

THE  
BETTER  
HOME

JANUARY • FEBRUARY • MARCH • 1945

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION SERIES

## There is ROMANCE

### 1/2 HOME MISSIONS

The romance of home missions is the romance that clusters around the toil and struggle and sacrifice of devoted, heroic men and women who have labored for a nation's spiritual regeneration.

The romance of home missions is the romance of winning racial groups to the Lord. Right here in our midst we have twenty-six nationalities speaking twenty-two languages. These foreigners, Indians, Negroes differ in their traditions, in their mental makeup, and in their racial and social outlook, but their heart-hungers and soul-longings are the same as ours. They need the gospel of Christ. The problem of sin and vice and ignorance is the same in all races and the process as well as the benefits of salvation are the same.

The romance of home missions is the romance of conquest for Christ in a changing order here in the homeland. The task of Home Missions is to transfuse all the life forces of the homeland with the spiritual potencies of the kingdom of God.

The romance of home missions is the romance of mingled faith in God and devotion to one's country. This is the highest patriotism, for deep in the hearts of men the principles are laid through faith in Christ that make for the progress and prosperity of the state.

*"Righteousness exalteth a nation"*

# The Better HOME

VOL. II JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH, 1945 NO. 1

HOWARD M. REAVES, EDITOR

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## A Growing Appreciation of the Home

The war has brought about many changes in our lives, some desirable and others quite undesirable. One of the more worth-while changes is a heightened appreciation of the home and of the contribution which it has made to our national life. Wartime living has caused the disruption of many homes. Thousands of families have been uprooted and transplanted. Large numbers of husbands and fathers have been called to arms and have had to leave their wives and families behind them. The man power shortage has resulted in the employment of more women than ever before. Many boys and girls have found themselves without the usual guidance and restraints of normal home life. Juvenile delinquency has shown an alarming increase and the home influences of other days have been more deeply appreciated than ever before.

What can be done about this situation? Obviously we are powerless to reverse the trend of events and to bring back home immediately the fathers in service and the mothers in industry. These circumstances will prevail for the duration and probably for a period of time after the war has closed. But there are some things which can be done to improve the home situation.

One of our first needs is to secure true appreciation of the importance and worth of Christian homes. A Christian home is not a nonessential, a luxury, a fifth wheel. It is absolutely essential to the development of character and to the welfare of our nation. We need to gain a new appreciation of the abiding influence of Christian homes and of the importance of the habits of daily Bible reading and prayer which they have inculcated.

Moreover, we should resolve to make the homes of our day more definitely Christian. Many homes have been disrupted because of the absence of one or both parents in military service or in industry, but not all parents are away from home. Many thousands of them are still at home and are engaged in their normal pursuits. Furthermore, although many husbands and fathers are away from home, their wives are at home. Those parents who remain, whether one or both, should resolve to do all within their power to make their homes more definitely Christian than ever before. It is not easy to be Christian at any time and it is vastly more difficult to be thoroughly Christian during wartime, but it is all the more important that every effort be put forth to make our homes Christian now.

A full appreciation of the worth of Christian homes will express itself also in a determination to render every possible service to children of homes which have been disrupted by the war and who have become delinquent or who are in danger of becoming so. With the restraining and guiding influences of their homes weakened or removed altogether, these boys and girls need the constructive influence and systematic instruction of the Sunday school more than ever. Now is the time to major upon reaching and enlisting all our young people in Sunday school, in bringing them to a whole-hearted acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Master, and in developing them through the training programs of their respective churches. Furthermore, every possible effort should be made to provide for them amusement and recreation under circumstances which are wholesome and Christian.

War brings in its train a host of evils, but it is possible for good to emerge from it. If one of the results of this war shall be a heightened appreciation of the value of Christian homes and a determined and continuous effort to make the homes of our land Christian, then there shall have been some gain. The opportunity lies before us. We can make our homes what we want them to be.

*Howard M. Reeves*

## ALL THAT I COULD SEE

JEAN CHALMERS DONALDSON

They lived 'way down across the railroad track

And everybody said that they were scum.  
They had no family tree and there was lack,

No doubt, of any culture; they had come  
From common stock and not the slightest doubt.

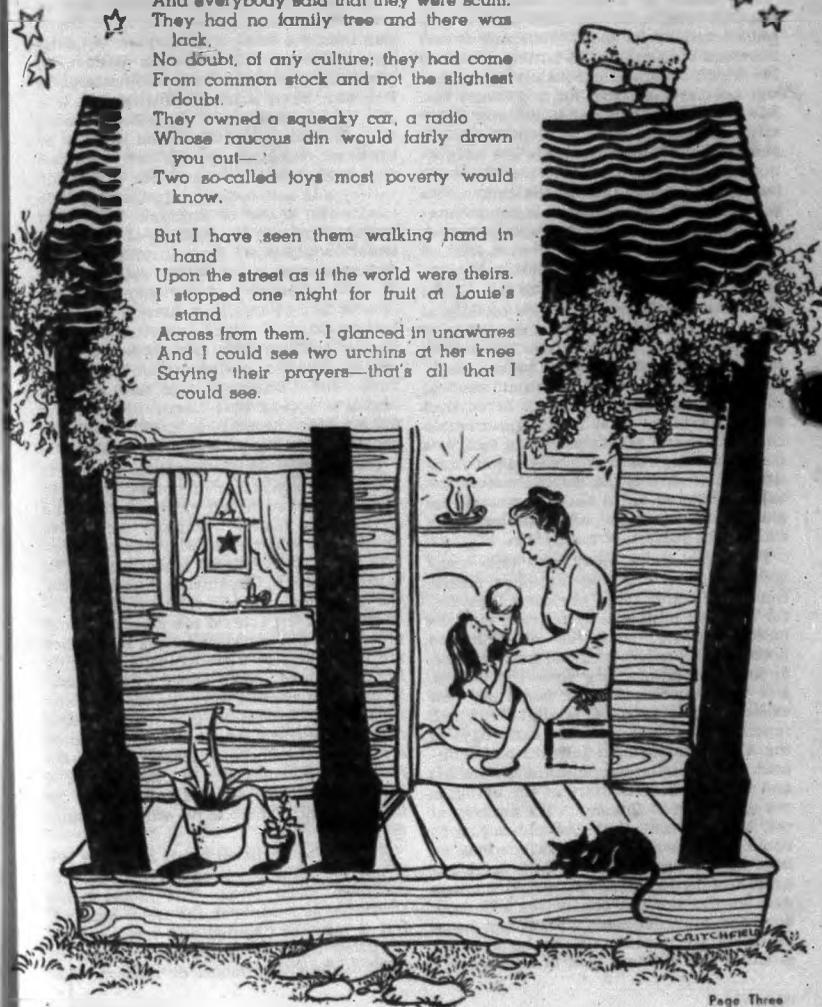
They owned a squeaky car, a radio  
Whose raucous din would fairly drown you out—

Two so-called toys most poverty would know.

But I have seen them walking hand in hand

Upon the street as if the world were theirs.  
I stopped one night for fruit at Louie's stand

Across from them. I glanced in unawares  
And I could see two urchins at her knees  
Saying their prayers—that's all that I could see.



# The Model Home for Modern Days

TALMAGE C. JOHNSON

The home is a social institution, the smallest social unit. As such it is largely conditioned by its social environment and the trend of the times. A pattern of family life which functions adequately in one age will not prove suitable for a different age. New times bring new duties, not only to individuals but also to social institutions, and new duties call for alterations and adaptations in previous patterns. But the more important a social unit is, the slower does it change. Consequently, it is not surprising that the home, the basic unit of human society, should experience often a kind of "social lag" or delay in meeting the requirements of a changing culture.

We are now living in a new social era. Many things have gone into the making of it. Some features of it are better and some are worse than those of previous eras. But that it is a new era few would venture to deny. Nor can it well be believed that it has yet taken final form; innumerable changes are still taking place. In fact, it is a truism to say that our age is one of transition. But already our general culture has been so altered as to make necessary the alteration of primary social patterns, including the pattern of family life.

There are those today who talk sentimentally about the "old-fashioned American home," and there are some who feel for it a real nostalgia. The truth must be faced, however, that the old-fashioned home was a product of a culture now gone, of social conditions long since left behind, and that it was geared to needs not now existent. The type of family life which functioned adequately in the early days of the American Republic and which contributed largely to the happiness of individuals and to the general welfare of the nation is not applicable to this day. The tragedy of our times is not that the old-fashioned home has passed away, but rather that we have not brought forth a new-fashioned home to function as adequately in the new days as did the old one in the old days. Surely we must develop a vibrant new home life if we are to maintain the home as an essential and primary unit of society.

The model home for modern days must be a Christian home, not less but more Christian than the home of yesteryear. A Christian home is not a specific pattern of family life, capable of no modifications in line with newly arisen conditions. It is a way of life built upon Christian foundations which do not alter and shaped by Christian principles which are universal and eternal, but it is capable of infinite variety and satisfactory adjustment to the total social frame of any age. And it is probable that the total culture of today and tomorrow will prove more hospitable to the Christian ideal of family life than did that of the first century of Christianity or the first century of American history. Whether that be true or not, it is certainly a fact that no earlier culture ever made more imperative an effort to Christianise wholly the family life. Unless that is now done, it begins to appear that family life and the private home, as we have known it, will be banished from the emerging social life.

The question which confronts us now is not primarily whether or not we can have Christian homes which can withstand the strain of the modern world and can survive at all when subjected to what Walter Lippman calls "the acids of modernity." The rapid increase in the American divorce rate, the alarming spread of juvenile delinquency, and the general complacency about premarital and extramarital sex indulgence are indications of what happens to family life maintained upon a non-Christian basis. If these are allowed to continue, the home as a social institution is done for. And nothing can check their continuance except a return to the Christian ideals of sex, marriage, and parenthood. In other words, if the home is to be saved at all it must be Christianised. There is no other salvation for it.

A return to Christian ideals of family life is not the same thing as a return to any outgrown social form. The model home should be as modern as the times demand. But it must be planned and fashioned on Christian concepts of human relations in order to be either model or modern. In-

deed, there is nothing new about the present decadence of American home life. The same diseases that have repeatedly sapped the life of the home in its long history in other lands have now infected the American home. They are not new diseases; they have accounted for the breakdown of family life in every great civilization and every great nation long since swept into oblivion. To call them modern is but to flatter them, adding to the appeal of novelty to which they are not entitled. The only modern pioneering in homemaking and family life, as in every other area of human society, is in the direction of the Christian ideal never yet attained in all its perfection and beauty.

Marriage is the first step in the establishment of a home. Here the Christian ideal requires that it be not undertaken thoughtlessly, lightly, or unadvisedly, but discreetly, reverently, and in the fear of God. Neither is it to be severed lightly, but rather to be viewed as a permanent union dissolved only by the death of one of the contracting parties. The Christian ideal of marriage, therefore, forbids it as a legalizing of lust, a thing of convenience, or an instrument for personal and selfish gratification. It sanctions it as a mutual self-giving and self-forgetting, a companionship of shared interests in worthwhile things, and an equal partnership in the propagation of the race and the rearing of children. If marriage were generally undertaken in accordance with this ideal, symbolizing as it does the union which is between Christ and his church, there would be little likelihood of its ending in failure or in the sordid "messes" which are so frequently aired in our divorce courts. Stricter marriage and divorce laws will do but little to bring about improvement in this matter, although there is an obvious need for more uniformity in the laws governing it within the various states of our nation. The real solution, however, lies in more effective teaching and more persuasive presentation of the Christian view of marriage.

Parenthood in the Christian ideal is a sacred trust and a responsibility which cannot be shirked. In giving birth to children and in the rearing of them, human beings have the high and noble privilege of sharing with God in his creative activity. At birth the child is a potential person; what he shall become depends largely upon how

well the parents co-operate with God in developing his potentialities. Children, therefore, are not to be thought of as playthings for grownups, to be cuddled when one wants to cuddle them and then to be shoved aside in favor of a new experience which promises some new thrill. They are not to be coddled or neglected, indulged or suppressed. The children of the Christian home must share all the experiences of the family they are capable of sharing, and be prepared for sharing additional experiences as they become more and more mature. Only thus can they be made ready to establish homes of their own after the Christian pattern.

The Christian view of human nature can alone furnish insight and direction for child training. Christian philosophy sees the essential nature of a human being as spiritual. The body is the spirit's living temple, not to be despised, abused, or mutilated, but also not to be given primacy. This conception requires that the body of a child be tenderly nourished, safeguarded, and developed. The progress of recent years in prenatal care and infant treatment is altogether to the good, resulting as it has in decreasing the number of stillborn babies and the infant mortality rate. The increased attention given in recent years to feeding and training children is also invaluable, resulting as it has in better bodies with which to participate in the activities of life. The development of child psychology with its emphasis on the needs of the growing child mind is also significant, for it has made possible a needed understanding of child life and has supplied a needed technique for child guidance. But, unfortunately, attention has been focused so completely upon the child's physical and mental needs that scant attention has been given to his spiritual needs, which, according to Christianity, are his primary needs.

It is at this point that the modern home has most seriously broken down and proved itself to be far inferior to what we are pleased to call the old-fashioned home. Whatever may have been the faults of the American home in years gone by, and it had its faults, we must concede that to a splendid degree it succeeded in transmitting to its youth high moral standards and in developing appreciation of the spiritual

[Continued on page six]

## OLD HOUSES

JESSIE WILMORE MURTON

I love old houses! There is dignity  
Of years upon each timber and each stone—  
A ripened mellowness which time alone  
Bestows, a certain aristocracy  
Of beam and sill. Old houses quietly  
Observe a changing world, content to own  
And cherish what old walls, old hearths, have known  
Of tears and laughter, love and loyalty.

Old houses know the ways of human hearts!  
The innocence of babes, the wild sweet pain  
Of youth and love, the stillness of last sleep.  
The touch of snow, the first pale bud that starts,  
The ancient lullabies of wind and rain:  
These thread the dreams old houses weave—and keep.

### The Model Home . . .

[Continued from preceding page]

values of life. True, the old-fashioned family altar sometimes made religion appear a bit austere and forbidding to the children compelled to kneel there. We must admit that family worship, both at home and at the meetinghouse, sometimes had in it too much of cant and hypocrisy and that Christianity was not always applied to life situations. The fact remains, however, that in addition to its disciplinary value, it imparted a measure of the Christian ideals and understandings of life. Furthermore, it played no small part in the molding of the noblest American character yet produced, character which cannot be reproduced in the atmosphere of a non-Christian home.

Whatever form family life is to have in our future, if it is to work and if it is to survive, it must be based upon the Christian concept that human nature is more than physical, that children are more than little animals, and that men and women do not achieve the glory for which they were created until they become sons and daughters of God. The model home for modern days can be built upon no other foundation than Jesus Christ and his unlimited appreciation of the worth of human life.

