

a little red glow build on the shore, then a brighter yellow, then a huge flame, and we rowed desperately to get in the path of that light and followed it safely to shore. You see," he

said, "the same fire that destroyed us saved us."

A cruel world? Yes, but God can make the wrath of man to praise his name.

## "MY CUP RUNNETH OVER"

November 21, 1954

I point you first to God's bountiful overflow. Wherever you lift your eyes you can see the hand of a great provider. He never does anything half-heartedly. He gives in abundance; he is unstinting. He doesn't tithe, that is, dole out one-tenth of blessings; he deluges us with the total flow.

Look at nature this time of year. It seems as though a master plan has gone through the land touching every leaf and blade of grass with colors of brown, yellow and red. The fields of ripened grain, the heavy pumpkins on the vine, hillsides studded with ore and minerals, fish in the streams, cattle in the barns, fruit on the vine; what a gracious provider is our God! An overflowing, bountiful host.

### THANKSGIVING

As a benediction to your soul this Thanksgiving, why not read a copy of Archibald Rutledge's little book entitled, *Life's Extras?* Therein is a pocket of excellent truth—an area of blessings which we overlook. Take color for instance: God could have made the earth all grays and dark brown. Instead, he made it with light and variations. The two colors you can look at the longest are blue and green; God put one of them overhead and the other on the ground under foot.

### GOD'S EXTRAS

It is not absolutely essential to have flowers on earth. We could eat our three meals and live out our days without a rosebud. Yet, they are here, one of God's extras . . . his way of running the cup over. Every rain cloud is followed by the pastels of a beautiful rainbow, God's way of renewing his eternal promise. Odors are among God's extras and had we no sense of smell, we could survive, yet the pungency of new-mown hay, the clean, fresh smell of falling rain is here to bless us. You do not need music to survive, but oh, what a dull life it would be were there no real notes to hear. As we sing about our Saviour, our cares

subside. Smiles must be of God's extras . . . for the dimples in a little child's chin speak more of God's mastery than a thousand steel mills. A smile which beams in radiance opens more doors than a whole chain of keys. All these are life's extras . . . God's way of showing his divine nature.

### WHY THIS OVERFLOW?

"Why all these extras? Why this overflowing cup?" The answer comes in clear relief from God, "So that you may do accordingly." Jesus said, "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back." Luke 6:38 RSV) This is a divine plum line, dropped from heaven to earth, to teach us how to do it. A precedent, a norm of giving, an act of generosity. God does not intend penny-pinching to go on among his folk. He does not condone stinginess, giving ourselves the benefits of the doubt, tipping God with the leftovers, accommodating first our needs and forgetting our brothers. Even if America gave just her overflow to our needy world, what a difference! We are giving, thank God, yet the motives are too seasoned by expediency and political angling.

### SIN OF INGRATITUDE

Doubtless the biggest sin that will be committed this year will not be overeating, perhaps not overdrinking, but when we have done both to fail to say, "Lord, I thank thee!" Ten lepers shook their feeble frames after Christ had healed them, ran off in their new strength but only one stopped to pour out his thanks. We have never known a more ungrateful day than this, taking the good things for granted, saying that God owes me a living; eat, drink and be merry for we have earned it all!"

How many of you Dads have changed that little monotonous sounding prayer before your meals? Do you

still sing off the same words worn slick by practice, but oh so heartless in sound? Why not this day re-think your blessings as you sit with your family before your bountiful table and open up your heart like a man? Be thankful, for you are of all people most blessed "I had no shoes and complained until I saw men who had not feet." No sight ever stabbed me more than the old woman in the leper colony whose fingers were eaten away by white leprosy and nothing remained of her hands except stubs. But on them she held her Bible and blew the leaves to turn them. That, my friend, is gratitude. It is common knowledge among physicians that many of us have had poliomyelitis and never knew it. But God knew it and worked the right forces in our bodies to keep off its crippling affects. Ingratitude is of hell and not an ounce of wit to justify its existence.

