Founder's Week Messages, 1961 and 1966 (Moody Bible Institute)

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Missionary Symposium: The Congo — Frank Longman (1961)

Frank Longman, Midwest Deputation Secretary, Africa Inland Mission.

This message was delivered February 2, and much has transpired since that time, making some of the information out of date.

The picture in the Congo is so varied and so changing and the situation so confused, that one often wonders exactly what the actual circumstances are. Preceding what I would like to say on the Congo, please note with me one or two thoughts from God's Word. What I say may soon be forgotten, but God's Word will not return unto Him void.

In I Corinthians 16:9 we read these words: "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." In Revelation 3:7,8 something else is said about open and closed doors: "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." In II Timothy 1:7: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Thank God for His Word in these days.

To attempt to bring any kind of comprehensive report which will give an adequate understanding of the situation in Congo, is most difficult for anyone who has not actually been on the field throughout the entire

critical and tragic recent months. Indeed, the problem seems so complex and in so many ways fraught with confusion as to make a clear picture impossible, other than to observe that it is very clear our warfare is "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Since so much has been written and reported by those much more able than I to treat the background for the present situation in Congo, it will be my purpose to gather a few obvious factors which have a direct bearing on the situation, and then to give you as I can, something of the condition now prevalent in the Congo, especially that area where the Africa Inland Mission is working along with other mission societies.

The chain of events in the last several months has certainly been an indication of the gross unpreparedness for self-government which existed in the Congo when the colony was granted her independence last July. Perhaps I should here refer to the very limited reasons which contributed to such a state of unpreparedness. Stated briefly and simply, they seem to me to be, first, a lack of trained leadership; second, a lack of united populace; third, a lack of educated electorates; and if I may add a fourth, a lack of Spirit-filled lives among many whom we shall term fringe-benefit Christians, those in the schools and teacher training institutions who are affected by the propaganda and subversive forces.

When the Congo gained her independence in mid-1960, there were less than twenty college graduates for a population of thirteen and a half million people, among them not one medical doctor, or engineer, or civil or

military administrator. This presented them with an unsolvable problem of coping with the affairs of government which they had demanded to be their right to administrate. Indeed, one Congolese pastor who had had an opportunity to visit briefly abroad, stated, "They are like teen-age children being handed the task of solving problems which have baffled men of great maturity in both wisdom and experience." He, of course, has been proved to be right.

The lack of unity in the Congo is demonstrated by the fact that the country is even yet comprised of 200 tribes, speaking some 180 languages, while occupying an area one-third the size of the United States. It is divided into five lingua franca or trade-language areas. Even the former European administrators were bilingual, using both French and Flemish.

Nationalism today in the Congo might more accurately be termed tribalism. Trying to communicate in such a situation is only made more difficult by the absence of telephones, radio, TV and adequate press facilities to inform the public, even if they were to be considered literate. And may I add here, that the Congo is considered to be one of the most literate of the equatorial colonies of Africa today. While literacy has increased rapidly in the last fifteen years, it still has been admitted that the majority of the literate populace is among the younger people, certainly under twenty years of age. The highest per cent of illiteracy is among the electorates. Again let us recognize the tremendous problem existing when those with the voting franchise are the ones who are the least literate.

Patrice Lumumba, leader of the Nationalist Party, himself has only been educated two years in a Protestant school, two years more in a Roman Catholic school, following which he spent a year in Prague, where he no doubt imbibed the Communist doctrines which he holds today. After returning to the Congo, he worked eleven years as a postal clerk and was dismissed only when he was convicted of embezzling a quarter of a million francs of postal funds. Following that, Mr. Lumumba worked in a brewery in Leopoldville in a clerical capacity.

As the situation rapidly deteriorated in July, the Africa Inland Mission evacuated many of its missionaries. The Force Publique was in mutiny, and it was considered best to leave the area. However, after only two weeks out of the country, things quieted down sufficiently to lead the mission to believe that the missionaries should re-enter the Congo and resume their work. Many other missions did the same, and from that time to this, we have been able to carry on somewhat of a limited program of missionary ministry.

As things have developed, however, we have seen the Congo becoming even more divided as one province after another seceded from the sovereign states. The Orientale Province, located in the northeastern part of the country, is the stronghold of the nationalist party, commonly referred to as the Lumumba Party. This is the province in which the Africa Inland Mission, along with a number of other missions, has been working, including the Conservative Baptist, the Berean Mission, Unevangelized Fields Mission, Immanuel Mission and others. When Lumumba was imprisoned by Kasavubu, his party began striking out against all that represented

authority. White skin became the target of their abuse, and incidents of imprisonment and reprisals are only too well known from accounts in the press.

This spirit of lawlessness has crept into the schools which were under the direction of the missions. Indeed, the only educational facilities to be found were mission schools, except for a very few isolated schools in more recent times. The students have refused to accept discipline in any form from their supervisors, either white or black. Incidents of throwing things at missionary teachers in schools, of tripping them, or other ways of inciting incidents to provoke disturbances were too numerous to permit continuation of the school program in our section of Orientale Province.

This growing attitude of unrest and antagonism suggests to me the lack to which I referred earlier, the lack of Spirit-filled lives on the part of those whom I would call weak or fringe-benefit Christians. No doubt among those seeking education in these days are many who know not our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and although exposed to a proclamation of the Word of God daily for six days a week in the classroom (six days a week, not five), they reject the claims of Christ upon their lives. They become easy prey to the subtle temptations of the enemy.

Then there are those who, although accepting the message of salvation by grace, are still infants in the matter of Christian growth. Confronted by the onslaught of materialism, the jostling of international powers for supremacy, rumors and accusations and grievances against their missionary leaders, whether those accusations be with or without foundation, these

toddling babes in Christ stumble and fall into the sin of strife and greed.

May I pause here to remind you, lest we become too critical of this group of unfortunate souls, that the problems of materialism and lack of discipline also face our own church in America. It seems to me that the unsolved problems in this area in our own lives indicate spiritual immaturity of such magnitude as to call for a great effort of prayer, of heart searching, of repentance and waiting upon God for much-needed filling of His Spirit and power in these days of uncertainty that we face in our own midst.

As the result of these deteriorating conditions in the Orientale Province and the difficulty experienced by our sister missions in the Kivu Province, the State Department advised us on January 24 to evacuate our missionary staff.

In accordance with their request and the advice of our field leaders, we took immediate steps to terminate our ministry in the Congo Republic. This move involved more than 200 missionaries. On January 26 about 150 missionaries were moved across the borders to Uganda, including fourteen from sister missions, evacuated under the UN escort.

Dr. and Mrs. Becker, Dr. Atkinson, Mr. and Mrs. Uhlinger working at Oicha station, located just north of the Kivu Province in the lower end of Orientale Province, were detained by local officials. And incidentally, they are still on their station at Oicha. However, UN troops are now on Oicha station and Dr. Becker is carrying on his work temporarily, together with Dr. Atkinson. They are in touch with the outside world by short wave radio. Dr.

Becker tells us that there is no immediate physical danger. But from our radio contact in Urandu Rundi, a dear brother in Christ, Mr. Little, says there is physical danger to Dr. Becker. The State Department is checking on this at the present time.

At Aba station, located to the north of Oicha, there awaits, as of yesterday, thirty more missionaries for evacuation permits from the Sudan government which will allow them to pass through the Sudan en route to Uganda. On up to the northeast sector, to a station called Napopo, there are seventeen more who await UN escort to cross over the border. While there seems to be no immediate danger to these last two groups, it is extremely doubtful that they will be permitted to leave unless they have UN escort. Thus, the delay.

Perhaps it should be noted here that a number of missionaries of the Unevangelized Fields Mission located in Stanleyville have not been heard from recently. Mail has not been going through for the past five weeks. And only this morning, the news wires indicated that a UN official has been dispatched to Stanleyville, the stronghold of the Lumumba Party, to investigate the situation.

Islam seems to be making a bid for the central part of Africa. Nassar would like to take that area for his own. He seeks domination there in order to control Africa. One of their means of propaganda is to suggest to the African that the missionary, with his teaching of monogamous marriage and a Spirit-dominated life in Christ, is only seeking to destroy their race. So the Muslims are coming in these days and saying, "We are

offering you four wives, and that will help to build up your race." You see the problem that these people face.

Our mission leaders from both IFMA and EFMA missions are working closely together with the State Department, and how we thank God for the leadership God has given these two organizations. We greatly appreciate the co-operation being given to us by our government. A word of appreciation is in order to the number of amateur radio operators around the world who have assisted us in relaying messages hither and yon, both in Europe and in the United States.

In spite of all this, what is the attitude of the church in our area? This is one place where we have been moved many times to give thanks to God and lift our hearts in praise and gratitude to Him for what is transpiring. Church leaders have assured us that they are wholeheartedly in agreement with us, and understand the necessity for us to evacuate. They believe that, for the benefit of the work and the church, we are making the right move. We thank God for their understanding in this regard.

They together with a host of staunch and dedicated, Spirit-filled believers have assumed the responsibility for the administration of the church. The move to place the church affairs in their hands was taken officially some months back. But it has been encouraging to see how wonderfully these men of God have assumed their places of responsibility. Only yesterday a letter was received from one of our African pastors by one of my fellow laborers in which he said, "After all, Bwana, how we thank God that you have given us the words of God." Pray for these leaders, together with their

congregations. Many of them are marked men. Some have been beaten. They are well aware that if the forces of Communism continue to take over, as they are now doing in their area, their lives will be required. Only last Christmas, an offering was taken in one of the churches on the station which a few years ago experienced a time of real testing in regard to white and national relationships. The offering amounted to 35,000 francs or about $750, but translated into our standard of living and our wage scale, it represents an offering of $25,000. Such sacrifice in personal comforts and possessions is some indication of the spiritually healthy state of the church in our area.

There is great need for a concentrated effort of prayer on the part of the church in America for their brethren in Christ over there. The Congo church, now stripped of the opportunity of ministering through the educational program, perhaps left with hospitals but no doctors, printing presses but no supervisory assistance, faces a colossal task. It seems to me that God has brought them to the place where, without help of any kind from the missionaries, He can in a most unique way demonstrate His omnipotent power. While we thank Him for the privilege which was ours throughout these years to utilize these many means of spreading the Word, at the same time we lift our voices in praise that He is not limited to such means. He will provide other channels through which He can reach the hearts of those who still sit in darkness and the shadow of death. The men and women who have come out of darkness themselves and who know our blessed Lord are a channel which is a living testimony to our God. Although some areas of the Congo have experienced lesser problems as far as

continuation of missionary ministry is concerned, by and large this is the direction in which the entire land seems to be heading today.

What shall we say regarding the future? So far as the AIM is concerned, we face no difficulty, at least for the moment, in absorbing our workers. Our greatest problem just now is the building of new residences in other parts of Africa. We are working in Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda and Central African Republic as well as in the Sudan. But new facilities for housing missionary personnel must be provided. The door is closed to new workers as far as the Sudan is concerned, but there are still wide open doors in all our other fields. Indeed, there is still much land that needs to be possessed.

Do join us in prayer as we seek to move ahead. Other areas of Africa are much in need. It is quite possible that other missions will join with us in a move to a new unreached area. After all, only 15 per cent of Africa can now be considered closed, 85 per cent is still open. Let us join our heart and hand in bringing the Word of Life to these who remain.

In conclusion, may I express what I believe to be the heart's cry of every missionary coming out of the Congo these days: brethren, pray for us. They are leaving behind loved ones in Christ. Some have left loved ones whom they buried there. The land of Congo is dear to their hearts, and they need your prayers. But along with that request, we should lift our hearts to God in a prayer of dedication and confidence so wonderfully expressed in the very familiar song:

"Lead on, O King Eternal!
The day of march has come;
Henceforth in fields of conquest
Thy tents shall be our home.
Through days of preparation
Thy grace has made us strong,
And now, O King Eternal,
We lift our battle song.

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"Lead on, O King Eternal!
Till sin's fierce war shall cease,
And holiness shall whisper
The sweet Amen of peace;
For not with swords loud clashing,
Nor roll of stirring drums;
With deeds of love and mercy
The heavenly kingdom comes.

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"Lead on, O King Eternal!
We follow not with fears;
For gladness breaks like morning
Where'er Thy face appears;
Thy cross is lifted o'er us;
We journey in its light;
The crown awaits the conquest;
Lead on, O God of might."

Missionary Symposium: An Open Door in Arabia — Raymond Joyce (1961)

Raymond Joyce, Missionary to Arabia, The Evangelical Alliance Mission.

I want to read part of Revelation 3:8 from the Berkeley translation. Said our Lord: "See, I have provided an opened door in front of you, which no one is able to close." It is my privilege and solemn responsibility to tell you by way of testimony something of what God has done in providing an open door for us in Arabia.

Now, this is not Saudi Arabia. I hope you will get out your atlas and find these places on the map. People are inclined to think of Arabia as just one big country. But there are, starting in the north of the Persian Gulf, these several independent states: Kuwait, Bahrein, Qatar, the seven Trucial states and the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, the Aden Federation, and Yemen. It is in one of these independent areas that God has opened this door, and we believe in His good time, we will be able to take the gospel right into Mecca itself. Dare we believe for that?

It is an open door in the midst of closing doors. You have heard about the Congo. It was my own privilege to serve the Lord previously in China. We thought we were there for life, I guess. I was born there. Then there is Cuba, and other places also are closing. But I believe in these last days we can believe that God will do miracles. And I believe He wants to do miracles in the Muslim world, which most people have written off pretty much as closed. Now there is an open door in Arabia.

Arabia is the land where Islam arose some six hundred years after Christ. Mohammed was born in Arabia. Are you acquainted with the Muslim Christ? The Muslim believes what is true about Christ even more than the modernist does. The Muslim Christ was sent of God as a prophet. He performed miracles. He was born of the Virgin Mary. He ascended bodily to heaven. He is coming again personally to earth. The Muslim could say a large part of the Nicene Creed. But the deity and the death of Christ are missing, so he has a false Christ. He has a religion that is a subtle mixture of truth and error, so that he is in a sense doubly deceived.

The religion of Islam has spread until it occupies, population-wise, one-seventh of the whole world. One in seven of all the millions of the world is a Muslim. Muslim lands include a population of some 85 million. Islam is sending missionaries today to America. They are building mosques, they have mission societies, they have mission stations right here. Arabia is the land to which several hundred thousand pilgrims, speaking many different languages, gather once a year during the month of pilgrimage.

Into this land, which is a sacred citadel of the great Muslim world, God is giving another penetration. I say another, because there has been a wondrous story of missionary endeavor, mostly along the coast. We praise God for that. But now He is enabling us, as He is enabling others in the Aden area, to probe further into the interior. "I have provided an opened door in front of you." When I read that in the Berkeley translation, I was thrilled, because that is exactly our experience. We did not make great plans, we did not think great thoughts,

nor make extensive investigations. God provided it in front of us.

We were looking to God to lead our small TEAM group out into some unevangelized area of the great Near East. We tried one country, and our two doctors were there for awhile, until they were forced out by a revolution. God had something better, or at least something bigger, I believe. Then the Arabian Mission of the Reformed Church, which has been working along the Persian Gulf for many decades--the work founded by Dr. Samuel Zwemer and James Cantine--very kindly told us of a sheik, a chief of one of the Trucial states, who had been repeatedly asking for mission doctors. They were not able to send anyone to meet the insistent request, and they passed it on to us.

So we went down on a survey trip, Dr. Burwell Kennedy and I, in December, 1959, and there we found a warm welcome from the ruling sheik. In April, 1960, we made a second visit, after having had the approval of the board and knowing that God meant for us to preach the gospel there. We made final negotiations, and this time we found the Lord in a peculiar way had gone before us. The sheik's heart was opened to us. He offered us land, as much as we wanted and where we wanted it, in an oasis 150 miles inland. We were taken out one day and shown a well of sweet water already dug, and that is quite a job in those places. There was also a building already erected. We were amazed. Then we heard that the sheik had built it for his mother-in-law, and she had changed her mind. It was very fortunate for us. God had it ready for us.

When we met the ruling sheik for our final discussion with him, we could hardly believe our ears when he said, "I do not want a government hospital. I do not want an oil company hospital." He could have had either one. "I want a mission hospital." In our talks with him, he used only one English word and that was the word mission. To make everything absolutely clear, we said, "Of course, this means we must be free to preach and to teach the Bible." And he replied, "You will have perfect freedom to preach and teach the Bible, and my people are free to believe if they wish." We do not want to get over-optimistic, but he said it and he is the ruler of the tribe. The door is open. Now it remains for us to pray that this is fully fulfilled.

We were conscious in another way that God had definitely gone before us. Most of these Persian Gulf states are in treaty relationship with Britain, and they have quite a setup of political offices to carry out their duties for protecting the area and for taking care of foreign affairs. The highest British political officer there, who has the status of ambassador, was a schoolmate of mine in England. That was just another wonderful provision of the Lord, because, you see, in his hands lays the power to keep us out altogether, or at least make it very difficult for us by all kinds of restrictions. But God has put that man there at the right time for His purposes in opening this door for us.

When we got down to the Trucial states we found that one of the high officers in the army, which is commanded, trained and officered by the British, is a very earnest Christian who has been praying for some time that missionaries would come into the interior of southeast Arabia. "I have provided an opened (past

tense) door in front of you." Could we possibly miss it when we saw things like this happen?