## Practical Consecration

LYDIA LION ROBERTS

We think of a minister as leading a consecrated life and of course we expect a church building to be consecrated, but why not bring the idea into small, everyday things too? How about a consecrated car, typewriter, or washing machine? The man who fills his car with people who are weary or who would not get to church otherwise or who need a lift—for spirit as well as feet—has a consecrated car. The girl who types for the Red Cross three nights a week after a full day of office work is consecrating her typewriter. Another typist may be doing letters for someone who is unable to spare time or strength to write them.

There was a woman who could not sing or play a musical instrument or paint pictures; nevertheless, she created happiness with her washing machine. She did the baby's washing for a mother who had too much to do, she washed all the curtains for a neighbor who had a multitude of troubles, and she gathered up the blankets from a household where there was illness and put them in her washing machine.

Consecration, like all holy things, is very practical and efficient in everyday use, and it always brings gladness wherever it is used.

## Evangelists All

MYRTIE OF THE OZARKS

Of course we never thought of ourselves as evangelists or of making good homes. We just did what we did because we got pleasure out of doing it and because we saw that the people in our isolated Ozark community needed social diversion. The unforeseen results were that homes became good homes and good homes became better homes.

Ours was a dull community before the singing teacher came to live in a little log cabin on one of the hill farms. Some of our people attended all the parties for miles around, parties that usually ended in drunken brawls. Others called themselves homeless Christians because there was no church within horse-and-wagon distance for them to belong to. And there were the young people, sons and daughters of these homeless Christians, who were denied a social outlet. Only roughnecks went to wild parties, so they had no place to go. This was obviously not a bright outlook for these young people.

Then came the singing teacher, and he soon had something started. It is doubtful that he had the welfare of these lonely young people at heart when he "gave out" the first singing to be held in his home on Sunday afternoon. This man liked to sing and he liked for people to hear him sing and to sing with him. So he invited everybody to come to his house for the singing.

By one o'clock the cabin was packed with people. An old-fashioned organ filled one corner of the room but he did not open it. Instead, he passed out songbooks saying, "Not more'n two of a kind, but many of the old hymns are in all of 'em." A song was selected and he continued, "Now just open your mouths wide and sing loud."

He sounded the keynote and started the first verse. We opened our mouths, for it seemed easier to drink in every note that way, but the only sound that came from anyone, except from our host and his wife, were sighs as the first verse ended. The singing teacher encouraged us to try the next verse and a few responded. Some rushed ahead and others dwelt at great

length on the last word of each phrase. Our host came out somewhere between at the right time, and then waited patiently, without cracking a smile, for the others to finish. He said, "Fine, fine, you're doin' fine," and started the third verse.

It is hard to imagine what a chance passerby that afternoon might have thought of the medley of inharmonious sounds issuing from that cabin. But by sunset many of us had discovered a miracle. We could actually carry a tune if someone started and led us. It was wonderful! Several parents offered timidly, "If you want to, you can give out a singin' at our place next Sunday afternoon."

We needed books, and when our singing teacher told us he could order them cheaply, we dug up the necessary quarters. We decided to wait for our books to come before starting a "protracted singing." In the meantime, the singing teacher learned that my father had once attended a singing school where figured notes had been taught and that he could sing bass. He also came to the conclusion that my sister and I had good voices and offered to give the three of us special help while we waited for the songbooks to come.

It wasn't hard for Father to sing bass to any song we undertook, and sister was soon singing alto like a top. As for me, it was fun, yet agony, to start trembling lest I couldn't carry the tune, and end up by singing it through without missing a note.

We got our books with shaped notes and it was suggested that we meet at the schoolhouse each Sunday afternoon to sing. It was soon apparent why the singing teacher had been taking special interest in teaching us the notes. With Father singing bass, it was easy to persuade the men and boys with bass voices to sing. With me to lead the sopranos, the teacher was left free to help where he was needed.

Our singings fell into a pattern. We would meet each Sunday afternoon to sing and at least one evening during the week for practice. Anyone living within walking, wagon, or horseback distance could come and listen or sing. Many came from other communi-

ties to join our class. But since the class needed more than one lesson a week, the singing teacher offered a two or three weeks' singing school free of charge, and during that time the hills and valleys for miles around were filled with singing. Coming to and going home from singing some sang the scale forward and backward, others sang songs by note, and others sang the words. What fun we had!

Since we were using songbooks "suitable for Sunday schools, revivals, singing schools, and conventions," it seemed logical to organize a Sunday school. Had we prepared our lessons as well as we prepared our songs, ours would have been the best Sunday school in the world, but it did the community good, and many who would never have ridden a mile to get to Sunday school rode five or six miles to hear the singing.

A preacher visited our community, and deciding that the field was ripe unto harvest, he arranged to hold a protracted meeting at our schoolhouse. Before the revival ended a church was organized. A few came from another church since this church would be much nearer for them, several of the homeless Christians united with the church, but the greater number of charter members were new recruits—those converted during the revival and baptized at its close.

Several of the converts confessed. "It wasn't nothing the preacher said that convicted me. It was listening to them songs. I realized a good while ago that there was something I wanted, needed bad, but I didn't exactly know what it was at first."

By this time our choir—including all from preschool age children to grandparents—was considered one of the two best in the county. Many contended that it was the best. We were not the best singers; we simply had good leadership, good training, and wanted to sing. That was all.

And that gave us opportunities for service. For instance, the oldest church in the county was having a revival. After two weeks it was about to close without a single conversion, which is a big disappointment for any group of Baptist people. On what was to have been the last night of the revival a group of young people from our church attended. We were given one songbook and invited to sing with them.

Sing with them! They could not even sing together. Some sang faster and faster; others hung to every word. But we came out somewhere between the two groups of singers, and waited for the slow ones to finish.

On the next verse we started singing confidently and the others started singing with us. All they needed was a leader with self-confidence. The next day our singing teacher was invited to come to the services and bring some of his best singers. He said he didn't have any "best," but he'd bring as many as would come.

After a fruitful week the revival ended with twenty-five candidates for baptism. Our choir was invited to sing at the baptismal service and it would be hard to forget that experience. There we stood on the bank of a crystal-clear stream, singing the glorious refrains while the new Christians were buried with Christ in baptism.

Our singings are past and gone. The singers have been scattered. Perhaps there are boys on distant battle fronts who are facing their Gethsemanes with more spiritual fortitude because of the good times we had singing on Sunday afternoons whenever we got together.

"The ability to sing a tune is God-given—I don't believe there is a person living who can't hum a tune," the singing teacher told us. "People are often afraid to try because they are afraid to make a noise. But you've got to open your mouths wide and make an effort."

And that, folks, is one recipe for creating a happy, harmonious atmosphere in your community. Good singing will make any home a good home and it will make good homes better. Try it and you will agree with the young man who said, "Good gospel singing preaches better sermons than many preachers ever preached."

## FOR GUIDANCE

BLANCHE LABELLE SWEENEY

I never shall be famous. I just bake  
And clean and hear small prayers when  
dusk comes down:  
And yet I have a niche in history  
For I am Mrs. Private William Brown.

## Intermediates Need Parents

MRS. C. H. COSBY

He was lying on the back seat of the bus. It was early Sunday morning. The bus driver pulled to the curb and stopped. Leaving his seat he went back and shook the sleeping boy. "Get up and get out," he scolded. "I've ridden you since three o'clock this morning. Get out, I say, and go home. This is your street. Scram!" The boy scrambled out, rubbing his eyes.

The bus driver came back to his seat, and turning he said, "I guess you folks think I'm hard but I'm not. I just get so outdone with the way folks let their boys and girls carry on in this city. Take that boy for instance—he's only thirteen. His mother works on the night shift. Every Saturday night she gives him two dollars and tells him to go have him a time. He does. And when he gets down to his last dime he boards a bus and rides and rides until somebody puts him off. He's not the only youngster at loose ends—I haul 'em all night long, pick 'em up at these hot-totsty places, some so drunk they don't know the way home. I wish you'd tell me what we're coming to?"

No one spoke. A full minute of heavy silence. No one knew the answer. The bus driver sat down, shifted the gears and we were on our way. It had happened again. Every few days we are jolted into an awareness of what is happening to the home life of our country. We are appalled, we are distressed, yet we do very little about it. We are so disturbed over the condition of the world at large that we are missing some of the vital issues right in our midst. And not the least of these is the need of a healthy comradeship in the home.

Can it be that through it all we are becoming more and more self-centered? A mother said to her friend, "I wish you would tell me of a good school for Joan. She is finishing the grades now and I want to send her away." "Away?" queried the friend. "Why away? We have an excellent high school right here." "Well," said that puckered-browed mother, "I just can't stand to take another daughter up over fool's hill. My two older girls nearly drove

me crazy. I'll be glad to have Joan back when she gets through these adolescent years. With camps in the summer and boarding school for the rest of the year, I can manage."

You say, "Impossible!" But no, she was another mother hunting an easy way out of her responsibility. Few are frank enough to admit it, but there are a host of parents in our land who do not want to be bothered with the problems of their teen-age children. Who is to get the warning across to them?

Intermediates need parents who love and lift. Almost all parents love their children but not all parents have a wholesome love. There is the doting love which pampers the child's whims until he becomes spoiled for society and at the other extreme, there is the dominant love which regulates the child's whole life and causes him to develop a fear complex or to become a cheat. The possessive and selfish loves take away initiative; the brooding love smothers personality. But an understanding love liberates and emphasizes individual values; it seeks out and develops aptitudes. Have you analyzed your love? Perhaps it looks all right to you, but how does it measure up? Have you found out what your teen-agers really think of you? What they want of you? What they need of you?

From a survey among young people, ages fourteen to twenty-three, in Baptist churches of a cross-section of Missouri, representing city, town, and rural communities, it was found that out of 100 girls 50 wanted helpfulness from their parents, 42 wanted sympathy in preference to everything else, 14 said, "just money," and 10 required Christian character. Out of 100 boys 25 expected helpfulness, 14 wanted their parents to teach them, 10 wanted only money, 8 expected their parents to be modern, and 5 required Christian character. Girls disliked most of all lack of co-operation, strictness, meddling in love affairs, and nagging, while boys resented lack of co-operation, old-fashioned ideas, and strictness.

The most surprising thing in this survey which covered many angles was the very small per cent who wanted Christian parents. Do you wonder why? Could it be that the type of Christianity with which these young people were associated held no challenge for them? It would seem that somewhere along the line these parents missed the way. An old physician said, as he placed a tiny son in the arms of a young mother, "Here he is, my dear, a perfect specimen of young manhood. He is neither good nor bad. What he becomes is up to you." What a challenge. Parents, do you have a love that lifts?

Intermediates need parents who work and play. Work is a gift of God. Work that has been well done brings a sense of satisfaction at the close of the day even to the most weary in body. Today many are finding that they can do hard manual labor and like it. Especially is this true of women. A great host of them have literally rolled up their sleeves and tackled men's jobs. All necessary work is important and our war work needs every one of us. Each of us must have a part in re-establishing peace among the nations of earth.

But we don't have to waste the youth of the land to win the war. What are we fighting for if it is not to maintain the standards of human rights and to safeguard our homes? We on the home front cannot break down. The challenge is not to choose between these two responsibilities—the challenge is to fulfill both. We must save our youth while we are saving our country. This is our work.

If you agree that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," you must apply this maxim in the home. First, let there be a sharing and balancing of the work. Let the Intermediate boys and girls know the importance and details of all the work of the parents. Let them take pride in every responsibility of the home and share in its finances. Here is where comradeship plays a big part. Have regular family councils. And at these councils plan the play life of the family. Begin with good reading. Better reading must first be cultivated by the parents themselves. Then have regular discussions of things-we-have-read-this-week in your family circle. Sing often. Parents singing the popular songs with

their teen-agers, twisting their tongues around "pidgin-English" if need be, then moving on to the saner songs which have lived through the years and winding up with a good hymn-sing—this is relaxation for the whole family. Games, hikes, boys and girls running through the home feeling free with Dad and Mother, playing and working together. Yes, these Intermediates do such unexpected and unpredictable things but if you are on intimate terms with them you'll steady them.

Intermediates need parents who truly worship God. What the world needs today is steadfastness. Fear is playing havoc with many lives. Disillusionment is on every side, but God is going on. It's a great day in which to catch step with the Lord. But it is perfectly obvious that God is being left out of many a family program. With the strain and stress of the war, with mothers away working, and boys and girls deprived of watchful care, the spiritual atmosphere of the home is in danger.

What can be done? First, put God naturally into the conversation of the home. Relating answers to prayer and heart experiences encourages private devotions. Guard well the family custom of asking God's blessing at the table. When father is at home, he leads as the head of the house. When father is absent, mother and children take turns. Family worship? Yes, set the best time and establish it with whatever part of the family can be present; the others will know and feel the pull of it. This is worship comradeship.

Sunday must be a different day. Parents will have to take the lead. Getting up early with that "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" spirit gives church worship the right-of-way. A father says, "I just can't get my boy to attend church." Why not? An old Negro philosopher explained his authority quite simply: "As long as dem chillum twist dere toes round my table legs, days gwine to come when I clucks." It seems as if parents need to "cluck" about honoring God.

Parents, hold on to that which is good in the home. Juvenile delinquency is being blamed on parent delinquency by our courts these days. Truly, INTERMEDIATES NEED PARENTS!

## PARENTHOOD

HELEN MARING

When God lends children to us  
It seems that we should be  
Particularly loving  
And faithful. We should see  
To helping them grow pleasant,  
To keeping laughter prime;  
For living close to children  
Is always a good time.

When God lends children to us  
Why should we scold or grouse?  
The mere fact of their being  
Is sunshine in a house.  
And shaping them to manhood  
Or womanhood will bless,  
For they are song and laughter  
And love and happiness.

## A YOUNG MOTHER TO HER MOTHER

RUBY C. HUTCHESON

Though you are the mother of seven  
And I but the mother of one,  
Yet God, in His goodness has planned it  
That each mother under the sun,  
Whatever her color or station,  
May the crown of motherhood wear,  
The glory of motherhood carry,  
And the sweet pain of motherhood bear.  
So now you have no greater blessing,  
More wonderful joy have you none  
Than I, darling mother of seven,  
Since I have my own little son.



## HOPE CHEST

RUTH ERICKSON

Dear little chest, not long ago  
Fine silks and linens were your store;  
But now within the children's room  
You're spilling toys upon the floor!

Oh, do not grieve, my little chest,  
For days when dreams hid in your  
hold—  
Those days when secret hopes were spun  
Within each soft and sacheted fold.

Now plundered daily, there you stand  
Where all the nursery noises team;  
Rejoice, beloved chest, for now  
We've realized our fondest dream.



## Everyday Sermons

MRS. OLLIN J. OWENS

Our father, being a minister, preached on Sunday, but one day in the week was not enough for Mother. She preached on Sunday and the other six days too. Mother did not confine herself to the lecture method either; in fact, she didn't confine herself to any method. We never knew how she would come at us next. She put over her points by lecture, by example, by acting, by pictures, or by illustrations (parables, we always called these). All we could predict about Mother was that the method would be unpredictable and that there would never be any letup. At any rate, we were never bored, and, most important of all, we never forgot!