### EBBTIDE

To be fair, I must say that the opposite of the flood-tide is ebbtide. The other side of the overflowing cup is the empty cup. This negative note is prophetic. We are not the first great people to have been blessed. Like silent ghosts passing at midnight go the nations assigned to the dust: "Lo, all the pomp of yesterday was one with Nineveh and Tyre." Greece had her splendor, Rome her magnificence, Babylon her hanging gardens, Israel her Canaan. But now these are names in history books highlighting the truth spoken by Goethe, that "a nation can endure anything except continuous prosperity." Listen, America, take heed in this year of our Lord 1954, sin breeds its own destruction and we cannot continue this lethargy. We cannot continue our indulgence and survive! Like the Syrian lepers, "We do not well." Some of us who witnessed the downfall of Germany and Japan in the second war

know at first-hand what it means to see a great power fall to the dust. Big empires crumble where national, as well as individual fortunes, are reduced to ashes. God forbid that these should portend the destiny of America!

### NOT AN EXTRA

And now let me come in the closing moments to tell you of the one thing which should receive our heartiest thanks. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was not an extra. His coming was an absolute necessity. Man at enmity with God, still in his sins, could not bring about the reconciliation. But God came down and lived among us, loving, forgiving and winning. Yet, then as now, "He came unto his own but his own received him not."

### IN YOUR HEART

When the old colored woman became sick down on the plantation in South Carolina, another Negro woman living across the way took her a little bowl of hot soup, bathed her each day and repeated this process for several weeks. The illness continued and the chore became not a matter of weeks but several months and then years. Finally one day the white man asked her, "Auntie, isn't this business of fixing the hot soup and cleaning the house for your friend getting to be old?" "Yes sir," she said, "it was getting to be quite a job until I got her in my heart. Now it ain't no trouble no more." "I got her in my heart." . . . that's the answer. When you get God in your heart, then all the service to this old world becomes a joy. Every hour will find a prayer of thanks on your lips. God is real when he is in your heart.

My friend, won't you close your eyes right there where you are now, surrender your will and life to Jesus and bring him into your heart?

## "GOD'S BROKEN HEART"

November 28, 1954

Just outside the city of Jerusalem Jesus sat weeping. The tears flowed because of the people who were breaking the heart of God. Hear Him saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood

under her wings and you would not!"

Today in our Jerusalem many are breaking God's heart. It may seem ridiculous to some to say that God could grieve, but because He loved us, he limited himself—he made possible pain and grief. When love is spurned, the heart will yearn and grieve.

## OUR DISTRACTING ANXIETIES

One of the things which grieves God is our distracting anxiety: the puny fretting, the aggravating worries about tomorrow. God has promised infinite care and provision. He says that even the hairs of our heads are numbered, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowing. He exhorts us to look at the lilies of the field, the fowls of the air, the grass of the meadow and be convinced that man is more important than all of these.

Nonetheless, many Christians live in such a way that they do not believe a single line of this truth. We say, "Oh I know that is true—but." And therein is the contradiction of faith. There is no difficulty in believing that God did all right by us yesterday, but the uncertainty of tomorrow breeds fear and anxiety.

Some are thinking: But our tomorrows look dark, war looms over us as a dark cloud, old age and insecurity are knocking on the door, the unknown factor of health—why not be distracted? These are the questions which the pagans ask, not the children of the household of faith. In the heart of the genuine Christian there is no room for worry—ever!

Today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday. Paul so confidently knew, "that my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory through Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:19).

A seventh-grade lad, all bent over his arithmetic, just couldn't get the right answer. He figured and figured yet it would not work out right. A visitor in the class that day asked, "Would you like me to help you?" The little fellow asked, "Do you know the answer?" The visitor that day was Albert Einstein. Sometimes we are like the seventh-grade boy trying to work out life's problems and God stands beside us saying, "Let me help you with tomorrow's arithmetic." Be not distracted about tomorrow. Because anxiety will break God's heart.

## OUR SECRET SINS

Moreover, our secret sins will break his heart. The hope of God is to redeem us from all sin: the sins that degrade, the sins that obsess, the sins that cost us life here and hereafter. The blood of Jesus was shed to cleanse all our sins; yet, man insists on keeping his pet iniquities. Most times it is covered from the eyes of the world, the world

takes him as a fine and respectable fellow. Yet, it does not escape the eye of God and God, loving him as his son, grieves.