What is this door like? What does it lead into? Well, it is an oasis of some ten villages with a local population of about two thousand, which increases in the summertime to about six thousand. But more than that, five trade routes come into this area. The local population and the traffic therefore is in a kind of belt around the southeast corner of Arabia, right up from Aden, right up from Oman, right up into the Persian Gulf, a belt about one hundred and in some places two hundred miles deep. This oasis is on the corner where they all have to pass--placed strategically, prepared of the Lord. We figure we will be able immediately to minister to a population of no less than half a million, almost all of whom have had very little if any chance to hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We will be pioneering, for we will be isolated 150 miles inland, which takes seven to ten hours of very rough riding in a land rover to get to the coast, and there is nothing between us and the coast. Isolation--and heat. For three or four months in the summer the temperature hardly relaxes, reaching a maximum often of 125 degrees in the shade.

So we want those whom God is pressing out, those He will constrain to go into that open door, to go out with us. I am glad to tell you that our first three missionaries are already there, Dr. Burwell and Dr. Marian Kennedy and their little family of four children, and Miss Maria Mayer. The witness of this Christian family should be tremendous. Most of the women have never seen a white woman before.

This group is now being joined by another young couple who will help in the practical and spiritual side of the work, because the Kennedys are being pressed beyond measure. We are glad to report that another couple, who has just finished their furlough, are on their way back there. One of them is a nurse. Two doctors and our one and only nurse! God willing, at the end of our furlough, my wife and I will also head for the desert.

The magnitude of the task I think I can best present in the words our doctors wrote in a letter which I received yesterday, coming right from Buraimi.

"Patients have come from far and near, many more than we anticipated in these early days. Some have been serious problems, and there can be no doubt of the appreciation of the local people. We are sometimes overwhelmed when we realize how these folk have lacked medical care. It may be no exaggeration when they say, 'If you had not been here, he would have died.'"

Dr. Marian Kennedy writes about the women's work. "We have been amazed at the freedom that Dr. Pat (her husband) has been given in caring for many of the women. He has made two trips far into the desert, both times for obstetrical emergencies. On both occasions, he performed life-saving procedures. This is an indication of the trust of the people, for no other man in this area has been given such entrance into the harems.

"But still a large portion of the ministry among the women is limited to female workers, and what opportunities there are. Infant and child mortality is well over 50 per cent. In contrast to much of the world, these mothers cry for us to help them have more children. The average family has had from four to six children plus

many miscarriages. Usually only one or two, if any, are living. But the greatest burden of all, and the greatest challenge, is the utter isolation, darkness and superstition of the woman's world. Over 90 per cent of these women have not seen a Western woman before, not to mention a Christian home and family. You can well imagine their reaction at seeing a strange woman with the entire profile of her face showing, and elbows and ankles uncovered. Nearly every woman has to share her husband with three or four other wives, and this together with cousins, aunts and uncles is the extent of her world.

"We are faced with a terrific opportunity for expansion. Beyond that immediate 500,000, there are other areas, and across the Persian Gulf is a large Arabic-speaking area in southern Iran. But we are faced with a tremendous opportunity for expansion here, and the local folks are already demanding it. Word is spreading that there is a 'clever' doctor here who really cares, that is what the people say. And the patient load is already too great. What shall we do when they come from afar and need hospitalization and surgery? Send them all on for another ten hours over the rough desert to Dhabi, on the coast where there is a government hospital? It will be a great opportunity if we can keep them, and opportunity lost if we cannot keep them."

This is Dr. Marian Kennedy's prayer. Let us share it as we think of this newly opened door in southeast Arabia:

"Lord, help us to enter into their lives, especially of the women, with love and understanding, and to show them that within their own world they too can have forgiveness of sins and a Saviour who indwells their

hearts. And, Lord, keep us from drawing their eyes and desires toward our Western ways; but rather may they see Thee, Thou who lovest the entire world and Thou who dost long to give to each one salvation and purpose in her own circumstances. O Father, burden some other women--doctors, midwives, nurses and teachers--for this new generation, and send them forth soon."

We are desperately needing one or two doctors. Dr. Kennedy's furlough will be due before long. We are needing nurses right away. We are needing other medical technicians and help in that way. We are needing any whom God will thrust forth, needing them for the sake of these souls that have never seen a Christian, much less heard the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our text says, "I have provided an opened door in front of you, which no one is able to close." But I believe God will keep this door open only as we enter it. No one is able to close it, but He may some day have to let it be closed if we do not enter in.

Pray for these needs, including a complete hospital and personnel. Above all, we need prayer coverage as we go into the strategic and terrific land of Arabia, a door which no one is able to close. Pray that we will not go in with too little and that we may not be too late.

Missionary Symposium: Southeast Asia — Arthur Mathews (1961)

Arthur Mathews, Regional Secretary, China Inland Mission.

Think with me for a little while in terms of world evangelism as it relates to southeast Asia. There is a verse I want to read in Luke 14:31: "What king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth." This is no doubt what our Lord did, made an appraisal of all the relevant factors before committing Himself to the task of preaching. Our Lord's life was not just a series of disjointed and unconnected journeys and miracles. I believe it was a campaign which was planned, and it was carried through according to a plan. So as we consider evangelism in the world today, we must not think in disjointed terms, but in terms of a campaign such as is introduced to us in the Word of God. When a king is going to make war, common sense tells him he has to sit down first and consult. And one of the things that we should do as we face this task is to consider the various factors that are involved.

First, let us think of some of the factors that militate against the missionary enterprise. Foremost among these is Communism. In China there is the definitely planned annihilation of one part of the Church of Jesus Christ in the world today. But the Communists have found long before this that the Church of Jesus Christ is the toughest thing on God's earth, and their killing off members here and there somehow or another does not seem to fulfill the purpose. We are not holding out any false optimism about the situation in China. With the

famine that they have been going through and with the pressures and at the same time their commune life, it seems almost impossible for us to envision how a Church could live, let alone grow. That, we must leave in the Lord's hands. We can assist and we must, by our prayers.

Let us consider Laos, this country which has come to the forefront and is the second one in which we are concerned with regard to Communist infiltration. The Communists are mainly in the north, although we find that the infiltration is pretty well country-wide. In the cities, there are the forces of peace, but anywhere in the jungle, wherever you might want to travel, you are likely to find Communist infiltrators. Our missionaries, more than twenty, are still there. Communications are not easy. There are no railroads in the country, nor are there any newspapers. Generally in Communist areas our missionaries do not run around with radios. And so the missionaries do not get all the up-to-date news, but at the same time they are carrying on, and steps have been taken to ensure that as soon as it is considered wise, they will be moved across the Mekong River into Thailand.

We think of south Thailand with its twenty different tribal groups just in that little strip of country, and so far just two or three of them have had initial inroads made by our missionaries; we went there in 1957. The missionaries have had first to learn the Lao language, and then the particular tribal group that they are interested in. So naturally not much has been accomplished; in fact, very little. We would hate to see this country closed to the gospel when it has been so recently entered and with such opportunity as at the

moment. There again we need to be in prayer that God will overrule the plans of men and nations, and further His own cause in that little kingdom.

The second limiting factor is Islam. In Malaya no Christian worker is permitted to evangelize Malays. If anyone is found breaking this law, he is deported within twenty-four hours, be he a Jehovah's Witness or an evangelical missionary. Therefore half the population of Malaya is left without any witness today in their home setting. We are trying to reach them through other sources. In Singapore we are allowed to preach to the Malays, as well as in south Thailand. We are working at these two ends hoping that some of the witness will spill across into Malaya itself, and that some of these Muslim people will hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In Indonesia, in the large island of Sumatra, we have in the central area a people called Menangkabaus, a Muslim people more than two and a half million strong. Our mission has concentrated on this tribe in prayer, but so far there has been practically no opportunity to get in. The viewpoint of this group is particularly fanatical. If any missionary were to go in there with the avowed intention of preaching the gospel to these people, his head would be off in no time.

And so there is another limiting factor, and we could go through a long list. There is the revival of ancient religions in modern dress in Formosa, Japan and some of the other countries. Then another point, which I could introduce here, is residence permits.

During the past years in Indonesia, it has been like pulling teeth to get visas from the government. In fact, in the early days when we had sixteen applications lined

up requesting visas, the minister in charge in the government said, "The China Inland Mission has sixteen workers whom they are planning to bring into this country, and just as sure as I'm here, I'm going to see that not one of them gets in." Today we have forty or more missionaries in Indonesia, and one of the latest of the applications was formulated by this very man who was so determined that no CIM missionary was to get into Indonesia. So you can see how God has undertaken. At the same time, this is a limiting factor. Actually the missions that were in Indonesia before its independence, or up until recently, have had very little trouble. But we have had to find interior sponsors for all our missionaries, and this is where the rub has come. In Burma, too, the same situation exists. We have tried to get into Burma, but have not been given permission to enter beyond just a temporary visa.

My second point is the potential factors. I am aware of the potential factors you have in mind as you look out on the mission field today. You think of literature and radio and similar things, and all of them could be used. But I want just now to bypass all these. Maybe we have concentrated a little too much on them, or given them a disproportionate place in missionary planning. Let us think in another direction. What is our objective? If our objective is anything else than to give the gospel to every creature, then we are aiming in the wrong direction. What means then in this world in which we are living has the greatest potential for reaching the largest number of creatures most effectively?

I see an answer in the youth, thinking particularly of southeast Asia. In Singapore there is a population of over one and a half million. More than one-half of these

are teen-agers. The Singapore Times, the straight newspaper, recently said something like this: "Singapore's glory is in its youth. Singapore's hope is in its youth." Any plan, either in church or state, which does not take this fully into account is sure to fail.

In Formosa there are eleven million, and half the population is under eighteen years of age, and two million between the ages of six and thirteen years. Japan has nearly twenty million people in the primary school division. I could go on through these different countries giving you some of these statistics. They are vital, but perhaps not necessary right here.

Youth is potential today for progress tomorrow! See the fiery, hot-blooded parading youth in Japan as they put on their demonstrations. See the secret societies among the youth of Malaya, the undercover Communist secret societies which are out, of course, to gain political status in that country again. These young people are physically able and ready to do or to dare or to die for any cause, the cause that seems to grip them for the moment.

I see also Chinese young people in Borneo, or Kalimantan, as it is called now. I see them on trek, fighting through rough, impossible trails, to carry the witness to other people. In other words, I see youth evangelizing in areas adjacent to where they are settled. And what is the result of this? Actually, according to figures that are coming into our headquarters, we have noted that the area most productive and where most fruit is being seen, is where these young people are out on the roads, out on trek, going up the rivers to carry the gospel to the people among whom they live, and it is almost like a miniature revival.

Well, what is being done to exploit this potential factor and turn it into a vital factor in world evangelization? Consider what we are doing. Some missionaries with particular gifts for youth work, or with the leading of God upon their lives, are directed into student work in universities and other schools. Their work in a sense is undirected, left to their own initiative to carry it through. It is generally fairly local and ties into no wider program.

I see also missionaries, sometimes single women, sometimes married couples, appointed to station work on the mission field, and these find their natural outlets in Sunday schools and young people's work. Their appointment was to a station, and the way they have handled the station's work is by drawing in the young people and children, starting classes and so on.

I see also bait languages being used; in other words, using English among nationals that speak another tongue to attract them, using English to teach English Bible classes. These are some of the ways we are working today to reach the youth. No doubt we could think of many more.

But I want to ask another question. What is to be done if we are seriously to attempt to make a bid for the youth and to use this potential? I have some points here.

First of all, we must survey our objectives. Our objectives should be a regular witness to all students, not just to a particular segment, not just to university students here, or not just to the Sunday school lower grades over in another part. In other words, what we need is a regular witness to this corporate body that we will call the youth of this area. That is our objective; now

how are we to go about doing this, what armies of missionaries will we need, and so on?

Let me go on then to my second point: we must revise our emphasis. Have we not been inclined to stress the need for technical experts in the fields of radio, literature, aviation, linguistics, translators, and so on? I would like to ask whether this is not perhaps because missions are getting so desperate for workers, that perhaps we are following the line of least resistance.

We are all prone to want to offer our physical qualifications first, because we know that is something we have. And so when there is a job out on the mission field requiring some of our particular qualifications, we think we can qualify, that this must be the leading of God for us, and so we are ready to offer ourselves in that direction. Should we not bring our emphasis to the young people in Bible schools and other places, and let them see that the mission field is desperately needing young people who will go out to young people? Why should all the graduates majoring in youth work in our Bible schools find their final place of appointment in our churches here at home? Do they feel that only here there is scope for their vision? Perhaps our mission boards ought to have more aggressive youth programs that will attract youth workers, and have more direction for those who come with these particular qualifications.

Anyway, there is another suggestion, that we revise our emphasis so that there is a proportionate disposal of our workers, that a number of workers may come onto the mission field, and not be scattered everywhere with just an occasional one sent off to do youth work in some university or other school.

My third point: review our organizations. We have medical supervisors, we have literature directors, we have audio-visual committees. These we ought to have. But should not mission organizations have a youth program director on the higher level who could advise and assist in appointments and in planning? Is not this perhaps one of the weightier matters which we may have overlooked or left undone?

Fourthly, perhaps we could consider recasting some of our methods. If youth as a whole is to be reached, then the first thing we must consider is mass communication media. And here we have our technical experts for radio, television, literature, newspapers and other fields like that. And then youth centers. We have found a youth center in Manila, Philippines, a productive field, and very far reaching. Some of the students who have gravitated to that youth center have been won to Christ, and have received a missionary vision. They have been taken out to some other island in the Philippines and have seen evangelism carried on among the people. We found youth centers, youth camps, and workers appointed to schools very fruitful approaches.

I might say in this regard, that quite a number of our workers in Indonesia are strategically placed in some of these big schools and universities where they are given varying responsibilities. In one university of Indonesia; in fact, one of the biggest, where students come from all those three thousand miles of islands, two of our women missionaries are given twenty hours of Bible teaching in a school in which 70 to 80 per cent are Muslim. One of our workers after furlough has been invited to come back as the chaplain of all the spiritual work carried on in that university. So our men are being placed. But

these are but trickles. And where we have only a trickle here and there, a thrust here and there, there should be some coordinated, concerted, over-all planning to carry the campaign through.

Finally, I must say something about the deciding factor. The Holy Spirit of God is sovereign in the Church of God to call out His recruits, to command the strategies of the Church and to conduct a campaign. It is under His leadership that we march, it is under His leadership that we war. He is the one who is responsible. If God shuts doors, then the Spirit of God must have somewhere else He is eager to take workers. That is the way we have seen things work out when our workers came out of China. God has given us another field. In China we worked in one language. Today we are touching more than forty different language groups. Where we had a major frontal attack in a broad front, now we are operating in the regional areas to pick up some of the places that have been bypassed in missionary advance.

So we look to the sovereign Spirit of God as the deciding factor in this campaign. He is the One who will call out whom He will. "Separate me Paul and Barnabas to the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:2). He is the One who will command the strategy, for He will open doors and He will close doors, and He will take Paul to Troas and across into Europe. And He will take the missionaries out of China and put them into southeast Asia and other countries. He will take them out of Congo and put them where He will.

At the same time, we must also think in terms of the prevailing power of prayer in the Church of Jesus Christ. Yes, consider the negligible factor, but here is the

winning factor, and we have the winning factor on our side.

As we think of the young people of southeast Asia today, let it be the call of God to some of the young people here and in our Bible schools, to dedicate their hearts and lives to Jesus Christ, to be used to win some of these youths, to make some of this potential into a vital factor for the advancement of the kingdom of Jesus Christ in the countries of southeast Asia.

Dress Becomingly! — David D. Allen (1961)

David D. Allen, Pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, Hazel Park, Michigan.

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:12-17).

The epistles of Ephesians and Colossians set forth the same glorious subject of the Person and work of God's incomparable Son. The emphasis in Ephesians, however, is on the Body, whereas the emphasis in Colossians is on the Head. Colossians bears the same relationship to Ephesians that Galatians does to Romans. Colossians is Ephesians compressed, condensed, concentrated. Conversely, Ephesians is Colossians amplified.

The Colossian letter falls into two segments. Paul's epistles are all built on the same last. The basic construction is along these lines: first, weighty doctrinal

material that sticks to your spiritual ribs, and then the outflow of that doctrine in deportment.

You are what you eat physically, and you are what you read mentally, and you are what you believe spiritually. If you do not believe anything, you are basically nothing. First it is doctrine, then it is deportment. First it is creed, then it is conduct. First it is belief, then it is behavior. First it is principles, then practice. First, revelation, and then, responsibility. And what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. Everything of doctrinal weight in the Bible has its corollary truth in ethical outworking in the deportment of the Christian. For a believer to claim that he holds this and that and another doctrine, and then to live a shabby, loose, cold, carnal, coarse, even vulgar life, is to prove he is a liar. In Matthew 7:20 the Saviour said: "Wherefore by their fruits shall ye know them."

In the first two chapters of Colossians we have set before us our infallible, eternal, incomparable, and unalterable position in Christ Jesus. Colossians 2:9 and 10 declares: "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him." You do not need anything else or anything more. "And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John 1:16). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

In the last two chapters of Colossians, however, there bristles from every corner, crisp, terse, lucid, pointed, relevant exhortations which are divine directives; not advice, not mere suggestions, but commandments which are just as binding on the twice-born sinner as "Thou

shalt not kill." We have read a paragraph from this segment of the Colossian letter.

This section which has a series of exhortations is set forth in the framework of disrobing and dressing again. On the negative side is the fact that we have "put off the old man" (3:9). That is a Bible fact. You do not smell it. You do not taste it. You do not feel it. The Bible says it, and that is all that is involved. On the basis of that, we are to put off, to disrobe, to discard, to fling aside the garments the old man wore. They look bad, they smell bad and they are bad. So we put off all those things.