I recall vividly a lesson on stewardship. One day soon after my grandmother's death Mother brought home a pair of brass candlesticks. Sue and I recognized them at once as the ones that had always set on our grandmother's dining room mantel. Turning to us, Mother asked, "Whose candlesticks are these?" "Yours," we replied, "now that Grandma is gone." "Nearly a hundred years ago," began Mother, "my great-grandfather bought these candlesticks. He thought they were his because he paid for them." Sue and I looked at each other. Mother continued, "But after a while he died. Then they came to my grandfather. He thought they were his because his father left them to him." Sue and I leaned forward. Mother continued, "But after a while he died. Then they came to Aunt Lou and she kept them for many years. But she died and they came to my mother. They stood on the mantel of the old home all of my childhood. But now Grandma is dead, the house is to be sold, and the candlesticks have come to me. Who really owns them?" Sue and I were speechless. The point was so obvious that we were unable to comment.

It has been many years since Mother brought the candlesticks from Grandma's. They still set on Mother's mantel. But Sue and I never look at them that we are not reminded of how short life is, and that God is really the owner and man merely has the use of things for a little while.

I was barely four years old when I received a lesson on gratitude. Aunt Annie sent me a tea set. I cannot recall the color, but I well remember how delighted I was as I prepared for the first tea party. "Now Sue, you sit there," I said, placing the tiny cups and saucers on the little folding table. "Wait a minute," said Mother. "You don't want to serve out of somebody else's dishes, do you?" Astonished, Sue and I halted our table setting. "What do you mean, Mother?" I asked. "Why, don't you know a gift isn't yours until you've thanked the giver for it? The tea set still belongs to Aunt Annie."

It was a new thought to me then, but it's an old one now. Throughout our childhood we were never allowed to forget that we must express our thanks for gifts before they became ours.

Mother taught us kindness by a variety of methods. She was particularly eager that we be kind to those less fortunate than ourselves. One Sunday when I was about seven I came home breathlessly from Sunday school to describe to Mother the new dress and hat that Eugenia was going to have for Easter. "And, oh, Mother, she's going to have white-top shoes!" I exclaimed. (Those were the days when black patent leather bottoms and white top shoes, complete with tassels, were the ultimate.) "And what will Sara have new for Easter?" asked Mother. I felt myself wilting. I was very sure that Sara would be wearing that same dress that she had worn all winter. Why did Mother have to bring up Sara?

I came home that morning bent on talking Mother into getting me an outfit that would put me in the same class with the gorgeous Eugenia, but I well recall that I went to Sunday school on Easter morning in my old winter best. As a matter of fact, I was in college when I wore my first Easter dress!

Mother loved her Bible. She meant for us to love it too. But there came a time during college days when a philosophy teacher caused me to doubt the divinity of God and the inspiration of the Bible. Religion temporarily lost its reality to me. Far from being happy, however, I felt like someone lost in the night seeking a guiding hand.

One day Mother called me into her room. On her desk I saw a stack of old Bibles.

Mother began to pick them up, one by one. "These are our family Bibles," she said. "Here is Great-grandma Downs's Bible. She was born before the Revolution. This Book was her comfort through a long, hard life." I looked at the Bible. It was large, heavy, and leather-bound. The family record had been carefully filled in between the Testaments. "Here is Grandma Thomason's Bible," said Mother. "I've heard that she used to slip down in the orchard back of the garden and read it every morning. She had twelve children and she led all of them to love it too." I noted that Grandma Thomason's Bible showed evidences of much use. "Here is my mother's Bible," said Mother tenderly. "I've seen her read it hundreds of times. How dear it was to her!" I could recall seeing my grandmother read that Book many times myself. Then I turned and picked up Mother's Bible. It was limber with use, and almost every page was marked with pencil, pen, and colored crayon. Looking me in the eye, Mother asked, "Could all of us have been wrong? Could it be possible to deceive generation after generation?"

I went back to my room to do some thinking. If so many people found help in the Bible, how indeed could there be nothing to it, as my teacher claimed? Then, as always, my mother triumphed, and I came through to the light again. Light again! That is Mother! She was always there when we needed her, and her batteries were always charged!

## QUILT

BERTHA ANNIS

Pretty quilt in rose design,  
Tiny stitches every line,  
I recall when it was made,  
Lovingly she applied  
Every leaf and stem and rose,  
I can't tell—she only knows—  
All the thoughts she sewed in it:  
Thoughts of love in every bit  
Of rose and leaf and thorn and stem.  
I value it—it's like a gem.  
Hard it was for her to see,  
Yet she made this quilt for me.

## Thinking Out Loud

NANCY BREWER

Bobby was quite a tiny chap and I was a very young mother when he began "thinking out loud." My neighbor soon warned me that when children were allowed to talk to themselves continually as they played with blocks, dolls, or other toys, they would form the terrible habit of talking too much all the time.

She offered her fourteen-year-old niece who had been a recent visitor at her home as proof of this declaration. "You know Jeannie literally talked our heads off." She spoke wearily of the memory of the days when Jeannie had been a difficult guest in her home. "Long before her visit was ended we were all worn out from listening to her chatter. When she was gone I sighed secretly with relief. But I can't blame the child, for her mother, given to taking the easiest way, always let the child chatter continually at her play."

There was no use in my trying to tell her that I believed that words are merely thoughts spoken aloud, thoughts which mothers should know so that they can more understandingly help their children. For though I was young I knew that from listening in to my little son's conversation with himself I should learn of his abilities and talents, his problems and his desires.

It was from Bobby's conversation with his blocks and trains his father and I first learned that he had a mind naturally turned toward engineering. The crector sets and other building toys he selected as his birthday gifts further proved this. Long before high school days arrived Bob's teachers as well as Henry and I were sure he would select our town's technical high school as the one he wanted to attend.

Next door to us lived Tommy, whose talking aloud was curbed when he was still very young. He soon became more or less of an enigma to his parents. He answered their questions in a polite, obedient fashion, but seldom did he volunteer to tell of his dreams of a career, of his friends, or of what he had done or seen or thought.

His mother, who did not want another chatterbox like Jeannie in the family, worried much during his high school days.

Tommy didn't talk about girls at home. She would have liked to have known about his dates. Only when his feet dragged and his face was glum did she sense that things were going badly for him.

"I worry myself to death when he worries," she wailed one day. "I should like to give him advice. I tell him that I am worried but that doesn't help. I don't see why he is so unfeeling and secretive about things."

It was too late to remind her of the days when Tommy had chattered as he had played and of the ways she had punished him to stop this chatter. I really think that the day she took away his train because he made so much noise as the engineer broke the bonds between the two, for when she brought the engine out two weeks later, Tommy took it without enthusiasm. Playing with a "dead" train minus a noisy engineer and crew is no fun for any little boy.

After Bobby, Eleanor came into our home. As most little girls do, she considered her dolls her babies and carried on long conversations with them. Eleanor, impatient with her dolls, showed me myself as a mother.

One day I overheard Eleanor tell the biggest doll daughter of her family. "If a man selling potholders knocks, hide so he won't know we're home. I just can't be bothered with poor folks today."

After that I was careful to answer each knock, to buy a commodity when I had the money to do so, and always to give a few friendly, encouraging words to the men and women who were going from door to door, working hard to make a living for their own children. And my prayer that my small daughter forget the days on which I had been unsympathetic was soon answered. On the afternoon of a hot day as I was making lemonade for the family Eleanor asked if she could not give a glass of it to any "nagents" who chanced to call.

In our home there was another tiny daughter who reveled in thinking out loud. Many years have passed, but out of the stillness of the night there often seems to come a little voice saying, "Mummy, I had the beautifullest dreams today. Want to hear them?"

Each child in our home had childish dreams of success and romance which they

shared with us. Although they were quite amusing at times, we did not laugh or term them foolish. The dreams faded, of course, but the memory of the hours we listened patiently and with understanding remains with those children, although some of them are now taller than I am.

When Bobby began to add to his prayer the request which his Sunday school teacher had suggested to her pupils—"Jesus keep my thoughts clean," I knew that he was not only sincere but that his thoughts were already clean. When Mary Jean first confided to me that she had to fight jealousy I knew she would win in the fight.

Because I shared sympathetically and understandingly, the spoken thoughts of my children while they were young, I have never had to work to win their confidence as they have grown older. The habit of having Mother listen to their stories has remained. And so I shall continue to have time and understanding for the thoughts of my children and grandchildren.

Yes, words are spoken thoughts. How imperative that every mother realize the value to her of these spontaneous expressions of her sons and daughters.

## PROMISE

CHRISTINE PARR HANKINSON

To stay your heart, treasure this promise well.

Go read it often in these trying days.  
Consider it for peace. Read it to quell  
The poignant sorrow that the wind conveys

From war-torn lands. Oh, cherish it to keep

Your faith in God and triumph of the right.

And when, perchance, some dark forebodings creep

Into your thinking lift it for a light.  
Hold fast to it when doubt and fear assail,

And keep it ever ready on the lip.  
Remembering His promise will not fail;

And never, never let the morning slip.  
Build out of it an altar. Stand unshod,

And hear, "Be still, and know that I am God."

## Keeping the Home Christian in Wartime

MARGARET STROH HIPPS

Although it is difficult at all times to build and maintain a Christian home, there are certain problems which in time of war become particularly acute. War raises barriers and breeds hate between groups of people and between nations, and almost unconsciously even Christians come to accept a distinctly unchristian attitude toward the enemy. In the case of children this is especially dangerous, for if they are taught in their youth to fear or distrust or hate certain groups of people, they tend to carry that attitude with them through life.

Today we are at war with Japan and Germany. Constantly we hear expressions of hate and desire for revenge on these people. One has only to listen to the radio, to pick up a newspaper, or to listen to the talk on buses or trains, at clubs or teas, to hear such expressions as "dirty Japs," "yellow monkeys," "rats," and the like. Our children may not hear these expressions in our homes, but they are not protected from hearing them elsewhere. In one third grade classroom recently the anti-Japanese sentiment was so strong that the children refused to read a story that had to do with a Japanese child. Children who have lived near Japanese children and played with them all their lives now ostracize them. What attitude will they have toward the Japanese twenty years from now?

What can Christian mothers and fathers do in this situation? We must be sure that we have the Christian attitude in our own hearts toward those who are our enemies. This can be expressed even in little words, such as always saying "Japanese" instead of "Japs." But something more is needed. We shall have to plan positive measures to combat what the children get outside the home. There are several ways of doing this.

Be sure that the child is in Sunday school and church on Sunday. There the teachings of the home will be reinforced and he will see that he is part of a group which thinks and feels as he does, and that he is not alone against the crowd.

Take every opportunity to tell some good thing about the Germans or Japanese. Stories appear in our denominational papers and sometimes even in the newspapers. It is not difficult to find material if one is on the lookout.

Retain the distinction made in the First World War between the people and the military. Militarism debases any human being, and one of the gravest dangers that faces our nation is that we shall come out of this war with faith in military force (as distinct from police force) as a means of maintaining peace. Militarism as such must be discarded and the people of every nation and race be given the opportunity to supply their needs.

Be aware in our own minds—for this awareness will carry over to our children—of our sins in our treatment of other people, particularly the people of colored skins. Our own attitude of superiority toward the Japanese has been one cause of their hatred of us.

These are some of the things that we as Christian parents must do if we are to keep our homes Christian in time of war. It will not be easy. It may mean that we shall be misunderstood and perhaps distrusted or despised by our neighbors. But the servant is not above his master and we cannot be false to our Master, no matter what the cost. If Christians cannot take the "more excellent way," who can, and where is there hope for a better world?

## AS A TREE

ELOISE WADE HACKETT

In lacy green the trees last spring  
Hung beauty over everything.

When summer came their symmetry  
In glossy leaves enchanted me.

Then fall repainted—gold and red;  
"Unparalleled! Superb!" I said.

Now leafless trees thrill me as I  
See snow-furred boughs on cobalt sky.

## ENLIGHTENMENT

ALETHA M. BOWNER

We do not pray to change God's will;  
We pray that we be shown  
The wisdom of His holy will  
That we may change our own.

## RAIN

FLORENCE GREEN

The rain goes clattering down the street  
Like little girls in grown-up clothes  
With mother's slippers on their feet.

## SPIDER WEB

ALICE CROWELL HOFFMAN

The spider spun a gossamer net,  
Hoping a fly or a bug to get;  
The fingers of night bepearled it with dew  
And now it has caught my glad heart too.

## CIVILIZATION CAN SURVIVE

ALICE CROWELL HOFFMAN

The world is all awry but then  
I saw her in the Five and Ten  
Buying a tiny ivy plant  
For her porcelain elephant:  
She pondered long as if to say,  
"I should not spend a dime this way."

Though war makes men uncivilized  
I should not be at all surprised  
If civilization won't survive,  
If it won't even grow and thrive,  
(Although the world is kicked in holes)  
While we buy hyacinths for souls.

## TRUST

ALETHA M. BOWNER

Let testing times prove trusting times  
Amid the world's loud roar.  
"Be still, and know that I am God"  
Who keeps thee evermore.

## MORAL PHILOSOPHY

ANNE HELET WESOM

"What is wrong with the world?" I asked  
Uncle Joe,  
And he answered, lifting his eyes from  
his cup,  
"Too much lookin' down; not enough  
lookin' up;  
From wrong to right is a short piece to go."

## IT IS ENOUGH

GLADYS LAWLER

The meadow lark filling the air with song,  
Soaring on carefree wing,  
Can never explain his rapture—  
But it is enough to sing.  
The wild rose caught in the bramble  
hedge  
Diffusing her rare perfume  
Can never explain her fragrance—  
But it is enough to bloom.  
And neither can I explain the force  
Which up to the sky above  
Has lifted my heart in wonder—  
But it is enough to love.

## Listen, Little Girl

MELVIN L. HAYES

Don't cry, little darling! Perhaps it won't  
be long until I'll be marching up the path  
again and you will scamper out to fling  
yourself into my arms. The bugle call must  
never sound a note of sadness in your hap-  
piness, for your sunlit face was never meant  
for shadows.

There, now. Cuddle up against me as you  
have done so many times before. I want  
to talk to you, for I have something near my  
heart. Now that you have almost reached  
the ripe old age of three, it is time that I  
tell you so that you will always know. So  
listen, little girl!

How well I remember the day when you  
came into this world. It was the dawning  
of a new day in my life and in the life of  
your mother, for you brought a bundle of  
blessings into our home. As the joyful days  
fitted by, your breezy yellow hair and in-  
quisitive blue eyes and your ever-ready  
smile made us supremely happy.

Many pleasant times we have had to-  
gether, little pal. Remember the picnic in  
the grove and your first swim in the rip-  
pling creek? You were unafraid—as long  
as I held you up.

The back yard swing brought hours of  
joy too. My, but you thrilled at soaring  
through the air. But sometimes you grad-  
ually slipped over the swing seat and almost  
grazed the ground. How your little hands  
gripped the ropes! Often I was not par-  
ticularly enthusiastic about being involved  
in the sport as "pusher," but the happiness  
you exhibited was highly contagious, caus-  
ing me to realize that my time was not lost.

