22:14). Cultivate a heart that loves the will of God—more, that delights to know the particular items of that will. Day by day study the Word of God to apply it to the ins-and-outs of life. Learn to find His

commands not grievous but happy. This is the master key of heaven vibrating on earth.

Pick up your trumpet. Key it to the standard B flat: "His servants shall serve him" (Revelation 22:3). Cultivate the conception of the highest joy of life as service for Jesus' sake. Jesus came to minister; is "servant" your name also? That is, when you think of opportunities, do you think of openings for money-making or pleasure, or for useful work? Are you valuing life in terms of what you can get or of what you can give? Can you look forward with satisfaction to an eternity spent in giving out, contributing, serving? Actually heaven is not keyed to ease and leisure; always to service. Creative work is the highest expression of Deity, and of those who live with God. Has He given you an assignment here, and are you busy at it under His supervision?

Now your violin; first the A string: "They shall see his face" (Revelation 22:4). Here are communion and personal acquaintance. Have you really got acquainted with Deity? Do you take time to seek God's face? to look there for the expression of His love? to know His nature? to get His directions? Do you look there for His approval? Is that face dearest of all to you now, so that to see Him face to face, unveiled, will be glory for you? It takes time and desire to develop that intimacy and cultivate that presence day by day.

Now tune to D. Better check here too: "His name shall be in their foreheads" (Revelation 22:4). Thrall, bond-slave, bound out to Jesus, His name branded on you as your Owner. Never a moment free to act on your own or for your own advantage. Whatever you do must be done in His name, for it reflects on Him. The dreariest routine, the most humiliating drudgery becomes honorable and beautiful when done for Him. And courage for impossible achievement is born when you bear the

authority of His name. You are not your own; you are bought with a price; be not the servant of men.

And the G string: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Revelation 21:4). God's comfort—it is the only kind that works even now. Are you trying to carry yourself over the rough spots, to forget your troubles in good times or bury them in hard work? Or have you learned to let God wipe the tears from your eyes? to accept His comfort and His healing for every sorrow and hurt? Life is full of hard things; friends and enemies will wound you, and the wounds will fester into grudges and hatreds and retaliations unless you learn to turn them over to God. Tune to God's comfort here on earth.

Now the high E: "Street . . . pure gold" (Revelation 21:21); that is, perfect purity of heart, and soul refined from dross. "A sea of glass," crystal clear (Revelation 22:1); that is sun-tested sincerity. Tune in now. Everything covered is to be revealed. No unclean thoughts, no selfish motives will enter there. Now is the time to let the Spirit search and the Blood purify. And now is the time to bring every hidden reaction to the test of fire. Now is the time to commit every subconscious emotion to the keeping of the Comforter.

One last tightening of the strings, perhaps for a chord. "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:3). Jesus has gone ahead to make the reservations for us, so that no one of us need be left out. "And if I go . . . I will come again—" for you, for me. The expectant, watching attitude of spirit that looks for His return any day bears slights and disappointments patiently and joyfully because it has a better home reserved, to be claimed in "just a few more days."

Tune in to heaven. Get the strings tightened, the notes true—then practice.

● THIS IS THE DAY

There is a familiar poem that tells of the soldier whose sword snapped in battle. He threw the useless thing away and crept out of the fight; he had no weapon. In the thick of the conflict when the enemy was pressing hard and every man counted, the prince, unhorsed and disarmed, came by, saw the broken sword, picked it up, and with it turned the tide and won the day.

The title of that poem is "Opportunity" and it tells the truth. Opportunity is not some marvelous streak of "good luck." It is not a ready-made something that drops into the lap. Opportunity is raw material. Its value is in the eye of the person who decides whether he will pick it up or let it lie unused and undeveloped.

Every day is an opportunity, whether it looks promising or not. The poets have seen this truth. Emerson packed a lifetime of wisdom into eleven lines when he wrote "Days." He tells of the endless file of these "daughters of Time" who march by, silent, "hypocritic" (masked), offering gifts. The gifts are not of equal worth: "bread, kingdoms, stars, sky that holds them all." We take our choice. And he tells how he was so busy in his neat little garden that, though he saw the procession, he snatched only a few "herbs and apples" as his portion. Too late he realized his mistake, when he saw the look of scorn on the face of the Day. He had missed his opportunity.

A poem in a current magazine gives us a similar message: "The Swarming of the Days." It says the year comes on like a swarm of bees starting a new hive. Each day bears "both honey and a sting." We are not to complain of the sting, but furnish the garden and the flowers for the bees to make the honey. No one can escape sorrow and difficulty; every day will bring its

problems, even its injustices. But these are not the big thing. The only thing that matters about the day is, Was its quota of honey made? Did my garden grow sweet enough flowers?

I read some time ago—perhaps you read it too—the story of the two boys and the glass of water. When asked how much water the glass contained, the first boy said, “It’s half empty.” The other said, “It’s half full.” A parable of opportunity. If you see your day as half empty, it will be barren. You will be pitying yourself for your difficulties and liabilities; you will be feeling the sting. But if you see your day as half full, you will be thanking God for the talents and opportunities you have. You will be making honey. It all depends on you.

Try this formula on every situation of life. Your response will determine whether you become a positive, praising, purposeful personality or a negative, nonproductive nonentity, worth nothing to others, to yourself, or to God. Self-pity never took a person anywhere—but downhill.

But the Christian, if he stays a Christian, parts company with self-pity and becomes strong in the Lord. “All men are afraid,” they tell us, “but some men do not surrender.” They become heroes in spite of their fears. We have a still better motto: “Courage is fear that has said its prayers.” We have an inner deliverance from hampering fear; we have the strength of conscious contact with God, the knowledge of adequate resources for every fight.