Now on the positive side, we are to put on the new man (verse 10). The new man in Christ. We have put Him on, we are in Him. I put on my overcoat; I am in it and it is on me and covers me.

Beginning with verse 12 we have the practical, ethical outflow. Christian ethics really are New Testament ethics. You have heard of medical ethics; there are certain things a physician will not do. A good physician does not go around giving out advertisements, "Come to me, I can heal you of this." He will not undercut another physician in order to steal his patients. Good physicians, good dentists and reliable lawyers have ethics. It may come as a shock to some Christians that the New Testament sets forth certain basic things which are proper and certain things which are improper. We need to know what pleases God. "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Proverbs 16:7).

Now turn to Colossians 3:12: "Put on therefore . . ." You should know that therefore's and wherefore's, then's and when's, till's and until's have to be circled. They are

landmarks in the New Testament. Because we have put on the new man, now we are to put on His garb. We have disrobed, we have been stripped right down to the skin. We have put off everything that the old man wore, anger and wrath and lying, and now we are dressing again. All our garments are not visible, and some of the things recorded here may not be seen by others.

As we begin to dress, we will be reminded of Colossians 3:4: "Christ, who is our life." When we consider the eight garments cataloged for us here and we put them on one by one, the whole thing spells Christ our life.

Before Paul tells what to put on, he confers three titles on those he designates as "saints and faithful brethren," in Colossians 1:2. No higher titles could be conferred on any human being.

Title number one, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God." I do not know how long it was after I was saved before I found out that God knew me before I knew Him. I was delighted to hear that I was the elect of God. I certainly was not seeking for God! I was fleeing from Him as fast as my sin would take me. He took out after me, arrested me, saved me. I found out God had a plan. He knew what He was doing all the time, I did not.

For those of you who are allergic to the word elect, let me suggest that you squeeze Romans 8:33 together as you read it: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's select?" The meaning is the same. "Chosen (or elected) in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy" (Ephesians 1:4). "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God" (I Thessalonians 1:4). "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from

the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (II Thessalonians 2:13). "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (II Timothy 2:10). "According to the faith of God's elect" (Titus 1:1). "Wherefore . . . give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (II Peter 1:10). "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God" (I Peter 1:2).

If you do not believe in election, you see how much of the Bible you have to tear out. You have to take your little Jehudi penknife and cut out all these verses, and you are second cousin to a modernist when you do that. You must believe it.

The second title given here--"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy . . ." This is the same as "saints" in 1:2. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Hebrews 3:1). "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:16). "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Corinthians 7:1). "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (I Thessalonians 3:12, 13). "They verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness" (Hebrews 12:10).

Some people are allergic to the word holiness. Do you like personal piety better? It is an old-fashioned word; no one will understand it. How about personal purity? It all adds up to the same thing. God expects us to be clean. Hear me, you do not have to be clever, but you do have to be clean. God will use men who are dumber than you, if they are clean. That is all God is looking for.

Then the third title--beloved. This is what we are. We are the best loved people on the face of God's globe. He loves us. "Behold, what manner of love," what thickness of love, what quality of love, what caliber of love, what viscosity of love, what density of love, "the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we," of all people, "should be called the sons of God" (I John 3:1). "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren beloved of the Lord" (II Thessalonians 2:13).

However, we are not merely people whom God loves in a peculiar way, other folks love us, too. As hard as it may be to believe, it is true. "Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved" (Philippians 4:1). God's people love one another, and you do not have an optional choice when it comes to that either.

Now we come to the eight garments we will put on. Working from the inside out, "put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies." In 1611, that was a good idiom, today it means nothing. An idiom today which means something would be "a heart of compassion."

Let us stop talking about compulsion and compunction. We do not have any compassion, and there is our

problem. Someone says, "I do not have a burden for that." That is it--no compassion.

"When Jesus saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion." That is more than we can say! Why was He so moved? Because the multitudes "fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd" (Matthew 9:36). "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted" (Ephesians 4:32). This is the only occurrence of the word tenderhearted in the Bible. That is the point--tenderhearted, compassionate, sympathetic. "Having compassion one of another" (I Peter 3:8).

Our hearts just do not go out! They are not made that way somehow. "O Lord, bless me, my wife, my son John and his wife, we four, no more." We are so busy with our own little crowd we do not have time for any other church, any other person, any other thing! We are localized, we are constricted, we are withered, we are dead. I do not care how much you have in your head, if it is not on the inside you will never be able to produce, because this comes from the inside. This is one of the under garments. You do not necessarily see my heart of compassion, although there must be some outflow of it.

Look at number two: Put on therefore, as the elect of God, not only a heart of compassion, but kindness. You might be able to see that, if you had an opportunity. "Be ye kind one to another" (Ephesians 4:32). "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another" (Romans 12:10). That sounds like language from outer space, from another continent, from another world. That is it, it is from another world! That is why we seldom see it in this world. You have heard of the little girl who prayed: "O God, make all the

bad people good, and the good people nice." That is about it.

On top of kindness, put on humbleness of mind. This is equivalent to lowliness of mind. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness" (Ephesians 4:1,2). The word lowliness is preceded by a very disturbing word, all lowliness. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." It sounds almost as if I am making a joke when I quote that from Philippians 2:3. We esteem ourselves better than everyone else ordinarily. "If I could not preach better than that fellow in the pulpit, I would quit." That is generally the attitude. These things are not very commonplace as far as practical Christian living is concerned.

"Serving the Lord with all . . ." I thought he would say, "Serving the Lord with all brilliancy of mind, with a scintillating intellect." But Paul said, "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind" (Acts 20:19). "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (I Peter 5:5,6). "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Romans 12:3). "For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Galatians 6:3). "Not that we are sufficient of

ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God" (II Corinthians 3:5).

Humility--who is an expert on this? Who is the professor for this course in lowliness? Humility is that elusive, rare virtue which, when you think you have it, that is the proof you do not. It is such a fragile, exotic, delicate flower, it grows only in a certain type of soil, and the slightest cold wind of pride, arrogance and conceit will wither it right down. Our hearts lack nothing more than lowliness of mind. The mind is the last citadel of the personality ever to capitulate. The mind says: "I am going to hang on right to the bitter end."

Then Paul says: "Put on meekness." Meekness is not weakness, it is not being mousy, it is not being a doormat. It is not going around with stooped shoulders and a long face. "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and with fear" (I Peter 3:15).

This is followed by longsuffering. Longsuffering with meekness can be produced only in the workshop of the soul by the Spirit of God. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, self-control: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22, 23). Longsuffering--be able to suffer as long as it is God's will.

"There hath no testing taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tested above that ye are able; but will with the testing make a way of escape, that ye may be able to take it" (I Corinthians 10:13--that is the Allen version). If there ever was a time when God's people needed to be able to

take it without giving up, it is now. The first thing a Christian wants to say . . . "Well, I quit." "Well, I am not going to teach my class any more." "Well, I resign."

First thing, longsuffering, and then forbearing one another, lovingly putting up with one another. That is the way people live together year after year after year. How can you do it? How can you live with that man so long, anybody as ornery and cantankerous as he? The only thing that will enable a child of God to lovingly bear and forbear in the home and in the local church is love.

If you cannot get along with anyone, you get the answer in the next item. Verse 13: "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another," forgiving one another this way: "If any man have a quarrel against any"--and this will eventually be true--"if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." This is the way Ephesians 4 closes: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." And then Ephesians 5:1 begins by saying: "Be ye therefore followers of God (mimics, imitators of God), as dear children." You see, you are never as much like God as when you are forgiving someone. That is what God does best, and if we are to mimic God, we ought to start being specialists in forgiving people.

Finally, and this is number eight: "And above all these things . . ."--this is the thing you put on last. The last garment people put on as they dressed in that day was a big belt that served many purposes. "And above all these things put on love, which is the bond (or the belt) of perfectness." This is the equivalent of I Peter 4:8: "And above all things have fervent love," bubbling love,

intense love, "among yourselves: for love shall cover the multitude of sins," not your sins, but your brothers' sins. Instead of exposing them and exposing him, you cover them.

This is the only way we have of demonstrating that we are born again. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (I John 3:14). "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another." How much? "As I have loved you, that ye also love one another." That much? "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples," here is how people will be able to tell, "if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34, 35).

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal" (I Corinthians 13:1). Did you ever have a cymbal solo in your church? I do not suppose it would be very pretty. And we are sound; some of us are very sound. That is all we are--sound, just so much noise. But Titus 2:2 says that you should be sound in faith, sound in patience, or tenacity, and sound in love. You should be sound in faith, that is orthodoxy. You also should be sound in tenacity, you do not give up every minute. Then thirdly, you must be sound in love. What is the good of being a fundamentalist in the faith, and being a modernist in love? You have to be fundamental in all three, right straight through.

God looks upon us and expects us to be dressed right. "Fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you as becometh saints" (Ephesians 5:3). "Let your conversation (your manner of life) be as it becometh the gospel of

Christ" (Philippians 1:27). These ugly things in the preceding section do not look good on a Christian. But these garments are becoming. They ornament, they garnish, they decorate, they beautify, they look good on a person who names His name and who bears His nature.

God's Spiritual Equation — David D. Allen (1961)

"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:15-17).

The four chapters, the 95 verses, the 1,998 words which comprise this compact letter to the Colossians is a concentrated epistle which sets before us, as Colossians 1:18 indicates, Christ as the Head, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. In the first two chapters, we are told of our magnificent, exalted, eternal, infallible and unalterable position in Christ Jesus the Lord. We are made accepted in the beloved One according to Ephesians 1:6; but Colossians 2:10 puts it this way: "Ye are complete in him." He is everything, and as Colossians 3:4 states, Christ is our life. We have no life of our own now. "The Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" is preceded by "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20).

The first two chapters of Colossians therefore set before us grand doctrine, and the closing two chapters, divine directives built upon the first two chapters of doctrine. What the stem is to the flower, and what the trunk is to the limbs, and the substructure is to the superstructure, so doctrine is to Christian living or Christian ethics or

New Testament ethics. In other words, any persuasion for Christians to live nicer and sweeter that is not based on the solid bed rock of Bible doctrine is nothing but simpering, sterile, synthetic sentimentality. It will not hold up and it will not work. But on the basis of who we are in Christ Jesus, and what we are as sons of God and as children of the King, there are some instructions for our hearts in Colossians 3:12-17, half of which we examined yesterday, and the other three verses we will look at today.

The first three verses that we have examined are over against the backdrop of disrobing and dressing again. You have put on the new man; now put on the garments that are appropriate, that are becoming a child of God. Those garments were eight in number, and as you examine them, you find that actually they are a description of the Lord Jesus Himself, Christ our life of Colossians 3:4.

In the three verses for our consideration today, there are divine directives which are as binding upon the child of God as "Thou shalt not commit adultery." We do not lay them to heart because they do not seem to be so urgent, so pressing. Yet listen to number one: "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body" (Colossians 3:15). Permit the peace of God to rule in your heart.

Every Christian has peace with God as the result of the finished work of the Son of God on the cross. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). "Having made peace through the blood of his cross" (Colossians 1:20). But though every child of God has peace with God, very

few of us have the peace of God, and this passage says, "Permit God's peace to rule."

It is the only occurrence of the word rule in the Bible. This is the word for arbitrate; be the referee, be the umpire; declare whether the man is safe or whether he is out; whether this is off limits, out of bounds, or in bounds; whether it is fair or foul. The peace of God does this, if we will permit the peace of God to do it.

We are so prone to worry, which is the very opposite of the peace of God flooding the heart of the child of God. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3). You worry in your mind. This is why you had a mental crack-up. Your mind goes first, though they may call it a nervous breakdown, or mental exhaustion. Your mind glued fast and riveted, fixed upon Him is the remedy.

Our Lord Jesus said in John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." It will be afraid if you permit it to be afraid, and if you permit it to be troubled, it will gravitate to that immediately.

So I worry not only in my mind, but I worry also in my heart. First I have a breakdown in my head, and then a breakdown in my heart. That is where the ulcers come from. I eat myself into the grave, but I worry myself into the grave also. I'm in a hurry to get there, evidently. And if I don't have something wrong with me, I think there is something wrong, there must be something wrong with me. I must have cancer! I have talked myself into it. Our

Lord says, "My peace I give unto you . . . Let not your heart be troubled."

"These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer" (John 16:33). That goes with peace. For you cannot be cheerful if you do not have the peace of God flooding your heart. "Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). The disciples were in the upper room for fear of the Jews. The Lord appeared and said, "Peace be unto you." "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace" (Galatians 5:22). In other words, this is the third commodity that the Holy Spirit begins to turn out in the workshop of your soul after you are saved.

"In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6,7, A.S.V.). If you will do that, if you will get in your requisition, the peace of God, God's own peace, internal, divine tranquillity in the midst of external turbulence, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." It surpasses all understanding, therefore it is inexplicable and inscrutable, you cannot explain it. God's peace will garrison or guard, put sentries around your heart and mind. They are the only two places I worry. I never worry in my elbow, or my kneecap, or my appendix. I worry in my head or in my heart, and sometimes I worry real good; I worry in my head and in my heart.

We have a motto: "Why pray when you can worry?" We enjoy it. Of course we would never admit it. We say, "I'm a little concerned, but I'm not worried. I'm a little

exercised, you understand, but I'm not worried." Well, anyone can rationalize. A rose by any other name smells exactly the same way.

Peace comes from God because that is His name. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus" (Hebrews 13:20). He has cornered the market on peace, and if you want peace, you have to go to the source.

God's peace may flood that heart and that life of yours. He says, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body" (Colossians 3:15). This is part of my birthright, this is part of the blessed benefits of being born again. I have a right to peace in my heart. Why do I have to be torn up all the time? The devil loves to keep me in a lather. He wants to get me stewing--butterflies in the stomach, we call it. Folks say, "It doesn't take very much to upset him." We are strangers to the peace of God. We do not have what we sing: "Blessed quietness." We can't sit down inside! "Let the peace of God rule (arbitrate) in your hearts to the which also ye are called in one body."

The second injunction in Colossians 3:15 goes right with it: "And be ye thankful," full of thanks. As a matter of fact, being thankful occurs at the end of verse 17 as well: "giving thanks to God."

"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (I Thessalonians 5:18). "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:20). We already have read the passage in Philippians 4:6 and 7: "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving," stirring in a generous portion of

thanksgiving before you ever receive the answer. "Be ye thankful."

Our Lord once said in Luke 6:35 of God, "He is kind unto the unthankful." If ever there was a word that describes many of God's dear people, it is that. We are unthankful, we are not appreciative, we are not grateful. We take for granted that we are supposed to have two eyes, two good legs and two arms. Did you ever walk through a hospital ward? Don't leave that just to the pastor. Walk through once in awhile and find out what other people are suffering. We just take good health for granted until we are horizontal instead of perpendicular. We are not thankful. He says, "Be ye thankful." Don't try to be, don't pray about it, don't read books on it; just "be ye thankful!"

That brings us to the third injunction: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (Colossians 3:16). "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart" (Deuteronomy 6:6). "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul" (Deuteronomy 11:18). "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8). Good success is better than bad success seven days a week. This is the only place you find the word success, good success.

"Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee. Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart" (Job 22:21, 22). "I have esteemed the words of his

mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). Job says this is more important to me than the staff of life, than bread and cereal, than meat and potatoes. You recall how Jeremiah declared: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jeremiah 15:16). "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:2). Thy word have I hid in my notebook that I might not sin against thee? "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11). Might it not be, we would sin less if we hid more of the Word of God in our hearts? "Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart" (Proverbs 7:3).

"They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night" (Song of Solomon 3:8). Do you know what the sword is? "Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17). God is holding us to it. God is expecting this of us. "But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay," I could not keep quiet (Jeremiah 20:9).

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). You see, the more of God's Word you hide in your heart, the more it abides in you and you abide in Him. That aids you even when it comes to praying. "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one" (I John 2:14). How did they do that?

Because the Word of God was in them. How do you get it in your heart? "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour" (II Peter 3:1 and 2). You will never get it in your heart if you do not get it into your head. The way to the heart is through the head. You will have more in your head than you will ever have in your heart, but you will never have anything in your heart if you do not get any in your head. The negligible Biblical content of the average evangelical sermon is appalling! If the average believer would expend as much energy trying to lay hold on the Bible as a boy does learning how to whistle, he would know the difference between one and two when it comes to the Word of God. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly."

It is so important that God's Word lives in our hearts that the following results may obtain. Notice in Colossians 3:16 the words ending in "ing"--teaching, admonishing, singing, and in verse 17, giving. These are the by-products of God's Word living in our hearts.

We read: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching. . ." Well, how else would you? That is the way to teach. Where do you get wisdom? "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Psalm 119:130). That is how you were saved. "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 3:15). Wise unto salvation, and wiser and wiser in direct proportion as this Word gets inside of us. What

would it not do if we exposed ourselves to God's Word and let the Spirit of God, the Author of the Word, have opportunity in us? He has no way of getting at us except through the Bible! That is why we are not very effective, He does not have much chance to get to us.

You will notice verse 16 says: "in all wisdom; teaching, admonishing." Sometimes the admonition goes along with the teaching. I would tie in Hebrews 10:25 here, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another (encouraging one another): and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

Colossians 3:16 goes on: "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart to the Lord." There are three types of songs: psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. There is a little latitude here, you see. Singing unto the Lord, you sing with grace in your heart; otherwise you can't sing unto the Lord. And verse 17 adds: "giving thanks to God."