Have you forgotten the hide-and-seek  
games we played? Great fun, weren't they?  
Invariably you chose the same spot as I  
and I always searched the wrong places in  
vain to avoid finding you. But soon, always  
too soon for you, came bedtime. Modestly  
you would disappear behind the stove to  
undress, only to venture forth in unclothed  
splendor to put your pajamas on. Then  
you knelt beside your little bed and said  
your prayer. "Watch and keep me through  
the night, and wake me with the morning  
light," it ended. But occasionally you chose

midnight rather than dawn for the awaken-  
ing.

On scores of mornings you took the air  
with "Where Daddy is?" At noon you raced  
up the walk to meet me and hold my hand.  
Scarcely half an hour after I left for work  
you began asking if it were time for me to  
come home!

And what a copy-cat you became! You  
crossed your legs or salted your potatoes or  
said the wrong words—just as I did. I real-  
ize now that I should have watched my  
footsteps more closely, for you certainly  
watched them.

Mother and I were very proud of you  
when you exhibited polite little mannerisms  
—even though these were less plentiful  
when company came. If grace were being  
said you folded your eager hands and bowed  
your head but sometimes kept a half-open  
eye fixed on the dessert.

Of course you weren't always a little an-  
gel, in spite of your sugar-and-spice origin.  
I tried in vain to reason with you, to place  
explanations on a level which you could  
grasp. But you were a nonconformist. No  
matter what penalty had to be exacted,  
you came right back with a hug and a kiss.  
My deepest hope is that you will help to  
teach others this full measure of forgiveness  
which is so characteristic of you. And  
maybe you can, for "A little child shall lead  
them."

You surely led your parents—and a merry  
chase it was sometimes. One day you ran  
away from home. And there was your pre-  
mature entry into the dish-drying business,  
breaking slightly fewer than you dried. You  
climbed into my lap and punched the  
wrong typewriter keys. You asked dozens  
of questions—questions so simple they were  
unanswerable, at least to your satisfaction.  
But no matter what happened, you found  
no trouble in wending your way again into  
the depths of my affections.

Yours has been a small world—mostly  
your family, your Sunday school teacher,  
and Topper, the black, woolly dog next door.  
I am proud to have been one of the heroes

of your universe, as all daddies must be the heroes of their own little girls.

Well, it is almost time to leave. "Where am I going? To work?" Yes, I am going to work—but not at the office this time. Perhaps it will be in a fox-hole or on sub-laden seas. Maybe it will be in Arctic blizzards, in steaming tropical jungles, or on blistering desert sands. But wherever it is, there's a tough job to do.

So I'm counting on you here at home, little one, for you are a big girl now. Help Mother all you can. You know I love her truly, but my love has never been divided between you. No, it has simply been multiplied by two.

It's hard to kiss you good-by. But we can't complain, for thousands of fathers have already said good-by to their little

girls and boys and have marched away, hoping that soon there will be a better world in which all children may live, love, and learn. When I look at you and think of your lighthearted joy, your purity and innocence, your forgiveness, your love of rich and poor alike, your lack of prejudices toward race and color and creed—then it is that I have courage to go on. You—and millions of children like you—are the hope of "on earth peace, good will toward men." Yes, it is for you—and in many ways, like you—that tomorrow's world, I am believing, shall be built.

Listen, little girl, the bugle call is for me now. Certainly, I am coming back, just as all daddies plan to come back. And then it will be the dawning of a new day again, for once more I shall have you.



### SHE IS NOT DEAD

IRENE MORGAN PHILLIPS

She is not dead to whom you said good-bye,  
For only they who fear to live can die.  
She lived, and living, tasted all of life—  
Its joy and happiness, its pain and strife.  
She faced its struggles with an unbowed head,  
And lived life fully; no, she is not dead.

She lives in you, and knowing, you'll rejoice  
To hear her laughter in a daughter's voice.  
You'll sense her courage in a young son's stance  
And meet her twinkle in a grandchild's glance.  
And in some weary, sleepless night of pain  
You'll know the soothing of her hand again.

She lives in deeds of kindness and of good  
To those who lived within her neighborhood.  
She lives and will live—let there be no doubt—  
In all the beauty that she brought about.  
Each resurrection of the flowers she grew  
Will whisper that she lives in heaven anew.

## Helping Mother Entertain Her Circle

ESTHER BROOKE

"There must be some mistake in this announcement in the calendar of the week's activities," I said to a friend in the church of which I was a new member. "Our circle surely isn't meeting with Mrs. Thomas Adams! She has three small children!"

"The announcement is correct," my friend assured me. "I think you are due for a pleasant surprise. May I stop by for you next Wednesday and take you with me to the meeting?"

"Thank you. I will be ready when you come," I promised, wondering what could be the meaning of my friend's words.

At the door of Mrs. Adams' home the following Wednesday afternoon we were met by a small girl who greeted us with a smile and led us into the bedroom where we were to leave our wraps. In the living room another small girl directed us to vacant chairs. Neither child was awkward or even self-conscious, and the women already seated in the room went on with their conversation without giving the young hostesses any undue attention. It was evident that Phyllis and Peggy were in the habit of welcoming their mother's guests.

Mrs. Adams came into the room, looking as unfurried as if taking care of three children and entertaining fifteen or twenty guests at the same time were the easiest thing in the world.

"Where is Tommy, Mrs. Adams?" someone asked.

"I just put him out on the back porch in his buggy for his afternoon nap," Mrs. Adams informed us. "He doesn't know what nice company he's missing, but I think he'll wake up before you leave."

When it was time for the meeting to begin, Mrs. Adams called her two little daughters into the room and told them that we were going to have a short meeting which would be much like church. They could stay and sit beside her or they could go into their own room and play quietly with the door closed.

Both children decided to stay with their mother. They made no disturbance while the devotional service and business meeting were carried on.

Late in the afternoon we were served cookies and tea. Tiny Peggy brought in paper napkins and her older sister passed around plates of cookies. Then their mother placed a small table and two chairs in one corner and the little girls had a tea party of their own, with milk instead of tea in the tiny cups.

Before we left, the six-months-old baby brother waked up. His mother excused herself to care for him and then brought him to sit contentedly on her lap and endear himself to all of us with his smiles.

Some months later, when I knew Mrs. Adams better, I told her how much I had enjoyed that afternoon and the part her children had taken in helping her entertain the circle. "Many mothers," I told her, "would think they had enough to do with three children to care for, but you managed to entertain the circle as if it were no trouble at all!"

Mrs. Adams flushed at my sincere praise. "It does call for a little management," she told me, "but I think it is worth all the time and planning it takes. We like to have guests in our home, and we want the children to be at ease with them. We don't want the children to receive too much attention or to feel that they are on exhibition. It has seemed to their father and me that if they are given a part in entertaining guests they will think about others instead of becoming self-conscious and self-centered.

"Of course I would not attempt to entertain a larger or more formal group than the circle and care for the children at the same time," Mrs. Adams continued. "When all the circles meet together at the church I leave the children at home with someone to care for them. But it hasn't seemed too much for me to entertain the circle. We have very simple refreshments and the children like to help me. I think a mother should keep up as many church activities as she can fit into her busy days."

"And your daughters are growing up in the fellowship of the church," I concluded. "Someday they'll be taking a gracious and active part in circles of their own."

## Home

DOROTHY LEE JEFFERSON

"Where is my home?" muses the ragged old tramp. "Why my home is any place where there's warmth and light and a place to lie down. My home is under a shade tree or on a park bench or in a barn. My home is where there's a friendly dog or an easy handout or a fellow tramp. Now I ain't so particular, but there's a lot of places I wouldn't call home. I'd rather cook bacon over a fire under a railroad bridge than to sit at a fine table with big shots who have forgotten how to laugh and don't know how to sing. Home ain't a place—it's a shelter."

"Home?" queries the coed. "Home means week-end visits and summer vacations. Home means long letters filled with advice and courage and love. Home means sleeping late and being spoiled and solving problems. Home is a place to rebuild shattered illusions and to gather inspiration and strength for whatever comes. Home is belonging to someone. I wouldn't care about an education if I didn't have the hope of a home of my own. Home isn't a residence—it is security."

"My home," says the dowager, "is really

quite suitable for our needs. My great-grandfather built it, and I have kept it just as he left it. There is a library, of course; I am proud, and justly, I think, of my collection of books. My husband has his den and trophy room, and I use one of the parlors for my art collection. The dining room will accommodate forty or more, and there is a ballroom for large parties. There is nothing exceptional about my home; it has been in the family for years. Home is not a dwelling, you know; it is a tradition."

"Home?" says the soldier. "Home is the thing I am fighting for. Home is safety and the four freedoms. Home is a place where we can rear our children to be good citizens. Home is something we have worked for, and something we are glad to fight for. In the army we come from all types of homes but the idea is the same. Home isn't a building—it's a symbol."

"Home?" echo 130,000,000 voices. "Home is a Brooklyn flat and a Mississippi tenant house. Home is a mansion in Chicago or a hut in California. Home is one room near an army camp, or a sturdy structure built by the pioneers. Home is a trapper's tent with a three-ring circus, or it is the largest suite in the Blitmore Hotel. For home is not a habitat; home is where the heart is.

## THIS IS MY FATHER'S WORLD

FAYE CARR ADAMS

This is my Father's world, this lovely place  
Where mountains hold their snowy peaks up high  
Above the valleys, green with grain, and lace  
Is hung on leafy trees against the sky.  
This is my Father's world and songbirds sing  
A deathless melody of joy and pain,  
Purging their hearts of dreariness to bring  
Sweet notes of cheer to human hearts again.  
Oh, he who loves a mountain's lofty peak—  
Or who sees valleys stretch to endless miles,  
Knows in the splendid silence God will speak  
And in the virile greenness that He smiles.  
This is my Father's world—His own design,  
But in His goodness He has made it mine!

## A Grandmother's Prayer

Lydia Lottie Roberts

- God of grandmothers, let me grow old gracefully.  
Help me to hide my thorns and frailties with flowers of graciousness and the strength of achievement.  
Let my wrinkles be made by smiles of courage rather than by lines of bitterness.  
As the light fades from my eyes, may an inner glow illumine my spirit.
- Give to me a wise old age, where I may admit the cruelties of life but where I am not afraid to endorse its beauty.  
May the memories of happy hours and blessed companionships keep my nights serene.  
Keep me ever striving for a wide-awake spirit, and help me to understand keenly that old age is no excuse for unloveliness of heart or mind.  
Inspire me with kindness and a gentle tongue.  
Help me to share the sorrows of others and keep mine to myself.  
Teach me to bear pain with dignity and to meet defeat with composure.  
Help me to be tender to all who are young and growing.  
Above all, teach me to bear with myself as I grow old, knowing that in thy love I am of worth even unto my greatest age.  
Therefore, let me walk unflinchingly the long path of life that leads to thy kingdom of joy and peace.

## The Best Things Are Not Rationed

MABEL WORTH

Even though we do our best in our homes as good citizens to teach the values of the rationing system and to remain cheerful and optimistic about the resultant inconveniences, there are times when children may grow skeptical, impatient, and show their disappointment when certain favorite foods or household items are not readily available as they were in prewar days.

One wise mother began early in the days of rationing to remind her family that the most important things in life are not rationed and never will be.

For example, when raincoats of synthetic materials gave dissatisfaction and an impatient adolescent getting ready for school complained of "that old coat," she reminded him that education in America is not rationed—every young person, as well as each man and woman, may have all the knowledge he wishes to take; schools are

operating as freely now as ever and books are available to all who will use them.

This mother emphasized that sunshine and lovely climate are not rationed and never will be. As the children were assigned duties in the family garden and weed-pulling brought its accompanying backaches and extra perspiration, she gaily told them that home-grown vegetables and all the favorite flowers were not rationed. In every family prayer gratitude was expressed for the unlimited love of God toward man and for the love which his children have for each other.

These fortunate children have had impressed on their minds and hearts the fact that spiritual gifts are free and that there is no parceling out of the most valuable gifts to mankind—faith, prayer, God's Word, love expressed in manifold ways, nature's rich gifts, and innumerable other treasures.

## Her Portion of Love

FRANCES McKINNON MORTON

There they sat in an irregular row on the low stone wall which was the boundary between Mrs. Parker's place and the hill beyond, and they annoyed her. She was tired of seeing them there day after day looking like little half-plucked birds in their variously assorted bathing suits and sun suits, and she told herself very firmly that she was not going to have the ragged edges of Trailer Town spilling over the wall into her shady back yard with its bright flower beds and its well kept garden.

She was baking orange cookies that morning and thinking pleasantly of the Study Club, which was to meet with her that afternoon. Then suddenly from beyond the garden wall where she had just noticed the children perching, she heard an ear-piercing shriek which started her racing up the gentle slope of her hill just as she had run in the days when the shriekers were her own.

There she found the "littles one"—Betty was her name—spluttering and splashing in the irrigation ditch as if she were about to drown. With a practiced hand Mrs. Parker fished her out. She was all set to begin lecturing the culprit until she saw how small and blue and shivering she looked. So Mrs. Parker called a truce with her own spirit and soon had the child in the warm kitchen, dried with one soft towel and wrapped in another while she munched warm cookies and waited for her tiny sun suit to dry. But the small one was shameless and asked for more cookies. "A little girl like you?" Mrs. Parker protested, but Betty argued, "The littler I am the more cookies I need to make me grow." Mrs. Parker chuckled inside but continued to look stern as she put Betty into her dry clothes and started her off with a bag of cookies.

"Divide these with your friends," she said severely, "and tell them I said if you will all stay off the wall you will not fall into the ditch and almost drown."

Later that afternoon, after the last Study Club member had departed, the children appeared at the back door, not looking half-

plucked any more but so clean and so neatly dressed that Mrs. Parker was forced to admit to herself that they were a nice looking group of children.

She opened the door and invited them in. The oldest boy, who seemed to have charge of the group, held out his hand to her. "Mrs. Parker," he said, "I am Jack Gilbert and this is my cousin Susan Cherry. We are both eight years old but I am six months older than Susan. Our parents work all day away from home and we sort of look out for the others. We are ashamed about Betty. We hope she didn't ask for those cookies. We are not beggars. We have homes where we came from and we all have ration cards for sugar—"

But Harper Bates, better known as Happy, and still better known as Fatty, could no longer endure the overpoweringly good smell of the cookies setting on the table, and fairly exploded with a plan of his own.

"Betty was such a little pig!" he said. "She ate every mouthful of that bag of cookies right before us and never offered us a taste. Maybe if you would give each one of us a cookie and let us eat it right before her it might teach her some manners."

"Maybe it might," Mrs. Parker said kindly, for she was quite unable to resist Happy's hungry look. So she seated all but Betty at the table while she served cookies and small glasses of cold sweet milk. Betty she ignored, and when the serving was over she sat down in the special chair which her boys had always called her throne. From that vantage point she talked pleasantly to them, still ignoring Betty, though she

### TODAY

LYDIA LOTTIE ROBERTS

I will do my job,  
I will not be afraid,  
I will not be lazy,  
I will not be diverted,  
I will not be discouraged  
I will go on.