Every day brings opportunity. The marvel of our Christian religion is that God takes the bad things and turns them into good. He takes the weak things, the good-for-nothing things (“things which are naught”), and uses them to overtop the mighty. He takes you and me (and only you and I know how weak we are) and

makes us over for His glory. The reclaimed down-and-out Francis Thompson, in his poem "The Hound of Heaven," has the seeking, finding Saviour say to the broken sinner, "None but I makes much of naught."

This makes the difference between fear and courage, between barren discontent and glorious achievement: God with us, God in us. The inner strength which is proof against the crushing pressure of outer circumstance, the abiding assurance of a Strength that is more than human, the steady reassurance that your life is worth something to God, the heavenly vision of work to be done for the Kingdom—work that only you can do—this is part of what Jesus promised when He said, "Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you."

And this power is verified, not nullified, by the tests of everyday living. "Courage is grace under pressure." Days make years, and years are life. "Up, for this is the day."

● IN STEP WITH GOD

How do you measure your progress in the Christian life? Or do you bother to measure it at all? The worm humps up and down measuring his sluggish forward movement by his own length, and most of us are not so very different: our own old habits, our "dispositions," our inclinations and preferences, our likes and dislikes determine pretty much our actions and achievements, and from year to year we can show little advancement in the things of God. "I always did it this way," "I don't feel like going," "That's too hard for me," "I'd rather not"—retarded achievement measured by our retarding selves.

Or we measure ourselves by others. Their standards of holiness, their stage of Christlikeness, their level of Christian activity, their limit of sacrifice, their warmth of spirit. "They think it's all right," "They don't have to give up this," "They can be sanctified without doing that," "Of course I've let down a little, but I'm just as good as the rest."

Some sort of self-measurement is inevitable to satisfy conscience. But the wrong measuring stick can be a deadly, deadening thing. When through some illuminating flash of the Holy Spirit's light we stand alone before God, we know that it is sheer waste to compare ourselves with others. The Spirit puts His finger on this or that in our lives and says, "How about this? I mean you." Then we recognize that there is no shifting nor evading. There is no replying, "The rest all do it." The one insistent word from God is, "What is that to thee? follow thou me."

And deep down in our hearts we know that the one standard of measurement for us is God's expectation of us; and this is based on our opportunities and our light. The whole way ahead is not in sight, but we have the conviction that there is a single, clearly defined path which He knows, and that He will lead us safely and surely along that path whatever the dangers or snares to right or left. This is God's voice speaking to us. God has His schedule for each of us to follow. He is moving on along the path; and He expects us to move in step with Him. This is His measure for us.

Walking with God is the normal Christian program. Your schedule will vary from time to time, but you will certainly pass four stages. Do not hurry any one of them. Let Him lead you. But when you reach the stage, do not draw back. Go through with Him.

There is the Enoch stage, the stage of *God-pleasing*; in a sense the whole path is but an extension of this.

“Enoch walked with God, and . . . he had this testimony, that he pleased God.” You must accept the smile of God as your highest reward and work for His approval as your steady wages. Other rewards and other smiles are pleasant, but they are incidental. Through the grind and the glory of life, through its ups and its downs, you are living to please Him. This is the first stage; until this is reached no progress at all is possible. Enoch walked with God.

There is the Abraham stage. “Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went.” And God said, “Walk before me. I will bless thee and thou shalt be a blessing.” This is the stage of *venturing for God* and, as you do so, blessing people. No sooner is your will fully yielded to God than He gives you something to do for Him. It will seem hard—impossible perhaps. It may be a call to Christian service that is to you a leap into thick darkness. Then remember that He is going on before you, and that to keep step with Him you must follow—promptly. It is your only path to usefulness, for it is the path He selects for you and the path He takes himself. Down that path you will become the friend of God.

There is the furnace stage of *suffering with God*. The furnace was heated seven times, exceeding hot, and the three men who would not deny their God were cast into the flames. But “in the midst of the fire” there were four, not three; “and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” The path with God leads through suffering and pain, often suffering that could be escaped by compromise: suffering, ridicule, persecution because you are a faithful Christian. But if you will assimilate the “But if not” spirit (“Our God . . . is able to deliver us . . . but if not,” we will not sin) His presence will be with you; the flame will not hurt you but refine your gold.

The fourth is the Elijah stage—or the Paul stage—of *exploits for God*, through His presence. As you walk with God you will become bold in the conscious assurance that God is with you. Elijah stood alone before kings and false prophets repeating, "The Lord God before whom I stand"; and the power of evil gave way. Paul was brought before rulers and through storms depending on "God, whose I am, and whom I serve"; and the rulers trembled before him. "This one thing I do," he said: "I press toward the mark," "that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ."

This mighty, reckless God-consciousness does not come in a day; it comes as we walk with God, keeping step with Him through thick and thin, measuring by His schedule. But it comes.

● EXAMINE YOUR OWN SELVES

When all is said and done, there is one perfect pattern for triumphant living. Jesus gave it to us in His Sermon on the Mount. Everyone admires these beautiful chapters (Matthew 5—7). Everyone has memorized the Beatitudes. But sometimes we forget that this is the standard by which we are to shape our lives and by which we shall finally be judged. Suppose we try out for the final examination. Give yourself this preliminary test.

Our Standard of Values

1. When I am choosing my activities and my attitudes, do I ask

- Will it make me blessed? *or*
- Will it make me happy?

Of course Jesus' "blessed" can be defined "happy"; but it means long-run happiness, the blessing of God. Perhaps we can test ourselves more closely.

2. Do I take Jesus' definition of happiness? *or*
 Do I think I know best what will make me happy?
3. Have I learned that happiness is quite independent of circumstances, but is entirely a matter of the attitude of my spirit? *or*
 Am I still chafing against circumstances and trying to change them?

Answer: Jesus' "Blesseds."