Ephesians 5:19, 20 presents the same thought: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always." How do we get that way in Colossians? Be full of the Word of God. How do we get that way in Ephesians? "Be filled with the Spirit" (5:18). If we are filled with the Spirit in Ephesians 5, then this will happen to us: one, two, three. If we are filled with the Word of God in Colossians 3, this will happen to us: one, two, three. The same thing.

Do you remember the algebraic formula: things that equal the same thing, equal one another? This formula

will obtain for this, too! So the Word of God results in speaking, singing, giving, being filled with the Spirit of God. It results in the very same thing. If X equals 10, and Y equals 10, X equals Y--filled with the Word of God, filled with the Spirit of God. Who wrote the Word of God? The Spirit of God. The Spirit of God does nothing contrary to the Word of God. And the omnipotent Spirit of God is constricted to the Word of God which He authored. The gigantic locomotive is restricted to the two steel rails; so the Spirit of God is confined, voluntarily by His own divine will, to the Word of God which He has written. If you want to find out what God likes and what He dislikes, it is all here in the manual.

Coming back to Colossians 3:17, Paul sums up the paragraph with this: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." You must tie I Corinthians 10:31 in here: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." And Colossians 1:18: "That in all things he might have the pre-eminence."

That does away with dividing work into sacred and secular. I drive my car in the name of the Lord Jesus. I preach my sermon in the name of the Lord Jesus. I teach my Sunday school class in the name of the Lord Jesus. I wash the dishes in the name of the Lord Jesus. I look for a parking space in the name of the Lord Jesus. I eat my meals in the name of the Lord Jesus. In the mighty name of Jesus, life in its entirety becomes sacred. If there are things that we feel reluctant to do in the name of the Lord Jesus, let us examine them very closely to see if we should do them at all, "that in all things he might have the pre-eminence."

If you remember anything of this message, remember this one thing: in the proportion you put the Lord Jesus Christ first in your life, in exactly that proportion God will put you first in His program. If you put the Lord Jesus second, God will put you second. If you put Him third, God will put you third. If you put Him fourth, God will put you fourth. If you relegate the sovereign Son of God to some insignificant area of your life, God will be on the opposite side of every one of your programs.

Oh, learn this little spiritual equation, the way to the Father's heart, the way into His affection, is for you to make much of God's dear Son. The Father and the Spirit love to glorify the Son, they love to give Him the pre-eminent place; and we ought to be like God, we likewise should seek to glorify, to do all, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Are You Producing Flowers or Fruit? — M. R. DeHaan (1961)

Dr. M. R. DeHaan, Teacher, Radio Bible Class, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

In John 15:16 our Lord Jesus makes a very remarkable statement: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

Last year in May, I stepped out of my automobile to call on one of my farmer friends and was greeted by one of those magnificent, indescribable, breath-taking scenes that are characteristic of the country in which I happen to live. It was a beautiful twenty-acre orchard of young apple trees in full blossom, like a great, magnificent, exquisite blanket, perfectly blended in the white and the pink of the blossoms. It stretched before my entranced eyes and I caught myself unconsciously murmuring aloud, "Wonderful! Marvelous! Can anyone imagine anything more beautiful!"

I was suddenly awakened out of my reverie by the voice of my farmer friend, who said to me these shocking words, "Yes, those blossoms are beautiful, but you can't eat them."

I looked at him surprised at his rather unsentimental remark and his apparent lack of appreciation of the beauty which had captivated me. As I breathed deeply of that heavily laden perfumed air from those blossoms, I said, "What do you mean? Don't you have any sense of beauty at all?"

He had a twinkle in his eye and a wry smile on his face as he replied, "I repeat, Doctor, they are beautiful, but people do not eat blossoms." I still did not understand, so he explained. "I happen to be a fruit farmer, not a florist. My bread and butter depends on fruit, not flowers. I am in this business to make a living. And while I am deeply conscious of the beauty of this wonderful panorama of God's creation, after all, it's the fruit that counts in the end. These blossoms are only promises, and you can't live on promises."

Then he preached a little sermon to me as we stood there. He waved his hand across the orchard and said, "All these blossoms are going to be gone in just another week. The petals will fall and the fragrance will vanish away. Then comes the hard work of producing fruit. You see, it doesn't take any labor to produce blossoms. They come spontaneously. When the atmosphere is just right and the time of year has come, there the blossoms are, without any effort on our part. But if we want fruit, it takes a lot of hard work. And a lot of things can happen between now and harvest time. We could have a bad freeze, or we might have a prolonged drought, or we might have a severe hailstorm. Then we have to spray against the codling moth and the leaf roller and the red mite and the scab and the scale and the apple maggot; and even then we are not sure whether we are going to have a crop. You see, Doctor, you can't eat blossoms; it's the fruit we're after."

That evening I sat in my study ruminating, thinking over what I had heard, and looking for some kind of argument by which I could disprove the rather disheartening and disappointing philosophy of my fruit farmer friend.

I turned to the Bible for some consolation, because my faith and appreciation in floral tribute had been badly shaken, and I found to my surprise that flowers are mentioned only thirty-seven times in the entire Old and New Testaments, and blossoms only two or three times. Out of the thirty-seven occurrences, according to my Strong's Concordance, sixteen times the word is used to refer to literal flowers, and the rest it is used only figuratively.

Then I found to my dismay at first--until I got a sermon out of it--that all sixteen references spoke very disparagingly of flowers. The Bible tells us that flowers are symbolic of vanity and emptiness and evanescence, and fanciful, fleeting beauty. They represent the things of the flesh and the highest expression of the natural man, but passing without any abiding value or any sustaining fruit. I found that they meant riches that vanish away and the fleeting pleasures of life that cannot satisfy, like the brackish waters from broken cisterns. I found that everywhere in the Bible where flowers are mentioned, it is not in a very good connotation.

If that is a surprise to you, I only challenge you. It is a very simple process to take your concordance and look up all the references, as I did that evening. I went to bed with my faith in flowers completely shaken, but my respect for fruit tremendously heightened. For instance, Job tells us in Job 14:1,2: "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down: and as a fleeting shadow, he continueth not." In Psalm 90:5,6 we are told that man is like the grass and the flower that flourishes in the morning; and in the evening it is cut down and withers.

In Psalm 103:15: "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more."

In Isaiah 28 all the glory and the beauty of the ceremonial and religious life of Israel are compared to a fading flower and a leaf that falls and withers. You remember in Isaiah 40:6,7 the voice said, "Cry." And what was he to cry? "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass." And Peter re-echoes that in I Peter 1:23-25, when he compares the abiding value of the fruit of the Word of God with the passing, fleeting, temporary value of flowers. He says: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth forever." In James 1:10 and 11 the rich and their riches are compared to a fading flower; for no sooner is the sun risen with a burning heat, than it is withered and passes away. So I found that flowers are promises, and you cannot eat flowers.

Then I turned to the word fruit and found that whereas flowers are mentioned only thirty-seven times, fruit is mentioned almost two hundred times in the Bible. It speaks in every case, even in the evil sense, of something that continues to operate, something that is abiding, that has body to it and does not pass with the using.

You are familiar with the fact that in the Bible the righteous man, the man of God, is spoken of as a tree; not as a flowering dogwood, but as a fruit tree. You cannot show me anywhere in the Bible where God ever created a flower. Now I know He did, and it is implied; but when He talks about His creation, it is the herb-bearing seed whose seed is in itself, and the fruit tree, bearing fruit after its kind. The emphasis in the entire Word of God is on that which abides; not the highest expression of morality and ethical dealing and human righteousness of the natural man, but that which is the result of the seed of the Word of God, that brings forth its fruit some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred-fold.

So the righteous man is compared to a tree. You remember in Psalm 1, David speaks about the blessed man, that "he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit"--not flowers--"in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Then in that wonderful passage in Psalm 92 we read: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing." Fatness is an expression used in the Bible of God's favor and blessing. The fruit which endures grows on trees which are planted by the rivers of water, representing the Holy Spirit, bringing forth their fruit even to old age. So we are called to be fruit bearers.

Now we come to a question on which there may be some difference of opinion. What is the fruit of a believer? Do not be too hasty in answering. I have had almost 100 per cent of an audience quote Galatians 5:22: "For the fruit

of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, and so forth." But that is not the fruit of the believer; that is the fruit of the Spirit in the believer. That is produced by the Holy Spirit within the believer as he feeds on the Word of God, as Galatians very clearly indicates. The fruit of a believer is a baby believer, it is another believer. The fruit of the Spirit is the production of the graces of the Spirit in the life of the believer, but the fruit of the believer is reproduction of its own kind. That is a basic law of nature.

Can you quote Proverbs 11:30? Most people remember the last half of the verse, but omit the important first part. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise." What is the fruit of the righteous? A tree. And what is the fruit of that tree? Another tree, and before long you have an orchard bearing fruit.

Here is the law of reproduction. The tree bears fruit. That seed is planted and there is another tree which bears fruit. And so the cycle goes on and on. That is a scientific law which God placed in creation at the very beginning, that everything should reproduce, and reproduce after its own kind. In Genesis 1:11 we read: "God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself." He said the same thing about the animals. And when He came to man, He laid down that law of reproduction, the continuation of his kind of the species, if you please. God created man so that he would need a woman in order to bring forth fruit, just as Christ has espoused the Church to Himself in order that we should bring forth fruit unto God; and that means babies, that means after our kind.

When God gave Eve to Adam, He gave her to him for two reasons, and the two are connected. We oftentimes forget one of them. The first reason God brought a man and a woman together was for fellowship. God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18), that they could work together. As a result of that fellowship, in order to perpetuate the man who had been created in the image of God, God created them so that the male and the female together in their relationship could become fruit-bearing trees to rear a family for the glory of God. Then after He had brought man and woman together for fellowship, He gave them this command: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Genesis 1:28). Therefore I find in Genesis 5:3 and 4 that Adam "begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth."

See, beloved, we have been called of God to bear fruit. Jesus said in John 15:8: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." If you are only a blossom bearer, you are not a disciple. There are two kinds of trees, those with many blossoms and no fruit, and others who back up their blossoms with a copious harvest at the end of the year. I have two apple trees in my backyard, and I recall that last spring they were both covered with blossoms, the most beautiful promising blossoms in the world. Then Mrs. DeHaan and I went on a Bible teaching trip of about two and a half months. When we came back, there was not one single sound apple on either of the trees. They had all been damaged, scabbed and scaled and rusted, and apple maggot eaten down to the core, and codling moth

and the rest. Because to bear blossoms doesn't cost anything, but to bear fruit means work and sacrifice.

I like to think of Matthew 11:28 and 29. There are two parts. First of all we have: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." That is God's invitation to the sinner. It costs nothing, it is free. It is obtained by coming. It is the gift of God. You cannot purchase it. You cannot work for it. You cannot do anything to obtain it but to accept it, because it is the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But when you come to the next verse, you have an entirely different situation. That was addressed to those who had already come to Christ and had received free salvation. He says: "I do not want you to stop there. I want more than flowers, I want more than blossoms. I want fruit. If you want the real experience, take My yoke upon you and become a student, learn from Me; become a disciple, a follower. Take My yoke, the symbol of service and work and toil and obedience, and learn from Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find--not I will give you, but you will find it, but you must look for it--ye shall find rest for your soul."

There are two kinds of Christians, if they are all Christians, flowering shrubs and fruit-bearing trees. I do not want to be harsh, but I have been in the work of the Lord long enough to rue the fact that most Christians have very little besides blossoms--and you can't eat flowers! There is more to salvation than being saved from hell. I know that a great many people have that narrow, constricted, shallow, cheap idea about salvation. The only reason they want it is because they do not want to go to hell. I do not see how anybody can have

assurance of salvation, if that is their only motive. They are perfectly happy they are saved and are not going to hell when they die, and they do not care in the least whether anybody else goes or not. They never say a prayer or lift a hand to warn others of their danger. I have met fathers and mothers who have children who are lost. They seem to be devout Christians themselves, but have never really wept hot tears or stayed up an extra hour at night to pray for the salvation of their loved ones.

Too many people think the job has to be done by the preacher or the professional evangelist, and we are so busy with making a living and enjoying pleasure and television and everything else, that we have no time to reproduce for Him. If someone else had not reproduced, you would not be here tonight as a saved individual. Your presence here as a born-again believer can be traced step by step all the way back, I like to think, to the apostle Paul, or even further back. It was because somebody was interested in you and told you or handed you something to read or prayed for you that you came in contact with the living Word and today you are the fruit of somebody else's travail. Oh, how many of these genetic strains seem to be cut off and stopped. Is it going to stop with you?

Remember what Jesus said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." I am afraid that we are today developing a brand of a cheap, superficial gospel which is defeating the very purpose for which Christ came. I repeat this because it is so true, many people consider salvation only an escape from hell. There are a few who go a step further

and are glad they can go to heaven when they cannot enjoy themselves down here any more.

I think it was Dr. William R. Newell who once said to an audience, "How many of you want to go to heaven? Raise your hands." They all raised their hands. He said, "How many of you would like to go tonight?" And there was not a hand raised. I have heard many people say, "I want to go to heaven when I die, I don't feel at home in this world any more." When I was practicing medicine I would be called out in the middle of the night to see some of these people that were so anxious to go to heaven. Brother, they would mortgage their farms and pay me the money to keep them from going to heaven!

We need to recognize there is more to salvation than merely being saved. Oh, the selfishness that we are prone to, as we look round us. Think of the increase of evil and wickedness, and then see how God's work struggles and struggles and crawls along. It makes one's heart sick.

I want to say this whether you like it or not, if you came to this conference just to get fat and enjoy your salvation, and it gives you no vision, no passion, no longing, no concern for that boy and that girl, that husband or that wife you left behind you, and no determination that by the grace of God you are going to be a fruit bearer, then these few days are going to stand in account against you at the judgment seat of Christ.

There is a very distinct difference between being a disciple and a mere believer. There were thousands who came to Christ during His ministry here on earth. Do not think that His ministry was fruitless; many believed on Him. Yet we hear nothing more of them. If they really

came to Christ, they will show up in heaven, some probably saved so as by fire. But when Christ wanted to do a job, He chose seventy disciples, and from among them twelve apostles. Are you a mere believer, or have you learned the lesson of discipleship?

The word disciple comes from a Greek word meaning disciplined one; one who disciplines himself for a task and for a prize; willing to give up, willing to sacrifice, willing to exercise, willing to expend oneself. That is the kind of person through whom God does His work.

We are living in an age of masses. Everything is numbers. If a thing is not big, it is not worth doing. Yet as I look back, I see that God always deals with a minority, always with a remnant. God today is looking for men and women who are willing to go all out and sit at the feet of Christ in complete, full surrender, willing to reproduce.

Are you a reproductive Christian? You have been saved to reproduce. May we stop and ask ourselves, "Am I fulfilling the purpose for which I have been saved?" Jesus said, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." When Peter came to Christ he was not worth anything, until he met Christ the second time and learned to obey. "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." Will you be able to say, when you stand before Him, "Behold, I and the children whom thou hast given me"? I wonder. May the Lord search our hearts as we bow before Him.

The Foundation on Which We Stand — William Culbertson (1966)

Dr. William Culbertson, President, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, Illinois.

> "*Forever, O Jehovah,*
> *Thy word is settled in heaven*"
> *(Ps. 119:89)*

(Most Scripture quotations in this message are from the American Standard Version (1901).)

This morning I should like to say some things about the Word of God. Most of them are probably well known to you, but I trust that in stirring up your pure minds by way of remembrance, your hearts will beat faster and your dedication will be made the deeper.

The doctrinal statement of Moody Bible Institute has a section devoted to the theme of inspiration. Article II reads: "The Bible, including both the Old and New Testaments, is a divine revelation, the original autographs of which were verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit (II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1:21)."

This statement includes at least four specifics. First, that inspiration is related to the Bible as a whole, which includes the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. Second, it involves the Bible as a divine revelation, and thus proscribes the modern unbelieving conception that the Bible is only a human document. Third, it specifies that it is the originals which may be spoken of as inspired in this sense; but let us understand that we have, to all

intents and purposes, that Word before us today. And fourth, it clearly states that the kind of inspiration is verbal, that is, it has to do with words, not simply with ideas and not simply with the writer's gift of expression. This is Moody Bible Institute's doctrinal position in this matter of Bible inspiration, and we stand there today, as we have through the years past.

In view of this commitment let me speak to three matters. Let me remind you first that this doctrine of inspiration is most certainly taught by the Scriptures themselves. Second, let me speak briefly concerning the history of this doctrine. And third, let me remind you of some of the reasons this doctrine is tremendously important.

First, the doctrine of inspiration is taught in the Scriptures. I am cognizant of the charge that to attempt to prove the Bible as the Word of God by quoting the supporting evidence from the Scriptures themselves is to reason in a circle; but let me make two observations. If the Bible itself denies its inspiration, then we would be utterly foolish to talk about it. Therefore, it seems to me we do well to see whether or not the Bible claims inspiration. May I also say that if the Bible remains silent about its inspiration, I think it would be difficult to maintain the doctrine. So my first observation is, let us see whether or not the Bible claims inspiration. My second observation is that there is corroborating evidence for the Bible believer and it supports the Bible's testimony. By corroborating evidence I mean such matters as the internal witness of the Holy Spirit to the Bible's truth; I mean also the external evidences, such as the power of the Bible, the durability of the Bible, the historicity of the Bible. All these, it seems to

me, support the statement of the Bible itself that it is the Word of God.