The Better Home

### REWARD

ARTHUR WALLACE PEACE

Though heavy in the hands of love  
Is work that love must do,  
Great peace shall bless the long day's end  
For love is kind and true.

There is a truth such tasks reveal—  
The toiling hours impart:  
Love's work, though heavy on the hands,  
Is light upon the heart.

had to admit that there was an angelic look to Betty in a little white dress.

Then a sudden wall swept through the air and five-year-old Betty literally flung herself into Mrs. Parker's lap, her face a little quivering flower and her voice a dramatic cry, while her tear-washed eyes looked appealingly to Mrs. Parker.

"I feel like I want somebody to love me," she wailed, "even if I don't get any cookies I want somebody to love me. I can't be good—"

But Jack interrupted with disgust, "Don't listen to her, Mrs. Parker, she always does that and then Susan takes her and loves her and that just makes her more spoiled—"

"Get on with your eating, Jack," Mrs. Parker said gently as she folded the small girl close in her arms, suddenly thrilled at the softness and sweetness of a little girl child, "I will take care of Betty, and Susan may be right."

Mrs. Parker adopted a by-the-day family, who were soon helping her, so she thought, quite as much as she helped them. She gave them love and care and the feeling of home while they took delight in helping with all the tasks about the place; and once again in all the lovely nooks and corners of her house there brooded the gracious spirit which makes a home.

It was on a Saturday afternoon that Mrs. Parker's eldest son, lovingly known in the community as Captain Johnny, surprised the family group on the hospitable back porch. Mrs. Parker, enthroned in her old rocker, was reading aloud to the children while they were grouped around the table

comfortably nibbling cookies and sandwiches for their mid-afternoon lunch that Fatty always assured her they were just a little bit more than ready for.

"Mother," he said looking down at her with a broad grin, "you are an angel, just a plain angel."

"And very plain," she came back with her heart-warming smile as she smoothed back her hair after the bear-hug the captain gave her.

"Don't we know she's an angel?" Jack exploded jealously. "A regular mother-angel, but we'd better be going and let you visit with her."

"No indeed," the captain said heartily. "Just you move over and let me sit down with the rest of you. I can't think of anything I would rather do right now than sit here and eat some of her cookies while she goes on reading *The Elephant's Child*; and boy, she can read it!"

When they were all gone, Johnny said thoughtfully, "Mother, I knew I could trust you to find a piece of work like this that so badly needs doing if the America we fight for is going to be worth what it ought to be to the future of the world."

But Mrs. Parker looked very serious as she replied softly, "Son, I am afraid I almost missed it. I almost took the wrong turn of the road and forgot that God's way is always a loving way and a giving way. I might have missed it entirely if that little Betty had not literally held me up and demanded her portion of love."

The captain smiled because he knew that wherever love is in the heart there will always be someone who needs it.

The father and mother of an unnoticed family, who in their seclusion awaken the mind of one child to the idea and love of goodness, who awaken in him a strength of will to repel temptation, and who send him out prepared to profit by the conflicts of life, surpass in influence a Napoleon breaking the world to his sway.—WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING

## In the Home Precinct

MARY S. STOVER

Ruth and Hal Norton were fortunate in knowing one family in the city to which they moved. Bill and Ellen Haworth assumed that they would join the fine downtown church which they attended.

"No," said Hal, "we have greatly enjoyed being there for our first Sunday worship service in town and coming home with you for dinner, but we shall have the minister of the little church three blocks from us send for our letters. Likely what co-operation we can give is more needed there, and the price of gas or carfares will surely count for more when put into our weekly envelope. But really, the main idea with us is to register definitely for God in our home precinct."

"I'd see more logic in that if you had bought a home. You are only renting," Bill expostulated.

"We like our little rented place. Anyhow, ours is a healthful suburb, and I need to be near my job. If this should prove to be only a brief sojourn, it would be all the more reason for letting folks have our Christian testimony while we have the opportunity." Clearly Ruth and Hal were acting from reasoned convictions, and Hal had more to say on the subject.

"We're not in a religious section either, and nonchurchgoing neighbors might never realize that we commuted for worship when others leave about the same time for visits, picnic trips, and so on. There will not be any question in even the children's minds when they see us regularly going afoot with Bibles under our arms. A be-

loved Sunday school teacher of years ago repeatedly urged us to carry our Bibles, saying that thereby we preached a sermon as long from home to the house of God and back. That is reassuring to a chap with no more eloquence than I have, Bill."

Ruth joined the conversation at this juncture. "To my mind, ignoring the church in our community would be getting off the job," she said frankly. "I think of my home church as a post of duty where both God and everybody around must right-fully look for me as a matter of course. I love the intimate family feeling of attendance there. But I'm one to sense that feeling wherever the Lord Christ is lifted up, and so it is not narrowness of me to prefer staying at home. It's loyalty!"

"I have never forgotten the thrill it gave me to read how a certain missionary in India had each convert lay one hand on his own head and repeat with him, 'I am a baptized Christian. Woe is me if I preach not the gospel.' Both Hal and I feel that our surest way of preaching is to attend church where people naturally expect us; then to do our best to live consistent with that testimony through the week."

"You know," Ellen mused, "what you two have said has set me to thinking. It must be good to have everyone in your home precinct know for certain that you are proud of your church. Bill, why didn't we think of it that way before?"

"I don't know," he answered, "but we certainly are not going to waste any time doing something about it now."

## DEDICATION FOR A HOUSE

EDITH de BLOIS LASEBY

Facing the mighty waters, it stands in its strength of beam—  
A hearthstone for our house fire, a temple for our dream.

As the years across the roof-slope in sun and shadow flee,  
May the grace of God fall gently on our home that faces the sea!

## Discipline Begets Love and Respect

IOLA KAUFMAN

It looks as if times have changed. When I was a child, parents used to say, "I hate to have the children spend much time at Mother's. The folks spoil them so." But in this advanced age it is common to hear young mothers say, "I do not know why it is, but the children mind Mother so much better than they do me. They are little angels at her house and regular limbs of Satan at mine!"

Surely there must be a good reason for this change. Parents today have a knowledge of psychology that should enable them to handle their children better than people who never had training in scientific ways of dealing with children. Why is it, then, that Grandma, to whom psychology is a new-fangled subject the children study in school, can get the children to do things that their mothers cannot?

I have in mind a little family that is separated because of the war. The mother and father both work in a war plant and their two boys live with their grandparents, who feel that since the children are not their own they should not spank them but discipline them in other ways. For instance, the older boy is tremendously enthusiastic about the radio programs which come on the air late in the afternoon. He files with Hop Harrigan, sails with Captain Silver, and rescues worthy people with 'The Lone Ranger. It hurts him worse to miss one of these programs than anything else does. Consequently it is not hard for his grandmother to hold him in hand. All she has to say is, "Frank, if you don't mind me there will be no radio programs tonight," and he does it. But his mother, who disapproves of depriving him of his fun, says, "Frank, I implore you to do as I say," and when he refuses she is baffled. In reality he knows how to handle her much better than she does him.

Nicky has never thrown a tantrum at his grandmother's, but they occur frequently in his own home. Woolen clothing annoys him with its scratching, and as soon as he complains his mother promises that he need never wear that garment again. His grand-

mother overcame this particular difficulty by saying, "It will be all right in a minute," and then changed the subject. Soon it was only at home that Nicky couldn't wear woolens. He raised a howl about the handsome sailor suit he received for Christmas. His mother did not feel that she could afford to let him get away with that, but what could she do?

One day Grandmother, wanting Nicky to look his best for a party, got out the suit. While she cleaned him up she talked to him about many things, and before he knew it the suit was on. When he remarked that it scratched she deftly guided the conversation into more intriguing channels until he forgot it and wore it all afternoon. The next time his mother tried to put it on him he threw such a tantrum that she said in his presence, "No one will ever get that suit on him again."

Grandfather, always quiet about such matters, took a hand in this little affair. While Nicky's mother was still there he got out the suit, took the little boy up in his lap and put the suit on him—and there was no protest. Nicky's mother was amazed, but it is doubtful if she got the full benefit of the lesson, for a little later she offered to take the suit off Nicky. Her solicitude was wasted, however, for Nicky blandly remarked, "I don't want to take this off. I like it."

Perhaps you have heard women who have handled a schoolroom full of boys and girls lament that their own children were impossible. What a shame it is for mothers not to learn early in their parenthood that it does not take a baby long to learn who is boss. A child respects discipline and the disciplinarian if the treatment is always fair and right. Admit your mistakes when you make them, but let the child know that your word is law. He will love and admire and respect you all of his life for it. Indulgence never made a child love an adult more.

Recently I heard a wise Sunday school teacher say to her class of young married women that she felt extremely sorry for

many of the young men whom she knew who had gone into the service. She expressed the feeling that army life would be hard on them because they were experiencing their first real discipline. Is it not imperative in a democracy that children be brought up to respect wise restraint so that they shall assume adequately the responsibilities of an adult world? But the benefits will not be all in the future—for a child who obeys intelligently is happy.



### A HOUSEWIFE PRAYS

JULIA W. WOLFE

Dear Lord, I pray, give me tranquility  
To keep me calm when dawns the kind  
of day  
All housewives know, when everything  
goes wrong:  
Each well-planned scheme goes hopelessly  
astray;  
The fires all smoke; dust falls; my baking  
falls;  
A cherished dish breaks of its own accord;  
The door bell rings incessantly--those  
days  
It is not easy to be tranquil, Lord.  
Let me remember in this ship of home  
Through storm and sunshine I its captain  
am.  
I cannot hope that in the voyage of life  
My precious crew will keep serene and  
calm  
If I their pilot, trusted with the wheel,  
Shall steer afloat, as flurried moods de-  
cree.  
Help me to make my ship a haven, too;  
Therefore, dear Lord, grant me tran-  
quillity.

## Lending War Mothers a Helping Hand

GRIER LOWRY

Now the youngster is happily at play while her mother works.

But my duty didn't stop there. Jean must have playmates and association with other children after nursery hours, and since the mother, being a stranger, had no way of selecting playmates, I assumed this responsibility. It was not hard to find another mother who was glad to have Jean go to Sunday school with her brood. Yesterday my new friend's daughter attended a birthday party in this neighborhood—the mother of the small celebrator was only too happy to co-operate when I called to tell her of our new neighbor's charming little girl!

My friend reports that her child enjoys the nursery and her new playmates and adds, "Someday my little girl will be glad I'm doing this."

Several of the older mothers in my community have now formed an organization which seeks out working mothers and determines whether their children are properly cared for and are happy. If they are not, we take steps toward insuring the happiness of the children, which in turn assures the happiness of the mothers. We have discovered several interesting aspects of human nature in dealing with this problem. The mothers do not want sympathy. It embarrasses them and sometimes creates a defiant attitude. What they want is concrete suggestions as to where to find someone to care for their children while they work, where to purchase clothing for their children, and, if they are strangers, where they can find the nearest church of their denomination.

Plant officials have often noticed that when women workers are worried, their children are usually the source of the worry. One mother had hired a woman to stay with her boys but she was not satisfied with

You cannot teach a child to take care of himself unless you will let him try to take care of himself. He will make mistakes; and out of these mistakes will come his wisdom.—HENRY WARD BEECHER

The other day a new neighbor moved in next door, and as custom dictates, I called on her first. She was just a youngster, twenty-two years old, and the wife of an army flier. With her four-year-old daughter she came to our city from a small town hoping to do something to match as nearly as possible the effort of her husband in getting the war over.

She brought with her a problem—what to do with her daughter while she helped to build planes. Immediately after our visit got under way I realized that this was going to have to be more than simply an exchange of friendly tid-bits between an old resident of the community and a new one.

There is a sort of an unwritten law that we oldsters of the neighborhood must offer newcomers pointers as to the best grocery to patronize, the drugstore with the most varied stock, and the cleaner who brings clothes back in a jiffy. Usually that was the extent to which we went in the way of advice, but I knew that this time I must give her substantial aid with her problems. And with her, as with many others, the biggest anxiety was what to do with tiny Jean while she worked.

With the children's fathers gone, these mothers need their sons and daughters more than ever, but many of them also feel a need for doing something tangible to help win the war; some of them are also in desperate need of the extra money. But they must enjoy peace of mind as they attend to their duties and it is only through a knowledge that their children are in safe hands that this can be accomplished.

Fortunately, our city has a public nursery that is wholesome in every respect, and I immediately informed the mother of this and suggested that we visit it together.

Be careful to seek after all the commands of the Lord your God, in order that you may continue to possess this good land, and leave it as an inheritance to your children after you.—1 Chronicles 28:8 GOODENFELD

the care the children were getting and it was cutting down her efficiency. Our organization helped to transfer the care of the children to more efficient and kinder hands and the mother is contented again.

Our organization has proved to be the solution of an important wartime problem. Basically, however, it can continue to function in the days of readjustment to peacetime living, for it is an amplification of the spirit of sincere neighborliness which is needed at all times.



### TO AN OLD DOLL

MARION H. ADDINGTON

What little arms have rocked you in the past;  
What childish voice has sung you lullabies;  
Who cradled you with careful hands at last  
To watch the leaden closing of your eyes?  
What little heart was throbbled with mother pain  
When some untoward accident befall,  
Then rushed to clasp you tenderly again  
And guarded you, reproachful sentinel?  
Though garret dust has grined your pretty face  
And snubbed your fair bisque nose to strange design,  
Has soiled your petticoat of fragile lace  
And dulled your painted lips of coraline,  
You smile as sweetly as when, washed and curled,  
You were the center of a small child's world.

## The Blessed Hour

JOY MAY WORTHINGTON

So long ago that it is only a hazy memory in my mind, my father returned home in the middle of the morning from his spring plowing to conduct family worship, which for some now unknown reason had been overlooked earlier in the day. The Scripture passage and the prayers are long since forgotten, but the urgency of having them is as distinct in my mind now as it was on that long ago day.

Ours was a humble home, the home of a pioneer preacher, with little more than the necessities of life which were provided by hard work and great sacrifice, but twice a day there was a "blessed hour of prayer." In the morning Father read God's Word, and Mother led in prayer, asking for God's guidance and leadership through the day. At night, just before retiring, Father thanked God for the day with its blessings and asked for the Father's care through the night.

Looking back over the years and recalling the prayers which were offered, we children remember that we were called by name every time the family knelt for prayer and that God was asked to convict us of sin and to save us. Then, when we became Christians, God was asked twice a day to guide us and use us in his service.

When we were in high school and were just beginning to make our own decisions and live our own lives, the habit of having family prayer was an incentive for us to be home reasonably early, for we knew that Father and Mother would delay evening prayer until every one of us was at home. Later on when we were in college and away at work the realization that those who were at home were praying for us twice a day by name kept us straight many times and helped us to say no to the tempter.

Now that we have our own homes we know that Father and Mother still remember us and that twice a day they carry us to the throne of grace. Frequently just knowing this helps us to overcome discouragement and to change success into failure.