Our Spirit

4. Do I keep myself where I realize my dependence on Christ for all my real joy, for wisdom, for victory in temptation? *or*
 Am I so self-sufficient that I can live for days together enjoying myself pretty well without thinking much about Him, working without asking His directions, sliding along without His help?
- Answer: "Blessed are the poor in spirit."
5. Do I take my troubles with a stiff upper lip and a hardening heart?
 Am I letting life make me bitter and cynical? *or*
 Do I let Christ wipe away the tears and use my sorrow to make me know Him better and love others more?
6. Am I self-centered and dry-eyed in a world of suffering and of sin? *or*

- Do I know what it is to weep with those that weep, to be burdened for the sins of others, to pray until faith takes hold with a song?

Have I "mourned" and been "comforted"?

Answer: "Blessed are they that mourn."

7. Am I zealous for my "rights"? *or*
 Am I willing to let God fight my battles? (I shall come out better!)

Answer: "Blessed are the meek."

8. Do I really want to be the best Christian I can? *or*
 Am I quick to excuse myself by the faults of others?

9. Am I eager to hear truth which will take me farther up the road? *or*
 Am I sleepy and indifferent as I read God's Word and hear it preached?

Answer: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness."

10. Do I enjoy telling a story at someone else's expense? *or*
 Do I put the best construction, remembering that I too may not be understood by others?

11. Am I quick to judge and criticize the actions of others? *or*
 Do I check the unkind word, even when it is clever?

Answer: "Blessed are the merciful."

12. Is my love always unfeigned and my spirit guileless, crystal-clear?
 Would I be willing for all the world to know my secret motives?

- Can my word be trusted as the exact counterpart of my thoughts? *or*
- Down at the core of my hidden life is self first in spite of all my efforts?
- Does a thought of self-interest mix itself with my best deeds?
- Do I allow jealousy or envy or resentment to mar the sincerity of my Christian fellowship?

Answer: "Blessed are the pure in heart."

13. Do people love one another better because of me? *or*
- Do I foster distrust and suspicion among fellow Christians?
14. Do I try to explain away misunderstandings? *or*
- Do I take up a reproach and add to it?
15. Do I promote cliques and foster social prejudices? *or*
- Have I the Christian family spirit that warms toward every Christian brother?

Answer: "Blessed are the peacemakers."

16. Am I different enough from the world ever to incur any persecution for Jesus' sake? *or*
- Am I so like the world that they never have seen any difference?

Answer: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake."

17. If I am laughed at or ostracized for my Christian principles, do I let myself be laughed or frozen out of my stand?
- Do I resolve never to be caught again in a public acknowledgment of Christ?

- Do I let myself feel ashamed and "inferior"?
or
- Have I found the deep joy of Jesus' fellowship with those who suffer for His sake?
- Do I thank Him that an opportunity has been given to testify for Him?
- Do I remember that I am a child of the King and need never hang my head?
- Have I learned that if I hold my ground others will be influenced for Christ and will gain courage if I am strong?

Answer: "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad."

Our Enemies

18. Do we wish to keep our enemies enemies?
- Do we still think that the way to treat an enemy is to do all we can to hurt him? *or*
- Do we wish to change our enemies to friends?
- Have we learned that we can conquer enemies best by kindness?
19. Have I ever really prayed for an enemy? Sincerely?
- Do I actually say good things about the person who has said mean things about me?
- If so, do I really wish people to *believe* good things about him?
- Can I trust my reputation in the hands of God?

Answer: "Love your enemies."

20. Now that you have tested your spirit and found the answers in the Beatitudes, test your Christian ethics. (Answer: "Let your light shine before men.")

Then test your prayer habits. (Answer: "After this manner pray ye.") Test your social relationships. (Answer: "Perfect [in love], even as your Father which is in heaven.")

We have discovered that Christ looks for more than wishful thinking; He looks for performance. Only a sanctified heart can meet the demand, a sanctified heart and a yielded, loving life. He must help us. He will.

● ONE LIFE

"We are all under sentence of death with an indefinite reprieve." So wrote Walter Pater. It seems that Rousseau, upon learning that he was smitten with an incurable disease, asked himself how he could make the utmost use of the interval of life which remained. (He decided for the intellectual stimulus of reading a clever writer!)

But Pater makes the point that the one thing certain for all of us is that we shall die. Only a counted number of heartbeats remain to any of us, old or young—counted by God. How shall we invest those heartbeats? Pater urges us to get as many pulsations as possible into our days, not to lose those days by indifference. Don't be listless, he says, but awake. Feel the richness of life. Fill it with vital experience.

Fine—and true, we all agree. The question is, what sort of experience? Your answer depends on what life is to you, and what you want to make of it.

The author of the Persian *Rubaiyat* said, Life is a *Tavern* and we'll have a good time: "Come, fill the cup."

*The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter—and the bird is on the wing.*

Many young people are viewing life, and living it, with that same don't-care spirit:

*Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum.*

Enjoy yourself today, whatever may happen tomorrow.

Robert Louis Stevenson, for years half dead of tuberculosis and always facing imminent death, saw life as a *Race* in a wilderness of snares and pitfalls. But he came of a family of lighthouse engineers whose creed was sound workmanship, and he counseled, "Stop your ears against paralyzing terror and run the race with a single mind." Begin some work even if you have only a week to live. Courage! Do something, and do it well. Don't fold up, useless. You were made for action.

Robert Browning, in *Rabbi ben Ezra*, says life is a *Potter's Wheel*. We are the clay and our life has a purpose. Every day, every circumstance counts in fashioning us into a cup for the Master's use in eternity. We are not our own. Our highest privilege is to choose the will of God and know that He is making out of our raw material something which He can use and enjoy.

Three very different views of life.