It is impossible, of course, to mention in this message all that the Bible says in this regard. What I have purposed to do is simply take a series of references that I think show clearly that the Bible claims inspiration again and again and again, and that it claims it for all its parts. Let us begin with Exodus 4:12, a word given by God to Moses. This is what God said: "I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak." According to this verse, I take it that what Moses spoke, and that which is recorded in the Bible as Moses' speech, was given to him by God. Leviticus begins (vv. 1, 2): "And Jehovah called unto Moses, and spake unto him . . . Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them . . ." and God gave him what to say. This is the claim of the Word of God. In II Samuel 23:2 David speaks clearly: "The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and his word was upon my tongue." It seems to me the phraseology is evident, the claim is patent, the word is that this is God's Word. Moses and David so spoke.

Now go to the prophets. Isaiah 1:10 says: "Hear the word of Jehovah . . ." I am informed that such a statement or the like occurs approximately twenty times in the book of Isaiah itself. In Jeremiah 1:1, 2 we read in part: "Jeremiah . . . to whom the word of Jehovah came." Such a statement or its like appears almost one hundred times in the book of Jeremiah. Ezekiel 3:16 says: "The word of Jehovah came unto me." And approximately sixty times in the book of Ezekiel you will find that formula. Indeed, Zechariah speaks in 7:12 of Israel: ". . . lest they should hear the law, and the words which Jehovah of hosts had sent by his Spirit by the former

prophets." So all the prophets before Zechariah are certainly spoken of as having given the words of the Spirit of God. Interestingly enough, when we come to the so-called minor prophets, such as Hosea, Joel, Jonah, Micah, Zephaniah, Haggai and Zechariah, all begin their prophecies with the declaration, "The word of Jehovah that came unto me," or words so similar that the difference is infinitesimal.

I am embarrassed by the wealth of such material which fell from the lips of the Lord Jesus. I will remind you of only one, John 10:35: "The scripture cannot be broken." Will you allow this one pregnant sentence to speak for the multitude of other references in which the Lord specified the same truth, "The scripture cannot be broken."

The apostle Paul by the Spirit of God in II Timothy 3:16 says: "Every scripture is inspired of God" (marginal reading). As you know, the literal translation is "Every scripture is God-breathed." II Peter 1:21 gives Peter's testimony: "Men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." Then Peter reminded his readers in II Peter 3:2: "Remember . . . the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles." So the commandment given by the apostles was the commandment of the Lord and Saviour.

Here we have a small compendium, if you will, of passages which show to us the claim of the Scriptures themselves. But you say, there are problems in this matter, there are things that we don't understand, or there are things that seem to contradict other things in the book of God. May I simply immediately acknowledge, certainly there are problems. Infinite

revelation to finite minds is going to involve problems. If you think you have the pat answer to everything in Scripture, I would remind you that we are still on earth and we still do not know perfectly and fully. But it is my conviction that there is no problem for which a believing heart sooner or later will not find the answer, and a good answer, that will satisfy both the mind and the heart. I believe that what we know not now, we shall hereafter fully know and understand. "Then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known," says I Corinthians 13:12. But what I do know now is so comforting and so powerful and so logical and so wonderful, that I can trust the Lord with the rest. I therefore conclude point one by asserting that the Bible attests its inspiration, and that this claim is so widely spread throughout the Bible and is so all inclusive in its application to the whole Bible that on its testimony we cannot logically believe in less than total plenary, verbal, full inspiration. Since it is God's Word, it follows that it is infallible and inerrant.

In the second place, let us consider the history of the doctrine, beginning with the Reformation. At that time, there was a twin battle cry that characterized the reformers. The Latin designation involved in the battle cry was, "Sola fide" and "Sola Scriptura." By the former, they meant that salvation is by faith alone opposed to human works. The latter meant that divine revelation was restricted to the Holy Scriptures and was not to be predicated of tradition and of the edicts of the church. Faith alone and the Scriptures alone!

It was in the middle of the eighteenth century that unbelieving higher criticism began; and by the use of literary criticism and historical investigation, the inspiration of the Bible was attacked. We are now living

in the time which liberal scholars call "the post-critical situation." The findings of these scholars of yesteryear are not to be disputed now, you see; they are to be meekly accepted, or else you are branded as an ignoramus. According to this view of liberal critical scholars, the Bible may contain the Word of God, but it is not that Word in totality. Indeed, some even suggest that it is false to call it the Word of God at all. In pious fashion they say that Christ is the only Word of God they know. But I should like to ask, how do they know what the Lord Jesus said? So far as I know, the only worthy record of His life and teachings is in the Gospels, and, unless something happened over night, they are still part of the Bible. Indeed, as a matter of fact, there is a third concept that some of these modern critical scholars hold. They claim that modern criticism has shown the Gospels to be composed of various contradictory traditions, so that it is impossible to believe in a historical Christ at all. Now they have gotten to the Gospels and have done with the Gospels what they did to the Pentateuch back in the eighteenth century. They have nothing to offer.

So much for this overview. Our concern, however, is that certain of these critical views are spreading. They have taken over some schools. They appear in magazines, both secular and religious; alas, in some religious magazines which were thought to be orthodox in the past. In short, there are not wanting signs of certain of them in evangelical circles. And as president of Moody Bible Institute, I want to sound again the word of warning. If we as orthodox, as evangelicals, as fundamentalists, move from this doctrine, we are doomed to disaster.

That leads me to my third point, the importance of this doctrine as I view it. I take my stand, first, on the anthropological teachings of the Word of God concerning man naturally, and affirm that man needs divine revelation. If the Bible is not divine revelation, then we do not have that revelation in which we stand in need. Frankly, here is the basic cleavage between the liberal and the Bible-believing Christian. To the liberal, the Bible along with everything else is the product of evolution. Man is on an upward struggle for truth, and now we have outgrown the Bible. Having learned a little about God's creation, man thinks he has reached the point where he can speak authoritatively concerning the creation's Creator. And so some modern scholars have banished the God of our fathers and blatantly say the God pictured in the Word of God is dead.

Now, the Bible believer thrusts his sword directly at the evolutionary concept of continual progress in spiritual matters and asserts biblically that man needs divine revelation and divine life if he is to know the truth; and that apart from Christ, man is sinful, twisted, and needs life. What says the Word of God? The Word of God affirms that the heart of man is desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9). The Word of God tells us that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). The Word of God says that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them" (I Cor. 2:14). Did you hear that? He cannot know them! However educated, however cultured, however gentlemanly, however accepted, he cannot know them. This is where we begin. The need for divine revelation, the need for the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God is first of all

in the darkness and the twistedness of our natures. Men need--if they are ever to know the truth--the God-breathed Book, God's final revelation.

Second, if the Bible claims to be the Word of God and it is not the Word of God, then I say, it is a sham, a pretense, a hoax, and is not to be trusted at all. So let us not be so illogical as to disown the Bible as the Word of God, on the one hand, and then try to keep what we want of it, on the other hand. Oh, I know that man in his vaunted rational powers wants to make his choice of what to accept and what to reject. But as we shall see, man's reason is a broken crutch that will afford him no ultimate good.

The third observation I should like to make as to the need for an inspired book is that, when all is said and done, man must still ask this question, By whose authority? Man must have a basis of authority or all is chaos. What is the voice that speaks infallibly? Where do I find what is right and what is wrong? How do I know what truth is as over against error? How can I know the meaning and the way to life now and hereafter? Who will begin to answer the questions that pound upon this mortal mind as I cry out for certainty, for some answer that will come across the ages and say, "This is the truth." By whose authority? It seems to me the crux of the matter confronting us, as I have viewed it in the message of the morning, is, Is it man's reason or is it divine revelation?

Now, you cannot be sure of man's reason. In fact, one of the strange things that perplexes my mind as I think about it is, that the current brand of scholars is so certain of its conclusions, as though there will not be

another brand of scholars in the next generation. I do not mean to be supercilious or cynical, but it seems to me that one of the marks of scholarship is to question the generation before. This may be all well and good within confines; but when it comes to the place where it repudiates the only divine revelation that we have, then it is time to speak, then it is time to stand on one's feet and acclaim loudly and emphatically our belief in the Bible as the inspired Word of God. Since you can't be sure of human reason, what is left to you? Without divine revelation, we must wander in the hopeless mazes of reason with no sure word from heaven.

The fourth observation I would like to make is this, that the doctrine of inspiration is basic to Christian teaching. All other doctrines stem from biblical inspiration and are supported by it. If the Bible is not true, then all the Christian doctrines go with it. For it is from the Bible's sacred pages that the truth, the hope, and the dynamic of life spring. The Bible has fashioned civilization as we know it. Western civilization is far from perfect, but its features of justice, of mercy, of human dignity come from the Bible. Rob us of the Bible, and where is morality and precept and power?

That leads me to my final point. The doctrine of inspiration is basic to Christian morality. Attack the Bible and you cannot long sustain the morality it teaches. You cannot question the Bible's integrity and preserve its morals. Indeed, for a long while we have lived on the faith and the foundations of our forefathers. Unbelief in the Bible was the exception in the nineteenth century. What there was was largely outside the church. Now men of little or no faith are in the church. And we wonder why our nation is in trouble. Economic

prosperity has blinded us to our moral and spiritual poverty, but it is still true: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). And it is still true: "The wicked shall be turned back unto Sheol, even all the nations that forget God" (Ps. 9:17). The God some little men have the audacity to say is dead, isn't dead, and His Word abides.

Blessed Book, the Holy Bible! In it I hear the voice of my heavenly Father, the invitation of my gracious Saviour, and the tender pleading of the blessed Comforter. This book unmasks my sin and convinces me of my need of the Saviour. It shows me the Redeemer in all the plenitude of His power, mighty to save, and I fall at His feet as His willing bondslave and worship Him. It comforts me in sorrow. It chastens me in disobedience. It strengthens me in testing. It encourages me in darkness. It makes faith grow in times of doubt. It is the gate of heaven to my weary soul, for in it I find that God speaks to the believing heart. It reveals to me God's provision to live as His son in a crooked and perverse generation, and thank the Lord for His miracle power in regeneration and sanctification. It shows me God's great plan that involves the completion of the Church, the restoration of Israel, the putting down of sin and Satan, the vindication of God's Son and God's people, and the glorious enthronement of our blessed Triune God, high over all. And I shout in answer, "Bring forth the royal diadem and crown Him Lord of all."

Blessed Book! The revelation of the heart, the will, the plan, and the provision of God for men, for you and for me. May our hearts beat faster and obey more quickly. This Book is God's loving gift, and it leads men to God.

So I end as I began: "The Bible, including both the Old and the New Testaments, is a divine revelation, the original autographs of which were verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit." Here we stand, so help us, God.

The Consecration of Conversation — Wilbur M. Smith (1966)

I wish to talk about a very elemental subject that is basic to all of our lives. It is true--not in God's sight but with men--that there are great differences among men and women in their assets, their talents, their opportunities, and their achievements. Some men seem to advance, some to retreat. Some move up into high places and make fortunes and become famous, many do not. Some lead, most people have to follow.

I remember at college we had an Old Testament professor who talked much more intelligently about golf than he did about the prophets. Nevertheless, he had a son who was in the Army. When he came back to school, he was about forty-five years of age and a private. Now, there is nothing wrong in being a private, but when you are forty-five years old and you are still a private, it means you have limitations, and perhaps a man just your own age is a three star general. There is a difference among men in their achievements and in their capabilities, even in the ministry.

But there are some fundamental factors that are general in the human race in which you and I participate. We all have the same practical anatomical structure. All men have the same nervous system. We have the same chemical compounds in our bodies. Our eyes look with the same optical laws whether a man is a savage or whether he is learned. We all have the same basic needs, at least three of them. We must breathe, we must eat, and we must sleep. Probably you can add a fourth, sooner or later; if you have any sense, you fall in love. I

remember hearing the great orator Dr. Lee once tell the story that he noticed a young man in the front of the church every Sunday night with a different girl. One day he met him on the street. "John, I see you in church every Sunday night with a different girl. What does this mean?" "Well," he said, "Pastor, I have to confess. Cupid shot me with a machine gun." I hope it is not true of you.

With these basic factors, we all have also fundamental acts. We look with our eyes, we hear with our ears, and we talk with our tongues and our mouths. About these matters, the Bible has a great deal to say. Even the word "hear" is mentioned over 700 times in the Scriptures, and "the ear" probably a hundred times. From the beginning to the end, apart from its great theology and its exalted themes and its great prophecies, the Bible talks about eating and drinking and even sleeping, and the things we see and what we should hear, and how we should talk. It is on this last matter that I would like to speak with great simplicity.

I have called this, I trust not inappropriately, "The Consecration of Conversation." You could take many texts, but I have chosen Ephesians 4:29: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." Phillips has a great translation here: "Let there be no more foul language, but good words instead--words suitable for the occasion which God can use to help other people."

This text has an English word that is profoundly significant, the word "communication." Communications have to do with letters, telephone calls, telegrams, radio messages; in fact, it is one of the great themes of our

contemporary civilization. "Communication" comes from a root meaning "to have in common or to share." When you communicate something to another person, you are taking something out of your mind and heart and passing it down to your lips, speaking it out on the air, letting it enter the ear of the hearer and go into his mind. When you and I communicate, we share what we have and what we are and what we are thinking, so that the person to whom we are talking begins to incorporate into himself a part of us. I came to this auditorium this morning with a message, I trust, and when the hour is over what was in my mind will be in your minds, and deposited in your own beings. I have communicated as you would communicate with me. This is a tremendous word. It involves a great responsibility, that others are going to be something like we are in their thinking and in their convictions.

There are two aspects to this verse. However, there is a third area of communication that is not in this text. There is a great deal of talking and conversation that is not included in these two classifications. Let us admit it, about 70 or 80 percent of our conversation is not important enough either to corrupt anybody or to strengthen anybody. It is just what we could call chatter. We have a lot of it, and it gets a little bit wearisome. Personally, I am not very good on chitchat, chitchat, chitchat, just talking about nothing. "There were 104 inches of snow in Oswego this morning." Well, I am not going to think about it tomorrow. "Isn't the weather lovely?" Yes, thank God, though not like the country I come from. "How is Susie, and how is Johnnie?" "I like your coat," and so on and on. All this comes and goes,

and our life is filled with it. I'm not going to talk about the trivialities of conversation.

Let's go back to our text: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." This is written to Christians. This text is not used by Paul professionally; this is not for ministers or teachers. This is for you and me as individuals in the body of Christ. This has nothing to do with how to preach and how to teach, but with our own individual, particular lives as children or as adults.

It is a tragic thing that with unregenerated men, with ordinary unsaved men and women through the ages, corrupt communication is normal. It is a sad commentary on the fallen nature of man that the talk in the shops is so common and vulgar. I heard a couple of Christian girls say last year that they were no longer able to stay in the office of the United States embassy in Great Britain because the language was so coarse and vulgar they felt polluted by it, and had secured positions some other place. The talk on the street, in restaurants, on railroads, at stag dinners is an indication of the corruption in the human race. Not only colored talk, seamy talk, evil talk, there are whisperings, lies about somebody, gossip, malice, the insinuation that this is wrong or that that is wrong, or there is some shadow hanging over someone's life. All this tends to drop items and sentences and insinuations into the minds and hearts of men, that multiply and putrify and rot.

Trench has a great chapter on the degradation of language in which he says that men take wholesome words and drag them down, so that the history of most words is in descent. But, he says, when Christianity

came, it took this Greek vocabulary and lifted it higher and higher and higher.

Said the apostle, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." I am sure that this must be primarily true of those in Christian work. Never, never, never let any member of your congregation ever hear you say anything that he could not repeat in front of angels, and let no one's character be hurt by anything you might ever say. The apostle Paul presses this over and over again, as in Colossians 3:8. Here is Phillips' translation: "No more evil thoughts or words about others, no more evil thoughts or words about God, and no more filthy conversation. Don't tell each other lies anymore." How important, how realistic, how practical.

Now I want to come into the better part of this verse, because I am sure that as members of the body of Christ there are not many here who are guilty of corrupt communication. If you are, you cannot do anything worthwhile for the Lord until this is washed away and you have victory in this matter. I must say that in all my years of fellowship among Christian people, and with students everywhere, seldom have I heard anything that is of a coarse nature. What a tribute to the redeeming grace of the Lord Jesus and the transforming power of the grace of God, that one can live for years among Christian people and hear nothing corrupt.

Now for the better part of the text: "But that which is good to the use of edifying." This is what our Lord meant when He said, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good" (Luke 6:45). Have you ever noticed this phrase, "the fruit of the lips," in Isaiah 57:19? I would like to read something from the

great commentary by George Adam Smith on this phrase: "The lips are, as it were, the blossom of a man. It is in the blossom of a plant that the plant's defects become conspicuous. It is when all of a man's faculties combine for the complex and delicate office of expression in speech, that any fault which is in him will immediately come to the surface."

"Let no corrupt communication . . . but . . ." You will notice when the apostle Paul has an exhortation as to what not to do, he never leaves it suspended in the air; he always has a corollary. First, this you should not do, but this you should do; that is, we not only put off the old man, but we put on the new man, and then he begins to describe the marks of the old man and contrasts these five, giving us the characteristics of the new man. "But that which," he says, "is good for edifying."

"Edify" is a word we rarely use today. Sometimes we use it in the word edifice, which is a building. To edify is to build up somebody. We have a tremendous contrast here. Paul says, "Do not let the words that come out of your mouth drop into the hearts of other people to putrify and pollute them; but let the words that come from your lips make for strong character, building up men in their faith, and in their knowledge, and in their decisions, and in the purposes of life"--"that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

Now, how are we going to do this? Well, you cannot have good things come to your lips unless you have good things in your heart and mind to begin with. A man can only speak those things which are within. Out of the heart, the man speaks, and if we do not have a

storehouse of good things within, they will never be able to come to our lips to pass on to others. I would like to illustrate this. Let me go back first to college days, and then come to this very Monday night of Founder's Week.