Secret sins are like malignancy in the flesh—the outside of the body appears robust, none suspects the slightest illness; still deep inside the war of life and death is being fought in the corpuscles. Finally, that which seemed so trivial, so petty, too small to hurt anybody, takes the whole life. Friends, you can never know the peace of God inside so long as you nurse that secret sin. You know what yours is and because one differs from the other doesn't ease the nature of the guilt. Satan moves along the line of least resistance to claim God's children for himself. These are the blockades to spiritual growth. The Church of Jesus Christ is populated by too many who break the heart of God because of secret sins. Many would never be guilty of base and vulgar sins, the obvious, crude type of transgression. Still, the sins may be pride, avarice, slander, malice, greed, envy, spirit of self-righteous.

Actually, these are worse than murder! They are more injurious to the kingdom than theft. A drunkard is easily detected in the company of the saints and all society will frown on his condition; but an unforgiving spirit may sit in the high seats of the temple and get by under the guise of respectability. Little wonder that God grieves.

## SPURNING HIS SON AS SAVIOUR

There is another point at which God's heart is broken: when men refuse to accept his Son as Saviour. "He came unto his own and his own received him not." That tragic process is going on even in this day—a day that has its own grandiose schemes for saving itself, a day of bewilderment, of confusion and endless strife.

Modern Jerusalem, killing the prophets of God, godless atheism saying there is no God, Christless communism crying that God is excess baggage, well-informed, plentifully prospered, thankless people ignoring the one door of hope in a world of chaos. Had there been another way of salvation, then Christ died in vain. There is no other way: a truth worn slick by pronouncement but a truth as fresh as the sunlight. And stubborn, persistent refusal to believe and accept will break our Father's heart.

The worst attitude of our day is to show kind deference to the church, to say that He was the Son of God, that He was the greatest teacher who ever lived, and stop it at that. To ignore the distinctive role for which He lived and died is to ignore all. He did not come to out-think Socrates, to out-shine Confucius, he did not die to be just a martyr, but He was God in human flesh, taking upon Himself the sins of the world, a lamb before a slaughter opening not His mouth, a "man of sorrows acquainted with grief, bearing the sins of the whole world for us all."

He never fought in any army, yet more men have marched on his behalf than followed, Hannibal, Caesar or Stalin. He never wrote a song, yet more music extols his life and death than all others combined. He is the Lily of the Valley, the Rose of Sharon, the Bright and Morning Star, the fairest of ten thousand to my soul—and to ignore him as Saviour is to break His Father's heart.

The price He paid is sufficient for all sins and sinners. Down in the gutter of despair with unpreached hands for help, he can save that kind. He can save the alcoholic, the prostitute, the criminal, the outcast and the great unwashed, the up-and-outs, the self-sufficient, the indifferent, the calloused, the impotent. He can save us all. The

black and white, the Jew and Gentile, Barbarian and Scythian, male and female, bond and free, young and old, rich and poor, sick and well. Let the church come back to this simple biblical principle, come back from its excursions through salve and syrup, come back from its worldly schemes and reasoning reformations, come to its knees before the son of God and find there its own new birth.

Recently Dr. McCloud, on the British Broadcasting Company, told of a minister who observed a young lad every day at noon who went into the church, knelt and prayed a brief prayer, then left. That continued each day so regularly and so briefly until the minister stopped the boy one day and asked, "Son, why do you just rush in, stay a moment and leave?" The lad said, "Sir I have 30 minutes for lunch, and I rush in, say my prayer and hurry back to work." "What do you say when you pray? The lad answered, "I say, Jesus, it is Jimmy." A few weeks later the same minister stood beside the bed of a dying boy and he vows that he heard a voice saying, "Jimmy, it is Jesus."

And now won't you kneel where you are and say, "God I have broken your heart long enough, now I surrender my life and all to thee, take me as I am and make me as I ought to be."

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W. L. HUGHEN, minister of music at Central Park Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala., will sing solos on the "Baptist Hour" December 12 and 19, it was announced this week.

His ability as a soloist brought him invitations to appear twice at the 1954 sessions of the Southern Baptist Convention. In his three years at Central Park Church, Hughen has developed a fully graded choir program which has a total of 500 members.

A native of Pensacola, Fla., Hughen received his B.A. in music from Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, Okla. He is married and has two children.