What you see as the meaning of life determines the use you put it to. It does not take long to show up. One year I told each of our college seniors how he was looking at life. Would you like to glimpse down some of those vistas with me? Each view shows us an angle of the entire beautiful truth about life.

Life is an *Inn*. I will not live as if I planned to stay here always. I will not change the cut of my heavenly clothes to suit the fashions of an overnight lodging.

Life is a *Prelude* to the vast symphony of eternity. Life is a *Rehearsal* for the performance of heaven. What

I do in my Today is not detached; it has a direct bearing on my Forever.

Life is not easy. Life is a *Battle*. But I shall not lie down nor run away. For the issues are vast and victory is possible.

Life is a *Lesson*. I cannot understand it all at once, but if I persevere I shall look back from the last page and read its meaning complete and glorious.

Life is a single *Arrow* which I must shoot. Tragic if I shoot at random. I must choose a mark and practice my aim. Life is a *Ladder*, up or down. I must place it erect, found it sure, and brace it firmly.

Life is a *Heritage* handed down to me from those who have gone before. I have great privileges; I must show my gratitude by making the most of my legacy.

Life is a *Torch*. I must pass on undimmed to those who shall come after me the light that shines on my way; every privilege is a responsibility.

Life is a *Book* which I am writing to be read by those about me and by those who will come after me. It still has blank pages, but I shall fill them all; and once I have written, I have written.

Life is a *Loom* where I am weaving a garment of praise or of dishonor. Every action, every thought, goes into writing and web; none is too trivial. For life is a *Bundle* of little things.

Life passes so swiftly, so silently that it would trick us into thinking it does not matter. But it matters infinitely. For life is a *Loan* from God to us, a loan to be repaid with interest. Life is God's great *Investment*—your life and mine. I will not disappoint Him.

Life is a *Mission* upon which He has sent me with work to do for Him. We cannot do it alone, but we need

not. For life can be a *Flame*, the flame of the love of Christ in our hearts, ever burning but never burning out.

Only one life—to live is Christ!

● YOUTH IS THE TIME

*One day, upon an old Judean road,
Strong, fine, and clean,
High-hearted, eager-eyed,
Mind like a keen, sure blade,
Youth met the Master.
And the Lord, beholding, loved him:
Loved him for dawning visions
Of service, purity, achievement rare;
Loved him, yet did not spare.*

How long a span is youth? We stretch it out; the Young People's Society will welcome you up to forty, then dismiss you. Some sturdy souls insist they are young at eighty, and feel it. Actually youth does not end abruptly, nor in the literal sense does it last long. It slips away imperceptibly, and before we realize it we are bearing the burdens and carrying out the routine and walking in the ruts of adulthood. Old age is not life after forty, or sixty; old age is "an accumulation of bad habits." Maturity is not a matter of years passed, but of character formed. And they say one's character is pretty firmly set by the time one is twenty years old. It would seem that, if we are to make the most of that wonderful treasure called youth, we must waste no time.

As in a well-ordered schedule each hour of the day has its own duty, so in a well-ordered life each period has its assigned work. There are some things to be accomplished in youth or not at all, but by a special grace of God; some gains you must make to serve as capital;

some provisions you must lay in for the journey. "Remember . . . in the days of thy youth."

One incident in our Bible (Mark 10:17-22; Matthew 19:16-22) belongs to young people. There are many accounts of Jesus' meeting and helping the sick, the lame, and the blind, but one particularly where He talked with a youth in the prime of opening manhood, vigorous and eager to make the most of life. You would have wished to meet the Master that way; you would have listened earnestly to His words. He loved youth and He had a message for youth.

1. *Youth is the time to meet Christ.*

Good character is Christian character, and it is hard to become a Christian after all your habits are set in the other direction. Yield to Christ before the devil has so tight a grip on you as to poison your spirit and warp your attitudes. Once you have hardened into rebellion there is not much you can do about it. Statistics prove that most Christians were converted in their teens. If you have not already laid the foundation for life in a genuine, satisfying Christian experience, attend to this all-important matter at once. Do not jeopardize all your tomorrows by neglecting this fundamental first.

2. *Youth is the time to set standards.*

As you grow older the world and the devil will try to cheat you into accepting their cheap counterfeits in place of the genuine. You will have to decide what kind of religion you will have: the ordinary kind or the real thing. You will have to decide what you are going to live for: the money you can make or the good you can do. Two standards of value set up in youth will save you from spending on dust and ashes your precious coin of time and strength and love. Jesus will give you both these touchstones.

One is a standard of what real religion is. You can have in youth a genuine personal experience of salvation from sin by faith in Christ that will spoil you for anything less. Once you have known for yourself the transforming, illuminating power of grace, you never can be persuaded that all there is to religion is going to church or even living a clean moral life. You have found the true standard for relationship with God.

The other is a standard of success in life. This too you learn from Jesus. He said it is a low ambition that aims at money or fame or position. He said, and taught by example, that the highest goal of all is service to others. He said that giving is greater than getting. This is the right standard for your relations with other people.

Better get a sound philosophy of life early. Know what you are doing; live intelligently, not haphazardly.

3. *Youth is the time to make right choices.*

For youth is the time of parting ways, and all your life is determined by the turn of the road you take. Dr. R. T. Williams used to name life's three major choices as (1) the choice of God, (2) the choice of a career, (3) the choice of a life partner. These choices you will be making; see that you make them under Christ's direction. They will make you or break you. A single wrong choice made in youth, not willfully but simply heedlessly, will prevent any number of good choices you would later give worlds to make.