During college days, and even in the Moody Bible Institute of course, it is a great thing to get into groups in which the fellowship and conversation is of such a nature that it will make for strong, deep convictions and glorious elevating, transfiguring thoughts. When I was at college, I happened to have a suite of two rooms in a private home. There were about six or eight of us men who generally chummed around together. One was the editor of the paper, two or three of us were on college debating teams, one later became the secretary of the faculty of Columbia University. After our study for the evening was over, and a fourth meal for the day, about twice a week these fellows would come up to my room. There the college orator, a very masculine individual, would sit down and open up the volumes of Alfred Noyes and would begin to read poetry to us. Then another college debater would begin to recite some things from Shakespeare without any preparation at all. Those were some of the most glorious, memorable hours I will ever know in my life. Now I know you can be saved without Alfred Noyes. (I realize that, so do not write me about this.) Also, you can be saved without Shakespeare. I know that. But nevertheless, these are edifying things, and they built themselves into our lives, and when we look back upon those hours, we are exalted and edified by them.

Now let me come down to an experience of this Monday night here in Chicago. Through letters I arranged to have dinner with a friend of mine of the last twenty

years perhaps, the retiring president of a firm which he has built up to fourteen million dollars of annual sales. He is a very devout Christian, and a very capable businessman. He is a very humble man who has a great love for the Word of God. He used to be president of Gideons International. After we had dinner together, I said, "Come on up to my room and let's talk." He did most of the talking, for he had such interesting things to say that I kept my mouth closed and my ears open.

He began by saying, "Have you read this?" I said, "No, I have never heard of it." Then he said, "Have you ever heard of a Mr. So and So who is working with dope addicts in New York?" I said, "I have never heard the name." "Well," he said, "he wrote a book which you ought to read, called Twelve Angels Out of Hell." What a title! And he began to tell me about this wonderful work, about which I had never heard. Then he began to tell me about a business conference he had attended for executive management. Four hundred big executives met together to be refreshed on a college campus in New York. I began to say to myself, "Would it not be wonderful if some institution would launch such a conference just for clergymen for one whole week to get alone in prayer and with the Word of God, and to be refreshed as these men were refreshed for their high and lofty positions?" When that man left my room that night, I was trembling with new ideals. He had put things into my mind that were of an edifying nature, and I was a stronger man for the evening.

You can do this in driving in an automobile. The other day I took a student doing graduate work in the seminary at Pasadena down to a bookstore in Long Beach. He is going to the mission field and is interested

in books and so am I. He said to me, "Have you seen the book called The Growth of the Church in Brazil?" Now, you know, I get a little irritated when a young fellow twenty-three or twenty-four years old talks to me about some book I ought to know, which I have never heard anything about. This is provoking, and humiliating at the same time. "No," I said, "I have never heard of it." "Well," he said, "you ought to get this." So I did. I have told him a dozen times, "Thank you for telling me." I found a true story in that book, and I pass it on to you.

In the early 1900's in South Bend, Indiana, a small Pentecostal group met together for prayer. During the prayer meeting, one of the men, no doubt under divine illumination more than he knew, said, "I believe the Lord is calling our brother to establish mission work in Para." When the meeting was over, this brother that he had indicated said, "Where is Para?" The man who communicated this message said, "I never heard of it." The next day the man who was designated to go to Para went with a friend to the public library to consult a world atlas as to where Para might be. They found it in an obscure corner of Brazil. This man said, "I believe this is the call of God." The other man said, "I believe it is, too, and we'll go together." They went down to Brazil, unannounced, unheralded, unsupervised, and they found Para by themselves in its pagan environment. They started to pray and to learn the language, and after a time a revival broke out. Recently the church celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. It has extended its ministry and converts have gone out founding other churches--this sounds utterly fantastic--so that in fifty years, out of that mission in Para there are now churches with a total membership of 400,000 souls!

Do you know what this did for me? This gave me one of the most wonderful illustrations, parallel to the divine leading of Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch. This is the leading of God. This refreshed my soul.

Now let's go back to the apostle Paul. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth," of course not, "but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." I rarely speak about anything of a personal nature like this, but I want to mention something that occurred while I was teaching here at Moody. One morning I came into the lower auditorium, where I had a class of about five or six hundred. As I walked down the aisle from the front door to go on the platform, I did something that I would not do once in ten years. I stopped in the middle of this auditorium and I put my hand on the shoulder of a student sitting on the aisle. I did not know who he was, though I found out later. I just said to him, "I hope everything is all right with you." A strange thing for me to stop and say to him. Then I went on. That afternoon I received a note from him. He said, "You will never know what your words to me this morning meant. I was already packed and was going to see the dean of men this afternoon to leave the Institute. I am a discouraged man, and I am not worthy to be in the ministry. Thank you for your words. I have unpacked. I am going to stay." I think that if you and I were increasingly sensitive to the leading of the Lord, we could bring words of comfort and strength and encouragement to many more than we do.

"But that which is good to the use of edifying," and above all, that we may have words concerning the Lord Jesus. You remember those words of our Lord in the high

priestly prayer of John 17:20. He not only prayed for the apostles but--I've always loved this phrase--"but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." Isn't that a wonderful statement? Not through their genius, and not through the books they are going to write, and not through the great pulpits they are going to hold, just through their word. This is what we need more and more and more, to drop the living, vital word of the Lord into the hearts of men and women.

Let me close with the illustration which to me is perfect. Our Lord did this. Of course there is no use to talk about corrupt communication from our Lord, that is out of all question. But the rest of the verse, our Lord really applied and practiced. One day He stopped at the well of Sychar and began to talk to a woman of Samaria who had been married again and again and was now living with one not her husband. Everybody knows everything in these small Palestinian towns. She was ostracized. She probably did not have a friend in that village. She was living in sin. She probably had been mistreated and beaten about, and probably could neither read nor write. The Lord began to talk to her--just words, that's all there are. But before that hour was over, the greatest statement that Jesus ever made about God, He uttered to that woman--to that woman, not to the rabbis, not even to the apostles. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth . . . for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:23-24). She left that water pitcher. I do not think our Lord ever did get the drink. She left that water pitcher, she went back to town. She began to tell the people that she had met a prophet, and they went out to see Him, and they said, "Come on into the village." And a revival

broke out. What an edifying conversation that was, which led to her conversion and the conversion of the village.

Luke 4:22: "All bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." He consecrated conversation. As members of the body of Christ, let no, no, NO corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, day or night, to strangers or friends; "let no corrupt communication . . . but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

Holding the Ropes — George Sweeting (1966)

I am thinking today of a statement made by William Carey, that great missionary, who said, "Yonder is a gold mine. I will descend and dig, but you at home must hold the ropes." Turn with me in your Bibles to Acts 9, as we think of this subject, holding the ropes. This is the great chapter of Saul's conversion. However, in verses 20-25 we read of Saul's arrival in the city of Damascus. "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: but their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket."

The infant church as related in the Acts of the Apostles was conceived in a rushing, mighty wind. It swept across the Aegean Sea, going over tossing waves and mountain peaks, until it rocked the imperial city of Rome with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The growth of that church was astronomical. Acts 2:41 says: "Then they that . . . received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Acts 4:4 adds: "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men

was about five thousand." Then Acts 5:14 says: "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." In Acts 6:7 we read, "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." Acts 9:31 reads: "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." In Acts 12:24 we read again: "But the word of God grew and multiplied." Acts 11:24 says: "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord." The growth of this first church was so tremendous, historians tell us that in seventy years there were over 200,000 believers in Jerusalem.

However, on the heels of this tremendous victory came violent persecution. The leader of this barbarous onslaught was a young man by the name of Saul. He was a Jew born in Tarsus, named in all probability after King Saul. He was a brilliant young man, having been trained at the feet of Gamaliel. He was zealous toward God; he was popular. He was a Pharisee and probably a member of the Sanhedrin and was intensely religious. He believed that Jesus was an imposter and that the followers of Christ were heretics. And somehow he dreamed that he was God's instrument to silence these early Christians. So, mad with rage, from rock to rill, and cave to cavern, he hounded the followers of Jesus Christ.

You will notice in Acts 7:58 that he was the man who held the coats of those who stoned Stephen, one of the first deacons in the early church. We read: "And cast him

out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul." Acts 8:1-3 continues: "And Saul" (this is the same young man) "was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison." At the beginning of Acts 9 this same young man is breathing out threats and slaughters against the disciples of the Lord Jesus, every breath a curse and every word a threat. His passion was the slaughter of the followers of Jesus.

But in this chapter he experienced an earth-shaking, heaven-awakening revolution, and his life was completely turned about. We read in Acts 9:3: "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

Young Saul believed in God. He had always believed in the Lord. But that Jesus was God, this he did not accept. He thought that the followers of Christ denied the doctrine of the unity of God and he determined that somehow, some way, he would wipe out the followers of Jesus Christ. But as he journeyed, he recognized supernatural power. He said, "Who art thou, Lord?" He

recognized it was from God. The voice said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." It was at that moment Saul recognized that Jesus was God and that his attitude toward the followers of Christ indicated his attitude toward God. He immediately called out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

In our Scripture lesson, we find him arriving in the city of Damascus, and immediately "he preached Christ in the synagogues that he is the Son of God." The people in Damascus were amazed. They said, "Isn't this he who destroyed them in Jerusalem? Isn't this why he came to our city, to wipe out the followers of Jesus?" Possibly they thought, "Ah, he's a clever young man. This is his strategy; he will get into the inner ranks, determine who the followers of Christ are, and then he will obliterate them once and for all." But after certain days passed, the patience of the Jews in Damascus ran out, and we read in verse 23 that they determined they would kill him. "And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: but their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket."

I want you to see the picture. The governor under Aretas the king kept the city of Damascus with a garrison. The Jews watched the gates day and night to kill Paul. It was nighttime in Damascus. I can see some of Paul's new-found friends, the believers in Damascus, as they crept along the shadows of the Damascus wall. One is carrying a basket and the other, a coil of rope. I can see them as they scale the wall and come to a window. They tie the rope to the basket and young Saul climbs into the basket. Then I imagine one of the disciples said, "Let's

pray a little bit." After they prayed, they let down that basket--down, down, down till it touched the ground with a thud and young Saul climbed out, waved to the disciples on the Damascus wall, and made his escape into the blackness of the Damascus night.

I am thinking first of all of the disciples who held the ropes, and aided Paul that night. Who were they? What were their names? In what chapter of the Bible are they listed? What were their rewards? The answer is, they are unknown to us. Their names are not listed in the Word of God. When I get to heaven I have a lot of questions to ask, as you do, and one is, who were the disciples who helped young Paul make his escape that night from the city of Damascus? They are unknown to history, they are unknown to the Scripture and unknown to us, but thank God, these disciples are known to the Lord.

I have found that some people will serve the Lord as long as they receive credit, as long as they receive earthly recognition, as long as their names are listed. They crave praise. But thank God for those who serve even though their names are not listed. Our Lord said, "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven." If we live for earthly credit, then there will be no heavenly credit. These disciples served without recognition. Actually, the great majority of pastors and missionaries and secretaries and teachers serve this way. Their goal is heavenly reward, not earthly reward. How we thank God for each of them.

I was reading the other day in Exodus 1:8 concerning Israel as slaves in the land of Egypt. The Bible says,

"There arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." He mercilessly oppressed the people of God. He ordered the new-born boys to be slain. He said, "If it be a son . . . kill him." These are the words of Pharaoh. One Jewish mother conceived and gave birth to a son. She saw he was well-formed, and she loved him. For three months at great risk, she hid him. When she could do it no longer, she made a basket of bulrushes, daubed it with slime and with pitch, and placed her precious little baby Moses in that basket. When Pharaoh's daughter found the child, the mother of Moses was conveniently at hand, and in the will of God she was called to nurse and care for her precious baby. Moses was in her basket, and this mother held the ropes for her child. I have often paused to thank God for a wonderful mother and for a saintly father who held the ropes till my basket touched ground. I have also thought of a good and wonderful pastor, of sacrificial deacons and elders, of Sunday school teachers saturated with the Word of God, of Bible school professors who held the ropes. Then I thought of Acts 9:25. Here are unknown disciples, yet they held the ropes for this brand new convert, Saul.

Secondly, I notice in Acts 9:25 that they held the ropes by night. It was nighttime chronologically. It was nighttime experientially. Certain death would have been their fate had they been captured that dark night. But they were willing to hazard their lives for the escape of this brand new convert. They held the ropes by night. Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:12: "For we wrestle . . . against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world." Anyone can be a Christian by day when the sky is blue and soft breezes play. Anyone can follow Christ when the body is strong and

the bills are paid. But I wonder, are we faithful by night? Do we prevail against the darkness? Do we persevere against the principalities, against the powers, against the rulers of darkness?

Peter held the ropes by day. When our Lord was popular, he was there. When our Lord fed the five thousand, he was there. When our Lord did His miracles, Peter was there for earthly recognition and credit. But the darkness moved in, and Peter said, "I don't know Him." Thrice he denied Him. When the darkness moved in, Peter did not hold the ropes.

In contrast, Enoch dared to be singular, and walked with God in a dark generation. Abraham held the ropes as the darkness enveloped Sodom. He pleaded, "Lord, peradventure there are fifty righteous souls there. Lord, peradventure there are forty-five righteous, or thirty, or twenty. Lord, even if there are only ten righteous, wilt Thou forbear?" He held the ropes for the people in that hour of darkness. Daniel was in the desperate minority in Babylon. Yet he wrestled against the rulers of darkness. Esther stood before the king, holding the ropes for her people in spite of the edicts of Haman. Polycarp stood at the stake and said, "Eighty and six years have I served Him. Never once has He wronged me. How can I blaspheme my Lord and King!" He was true during the darkness. Rutherford in Aberdeen, Scotland, said, "O my Lord, were there a broad hell betwixt me and Thee, and I could not get at Thee except wading through it all, I would not hesitate to embrace Thee and call Thee mine." He was true during the nighttime. Mrs. Jonathan Goforth said, "The greatest hardship of the missionary's life is not the strange food he eats, not the houses he lives in, not the trying

climate, not the lack of modern conveniences. The greatest hardship in the missionary's life and the thing which drives many defeated from the field, is the combat against the powers of darkness. If the missionary is left without sufficient aid in prayer, the missionary suffers."

The call today is for rope holders. We live in a great age, a day of opportunity, an absolutely exciting age. But never forget, it is a dark age, a dangerous age. The Christian religion has blood on it, and I believe in the years to come we will see many more martyrs. I painted an oil painting some time ago called "Night Time." The light is at the top of the picture descending into deep, desperate darkness, because night never falls, night always rises. First the valleys are filled with darkness, then the forest, finally the mountains, and then the sky. The darkness is rising about us. It is on every side. But we are to hold the ropes in the rising darkness of the night.

Thirdly, these disciples held the ropes till the basket touched ground. Ninety percent of the time, staying power makes the difference. The Scripture says it is required in stewards that a man or woman be found faithful. I believe that one need of the church today is for old-fashioned dependability. Acts 2:42 tells how the new converts continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, in fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayer. They were not sporadic, not intermittent; they were steadfast. Yes, staying power is the call of the hour. These disciples held the ropes until the basket touched and young Saul stepped out.

There are two reasons for the importance of holding the rope. First of all, you may be the only one holding the

rope. Some people may never hear the gospel unless you reach them. The executive can reach the executive; the truck driver, the truck driver; the housewife, the housewife; and the teen-ager, the teen-ager. We need to communicate the gospel. It may be if you do not win that little junior boy or girl or neighbor, if you are not the channel, if you do not deliver the message, that one may never hear the message of grace. You may be the only one holding the rope.

Secondly, we have no way of knowing how near the basket is to touching ground. It may be today that God will answer your prayer. It may be today that that deep-rooted problem will be resolved. It may be today that that loved one will be reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I was ministering in Levittown, and a woman came up after the service and said, "Mr. Sweeting, do you remember me?" I said, "I surely do. It was while I was here last time that you put your trust in Jesus Christ." She said, "Yes. Do you remember my husband?" I said, "No, I don't. All I remember is that he was against the church, he was antagonistic to the gospel, and he did not like the things of the Lord in general." She said, "That's right. In fact, he took out his vengeance on me and I suffered physical violence because of his anger toward things of God. But I have good news. He has been saved. He has come to know Christ." I said, "I want to meet him." They were having a fellowship time after the service. And I got the man alone in a corner and said, "Friend, tell me, were you like I heard you were? Were you that crude, that rude, that hard, that harsh, that rough, that tough? Were you really that way?" He bowed his head and said, "Mr. Sweeting, to my shame, I

was that crude, that rude; but I am glad my wife did not quit. I am glad she did not give up. I am glad she did as you say, she held the ropes until the basket touched, and I came to know the grace of God."

Oh, I say, your basket may touch ground this morning. The Scripture says, "Pray. Ask on till the answer is given. Seek on till the lost is found. Knock on till the door is opened." I would challenge every believer in Christ to deeper, consistent, steadfast devotion to the Lord Jesus. These disciples held the ropes until the job was done. They stuck with the job and God gave great reward.