The importance of family worship in my parents' home has caused me to strive earnestly to maintain a family altar in my

own home. The rush of the children's school life, the duties of home and church, and the indifference of certain members of the family have at times caused me to wonder if it were worth the struggle to set aside five minutes each morning to read the Bible and to pray with the family. But realizing more poignantly than ever before how much the "blessed hour of prayer" in my childhood home has meant to me through the years, I have come to the conclusion that come what may there will be one time during the day when there will be an hour of prayer in my home.



### I SHALL SEEK SILENT PLACES

HELEN BAYLEY DAVIS

Now I shall be seeking silent places  
Where I shall gather courage to meet each day:  
A hilltop faintly green whose shoulder  
faces  
Winds of the south that rumple spring's  
display.  
I shall seek a wood's green-hidden pool  
Where small furred creatures trample the  
festoon  
Of grasses rimming water darkly cool.  
A country lane turned silver by the moon  
Is strangely quiet. Silent places, things,  
Strengthen my spirit's faith, its valiancy,  
Calming all fears, they still my question-  
ings.  
In quiet places God is close to me.

The Better Home

# ALTAR FIRES

Recommended for Daily Worship in the Home

Prepared by Elmer Francis Height

FIRST QUARTER, 1945—THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

LESSON FOR JANUARY 7, 1945

## The Childhood of Jesus

Matthew 2:13-23

Expounded in Daily Readings for Tuesday and Wednesday

Golden Text: Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest.  
Genesis 28:15.

### MONDAY, JANUARY 1

The King Is Born—Matthew 2:1-12

With today's Bible reading we begin a new year, and we begin it in company with a group of people interested in a new-born baby, Jesus. The individuals in the group are interested in Jesus in different ways, but each one thinks of him as King. The Wise Men, devout and learned astrologers, from the East, led by the star, inquire at Jerusalem for the birthplace of him "born King of the Jews." The wicked King Herod, of whom they inquired, is interested because he fears a rival leader. The chief priests and scribes, who were the religious leaders and scholars among the Jews, have only an academic interest. Of course Mary, the mother, and Joseph, her husband, are present, with a kingly secret in their hearts.

As we join this group about the royal babe, we note the reverent devotion of the Magi as they offer their costly gifts to Jesus, the hypocritical cunning of Herod, as he seeks information concerning the birthplace of the Christ, the skeptical disinterest of the religious leaders, and the adoring

wonder and the solemn awe on the faces of Mary and Joseph.

With reverent joy we join the happy company of Jesus' friends to engage in adoring worship of the King.

*Throughout the year, dear Heavenly Father, may we dwell in the company of the adoring friends of thy Son Jesus. Amen.*

### TUESDAY, JANUARY 2

The Flight into Egypt—Matthew 2:13-18

It was not long after the birth of Jesus before evil, hostile powers struck to destroy him. King Herod, who had planned so shrewdly, seemed sure of himself as he awaited the report of the returning Wise Men. What chances had a peasant family and the new-born infant against the wicked king?

God, however, protected Jesus through human helpers who kept their hearts open to his guidance and who gladly and

promptly obeyed his will. The Wise Men, "being warned of God in a dream" about reporting to Herod, "departed into their own country another way." But Herod did not abandon his wicked purpose; for "when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth" and made other plans to destroy the royal babe. He issued orders that all infants in Bethlehem "from two years old and under" should be slain. Surely now he would be rid of Jesus.

Again God intervened. Joseph, warned and directed of God in a dream, took Mary and the babe down into Egypt. There, far from the evil designs of Herod, the family remained until the wicked king died.

*Help us, dear Heavenly Father, so to keep our hearts open to thee that thou canst always carry out thine unerring purpose in our lives. Amen.*

### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3

The Return to Nazareth—Matthew 2:19-23

We learn from today's Bible reading how it came about that Jesus was called a Nazarene. He was not born in Nazareth, nor was the town situated in the territory of his ancestral tribe, Judah. And yet, the royal descendant of David and divine heir to the throne of Judah came to be known as the Nazarene.

After the death of Herod, God again spoke to Joseph in a dream directing him to carry Mary and the young child "into the land of Israel." But Joseph was dismayed and alarmed when he discovered, probably at the southern border of Judea, that Herod's son, Archelaus, reigned over Judah. He "was afraid to go thither" to his ancestral home, Bethlehem of Judah. Once more he was guided by God in a dream. He by-passed the territory of Archelaus, even the land of his royal ancestor David, and "dwelt in a city called Nazareth."

Not only the town, Nazareth, but the entire district, Galilee, became associated with Jesus; for he and his followers became known as Galileans. And so the names "Nazarene" and "Galilean" have

been lifted from shame to fame by becoming attached to Jesus.

*May our lives today, O God, be so lived as to become associated with Jesus in the minds of those about us. Amen.*

### THURSDAY, JANUARY 4

The King of Peace Foretold—Isaiah 9:1-7

Had King Herod known and believed Isaiah's prophecy concerning Christ, he might well have feared him as a rival king, for Isaiah called him "The Prince of Peace." A King of Peace! How strange the words would have seemed to Herod! The only kings he knew were kings who achieved their crowns by war and driving peace from the earth.

The ancient prophet foresaw the divine sovereign becoming an earthly ruler whose name should be called "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Such a divine sovereign is described by the prophet against a background of war and battle. He portrays the king as one whose government and peace will increase more and more, even to becoming an everlasting Kingdom. Moreover, Christ's reign is to be established "with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever."

Such was the divine ruler who was to come into the world. Such was the ruler who did come when Jesus was born. Such is the ruler who has come for all those who have accepted him. Such is the ruler who, in all his power and glory, is yet to come to the nations and peoples of earth.

*We thank thee, O God of the nations, for the gift of thy Son, the king of peace, to our world. Amen.*

### FRIDAY, JANUARY 5

The Prophecy Fulfilled—Luke 2:8-20

"Lying in a manger!" Who would ever have looked for a human infant in a stable? One would expect to find feed for the cattle but never a baby in a manger. The

shepherds would have no trouble identifying the infant Jesus, for no one else was ever born in a stable and cradled in a manger.

For any human infant to be born thus would be strange enough. But here was one whose birth was so important to God and man that a special delegation of angels was dispatched to bear the news to men. Here was one who was to be "a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Here was one whose birth was heralded by the heavenly doxology of the angelic choir, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." For him to be born in a stable and laid in a manger was incredibly wonderful.

Small wonder that all those who heard the story of the shepherds "wondered at those things which were told them," that Mary "kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart," and that the shepherds glorified and praised God "for all the things that they had heard and seen."

*Our Heavenly Father, we, too, stand in holy wonder before thy love and mercy manifest in Christ of the manger. Amen.*

### SATURDAY, JANUARY 6

How the King Was Received—John 1:1-14

We learn from today's reading of the introduction to John's Gospel that people react to Christ (the Word) in two different ways. Many do not recognize who Jesus is. In fact, so large is this group that John declares that even though Jesus came unto his own, they who were his very own people "received him not." This is one way people react to Christ. Others, in spite of what a hostile world does about Jesus, receive him.

And so it is today. Many do not recognize who Jesus is and many more do not receive him but reject or neglect him. Some, knowing their need of a divine Saviour and recognizing in Jesus the Saviour they need, do receive him. All of those who receive him, then and now, become, through this experience of trusting Christ, sons of God. Indeed, so radical and marvellous is the change wrought in the believer by Christ that one is as though he had been born again, not of human parents, not of human resolution, not of evolution going on

in the race, but born of God. And all who receive Jesus behold in him "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

*Today, dear Heavenly Father, we would affirm our receiving of Jesus as our divine Saviour and Lord. Amen.*

### SUNDAY, JANUARY 7

Jesus in the Temple—Luke 2:40-52

"And he . . . was subject unto them." This statement of Luke's becomes amazing when one considers who the "he" and the "them" are. As brought out by this charming story of the boy Jesus, the "he" is the young Jewish lad from Nazareth who had, a few days before, astounded with his understanding the scholars and teachers of religion in the Temple at Jerusalem. The "them" were his unschooled, peasant parents, Joseph and Mary. It is as though a precocious youth today amazed the graduate faculty of a university with his knowledge, and then went home to his plain, unschooled, humble parents to be subject unto them.

Small wonder that again, as at his birth, Mary kept all these sayings in her heart. If this incident marks Jesus' earliest recorded consciousness of his messiahship, does it not also mark one of Mary's earliest intimations of her son's unique relation to God and to men?

And yet, being subject unto them, Jesus realized growth from boyhood to manhood. As the respectful and obedient son of Mary, he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

Thus was Jesus in the Temple of God and in the home of Joseph and Mary.

*May we, O God, live daily before thee in wisdom and humility. Amen.*

### BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

- M.—A New Heaven and a New Earth. Revelation 21
- T.—"Let There Be." Genesis 1:1-22
- W.—Man Created. Genesis 1:24-31
- T.—Sin. Genesis 3:1-15
- F.—The First Murder. Genesis 4:2-16
- S.—Enoch. Genesis 5:18-32

## Jesus Begins His Ministry

Matthew 1:13 to 4:11

Explained in Daily Readings for Tuesday and Wednesday

**Golden Text:** Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.  
Matthew 4:10.

### MONDAY, JANUARY 8

John the Forerunner—Matthew 3:1-11

John the Baptist is one of the most colorful, dramatic, and important persons connected with Jesus and the early Christian movement. His dress and food were unconventional. His voice and message were prophetic. His sudden appearance in the Jordan Valley with a startling call to repentance brought crowds of city people out to see and hear him. His straightforward and courageous dealing with people, irrespective of who or what they were, challenged all classes. His introduction of the Christian rite of baptism and his amazing testimony to Jesus as the Lamb of God have placed him forever in Christian history as the forerunner of Christ.

John is easily one of the most important persons, in the eyes of first century Jews and Gentiles, connected with the earthly life of Jesus. Each of the Four Gospels, notwithstanding its purpose and destination, emphasizes the connection between Jesus and John the Baptist. They seem to assume that John's endorsement of Jesus is one of the most convincing of proofs of Jesus' messiahship.

*Give us to know today, O God, our need of that repentance which John aroused in the hearts of men. Amen.*

### TUESDAY, JANUARY 9

The Baptism of Jesus—Matthew 3:13-17

In describing the baptism of Jesus, Matthew seems to be showing its fourfold significance—its significance for John the Baptist, for Jesus, for God the Father, and for us. He describes John as hesitating, even protesting, as Jesus offers himself for baptism. But Jesus overrode John's protest, saying, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Evidently Jesus looked upon his baptism as an outward demonstration to men of his own committal to all that is righteous, and the committal also of his movement (the kingdom of God) to that righteousness which John represented.

God the Father looked upon this sacred scene with approving delight. He caused the Spirit to descend upon his Son as he proclaimed to men his divine pleasure in the baptism of Jesus.

God's declaration of approval was addressed to the "witnesses of Jesus' baptism, the throngs from Jerusalem and elsewhere who had been attracted by John's ministry and message. It was part of God's purpose that they should know of his approval of Jesus as his "beloved Son" in whose baptism by John he was "well pleased." Doubtless God is "well pleased" also with

all those who follow his Son in Christian baptism.

*Help us, dear Lord, so to be committed to thee and thy righteousness as to please and honor thee. Amen.*

### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10

The Temptation of Jesus—Matthew 4:1-11

As one reads Matthew's account of Jesus' temptation experiences, several questions arise. Was temptation real to Jesus? Or was this simply a sham battle in which he faced no real danger? The Bible tells us that Jesus was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." We know that temptation is real and dangerous. So was it for Jesus. In fact, the reality of Jesus' struggle makes him a high priest who can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" when we are tempted (Heb. 4:15). Jesus' sinlessness therefore was not an endowment but an achievement.

How did Jesus overcome temptation? In each of the three temptations, Jesus took his stand beside the Heavenly Father, and he looked at the proposal of Satan from God's viewpoint. He expressed this point of view by quoting God's Word. He thus avoided the very thing which Satan was trying to get him to do—to leave God out and therefore to view the satanic proposals from a purely human and personal point of view. So also may we, for with every temptation God makes for us "a way to escape" by which we "may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). Our real problem is this: shall we leave God out or invite him in when we are tempted?

*Help us, O God, when tempted always to move very close to thee. Teach us that we can overcome temptation, but only in the way that Jesus did—by accepting thy guidance and depending upon thy power. Amen.*

### THURSDAY, JANUARY 11

Jesus Retires to Galilee—Matthew 4:12-17

Jesus retired from Judea to Galilee, not to rest or to quit, but in order to enter upon his ministry of teaching, preaching, and healing. Thus he began what is known as his great Galilean ministry. This three-fold ministry involved so much healing of the souls and bodies of men that Matthew recognized in it the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy concerning this section of Israel. The ancient prophet had predicted the coming of a great light to "the people which sat in darkness" and to those who dwelt in "the region and shadow of death." The coming of Jesus into any community or home or individual life today means the coming of light and salvation.

Note the gist of Jesus' message—"Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This was also the message of John the Baptist and of the apostle Paul (Acts 20:21). It is vitally important in gospel preaching today. Always when men think seriously of their personal relation to God's kingdom they feel the need of doing something about their sins, for sin is a symptom of not being under the sovereign control of God as Lord and Saviour. So it was as Jesus brought men into a conscious nearness to the kingdom of God.

*May he who is the Light of the World constantly illumine us, O God, and may we ever desire to dwell with him in light. Amen.*

### FRIDAY, JANUARY 12

Jesus Calls Four Fishermen—Matthew 4:18-22

"Follow me!" Jesus called to Simon Peter and Andrew. How the words must have stirred and challenged these brothers! A little later during the same unforgettable day, these words challenged another pair of brothers, James and John. In response, all four immediately left their fishing busi-

ness and gave themselves to going along with Jesus to help him with his ministry.

The disciples of Jesus, then and now, can reckon their spiritual growth as Christians by their responses to Jesus' call, "Follow me!" They begin the Christian life, like Matthew, by turning from their own way of sin and disobedience to the way of Christ and obedience as they respond to this call. They enter upon experiences of consecration and service, as did the four men in today's reading, by responding to this call to follow him in intimate fellowship, instruction, training, and finally in service. Our responses to Jesus' call to us, "Follow thou me," are the milestones which mark our spiritual journey to the celestial city.

*Dear Heavenly Father, may no eagerness for earthly sounds ever cause us to miss thy clear summons in Christ; "Follow me." Amen.*

#### SATURDAY, JANUARY 13

The Spirit of the Lord—Isaiah 61:1-9

This description of the earthly ministry of the Christ is so accurate that it reads more like history than prophecy. Indeed, Jesus himself read from this passage when he began preaching in his home synagogue (Luke 4:16-22). After reading this passage, he declared to the astonished congregation of his fellow townsmen: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

Note the kind of people toward whom Jesus' Spirit-led ministry was directed. The prophet mentions the meek, the broken-hearted, the captives, and those that mourn. These and others like them were declared blessed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

Note also the result of his ministry in the lives of the people as individuals and as a community. There will be the binding up of broken hearts, the liberating of captives, and the comforting of those who mourn.

The world of mankind will take note of those who have been blessed by Christ's ministry, "that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed."