4. *Youth is the time to make commitments.*

As you grow older you become entangled in the affairs of this life—business, family, financial, social. So many considerations will tie you down, so many real or supposed obligations will have a lien on you, only by a miracle can you tear yourself loose. Youth is the time to commit yourself without reservation to the will

of God. If you hear His call to special service, say Yes quickly. Do not hesitate until you find yourself in some situation from which you cannot pull loose. If you have no special call, turn over all life's unknowns to Him in an unreserving consecration, that you may not miss His blueprint for you. You want your life to amount to something; His cause, and only that, is great enough to claim you wholly and forever. If His cause does not enlist your energies, you will fritter them away on nothings or sell out to Satan, to your everlasting regret. Only this kind of commitment will save you.

All this Jesus said to the young man whom He met and loved—loved yet did not spare. For He knew youth.

Have you been fair to yourself? Have you taken care of your obligations to date: your contact with Christ, your standards for life, your choices, your commitment? Are you up to schedule? Then you are ready to live. But if you do not do it now, the chances are you never will. Now is the time.

● NOT FOR SALE

“The suspense really was over when they said, ‘But if not—’ I knew then it was coming out right.”

One of my Sunday-school girls said it; and she said the truth.

We had been following the fortunes of three high-spirited young men who were not for sale. You remember the story well: how their employer and patron King Nebuchadnezzar threatened to withdraw his favors from them—even to take their lives with extreme torture—if they did not put him in place of their God. You remember how when everybody else bowed down, they saw God larger than the sizzling fire-chamber; how they said to the king three things: (1) “We are not your

slaves" (we are not answerable to you); (2) "Our God is able to deliver us out of your hands"; (3) "But if not, we will not do wrong."

Their God did come to their help. He walked with them in the fire and He brought them out alive without the smell of smoke on their clothing. But the decisive moment was their "But if not—." It was then we knew they were no man's slaves. Freedom is of the spirit; no one can be enslaved except on the inside.

The poet Lowell wrote,

*They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.*

The slaves that day were the crowd who danced to Nebuchadnezzar's music, who fell down when he said, "Bow," and stood up when he said, "Stand." In that kneeling crowd were some trembling Jews who loathed themselves as they knelt. They longed to refuse, but dared not. They were slaves. The splendidly free men were the three who stood higher than any man's threats or bribes.

Slaves are bought and sold at the auction block; they go to the highest bidder. They have their price. The free man is not for sale. "Every man has his price"—a cynical saying? That price is the thing that looks larger to a man than the right thing.

Some people are bought outright by money: "I'd lose my job"; or, "Of course, I'd rather not—; but what else can I do?" "I know it's a shady practice; but a man must live." One writer countered: "A man must live—who said a man must live?" Plenty of persons have chosen physical death rather than soul slavery.

Some are bought by popularity. "Everybody is doing it; I don't want to be queer"; or "I don't want to set

myself up as holier-than-thou." As if to be "different" were necessarily to be "a speckled bird." To be different can be to wear the shining crown of individuality. To be one of a truckling crowd is to be a slave who dares not be himself.

Some would even serve God as slaves; they expect God to buy their loyalty. Jacob did when he said, "If God will bless me, I will surely give a tenth." We may do it unconsciously when we say, "If I give God my last cent, He'll see to it that someone sends me a dollar"; "If I lose my job for being honest, He'll send me a better one"; "If I take an unpopular stand for righteousness' sake, He'll make everybody admire my courage." He may—and He often does; but not always.

Our three young men said, "Our God is able to deliver; *but if not* we will not bow down." It was then the bells of freedom rang in their souls. That was their declaration of independence.

Not even God must bribe me. God can deliver me from this sore trial; but if not—Satan cannot buy me off to distrust or disaffection. God can reward me for uprightness with prosperity or popularity; but if not—I choose uprightness because my spirit is upright. To be sure, I know that honesty is the best policy. I know that it is foolish to compromise a principle to follow the crowd or to win some man's favor, for right will surely win in the end. I am taking the long view. I know all this; but I am not doing right even for long-time pay. I do right because my spirit cleaves to the right and to the God of right.

I love God for His character, for himself, for His love to me. He has taken my crooked, cowardly nature and transformed it by the operation of His own Spirit until it stands erect and faces the light.

*Glorious freedom, wonderful freedom,
No more in chains of sin I repine;
Jesus, the glorious Emancipator,
Now and forever He shall be mine.*

It is idle for an unsanctified Christian to hope for "triumphant living." His heart has not been set free.

But the story is not finished, even though the climax has been reached. No, they were not kept from the flames. The furnace was heated seven times hotter and they were thrown in. But they were victorious. The kneeling crowd—and the king himself—they were the fearful slaves. For beside the free men in the flames walked "the form of the Fourth." That was the secret. That was the reward. It is ours: the constant presence of God with us, the assurance that whatever comes, whatever goes, His will is being worked out in our lives—in us. He has called us friends, sons of God, joint-heirs with Christ.

*The thrall in person may be free in soul;
And I shall see the King,*

said Tennyson's knight Gareth, disguised for the time as a kitchen servant. We say it too.

Our God will deliver us. We shall come out without the smell of smoke. We are not anxious about the outcome, for He is faithful. Meantime, we are not for sale.

● LEARN YOUR JOB

Which is, to be a useful Christian. When you were converted you were freed from your sins and from Satan. When you were sanctified wholly you were freed from your selfish self and given without reservation to God for His uses—that was the price. It was not a play trans-

action. You were in earnest; and so was God. But you were ignorant about the job you were undertaking, ignorant and unskilled. God had to take you on trust. He did, for He knew He could teach you if you were a good learner; and He knew His plant was stocked with all the appliances necessary for effective performance. He was giving you a special Helper to be always at your side; and in a way no one but himself and you can understand He was communicating to you something of His own aptitude and enthusiasm for the work. He assured you that you could make it.

All this in that great transaction when you engaged yourself to be God's "love slave." Now there lies before you the business of learning to do the job, of building Christian habits. Suppose you look them over and check on them. Every one must be learned, then worked, if you are to keep your contract.