Finally, they did not know who was in their basket. I can hear many of you saying, "Well, Mr. Sweeting, of course they knew who was in their basket. Actually it was Saul the persecutor, Saul who was converted. He was in their basket that dark, desperate night." Well, in a sense they did not know who was in the basket. They did not dream that God would use Saul the way that He did. They did not dream that this young man would preach Christ in Jerusalem, and in Antioch, Cyprus, Lystra, and Derbe. They did not imagine that he would start a church in Philippi. They did not dream that he would go to Thessalonica, to Corinth, to Ephesus, to Rome. They did not envision, that dark night, that young Saul would write thirteen epistles that we would read and memorize and study and feast upon down through the centuries. No, they did not know who was really in their basket.

In II Kings 10:7 we read how Jehu ordered the slaughter of seventy of the king's sons, had their heads put in baskets and sent to Jezreel. Here we have baskets of ugliness, baskets of death, baskets of despair, baskets of hatred, baskets of doom.

I ask today, who is in your basket? You respond, "But, Mr. Sweeting, I am so weak. I am so unimportant." Ah, we all are. "Without me, ye can do nothing," says Christ. This does not say without the Lord we are handicapped; it does not say without the Lord we are inferior. It says without Him we are total failures. Without Him we can do nothing.

Remember that Jesus Christ delights in multiplying and magnifying the small. In John 6 we read of a lad, a little boy who had five barley loaves and two small fishes, and with this Jesus fed five thousand. And John 6:13 says this: "They filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten." What am I saying? I am saying that the Lord Jesus Christ delights in using the weak, in taking the small, for little is much when God is in it. Moses only had a rod. Samson had a jaw bone, David a sling, the widow two mites, Gideon a pitcher, and the boy five loaves and two fishes. God wants you and me and the little that we have. When we give Him that little, He takes it and He multiplies it.

Mordecai Ham preached night after night in Charlotte, North Carolina, and one night a thin, good-looking teenager by the name of Billy Graham came forward. Mordecai Ham did not know or imagine or dream who was in his basket.

George Shelley witnessed to a fellow bandsman in New York State. This bandsman, curly headed, enthusiastic Jack Wyrtzen was satisfied with his philosophy of life. When George Shelley gave Jack Wyrtzen a Gospel of John, Jack tore it in two and said, "I don't want to be bothered with it." George Shelley went back again and

gave him a portion of the Gospel of John. Jack did the same thing. But George Shelley kept praying and holding the ropes, until the basket touched ground and Jack professed faith in Christ. But George Shelley did not dream who was in his basket.

Edward Kimball taught a class of rough teen-agers in Boston. He wasn't satisfied just to teach the lesson. He visited them. He witnessed to them. He went to their places of employment. One day, in back of a shoe store, he led a young lad by the name of Dwight Lyman Moody to Jesus Christ. Edward Kimball did not realize who was in his basket. He did not dream that this man would take two continents and rock them in the direction of heaven. Edward Kimball did not dream that Dwight Lyman Moody would lead thousands into the kingdom of God. He did not dream that Moody would establish this Bible Institute and the Moody Church and so reach lost people around our world. We need to remember that little is much when God is in it.

The Lord delights in taking the little that we have. This is what God wants to do today. Oh, I ask, are you a rope holder? Will you get a new grip on the gospel rope? Will you hold that rope until you hear the thud of the basket as it touches ground?

We need to put one another in the basket. You know, we are partners in Christ. We are laborers together. Every teacher, every believer, every missionary, every pastor, every worker--we are laborers together. Let's put each other in the basket.

Then we need to put the missionaries in the basket. We need to hold the ropes for worldwide evangelization. Our supreme task is to reach the world with the gospel

of Jesus Christ. For every missionary here, in a special way, it is our desire as believers to hold the ropes for you. Let's make sure that every missionary is in the basket.

We need to pray for students. Oh, there is a crying need across our land for pastors. The need is so great and it is not being filled. Most institutions are not producing the pastors and the missionaries as they were some years ago. Let's put these students in the basket. We also need to put lost people in the basket as we prevail against the darkness of sin.

I think we need to put Moody Bible Institute and all its ministries in the basket. We need to put the faculty members in the basket. Yes, we need to put the leadership in the basket.

Some of you are discouraged, and I would encourage you to get a grip on the gospel rope and hold the rope until the basket touches ground, for we are to prevail, to wrestle against the darkness. We are to hold the ropes in the nighttime.

Captured by a Vision — Howard F. Sugden (1966)

Dr. Howard F. Sugden, Pastor, South Baptist Church, Lansing, Michigan.

A few moments ago, a giant 707 screamed out of the sky and came in on the runway out at O'Hare Field. It pulled up by that long piece of baloney and men and women moved out into the port. Its arrival and its flight were made possible because on a December day in 1903 two men with a strange glint in their eyes looked at an odd box that they had made. Inside that box was a twelve-horsepower engine. In a few minutes it would be wound up and started, and it would fly for fifty-nine seconds at the incredible speed of thirty miles per hour. It was a great day at Kitty Hawk. The clouds hung low over the infant airport, but these two men with a strange glint in their eyes had a vision. They never lived to see O'Hare Field, but they had a vision.

In the year 1759 a baby boy was born. Many baby boys were born that year, but not many you know about. This one you do know about. Nine years after he was born, his father died and he was left alone. But at twenty-two he was elected to the House of Commons. The name of William Wilberforce is well known today. He had a vision. He was captured by what God might do with him.

Now, this is a day of clouds, all kinds of clouds, and they hang low over the world tonight. There are clouds that threaten to destroy us. We are greatly concerned about world events. And when we turn from world events to the events in theology, we find another area of

cloudiness and haze. Men tell us God is dead, that no longer can we trust in the living God, the God who created heaven and earth, and all that in them is. When we move out of the realm of theology, then we enter into the realm of the Word of God, and we find that this Word must be handled with clever fingers to unwrap the husk of mythology to get at truth. These are days of clouds. I have only one concern, that God might this evening in some way move upon our hearts that we might be men and women captured by God and sent back to our homes different from when we came.

Abraham was captured by a vision. He did not have radio, he had no radar and no Gulf gas station to guide him. He just started out with a vision.

Moses endured. He endured sufferings and afflictions as the leader of his people. He endured because he was captured by a vision.

You remember dear old Caleb. He stood at the foot of a mountain Moses had promised him, and though some long-necked giant looked out at him, Caleb, an old man now, cried out to Joshua, "I had a vision of this mountain. Now, therefore, I pray thee, give me this mountain" (Josh. 14).

I don't know what your mountain may be, and I don't know anything about the giants that peek out through the crevices at you, but I do know this, that if you are captured with a vision, you will go home different from when you came, and prayer will be answered in your soul.

Now, there are movements of God, and I would like to talk with you about four activities of God in giving men a vision. Someone said to Tennyson one day, "I have one

desire in my life, that I will leave the world a better place than I found it." Noble, noble thought. Tennyson said, "That is strange. I have one desire in my life, and that desire is to see God." That is vision.

Isaiah 6 is a familiar chapter. I will not read it to you but only suggest that this was one of the most unusual periods in Israel's history. It was almost like today. They had some society! Do you know that the king that was on the throne had the first guided missiles? Why, his public works project had reached out over Palestine, and every newspaper carried the headlines about Uzziah, what a great man he was. There was a sense of security and a sense of well-being all up and down the land, and it rested in this king. Nothing could ever happen to a nation that had a king like this. And then it did! He died, and Isaiah was involved in it. He was one who knew all about Uzziah. They were friends. He knew about his public works project. No doubt he had been invited into the capitol to discuss with him Route 96, who knows? Isaiah's hopes that day were crushed.

With that simple background, let us read verse 1: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting . . ." No panic in heaven. God did not say, "Oh, what are we going to do now? This ruler on earth has died." You just can't imagine God pushing the panic button and saying "Help!" No, but they were pushing panic buttons on earth, and the whole nation was in distress and mourning. Isaiah went down to the temple. As he stood in the great rotunda and looked across and saw the bronze casket, and the hopes of a nation resting there, suddenly God moved in upon that scene and gave Isaiah a vision--one that we must have if we are going to

live in this day. He saw God seated. He was not in panic, He was not frantic, He was not nervous. He was seated.

The other day I came across a book by an old-fashioned Methodist who wrote it a hundred years ago. The first two messages in it were on the theme of Isaiah's vision and he makes a little comment about this: "Think of it! Isaiah looked up and he saw a sovereign God seated upon the throne, and the skirts of His raiment covered the world. God was a sovereign God. Kings died and kings lived, and presidents move and presidents are elected by the hand of a sovereign God."

We get all worried, all disturbed up our way. The phone rings and someone says, "Mr. Sugden, what do you think about the war? Don't you think you should march somewhere?" I am marching. But I am marching hand in hand with the sovereign God who is not disturbed about earth's events, only as they are the fulfillment of His plans and His purposes.

I was reading Morrison's great new volume, the Oxford History of the American People. In the very opening chapters he makes this statement about the Virginia Colony: "The colony of Virginia lived because they believed God would not let them fall." It is good to know this today with Viet Nam and Cuba and Castro. Khrushchev is sick now, so we don't need to be disturbed about him. God is on the throne! No wonder Julia Ward Howe, after going to Washington and watching our armies march, went home and wrote:

> "*Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;*
> *He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;*

He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword;
His truth is marching on."

I say, Hallelujah! The Christian marches with Him in His sovereignty. We need a vision of His sovereignty today.

But this is not all. There is another vision. In Acts 7 there is a young man preaching a great sermon. Talk about the exposition of the Word of God, all you have to do is read Acts 7. I have always thought that good preachers would be popular, but this puts the lie to that; this one was not. As you read you find this man reaching back and gathering up Abraham and Moses and David, and the pageantry of the Old Testament unfolds. Isn't it good to read how the men in the early days handled the Word of God. The Lord Jesus talked about all that was written in Moses and the prophets and the writings concerning Him. He did not say we have to have a new approach. He just believed the record. And Stephen believed it.

As Stephen came to the conclusion of his message, he became very personal. He said, "You know, as I have traced our history you must recognize that throughout the years of God's dealing with us as a people, there has always been a resistance to truth. Our fathers killed Isaiah and they put Jeremiah in the pit. As they have done, so you will do." Some old fellow in the front nudged the one next to him and said, "How long are we going to put up with this preacher? This is too personal." The other fellow said, "Wait until he gets to the next stopping point and we'll pick up some sticks and stones." And that's what they did. When he made his next pause, they reached down for stones. The Word of God says in

verses 54 and 55: "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing."

I have talked with all my Greek friends and they are not much help here, but one of them came close, I think. He said, "It could be that when Stephen saw the glory of God, the glory of God was Jesus." He looked up, he saw the glory of God and he saw Jesus standing.

The last time the disciples saw Him, He was ascending. That is where Acts 1 closes as far as the Lord Jesus' visible presence is concerned. It is right there that the epistle to the Hebrews takes over, and four times in that epistle we read of the Lord Jesus being seated. He sat down in His relationship to redemption and to sin, because He had settled forever the question of sin by His sufficient sacrifice upon the cross. The Lord Jesus is not dying today. Once He died, and "under an eastern sky, 'mid a rabble's cry, a Man went forth to die" for me. In relation to sin and redemption, the Lord Jesus is seated. But in relation to my need, He stands, because you see Him now in His priestly ministry.

I am quite sure He stood to encourage Stephen. I have always believed that as He looked down and saw this young man about to give his life as a martyr, He was standing there in the glory and saying to Stephen, "Go on!" And He strengthened him to go on, gave him the courage that normally he would not have had.

When I was a young man, we used to have some great teachers. I remember one day in class hearing Dr. Harold Paul Sloan tell about an experience he had in

going to the Conference of which he was a part. He had stood valiantly for the truth. I could just see him, with his shoulders lifted, his great head with white hair thrown back, standing for God. But nobody appreciated it. Strange! When the day was over, he went down to the station to take the train, his little briefcase under his arm. Snow was blowing around the station, and as he stood waiting for the train to take him back home, he related to us, "I wanted to die. Then suddenly it seemed that I had a vision. I saw Wesley. He was drawing near to the Saviour, and as he did, he said, 'Sloan's fed up. Sloan's quitting. He wants to die. Lord, if You will bring him home and give me his body, I'll go back and I'll fight the battles. With Your courage, we'll win the victory.'" Sloan continued, "Then I was back at the station, and I was ready to go on, encouraged, because the Lord was involved in my need."

Oh, how we need to see that here is One who is involved. He stood to encourage Stephen.

I have always believed that along with His standing to encourage Stephen, He was also standing to strengthen him, to give him the unusual strength that he needed in that hour. You see, this is the function of a priest. The Lord Jesus has two offices, you know. He is at the right hand of the Father an Advocate, for "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." Think of it! It does not say if any man cries, if any man weeps; it says if any man sins he has an Advocate. That is Christ's office, and that is for failure. He is a Priest for frailty. If in our frailty He comes to us, and in our need of strength He comes to us, it makes us to go through life not somehow, but triumphantly.

The first time I ever met Bishop Culbertson was at a conference. The day I arrived I went up to my little room with a fearful heart. I dropped my suitcase and looked around. There on the wall was the word that God had for me. It showed a picture of a man bowed down, and underneath it said, "Not somehow, but triumphantly." This is what He wants to do for us, and it works down where we live every day.

Several years ago, up in the thumb of Michigan, a mother had taken her two boys to their grandfather's house to hunt deer. It was evening when the two boys went out in the corn field. They parted, and as they watched for a moving deer, suddenly one of them saw a movement. He raised his gun and blasted. Then he heard a cry and he knew instantly he had not shot a deer. He ran over and found his brother, dying. An ambulance was called, and perhaps no other scene could so wonderfully describe how God gives strength. The mother, who had been widowed some ten years before, sat in the ambulance that was scurrying down the roadway to the nearest hospital, with her young high school boy. He said, "Mom, I think it is the end for me, I don't think I'll survive. It must be that this is the way God wants it. Mom, will you sing for me?" She did. They had been up at Keswick the summer before and had learned our great Keswick hymn. As she finished singing he said, "Mother, will you sing that great rock song?" And there in the ambulance that mother sang to her dying boy:

"*Thou art my Rock, O blessed Redeemer,*
Thou art my Refuge where I may hide;
Thou art my Rock to shelter and bless me;
Ever in Thee I safely abide."

You see, it is down where we live we need this strength. We need the vision that Stephen had when he saw the Lord God, the God of glory, giving strength to His own.

But that is not all. There are four of these movements and they involve every area of the human life. In Acts 10 there is another vision. This is not a vision of sovereignty, such as Isaiah had. It is not a vision of strength or glory, such as Stephen experienced. This is a vision of grace.

All of you are aware that the opening chapters of Acts deal with the Lord Jesus and His movement in the church, and the Holy Spirit's work in the church among Jewish people. It began at Jerusalem and Judea; it had gone to Samaria, and now the church was standing in a position that was dangerous. It was in danger of becoming a Jewish sect. And right at this time, Cornelius, a Gentile, had a vision.

He was a good man. He would have been on the board in most churches. But he was not saved. He was a Gentile who had lived up to the light he had, and when a man lives up to the light he has, God gives him more light. This is the genius in missions. A vision came to Cornelius and said, "Send for Peter." How was he going to get to Peter? Peter was down at Joppa, thirty miles away.

At the very time that messengers were on the way, Peter was up on a housetop. His hostess was slow in getting the meal. He could smell the beefburgers cooking, and as he thought of food, he had a vision. It is amazing how the emphasis is upon hunger. Peter was hungry. But I am quite sure that when Luke wrote this, he saw in Peter's hunger more than the hunger that could be satisfied at

the table in the dining room. He must have remembered that day when the Lord Jesus with His disciples went through Samaria. The disciples went into McDonalds to get hamburgers, and when they came back, they were shocked to see that the Lord Jesus was sitting on the well talking with a woman of Samaria. One of them broke open the sack and said, "Have one." And you know what He said. Peter never forgot it. The Lord said, "I have meat to eat that you men know nothing about. This lost woman has satisfied the hunger of my soul." Peter was hungry, but his hunger was for more than bread and meat.

While he thought and prayed, a sheet came down from heaven. I am glad it says a great sheet. I am afraid of skinny sheets. Through the years the church has been holding out skinny sheets for people. When God dropped a sheet, He dropped a great sheet. In it were clean and unclean animals and creeping things.

Dear old Dr. Ironside used to tell about his father when he was dying. He would say to his wife, "Tell me that story again." When she came to "creeping things," he would stop her and say, "That's where I got in. That's where I got in." That is the grace of God.

While Peter thought on these things, there was a rap, and the lady of the house went to the door. Three men stood there and said, "Is there a gentleman here by the name of Peter?" They were invited in, and they ate. The next day ten men traveled down the expressway, six Jewish men, Peter, and three Gentiles. When they arrived at Cornelius' house, there they were, Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius, and all the little Corneliuses. Cornelius said, "We are all gathered here to hear the word."

Do you know what Peter started out to say? He said, "I would like to give you a few simple statements about existentialism. That has helped so many people." No, he did not. He said, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons," and he told them about a Christ who had died, a Christ who had risen. He never had a chance to say, "Finally, brethren." Oh, Peter said, "This is a vision of what God is doing. He is breaking down walls, He is reaching to the uttermost part of the earth. He is taking in all men and women." We need this today. We have so many skimpy sheets, and we have made the gospel of Jesus Christ something over which we dispute, rather than that which we proclaim. Peter simply said to them, "Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." He didn't even have a chance to give the invitation. Cornelius and his whole family stood up. "Oh," they said, "this is what we have been waiting for. Thank God, the gospel of the grace of God has reached to us."