*We thank thee today, dear God, for the rich blessings which we enjoy through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

#### SUNDAY, JANUARY 14

The Power of the Gospel—Romans 1:8-17

Through the gospel the redemptive ministry of Jesus has been made available to all people. Paul discovered the good news of salvation in Christ by faith through his experience with the risen Christ on the Damascus road. From that time on he told others the good news, and many times he witnessed the power of the gospel in the lives of others who received it. And so he looked forward to visiting Rome in order that he "might have some fruit" among them.

Paul was not ashamed of the gospel, not even at Rome. He had seen God operate through it too often and had felt its power himself too deeply and too constantly to have the slightest fear or doubt of its efficacy. He knew that there is power—God's saving power—in the gospel, a dynamic which needs only to be released and applied to accomplish any man's salvation. Indeed, everyone who has received the gospel by believing on Christ has manifested the righteousness of God which his power alone can accomplish in a human life.

*May our lives today, O God, manifest that divine righteousness which gives unmistakable proof of thy saving power in Christ. Amen.*

#### BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

M.—Noah and His Sons. Genesis 6:9-22  
T.—The Flood. Genesis 7:1-24  
W.—The Rainbow. Genesis 9:1-17  
T.—Babel. Genesis 11:1-9  
F.—Abram. Genesis 12:1-20  
S.—Abram Blessed. Genesis 15:1-15

## Standards of the Kingdom

Matthew 5:3-10, 43-48

Explained in Daily Readings for Tuesday and Wednesday

**Golden Text:** Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:10.

#### MONDAY, JANUARY 15

Jesus Teaching and Healing—Matthew 4:23-25

Jesus' public ministry involved a three-fold activity—teaching, preaching, and healing. This does not mean that Jesus restricted himself to any one of these approaches in dealing with people. The truth is that Jesus came into the world "to seek and to save that which was lost," that is, to save the entire life of each individual from sin to righteousness.

We cannot but wonder, as we read today's passage, about the motives and desires in the hearts of the people who flocked around Jesus. The impression one gets is that most of them came to Jesus primarily to be healed in body or to bring someone who needed healing. Verse 24 definitely says as much. Because of this Jesus found it necessary to make clear to the people, and especially to his disciples, what his true mission was and what was involved in entering the kingdom of heaven which he proclaimed. This he did in the Sermon on the Mount.

Let us check up on our own motives and desires today as we engage in Christian activities. Do we share Jesus' interest in seeking and saving the whole life? Are we interested in being saved from sin to righteousness?

*O God, help us to avoid the tragedy of a personal religion like that of the multitudes about Jesus who were interested most of all in healing or feeding of the body. Amen.*

#### TUESDAY, JANUARY 16

The Secret of Blessedness—Matthew 5:1-12

"Healthy Souls" might be a better title for today's reading, because the word translated "blessed" conveys especially the idea of health. Jesus pronounced healthy those whose lives showed symptoms of spiritual health.

Think of spiritual health when you read the word "blessed" in the Beatitudes, and note the characteristics of healthy souls. Take, for example, verse 6. "Healthy" are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." One of the most obvious characteristics of a healthy physical body is the experiencing of hunger and thirst. Indeed, one keeps alive and grows as he experiences the hunger-food-satisfaction cycle. When a member of the family has no hunger, we send for a physician, for we know that the body is ill or diseased.

Thus it is with the healthy soul. One who lives daily with a craving for righteousness which is like hunger for food and thirst for drink is exhibiting the symptoms of a healthy soul. The lack of such hunger and thirst is a symptom of spiritual illness.

We must be constantly on the alert to see that our spiritual appetites lead us to secure nourishment which will strengthen our souls with righteousness.

*Strengthen in us today, dear Heavenly Father, our feeble hunger and thirst after thy righteousness. Amen.*

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17

The Law of Love—Matthew 5:38-45

Jesus began his brief discussion of the law of love by citing the ancient law of retaliation, "An eye for an eye."

Against this background he described the conduct of Christians in an evil and hostile world. He mentioned blows on the cheek, lawsuits, forced service, troublesome borrowing, curses, hatred, abuse, persecution. What a world! What is a Christian to do about it?

First of all, Jesus declared: "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil." He means, of course, that the one who follows him is not to resist evil done to him by doing evil to his enemies and so adding more evil and making matters worse. The Christian is not to strike back but is to act according to the law of love.

Then, instead of the current command to hate one's enemies, Jesus said, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies. . . ." He thereupon proceeded to show that the Christian must be impelled by a persistent, invincible friendliness which seeks always the good of others. Just as God is given to doing only good to all, even so the Christian must be committed to doing only good, because he is a child of God.

*Help us wear today that badge of Christian discipleship, dear Father, even the practice of a love like that with which Christ loved us. Amen.*

## THURSDAY, JANUARY 18

Jesus Teaching to Pray—Matthew 6:5-16

This well-known passage about prayer contains a sharp contrast between hypocritical entreaty and sincere, Christian praying. The hypocrite prays because he wants people to think of him as a praying

man, a religious man. In Jesus' day a reputation for piety entitled a person to considerable personal advantage. What he prayed for and whether or not God heard were matters of no consequence. To be "seen of men" was his reward, and the only one he desired.

How different is the prayer experience of a Christian! He prays because he longs for intimate fellowship with his Heavenly Father. In this fellowship he will whisper to God some desired blessing for a friend or sob out his confession of sin or seek comfort in sorrow. And so he leaves the street corner, goes to his own home, enters into a little room alone, and shuts the door. Then, with the world shut out and himself shut in alone with God, he prays. (A hypocrite would never be caught alone with God if he could help it.) The blessing he finds is a happy secret between himself and God.

*May we be so sincerely and vitally devoted to thee, O God, that we shall never fear but shall always desire to be alone with thee. Amen.*

## FRIDAY, JANUARY 19

Loving Our Enemies—Luke 6:27-38

One of the most revealing things about a person is the way he handles his personal enemies and others who are more or less bothersome. The qualities of his religion are demonstrated thereby more than by the way one treats his friends and those who are helpful. Anyone, even pagan and sinner, will be kind and gracious to those who love him and do good to him, but what one does to his enemies and to those who make trouble, shows the kind of person he is and the quality of his religion.

In today's reading Jesus has set forth the attitude and conduct of a Christian as he deals with personal enemies and trouble-

some people. The verbs in this passage are significant. The Christian is described as doing such things to people who are unfriendly to him as loving and doing good unto them, blessing and praying for them, offering the other cheek and giving to them. Moreover, the Christian will find in these unhappy situations his most fruitful opportunities for demonstrating the fine qualities of his religion and will experience some of life's most cherished spiritual blessings. "Your reward," said Jesus, "shall be great."

*Grant us the grace today, kind Heavenly Father, to do only good to all, both friend and foe. Amen.*

## SATURDAY, JANUARY 20

Christian Duties—Ephesians 4:25-32

Three interesting duties of Christians are set forth in the Scripture passage for today. There is the strange command, "Be ye angry, and sin not." Paul shows how one can avoid sinning when his life is in the grip of dangerous though righteous wrath. The Christian should straighten out the difficulty before the sun goes down and should be on the alert against the devil, who is eagerly watching for a chance to get a foothold in our lives while we are stirred up by anger.

Paul warns against grieving the Holy Spirit in the matter of talking to people. He is probably thinking of Christians who fail to say anything in their conversations which the Spirit can use to point others to Christ. As he vainly waits for us to speak words concerning Christ the Spirit is grieved.

Paul concludes this passage on Christian conduct by setting forth the all-inclusive principle of love. All that is not consistent with love—"bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking"—is to be put away. Christians are to be kind and tenderhearted toward each other and

are to forgive one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven them.

*Help us today, dear God, to love and lift. Amen.*

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 21

Brotherly Love—Romans 12:9-21

A pastor, speaking about a young man who was having a hard time in school, said, "After all, what John needs most is for people to love him." Perhaps this is what most of us need.

In today's reading Paul urges, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love." Such living is not primarily negative, the avoiding of that which is evil, although it includes this. It is most of all the positive doing of good. Paul announces the general principle of living, which expresses brotherly love, in the last verse—"overcome evil with good."

One might think of this principle as the practice of a persistent and invincible friendliness. When other people are selfish, unfriendly, indifferent, and even hostile and evil, the Christian is to overcome evil by intending and doing only good to everybody. He, like Jesus, is to insist most of all on the right to be friendly no matter what others do or fail to do.

*In our world today, kind Heavenly Father, help us to contribute the fullest possible measure of good to all we meet. Amen.*

## BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

- M.—Isaac Promised. Genesis 17:1-8
- T.—Praying for Sodom. Genesis 18:22-33
- W.—Sodom Destroyed. Genesis 19:12-28
- T.—Abraham Tested. Genesis 22:1-14
- F.—Rebekah Betrothed. Genesis 24:50-60
- S.—Esau and Jacob. Genesis 28:27-34

## Loyalty to the Kingdom

Matthew 6:33; 7:12, 16-29

Explained in Daily Readings for Monday, Thursday, and Saturday

**Golden Text:** Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Matthew 6:33.

### MONDAY, JANUARY 22

God's Kingdom First—Matthew 6:24-34

Is God first in your devotion? Is his kingdom first in your everyday loyalty? If not, who and what are first? Well, many complain, a person has to earn a livelihood. How can he at the same time promote God's kingdom in the earth as his most important business?

Jesus helps us understand how we can put God's kingdom first by telling us that God will take care of us as he does the birds. How does he feed birds? Not, of course, by raining down food—luscious worms and tasty insects—from the clouds. He provides birds with the instinct for hunting food and surrounds them with an environment which offers the needed opportunities for obtaining food. Similarly, God provides for us who are "much better than they." He gives each of us the ability and opportunity to obtain the necessities of life without distracting worry.

Depending thus on the wise and loving God of providence and prayer, the Christian can give himself to promoting God's kingdom as the first interest of his daily life.

*O God, help us to keep first things first in our lives every day that we live. Amen.*

### TUESDAY, JANUARY 23

The Danger of Riches—Mark 10:23-31

The rich young ruler had just turned away from following Christ because he was unwilling to bring his great possessions along with himself to the Lord. When Jesus solemnly announced that it is extremely difficult for a rich man to come into the kingdom, his disciples were amazed at his words.

Why were the disciples so puzzled? They thought, as did most Jews of the first century, that wealth was a sign of divine approval and therefore a sure indication of possessing righteousness acceptable to God. If, then, supposedly righteous people were not entering the kingdom of God, they naturally wondered who could.

Jesus pointed them to God and to a wholehearted reliance upon him rather than upon wealth as the only way by which anyone could be saved. Wealth, instead of being a sign of God's approval, is more often a handicap to righteousness, for men rely upon and devote themselves to it rather than to God. But all who put God first find a rich life in this world and in the world to come, eternal life.

*May our devotion to thee, O God, be so complete that thou art indeed first in every part of our lives. Amen.*

### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24

Solomon's Wise Choice—1 Kings 3:3-14

If you could have anything that you want, what would you choose? Your answer would be most revealing, for it would indicate what you really are and the direction in which you are moving. So it was with King Solomon in today's reading: he revealed the person he was and hoped to become by his choice of wisdom.

The young king, as a child of the royal family, had become accustomed to getting what he wanted. It is a splendid compliment to David that his son requested of God an understanding heart above all else.

It is revealing, too, that Solomon made this noble request out of a deep sense of need as he faced the vast responsibility of ruling over Israel in the place of his father. His keen awareness of his sense of need both for wisdom and for the help of God point to a great character and a great career.

Will not God always give wisdom to those who seek it in order to measure up to their divinely given responsibilities?

*Give unto us for today, dear Heavenly Father, understanding hearts so that we may fill well the places thou hast for us. Amen.*

### THURSDAY, JANUARY 25

Living by the Golden Rule—Matthew 7:7-12

Verse 12 follows a passage in which Jesus speaks to us about prayer. He assures us that God will surely answer us when we pray. He also declares that God will give not merely what we ask but what is best. Then Jesus announces the Golden Rule. What connection has this with the passage about prayer?

Perhaps the connection is suggested by the question, "What does a Christian desire that men should do to him?" Ideally a Christian comes more and more to desire for his own life that which he learns is best for him. In like manner he comes to desire the best for others, too. In all his dealings with his fellow men he does to others that which will result in their realizing most of the best which he desires for himself.

Thus the Golden Rule is a Christian principle of action and only thus. One who does not desire for himself that which is best will not do unto others that which will most help and bless them. If he desires for himself the things that harm and are sinful, his application of the Golden Rule will be hurtful rather than helpful.

*Help us, O God, to desire for ourselves and our fellow men that which thou dost most wish us to have. Amen.*

### FRIDAY, JANUARY 26

Loyalty Through Giving—2 Corinthians 9:6-15

Today's reading teaches us several important lessons about Christian giving which help us to understand how it is that we express our loyalty to the kingdom of God through giving.

Christian giving is expressive of the purpose of the heart which springs not from a feeling of compulsion but from a feeling of interest in others and gratitude to God. Moreover, Christian giving is cheerful giving. The Christian does not give merely until it hurts but until it stops hurting and makes him feel happy. Furthermore, Christian giving causes people to give thanks unto God as well as to thank us. Paul declares that it is "abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God."

Finally, all Christian giving is done in full view of God's unspeakable gift unto

us of his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Indeed, all giving, even all we do by way of serving God, is our way of saying to God, "I thank thee."

And so, giving is a form of grateful devotion to God which very definitely promotes God's kingdom on earth and causes other people to thank God with us.

*We thank Thee, dear Heavenly Father, that each of us possesses something to give and that thus we can express before the world our deep gratitude for thy gracious gift of Christ. Amen.*

### SATURDAY, JANUARY 27

The Two Builders—Matthew 7:24-29

The fundamental difference between the two buildings and the two builders was not how they built but where. It was a difference of foundation. One man built his house upon a rock, the other upon the sand. The building of the houses represents life. Jesus used the story to point out the vital importance of the foundation upon which life is to be built.

On the one hand, the wise man is the one who hears Christ's teachings and lives in accordance with them. This man is not one who picks out this or that in what Jesus says and does it, and then considers his duty finished. He is, instead, one who has committed himself wholeheartedly to the practice of Christ's teachings as the will of his divine Lord and Saviour. A life like his will not go to pieces beneath the buffeting of the storms which come.

On the other hand, the foolish man is one who hears Jesus' sayings and never commits himself wholeheartedly to practicing them in all areas of life, because he has never committed himself to Christ as his Lord and Saviour. In time of crisis he will not survive because he lacks inner strength and stamina.

*We would today, O God, reaffirm our committal to thee as Lord and Saviour of our lives. Amen.*

### SUNDAY, JANUARY 28

The Two Ways—Psalm 1:1-6

The word "way" is an ancient and universal figure of speech for the kind of life one lives. The psalmist conceived of only two ways—the life of a godly man and the life of an ungodly man. To be sure, he knew that there were degrees of goodness and of badness in men. All godly men were not equally godly in their daily living, nor were all ungodly men equally evil. Nevertheless, men tend toward one or the other of the two ways of life.