First, of course, what we call the *means of grace*. That is, the means by which we receive our supply of the enabling power of God. The job is one you cannot do alone: your strength would give out, your judgment go astray, your interest flag. So God has provided inlets of divine energy: daily prayer and Bible reading; regular attendance and participation in the activities of the church—Sunday services, weekday prayer meetings, Sunday school, missionary and young people's meetings. Every one has its particular contribution to make; if you miss one without a real reason you are deliberately planning for weakness or unpreparedness.

Next, the use of your *faculties*. Your eyes—you must learn to use them for God's purposes. What do you see, and how? What do you read, and when, and why? What care do you take of your eyes? Your ears—what do you listen to? Sometimes you need to shut them: to evil stories, to unkind gossip, even to too much joking or

chitchat. And how do they listen to the teaching of God's truth, in church and Sunday school? Have you trained them really to hear? Do they send what they hear to your mind, or do they let it slip?

Your tongue—is it disciplined? It can be your most effective tool for good, but if you do not use it properly it can ruin everything. Do you use it unkindly, cleverly but cuttingly, or just carelessly, stupidly—or have you learned to use it to encourage, to cheer, to recommend Christ, to invite people to church, to thank God for His goodness, to tell others what He means to you? Your feet—where do they carry you? Are you willing to have weaker Christians follow your steps? Your hands—are they busy, helpful, soothing hands?

Your brain—have you given it something to do? Or are you wasting it on cheap reading and cheap listening? Do you shrink from mental effort? do you always read what is easy? God's service needs the best brains, working brains. Your thoughts—do you control them, or do you just daydream? Do you let them dwell on hurts and slights, fancied or even real; or do you actually follow the Bible command, "Whatsoever things are . . . good . . . think on these things"? Great achievements for God are born of Spirit-guided thoughts.

Your emotions? Harnessed, they are powerful for good; but allowed to run wild, they will destroy your work and you. Love uncontrolled is lust; and either joy or sorrow uncontrolled is madness. Bring your moods under discipline early. Your will? You gave it to God; now you must practice choosing God's will. Your Helper at your side will prompt you; you must respond quickly to every suggestion. Never argue or delay; or He will speak less often, and finally will stop counseling.

But this is only the beginning. There is the use of your *talents* to be learned. Your money—you do not

have much now, but you are acquiring now your habits of spending or saving or investing. Use your dimes and nickels for God and you will later use your dollars. Learn to work the tithing principle. Your friends and the power to make friends—you must learn to utilize that gift for God. Make friends who will help you know God better; and, in turn, help all your friends to know God better.

Your education, and the power to get an education. You will need as thorough mental development and practical training as you can get; the devil's servants are alert. Besides, God gave you the learning faculty for a purpose. If you make the most of what you have, He will find a place to put it to use. And keep that power consecrated while you are getting your education—which will be as long as you live. That is, bring everything you study to the test of Christ's words and Christ's cross. Otherwise, your supposed education will prove a dangerous tool.

Learn the use of your *possessions*; and as your possessions increase let not one escape your scrutiny. Make certain that you have discovered ways to put them to use for God. Your home, your car, your clothes, your books—whatever you prize as a possession is to be prized for its relation to His kingdom.

Learn the right use of your *time*. It is your most valuable possession. Learn to divide it wisely: your Sundays for God and worship, soul-building and soul-saving, your secular work ruled out; your weekdays each with the proper allotment of worship and work and social contacts and recreation. Learn to make your relaxation true re-creation of body and mind and not dissipation. Learn to keep your social relationships on such a plane that opportunities will develop naturally to help people to God; they will know always where to

turn in their need. And learn to be alert to these opportunities. Learn to establish vital contact with heaven early in the day, so that your work on earth will be easier and more effective.

Learn the right use of *personalities*. Much of your life is made up of dealings with persons. Establish early the principle that persons are more important than things: they are not to be worked but worked for, not to help you but to be helped; your part is not getting, but giving—only so can you carry out your charge of following Jesus, who “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.”

Learn the right use of the *circumstances of life*: its successes, its failures, its joys, its sorrows. Learn that neither praise nor blame counts overmuch, but only God’s approval. Learn that both the pleasant and the unpleasant experience pass quickly, and that all that really matters is the effect each had on your spirit. Learn that all things will work together for your good, but only if you are living for God and not for self. Learn to keep your troubles to yourself so that you can listen to other people’s; rather, learn to turn your problems over to God. Learn to lean on God.

And finally, learn the use and develop the possibilities of *your own calling* and *your own personality*. If you are a called minister or missionary, of course. But also if you are a wife and mother, a secretary, a businessman, a student. God calls us to service for Him just where we are—and just who we are. There is no occupation without its opportunities, and no person without his individual, peculiar power to serve. *You* have something God needs and will use for His glory. Only you must learn your job—a lifetime study; and you learn by doing.

● LIFE'S ANSWERS

We hear a great deal these days about life's problems and life's questions. I would counter with life's answers. I hear these in the echoing, chanting, pulsating rhythm of Paul's declaration of faith: "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three." Here is the *summum bonum*. Here are the Christian's three answers to life's three tests. The tests do not change from age to age, nor—thank God—the answers. They abide.

"Now abideth faith"—in Christ. *We want to depend* on people and on familiar situations. But life takes the props from under every one of us; this is part of growing up. A person becomes a man when he learns that he cannot lean; he must stand alone. The teaching process is more or less gradual; but sooner or later slow motion changes to quick; in some devastating experience life is torn up by the roots or goes to pieces under us. Then,

*When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay—*

if we have learned to trust Him. At any rate, He is there. Faith is pure when all else is gone; faith is proved by obedience through the fog and the darkness. "He that believeth on me—" Christ will not let you down. Faith abideth.