A vision of grace. I need this. It is so easy for me to go in my office and sit down and think I am a scholar. I am not. It would be easy to just sit and delegate all the work and say, "Brethren, this is for you to do." But there are days when I take my little car and drive down the streets of my city, and as I drive I cry and say, "O God, that these people might know the grace that has been made available in Jesus Christ." We need a vision of grace. And I pray that I may have it.

A vision of sovereignty, a vision of glory, a vision of grace. But that is not all. If you have all this and you do not have the last vision that God drops right down where we are on this great missionary day, we would miss it all.

As you open Acts 16 you hear the roar of the sea and you hear the swish of the waves. A man moves through the gloom, and as he reaches the edge of the sea he feels the spray in his face. Everything is pushed into this hour, every single thing in this chapter is pushed into it: friends he has consulted, circumstances, conditions, all pushed into this hour. Just as you have been pushed into this hour, just as you have been brought here tonight, Paul was brought to this hour. As he stands there in the night, a man stands over across the sea, and holding out his hand he cries, as only a man in need can cry. Have you ever heard a man in need cry? Oh, I pray you will hear a man in need cry, in your city, on your street, in your office, in your building. Oh, to hear the cry of a man in need, and be moved by that cry. Why, there are people today who are getting emotionally upset over TV commercials, and they never bat an eye in the house of God! Just think of it.

This man cries, "Come on over, we need you." Paul cries back, "Get an IBM machine. Get a recorder. Get a gadget." No, he doesn't. Do you know what Paul has found? Paul has found in this a vision of a program that has been pushing its way into his heart, and God's program is always a man. This is God's program. He is not going to speak to anyone in your office unless he speaks through you. The woman next door is not going to hear about the Lord Jesus unless you realize that God's method is to use you as a living personality.

The church withers, dies, decays when men lose the wonder of the program of God. I wish it could be done with machinery. Wouldn't it be nice? But it can't be done that way. Do you know how I know it can't be done? Because there was a time when God gave to Israel the

wonderful task of making His glory known as they marched for forty years. Then after they had gotten in the land and things were more settled, they brought up the ark. They said, "We have carried this thing around so long on our shoulders, let's get a '66 model. That should be pleasing to God." So they went out and got a '66 model, hydromatic, everything, and they loaded the ark of God. God reached down from heaven and said, "O man, don't you know. My glory, the wonder of Myself, can never be carried on by machinery. It has to be on human shoulders, the shoulders of men, the shoulders of women."

We need this vision. You cannot escape it tonight. You just cannot escape it. God does not have any other hands, He does not have any other feet but ours. God's program is a person. Surrender to, no, affirm, the will of God, and immediately move as Paul moved in his affirmation of God's will in his life.

Message Received and Understood? — Alan Redpath (1966)

Dr. Alan Redpath, Pastor, Charlotte Baptist Chapel, Edinburgh, Scotland.

During the days of this week, there has come to you from many men of God the ringing clear note which has spelled out with no uncertain sound what we believe concerning the inspiration and infallibility of the Word of God. It confirms what we already knew, the stand which this school takes, and it also confirms to our heart the things which we believe.

You know every truth has two sides, just like a coin. The infallibility of the Word of God in its authority is one side. The other side of that coin is the infallibility and inevitability of the authority of the Word of God in the life of every believer. If you believe, as I do, that this Book from Genesis to Revelation is the inspired Word of God, then it inevitably follows that this is the word which must be obeyed in all of our lives. Therefore, I want to deal with this side of the truth, and to take for our text James 1:22: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

No less an authority than Martin Luther called the epistle of James an epistle of straw, because he could only see in it a great contradiction between James and Paul; Paul, who was teaching justification by faith alone, and James, who seemed to teach not by faith alone. Here again is an example of the very thing which I have said, that every truth has two sides. In fact, Paul and James were both saying the same thing from a different

viewpoint. James was saying not by a lifeless faith alone; not by mental assent to doctrine; not by a statement of doctrinal creed in which you believe alone, but by a faith that works. And nobody would be more happy to agree with that than the apostle Paul. You will remember that in Acts 15 he was brought before the council of the church in Jerusalem--we would say today, before the church board--to account for his conduct and for his ministry among Gentile people, and he argued for justification by faith alone. The council passed the unanimous resolution recommending the acceptance of what Paul taught, and the chairman of the council was James. So they both agreed, as we read in those familiar verses in Ephesians 2:8-10: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

We are in grave danger of confusion in our thinking between good works, which cannot avail anything for our salvation, and the good works which are the fruit of the indwelling Son of God in a born-again life, and which are the only evidence of conversion. Charles Finney, in his great books on revival, says, "When revival comes, truths to which our hearts are unresponsive suddenly become alive; and whereas mind and conscience may have assented to the truth, when revival comes obedience to the truth is the one thing that matters."

I speak to you as one whose ministry is more in retrospect than prospect, it is more in the past than in the future. But tonight I unburden my heart concerning truth which is deeper and lies heavily upon me as the

one thing that matters in the Christian church: the fastest, speediest way of evangelizing a neighborhood, and the sure product of a revival of Holy Ghost power, namely, the authority of the Word of God in the life of a Christian.

In his matchless books, Know Your Bible, which should be in every preacher's library, written by Dr. W. Graham Scroggie,

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twelve minor prophets. He also makes constant application to our Lord's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, and one such application is here. For if we compare my text with Matthew 7:21, we are reminded that our Lord Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." And in verse 24: "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock."

In the earlier part of this chapter, James has been speaking about how we should hear. Verse 19: "Be swift to hear." Verse 21: "Receive with meekness the engrafted word." But now the all-important thing, having heard, what then? Having listened, having been in church, having been at Founder's Week, having sat under a whole avalanche of sound doctrine, what then? Our text reminds us very forcibly that hearing is in order to doing. Faith and obedience go hand in hand. It is impossible for us truly to believe the principles that are laid down in the New Testament without their laying a powerful grip upon our lives and influencing all that we are.

We were reminded by Dr. Wilbur Smith of John the Baptist. We read of him that the word of God came to him. The meaning is that the word gripped him, it came upon him with force. This is the same thought when God spoke to Jeremiah, the word of God came to him. The only hope for the Christian church today, for young and old, is for the Word of God with all its authority to come upon us and grip us till the only thing that matters is that we work it out in obedience.

The only safe standard in the twentieth century, which has gone crazy about morals and which talks about the new morality--which, incidentally, is as old as the first chapter of Romans--is for all of us here to be gripped by the authority of God's Word. To the believer, the Word of God, James says, is "the perfect law of liberty." It is not a code of do's and don'ts, but it is the law of liberty written by the Holy Spirit upon our hearts, so that the Christian obeys not in order that he might be saved, but because he is; not because he has been delivered

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because there is a strange inner compulsion which always says to him, "I must obey God."

We believe that the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation is inspired; that it does not contain the Word of God but it is the Word of God, and we have been clearly, powerfully reminded of that fact. But may I say this to you, the Bible from Genesis to Revelation has to be obeyed. You cannot carve passages out from this Book and say, that is not for this dispensation. Of course we believe in dispensations. Of course we believe in a dispensation of law and a dispensation of grace. We believe all that. But if you have a whole cake and you cut

a slice out of it, it is part of the whole. We must not throw overboard whole sections of the Word of God on the claim that they apply only to the millennial kingdom. A whole Bible is inspired, a whole Bible is to be obeyed. I am saved from all the condemnation of God's holy law because Jesus Christ fulfilled it, and He is the end of the law unto righteousness for me because I trust Him and love Him. I am saved from the condemnation of the law, but I am not saved from obligation to walk by the Spirit and so fulfill the law. For the Lord Jesus condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

There are many people in our churches who read the Bible, who respect the Bible, and who reverence the Bible, but who do not obey the Bible. They are merely hearers of the Word. I could hear a sermon every day preached by Gabriel himself from heaven, but that would not get me there. Hearing must be followed by the silence of my heart in meditation, and that in turn must be followed by the activity of my life in obedience. It is not enough to remember what I hear, to take notes about it, to write it out, to have my Bible memory kit in my pocket and learn a verse of Scripture every day--that is a good thing to do--but that which must crown every act of faith is obedience. Apart from that, our text says, we deceive ourselves but nobody else. The worst form of deceit, the most awful error imaginable, the most terrifying road to a Christless eternity that leads a man down to hell, is to fill his head with truth, while his heart is empty of love and his life is bereft of obedience.

The Bible is a directory of disciplined Christian living. Therefore the main business of our lives is to obey its

authority. Some people, and they may be here, say that when a preacher speaks like this and talks about practical righteousness, he is not preaching the gospel. Neither is he if he does not present

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conception of Christianity has not grasped it as a rule of life, we had better go to school with James. It puts me under an authority in which my heart delights and from which I am glad never to be able to escape. It is not what we say we believe, but what we do, that is the essence of our Christian living. But our doing must be deeply rooted in our conviction.

Notice the contrast that James draws in verse 23. The man who merely hears the Word and fails to obey it is like a man who beholds his natural face, that is, the face he was born with, as he looks at it in a mirror. There are two ways of finding out what you are like, one a photograph, the other a mirror.

Before coming over to the States, of course I had to have a photograph taken. I went to the cheapest place I could find, and it was all over in a minute. I had three of these photographs. I said to myself, is that really true? I went home where I have a photograph of my wife and Carolyn and myself that was taken just before we left Chicago. It was presented to us by the photographer with his compliments, a beautiful touched-up photograph. I compared these two, and having looked at them for a few moments, I said to myself, "One of these is not telling the truth." So I took the one I just had taken up to my bedroom and I looked in the mirror and I looked at that photograph, and I had to acknowledge it was pretty

near the truth, and the one on the piano, which is a work of art, is sheer flattery.

You can find out what you look like either by the photograph or the mirror, but if you really want to know, choose the mirror. The photograph is what other people say, the mirror is what God says, and there is no use arguing with it, it is a perfect reflector.

There is a type of man who looks at his natural face casually. That is what the word "behold" in the text implies, a casual glance. Immediately he goes away and forgets it. He does not bother about it. But there is another man, you notice from this passage, who looks carefully into the perfect law of liberty. That word means he stoops down, he bends down, he gazes, he looks with a penetrating gaze. It is the same word used of the apostle Peter when on the first Easter morning he went to the empty tomb and he stooped down and gazed in. These are two types of people. The one casually looks at his Bible, shuts it, goes away and forgets it. The other bends his heart, his head, his face over the Word of God, and as we see in II Corinthians 3:18, "with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, (he is) changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." One man has his quiet time, reads his Scripture Union portion, puts his book down, and goes about his business, forgetting all about it. The other man comes each day under the authority of the Word, and on his knees he bows his head and heart, and he catches something of the glory and the glow. His life is changed from glory to glory by the Holy Spirit. Do you know how you can tell the difference between the two? The outcome is inevitably and without exception the difference between mellowness and hardness.

As I grow older, there is only one thing I want to be, that is, more like Jesus. I want to be more mellow, more gentle, more loving, more tender, more kind, more merciful, more like He is. There are men who have bowed before the Word of God and whose spirits have become gentle. They are not weak; they are strong, they are firm, they are true to the truth. But there is something about them that radiates the glory of Jesus, and everyone who meets them feels somehow he is being brought near to Christ. Of such a person, James says (v. 25), he "shall be blessed in his deed," in his obeying the authority.

Whoever finds obedience to the authority of God's Word a delight, he is a free man. We are set at liberty when we walk within the framework of the gospel. They who delight to do the law in the power of the Holy Ghost are free. The founder of this church knew that truth, for he chose as his life text, "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:17); not he who knoweth it, not he who admires it, but he who does it.

Now, all that was really only the introduction. The question I want to ask of every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus is, how do you read your Bible? Which category do you come into? Are you a hearer only? Perhaps you are convicted, and you attend regularly every conference you learn about, and you hear the finest messages proclaimed to you; but you fail in carrying the Word through into obedience. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).

The remainder of this passage in James gives us three simple, brief tests which will help us to decide into which category we come. If we submit to the authority

of the Word of God, this will inevitably reveal itself in these ways.

One, the test of a Spirit-controlled tongue. Verse 26: "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." I may conform to the Word of God, I may conform to outward forms of service, but Satan has a remarkable habit of sowing tares among wheat. Dr. Lehman Strauss says in his excellent book on this epistle, which I commend to you: "These tares sit with the brethren, sing with the brethren, give with the brethren, listen to God's Word, but they have never submitted to its authority." You may shelter under the umbrella of the most evangelical church in the country, and say you believe every word of its doctrine, but go to hell if you do not obey. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue . . ."

It is very interesting that when you are ill a doctor often says to you, "Show me your tongue." The true test of a man's Christian experience is not his ability to speak his mind, but his ability to control his tongue. We judge a man by his walk. James says, judge him also by his talk. Ephesians 4:29: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." Young people, has grace cleaned up your tongue? Ephesians 4:25, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor." I am talking to you personally, just as if you were the only one who matters. I hope that the Holy Spirit is doing this. Have you a tongue that tells the truth? There is no such thing as a saved liar. We are saved from lying. Have you a gossiping tongue? Do you spread rumors that are only half true? Do you put them in writing? Do you publish them in magazines, in periodicals? Do you take them out

of context, omit certain parts which alter the meaning, twist the truth, don't disclose all the facts? Do you do that sort of thing? Your religion is vain, you are heading for a Christless grave.

Second test, a sympathetic heart. Verse 27: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." That word "visit" does not mean a casual call. It is the same word that is used in Luke 1:68 and 78, "the dayspring from on high hath visited us." If you would place that visitation from heaven, that lowliness of the Son of God in the manger, that love that He came to bestow; if you would compare that with the context of our verse, then I think you really have begun to understand what religion means. I believe the world, your neighbor, my neighbor, is dying because there is nobody to love them. Many teen-agers today, about whom I am so desperately concerned in Edinburgh, have no father to pray for them, no mother to pray for them, no home to care for them. They are just brought up any old way. Do you get under that load? Do you share that care? Do you express that love to them? You give a tract to a stranger on the street, well that is a good thing to do. But do you ever take flowers to a home where there is a sad, broken heart? That is even better.

Just before Christmas, in a town in Scotland, according to a Scottish paper there was a very serious fire, a house went up rapidly in flames. It was about nine in the morning and there were three children in the house, two little boys sleeping upstairs, and one baby girl downstairs. Before there was time to call the fire brigade, the place was in flames and smoke. Two passing tradesmen managed to put up a ladder to a top

window and pull out the two boys, but the ground floor rooms were full of smoke. These two men, however, put bandages over their faces and getting down on their knees began to crawl slowly, slowly through the smoke and flames. It seemed as if they couldn't make it, when suddenly the mother, who had been out shopping, came back, and seeing what had happened, dashed over them, raced into the room, pulled out the little girl alive, and got her into the street. Love will always find a way.

Lastly, a sanctified life. Pure religion and undefiled before God means to keep oneself unspotted from the world. God will always keep that which I have committed to Him against that day, but I am responsible for keeping myself unspotted from the world. God will not keep you from temptation if you deliberately expose yourself to it. If you want to keep yourself clean, you do not deliberately walk on the edge of the sidewalk on a rainy day. In the spiritual sense, that means keeping close to Jesus.

Did you know that holiness is not a blessing, it is a person, and holiness is Jesus. I want to bear testimony to something that has happened to me recently. Several months ago, when I lay very ill on a sick bed, I was attacked by every form of evil imagination. Foul thoughts, evil temptations which I thought long since had left me, evil words, bad language, all these things flooded into my mind. I was absolutely in despair that I had lost faith, and I could not pray, I could not talk to God. It all seemed a hopeless battle. I said out of weakness, "Lord, this is surely the devil. I cannot stand him anymore." But it seemed He drew very near to me that morning. For the first time I was conscious of His presence as I had not been for a long, long period. He

said to me, "My child, it is not the devil. It is I. It is Jesus, your Saviour, and I have had to let you go through all this that you might understand that that is all you are but for grace."

The only good thing about a Christian is Jesus. Holiness, in the New Testament sense of the word, the sanctified life, is a life where sinful corruption has been met by all the fullness of the blessing of the power of God flowing in, flowing through, and flowing out.

The tests, therefore, of how I read my Bible, whether or not I submit to its authority, are: Is my tongue controlled? Is my heart bleeding with love? Is my life pure like Jesus? "For by their fruits ye shall know them." The Lord deliver me and the Lord deliver you from being thoroughly sound in doctrine and thoroughly unpleasant in life. This is not an easy message to preach. But such obedience to the Word has its own reward, an increasing communion with God, a closer conformity to His will, and a glimpse of the reflection of the smile of Jesus.

I reach over the pond for my closing illustration. It goes back into history, which you may read for yourself in Winston Churchill's war memoir. The date, sometime in May, 1940. The threat, invasion of Britain. The experience, hundreds and thousands of Nazi bombers dropping everything they had upon London and upon the southeast coast. The scene, a little air base in the southeast part of our island. Sitting round a table are a dozen airmen, dead tired, some of them scarred and bleeding, worn out. Between them they share three planes, all that was left of that fighter command. They had not slept for days or nights. Absolutely weary, they were drinking coffee.

Suddenly a notice from Air Force headquarters: "Enemy approaching in force over the English Channel. Five hundred planes estimate. Take immediate action." All they did was to put down their coffee, run for their planes, and send a message to headquarters, which read, "Message received and understood."

I may never again stand in the pulpit of this church, only the Lord knows. But I have unburdened my heart to you concerning what I believe to be the greatest need of the hour. Message received and understood? God grant it.