"Abideth hope"—in Christ. *We want to see ahead.* But life is full of blind alleys. Sooner or later we shall run into one: a situation that is impossible, a tangle that is insoluble, a mess that we have caused ourselves, a failure that is unforgivable. What then? Discouragement? fear? despair? Turn fatalist? A person becomes a man when he learns to face failure: he has fallen down; he must get up.

There is hope for the hopeless. Faith in God, therefore hope. "The God of hope" is named Providence.

Never say, nor think, "Fate is against me." God is for you. Let Him show you the way out; let Him make your plans. Because Christ has died and risen and gone to heaven, interceding for us, bearing our names written on His hand, no situation is hopeless. Our hope is anchored in Him. There is no dead end for the Christian who will not let go of Christ; Satan cannot tear you out of the plan of God. There always is hope—in Christ.

"Abideth love"—in Christ. The greatest of all, for Christ is love. *We want to succeed.* And Life says, Shift for yourself; no one else is going to look out for you. But a person becomes a man when he learns what real success is and how to find it. Love says, Forget yourself, and look out for others to help as well as yourself. Live as Christ lived; He was the great Success. And the love of Christ enables you to live by love.

Love is positive, not negative. It is a dynamic, driving urge. It gives you more than the Stoic's "Grin-and-bear-it" to meet life with. It gives you the Kingdom to put first and a world of people to bless with Christ's Golden Rule. Love is omnipotent. In saving and blessing others you save and bless yourself. Try it. Try loving your enemy and pushing your rival's interests. "Abideth love"—in Christ.

They say the world is going to pieces around us. It looks that way. But in the most stirring shipwreck story of all time Paul proved his own philosophy. He held to faith and hope and love. "I believe God"; "Be of good cheer"; "Not a man shall perish." "So they all escaped safe to land."

The answer for all life's unknowns and uncertainties: "Abideth faith and hope and love."

● IN MY BIBLE

Perhaps you are more systematic and keep them in a proper filing-box; perhaps you have a photographic memory and record them in your mind. I confess to the bad habit of slipping them between the pages of my Bible—that is, I used to, until they accumulated dangerously and I had to clear them out and build up the hoard elsewhere. But a few I could not discard and they have stayed there year after year to speak to me as I leafed the pages.

You know what they are: those sayings, quotations, thoughts you have come across which spoke straight to you so that you wished to have them become a part of you, and which by sheer familiarity have actually got into the texture of your spirit, or will get there. I will pass on to you a few of the scraps I find in my Bible today. Perhaps you can use them. They have done something for me.

Here is a tiny clipping: "There are times when I can do nothing to help my friends, but I can always be something to help them if my own lamp of faith and love burns clear." When I think of wealth I do not think of money; I think of people: the wonderful Christian friends God has given me; the eager, honest young people I work with day after day who are trying to get their feet down spiritually; the brave men and women I meet casually who yet may never have met the Christ I represent and who are reading no Bible but me. I prize them all. God keep my lamp of faith and love burning bright. They may need it.

And another—this from a chapel talk of our good philosophy professor years ago: "All of us must be careful lest our religion spoil our morals. Many people accept religion as a system of indulgences to shield them

from the rigorous demands of moral law. But every moral lapse loosens character." That quotation is a tonic. It says something like this. The cross of Jesus did not do away with the Ten Commandments. Even though I know God forgives sins for Jesus' sake and has forgiven mine, I must never presume on that grace. I must never say, "I know what I'm doing is shady, but God will forgive." I am responsible as a child of God to find what is the right thing and then to do it. "The blood of Jesus is not a whitewash but a deterrent." I must "love righteousness and hate iniquity" as Jesus did. I have a character to build.

Time is our only essential possession; it is the stuff given us out of which to make a life. Yet how fragile, how evanescent, how it slips through our fingers! Our only hope of making it permanently ours by wise investment is to turn it over to God and ask Him to direct its use, day by day. One card I printed myself, headed TIME; the list grew item by item. I have needed the reminder. Here it is to date, with my thoughts about it; perhaps it will grow still longer.

TIME

1. "Consecrate your *greatest riches*." (Yes, the moments of my quickly flying days.)
 2. "Offer *willingly* your gifts." (I will not grudge my best to God; He can have it all.)
 3. "Take *joyfully* the spoiling of your goods." (Even the most unnecessary interruption of the busiest hour.)
 4. "Make me a little cake *first*." (I will give God the first of those precious morning hours.)
- "And the cruse of oil and the barrel of meal *wasted not*." (God will not let me lose by giving the first and best to Him; He will bless the rest of the day and make it stretch farther.)

5. "Cursed be he that voweth and hath in his flock a male and sacrificeth a corrupt thing." (I cannot expect God's blessing if I use up on myself all my clearest thought and freshest energies and leave Him only the fag-ends of time and strength.)

6. "God blessed the seventh day": *heart rest*. (Time set aside for God is the secret of heart rest; and when the heart is rested the days run smoothly.)

7. "Bring ye *all the tithes . . . and prove me now*." (Obedient to God in my prayer life, I can trust Him for everything else.)

8. "A great while before day he *departed* into a solitary place, and there *prayed*." (If Jesus needed to maintain a secret contact with His Father, I should be presumptuous to try to get on without it.)

"Do not try to fit prayer into your life: build your life around prayer—and God."

Here are those inspired couplets of Martha Snell Nicholson's: *

*Let me hold lightly temporal things,
I who am deathless, I who wear wings.*

*Let me hold lightly things that are mine;
Lord, Thou hast given me all that is Thine.*

How they lift the spirit and relax clutching fingers!
I never want to cling too tightly to things I can lose when I die.

And the sonnet of Grace Noll Crowell (it has been here for years), beginning,

*I think that God is proud of those who bear
A sorrow bravely.*

*Quoted by permission of *Sunday School Times*.

He was proud of Job and put him on display. He was proud of the three Hebrew youths in the fiery furnace and walked beside them. I should wish to join their company.

I see my space is running out. I must skip the rest, and say that one of the most precious of these scraps is a card on which my friend and student, Irma Koffel, now missionary to Africa, copied *her* song for me. I have kept it here since she sailed, and it is a constant inspiration. Missionaries are not made of special clay; missionaries are normal fun-loving, hearty young men and women who give themselves wholly to God for His use. All of us will find ourselves and our richest possibilities only as we make this song our own.

I AM THE LORD'S

*Whether I live or die, Whether I wake or sleep,
Whether upon the land, Or on the stormy deep;
When 'tis serene and calm, Or when the wild winds blow,
I shall not be afraid—I am the Lord's, I know.*

*When with abundant store, Or in deep poverty,
When all the world may smile, Or it may frown on me;
Where it shall help me on, Or shall obstruct my way,
Still shall my heart rejoice—I am the Lord's today.*

*When I am safe at home, Or in a foreign land,
When on an icebound shore, Or on a sunlit strand;
When on the mountain height, Or in the valley low,
Still doth He care for me. I am the Lord's, I know.*

—C. W. NAYLOR*

*Used by permission of the author.

● "SUCH AS I HAVE"

"Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee." When Peter (at the gate of the Temple) made this reply to the lame man who had asked for money, he was not speaking apologetically. He spoke confidently, with the glow of promise and expectation. He knew he was giving the cripple something far better than alms for a day.

"Such as I have"—what was it? Rather, who was it? It was Jesus, Meeter of human needs. And what made Peter so sure? He knew Him in the experiences of life. "No more Simon, but Peter"—Changer of weak natures to strong. "Follow me"—Giver of direction and goal to life. "Peace, be still"—Master of storms. "Bid me come unto thee on the water"—Empowerer for impossible undertakings. "Lazarus, come forth"—Healer, Life-Giver. "Give ye them to eat"—Feeder of the hungry. "Feed my sheep"—Forgiver of failure and faithlessness.

How did Peter know Him? By promises fulfilled and words translated into life. The promise "I will rise" translated into Easter morning proved Him Victor. "Tarry," "I will send the Comforter" translated into Pentecost proved Him Giver of spiritual power. "The Spirit shall testify of Me" translated into daily guidance proved Him living Companion and Friend, more real even than when He had walked on earth.

"Such as I have"—the knowledge of Jesus Christ has enriched me too. I too have been granted this wealth to share with others. I say it to His praise. I too have known Him as Transformer of shifty nature, Stillier of storms, Helper of weak attempts, Supplier of bread and daily strength. I too have failed Him and been trusted again. I too have felt His resurrection life; I too have

tarried and received the Spirit; I too have been taught by Him day by day. I too would share my experience of Jesus. I would say to every crippled soul I meet, "Such as I have give I." Every one in all the world has the same basic needs. He will never disappoint one. For He satisfied me.

How have I known Him? As Saviour first, from sins realized and unrealized, from deceit, from selfish ambition, from laziness and willfulness. The sight of His cross showed me my treacherous nature; His word changed my quicksand, too, to rock.

I too have known Him as Counselor. Without Him I should have been bewildered and lost in a confused world. But He directed my basic choices; at every turn I heard His "Follow me." And looking back, I see the way He led was good.

How do I know Him? As Faithful Guide He has given meaning to my life; He has given me a cause to live for that is bigger than I am. The very day I gave myself wholly to Him, He gave me a work to do for Him. Delivering me from an almost certain death, He laid claim to my service for life. At every crossroads the word of direction has come in the nick of time. In the keenest temptation to think myself a useless failure, He has repeated, "I have chosen you . . . that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

How do I know Him? I have come to know Him as Provider and Giver of Bread. I have found by specific tests that if I would give daringly to the Kingdom He would fill up the lack in my purse; if I would "rest in the Lord" He would care for my interests.

How do I know Him? As Master and Teacher. He taught me with the basin and towel that my work was to be done selflessly for Him: "Seekest thou great things

for thyself? Seek them not." He taught me that things—rewards and material possessions—do not matter so much: "I am your Possession." He taught me to pray, "Establish Thou the work of my hands," and promised—but how can I tell all my secrets?

How do I know Him? As Friend, Comforter, Strengthen, with me always. In my early teens He took my mother but whispered in my ear a word of comfort I had not known was in the Bible: "They shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads." And in every emergency since He has been there to speak the lifting word. How faithfully those words have come! Alone under the wreckage of a railroad car, "Jesus, every day the same." At the point of crucial test, "Lo, a spring of joy I see." In heavy loss, "God hath provided some better thing." Battling weakness and illness, the healing word, "All things are possible to her that believeth." Fighting for a soul when it seemed too late: "Even now—"; and again, "The faith of the Son of God."

It all comes too close and too personal to put into writing: the gifts of inner strength and hope and courage to face life's battles—the power of that faithful engine down in the hold of the ship throbbing steadily and carrying it on through the waves and the storms. "In all these things we are more than conquerors *through* him." God "is able to deliver us *But if not—*"; for the form of the Fourth is there. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" "My grace is sufficient for thee."

"Such as I have"—is it worth recommending, recommending with a shout!

Faith in Christ is not an upside-down cone teetering tipsily on its point; faith in Christ is a pyramid resting firmly on its base, broadening down and settling surely

so that it cannot be overturned, more real and more precious than life. It is "better farther on."

*The young cannot look back and say,
"He led me thus and so."*

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*The young can only trust to Him,
And walk by faith; but we,
Those who have traveled longer roads,
And older grown,—can see!**

"Such as I have"—"give"! I would be a Peter to give Jesus to the needy. I would be an Andrew to recommend Him and introduce Him boldly and confidently.

*Martha Snell Nicholson. *Used by permission.*