Essentially the two ways of life are our way and God's way. The prophet Isaiah expressed this thought when he said of sinful man and the Christ, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "We have turned every one to his own way." This is one way, man's own sinful way, the way spoken of in the Proverbs 16:25 as that which "seemeth right unto a man" but whose end "are the ways of death."

The other way is God's way. Jesus said of himself, "I am the way." The American Indians are right when they call Christianity "The Jesus Way."

*Today, O God, we would commit our way unto thee. Amen.*

### BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

M.—The Trickster. Genesis 27:15-30  
T.—Jacob's Ladder. Genesis 28:10-32  
W.—Rachel. Genesis 29:1-20  
T.—Jabbok. Genesis 32:9-30  
F.—Bethel. Genesis 35:1-10  
S.—Joseph. Genesis 37:5-28

LESSON FOR FEBRUARY 4, 1945

## Jesus' Concern for All

Matthew 9:1-13, 23-26

Explained in Daily Readings for Monday and Sunday

**Golden Text:** Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Matthew 7:12.

### MONDAY, JANUARY 29

The Call of Matthew—Matthew 9:9-13

For today's reading Matthew has given us one of the most beautiful scenes in the Gospels. It is a twofold picture. First he recounts his initial response to Jesus. He heard the challenge of the Master, "Follow me!" and immediately, "he arose, and followed him." Matthew made his choice; he turned away from self and sin to follow Jesus Christ.

Shortly after his experience of conversion and consecration Matthew gave a banquet in his home in honor of Jesus. He invited his business associates and friends. His purpose was evidently to introduce to them his new-found, divine Friend who was also his Saviour and Lord. It was as though some modern businessman were converted and shortly afterward invited his business partners and friends to his office or home in order that he and his pastor might share with them a knowledge of the same Saviour that Matthew had found and trusted.

What a pity that the Pharisees protested! But Jesus answered their criticism by declaring, "they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

*We would live today, dear Saviour, so as to share thee with others. Amen.*

### TUESDAY, JANUARY 30

Jesus Meets Two Brothers—John 1:35-42

In response to John's amazing announcement about Jesus—"Behold the Lamb of

God!"—and to Jesus' invitation, Andrew and his friend (probably John the apostle) spent a few memorable hours with the Lord. We are not told what took place, we know only that both men came away from this visit wholly committed to Jesus as the Christ of God. They revealed this committal not so much by talking about their faith as by their transformed lives and their convincing testimony.

Andrew gave evidence of his experience of grace by his prompt testimony to Simon, his brother. Simon became interested and immediately accompanied his brother to Jesus. Then Andrew stepped out of the picture and Jesus dealt directly with Simon.

"Thou art Simon the son of Jonah," said Jesus. Furthermore, Jesus informed Simon that he knew what he would become through faith in him in the years ahead. In token of his future as a Christian, Jesus named him Cephas, meaning a rock.

Thus it was that two brothers became disciples of Jesus, afterward apostles, and still later, mighty agents for projecting the Christian movement in the earth.

*Help us, dear Lord, to be always mindful of our brother men as we enjoy fellowship with thee. Amen.*

### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31

Jesus, Friend of the Needy—John 5:1-9

What a pitiful scene John has portrayed in today's reading! Around the pool, wistfully and vainly hoping for relief and cure,

lay the blind, the halt, the withered, the sickly. Their hopes for future health were based on the supposedly supernatural powers of the water in the pool. Among these pitiful sufferers lay one who doubtless was among the most pathetic—"a certain man . . . which had an infirmity thirty and eight years." What an accumulation of misery and despair there was in this one life!

When Jesus came upon the unhappy scene at the pool, he noticed this poor creature. "Wilt thou be made whole?" he gently inquired. Of course he would, more than anything else in the world. But alas, what chances had he to benefit from the waters when they moved with healing potency, for he was unable to walk and had no friend who would help him in? Thereupon Jesus entered his life as the Friend who could and would help. "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk!" commanded Jesus. The cure was instantaneous. He who for thirty-eight years had never walked "took up his bed, and walked." And thus, through Christ life was released from impotency and despair to health and hope.

*We thank thee, dear Heavenly Father, for thy healing and saving power. May our new life in thee be revealed in joyful, active service. Amen.*

#### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1

Jesus Among His Friends—John 15:1-14

It is interesting to note in today's reading that Jesus desired that the lives of his friends should be fruitful. Fruitfulness is the result of a twofold divine process: it depends negatively upon pruning and positively upon supplying of nourishment. Translated into terms of personal experience, fruitfulness is accomplished through committing ourselves to keeping Jesus'

commandments and so sharing vitally in the divine life and purpose.

Jesus desired also that his friends should experience his joy in order that their joy might be full. He knew a deep and abiding joy through his obedient fellowship with the Father. He desired that his friends should possess the joy of sharing in and carrying out God's redemptive purpose.

He desired, too, that his friends should share his love—love for God the Father and love for others. Indeed the one all-inclusive commandment of Jesus is that they "love one another" as he has loved us.

Thus Jesus would draw us, his friends, into intimate fellowship with God.

*Dear Heavenly Father, we thank thee for the Friend thou art to us in Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.*

#### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2

The Friends at Bethany—Luke 10:38-42

This colorful incident reveals the personalities of two sisters, both devout friends of Jesus, and shows how he dealt with these devoted but dissimilar women. Martha was evidently the leader in the home—efficient, a good housekeeper, hospitable, wholeheartedly devoted to Jesus, outspoken, and used to having her way.

Mary was different. She was the helper to Martha in the home. We can picture her as affectionate, modest, deeply sensitive, and not too energetic or efficient.

And so it was that during Jesus' visit in this home at Bethany Martha bustled herself about the house to prepare a meal while Mary sat at Jesus' feet "and heard his word." Notice how deftly Jesus handled the complaining and distracted Martha when she reproved Jesus himself for seemingly encouraging Mary's lack of co-opera-

tion in the house work. The calling of her name twice—"Martha, Martha"—must have both rebuked and soothed her. Thereupon Jesus encouraged both women to go on with their lives, each expressing her devotion to him in her own characteristic manner.

*We thank thee, dear Lord, for thy understanding dealing with us when we misunderstand others. Amen.*

#### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3

Jesus Befriends the Multitude—Matthew 15:32-38

There are three aspects of Jesus' befriending of the multitude—he noticed their need of food, he had compassion on them, and he supplied their need.

He first took notice of their need. He summed up the situation by calling attention to the fact that they had gone three days without an opportunity to obtain food. Jesus was never too busy to note the distress of others.

Second, he had compassion on them. He felt with them, shared their distress and need. He spoke of his compassion to his disciples, evidently seeking to get them to share his concern for the people. Jesus kept his heart open always in sympathy toward the sufferings and needs of people.

Moreover, Jesus met the needs of the multitude. In doing so, he made use of his disciples, who doubtless had come to share his compassion for the people. They brought what they had to Jesus, and he used it in feeding the hungry crowds. Thus Jesus met the needs of the people and led his disciples to share his viewpoint and participate in service with him.

*Help us, O God, to keep our hearts sympathetic to the needs of our fellow men so that thou wilt always find us ready and compassionate servants. Amen.*

#### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4

Jesus, Friend of Sinners—Matthew 9:1-8

The poor sinner with whom Jesus dealt in today's reading was in dire need of two things: the cure of his palsied body and of his sinful soul. Jesus met both needs, dealing first with the man's soul. "Son," he said, "be of good cheer: thy sins be forgiven thee." He had noted the faith not only of the palsied man but of the friends who brought him. But there were those who took exception to Jesus' declaration of his forgiving of sin. Who but God can forgive sin? "This man blasphemeth," they thought within themselves.

Jesus proved to all present that he had the divine power to forgive sins by showing that he had power to heal the body. He therefore spoke again to the palsied man, this time dealing with his body. The scribes beheld the healing of the man's body and should have found therein adequate reason for believing that Jesus could also forgive sin. Surely the palsied man came to believe in Jesus as the divine Saviour as the result of this experience.

And so there must have been intense interest in the minds of all while watching the palsied man as Jesus said to him, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." Great must have been their wonder as the man "arose, and departed to his house." In it all, God was glorified by men.

*We thank thee, dear Saviour, that thou didst love and that thou dost save even us. Amen.*

#### BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

- M.—Joseph in Egypt. Genesis 39:1-6, 19-23
- T.—Joseph in Prison. Genesis 40:3-20
- W.—Ruler in Egypt. Genesis 41:25-41
- T.—The Brothers Come. Genesis 42:1-17
- F.—The Brothers' Second Visit. Genesis 43:1-15
- S.—Joseph's Stratagem. Genesis 44:1-17

## Jesus and the Twelve

Matthew 10:1, 5-8, 16-18, 32-33, 37-39

*Golden Text: Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. John 15:14.*

### MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5

Jesus Calls the Twelve—Mark 3:13-19

Note three things in today's reading about the call of the twelve apostles. Jesus picked the twelve from among the large crowd of disciples who followed him. It was he who made the selections, not they. He "callesth unto him whom he would." Nevertheless they responded freely as "they came unto him."

Notice that Jesus had a twofold program for them. He wanted them to be with him because they needed instruction, training, and development which intimate association with him would give them. Then he would send them out to preach. This is still Jesus' way with his followers. We first learn of him and then we testify to others.

It is interesting to note also that the list of twelve names, which occurs four times in the Bible (Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:13-16; Acts 1:13), shows a certain fixed order and at the same time variations. In all four lists, the name of Peter is first. In all but the last (which omits it) Judas is last. The position of the other names varies except that they always remain within the same group of four. This fact suggests that Jesus organized the twelve in three groups of four.

*We thank thee, dear Heavenly Father, for thy sweet fellowship in Christ. Amen.*

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### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6

The Twelve Sent Forth—Luke 9:1-4

You have doubtless heard the statement "we are saved to serve." It was thus with the twelve. Jesus called them unto himself and then into an intensive training and intimate fellowship with him. After this he could trust them with power, knowing they would use it rightly, for he discerned that they had come to share something of his own view and purpose.

Then he sent them forth to serve. Their instructions were simple. They were to do two things: "to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick." They were not commanded to perform miracles but were given power to do so. They were expected to use their own discretion and to perform miracles as they found them necessary in carrying out their twofold orders from Jesus. They were also warned and instructed about the various ways people would receive them. Jesus directed them to allow nothing to discourage or prevent them from carrying out their divine orders. The last verse indicates that they did exactly as the Lord had instructed them.

*We thank thee, dear Lord, for allowing us to have part in thy gracious ministry in the world. Amen.*

The Better Home

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

The Seventy Sent Forth—Luke 10:1-11

Several interesting phrases occur in today's reading of the instructing and sending out of the seventy disciples. They were sent out two by two. There is more than double strength in two when they are engaged in the same task for Christ. What a fellowship this experience creates!

The seventy were to go "before his face." They were to represent Jesus and also to prepare the way for Jesus' later coming, going "whither he himself would come."

Their first message is to be a greeting—"Peace be to this house"—for they are messengers of the Prince of Peace. But both the message and the messengers may be rejected.

The seventy are also to announce, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." To receive them and their message, therefore, is to receive the King. Is not the chief business of Christians in this world to help extend "God's country" among men?

And no matter how they may be treated personally, even when utterly rejected, it is still true that wherever they go God's kingdom has "come nigh" unto men.

*O God, help us today to be good representatives of our Lord and Saviour to those we meet. Amen.*

### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8

"The Lord Working with Them"—Mark 16:14-20

Today's reading reminds us that the Bible has a great deal more to say about God's working with us than about our working with God. To be sure, we do work with God, and so become "labourers together with God." However, our self-dedication to God by which he finds us willing and ready agents to do his will is the basis of the Christian life and is essential to the progress of God's kingdom in the earth.

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Christian service, then, is not so much our doing things for God as it is letting God carry out his purposes through us. It is God's power and glory, not our abilities, which need demonstrating in the world. God's power is released and his glory is manifest as he works with those who love him and who are committed to doing his will.

Moreover, we can better understand why Jesus emphasized the quality of our faith as the important thing about Christians, for only through a life wholly committed to Christ can God release the fullness of his power and manifest the beauty of his glory.

The most important questions for Christians today are: Do we really trust Christ as Saviour? How fully are we committed to him as the Lord of all our life?

*We would today, dear Heavenly Father, recommit ourselves wholly to thee. Amen.*

### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9

Co-laborers with God—1 Corinthians 3:1-11

The apostle Paul emphasized association with God in Christian service at Corinth in order to help Christians to work better with one another. The members of the church at Corinth were badly divided. Some were devoted to Paul, some to Apollos, others to Peter. One group even claimed to be the only one made up of those devoted to Christ. And yet they were all trying to serve the same Christ and advance the same kingdom of God.

Paul reminded them that no merely human effort, no matter by whom and under what leadership, amounts to anything whatsoever apart from "God that giveth the increase." All truly Christian work is God's work. Why, then, were there divisions among Christians engaged in a common effort? It was because they were human enough to place their allegiance to a leader above their devotion to Christ.

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Paul pointed out that all were enjoying the high privilege of being "labourers together with God," and that any success which they might have in this service was due not to a human leader but to God. After all, any building done by Christians is based on Jesus Christ, for he is the one foundation.

*We thank thee, dear Heavenly Father, for the high privilege of laboring with thee. Amen.*

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10

"A Good Minister of Christ"—1 Timothy 4:6-16

Paul earnestly desired that his friend Timothy should be "a good minister of Jesus Christ." He is apprehensive about the immediate future of Christianity because of the false teachings abroad in the land. Christ's servants must be on guard against the influences of false doctrine. Their brethren will need help, guidance, and encouragement. Timothy has a great responsibility.

But Timothy would not be his best as a minister of Christ simply by wishing to be. He must diligently exercise himself. He is to "take heed" unto himself. After all, his chief usefulness as a minister of Christ grows out of the kind of person he is in himself. Here is both his largest asset and his greatest potential danger—himself. He is to "take heed" also unto the doctrine. This means both what he is taught and what he teaches. He is to have an open mind "with a good screen in it." He is to be careful to teach only truth. In both of these exercises—self-cultivation and teaching—he is to keep everlastingly at it.

"For in doing this," Paul assures Timothy, "thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." He thereby safely invests his own life and becomes the human agent by which God saves others.

*We dedicate ourselves to thee, O God, to be our best today as good ministers of our Lord. Amen.*

### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11

The Great Commission—Matthew 28:16-20

Matthew mentions dissenting voices in the worship of the risen Christ on the appointed mountain in Galilee where Jesus gave the Great Commission. After describing the adoring worship of the eleven disciples, he adds, "but some doubted." Jesus seems to have paid no attention to doubters. Rather, he assumes that further proof would be as futile as it is unnecessary, and proceeds to give the marching orders which have challenged his believing followers for more than nineteen hundred years. There have always been the doubtful, the faint-hearted, and the half-committed among his professed disciples. But, thank God, there have always been Christians in every age who have taken Christ seriously when he said, "Go!"

In the Great Commission there are a basic command and a basic promise. The central command is "make disciples of all the nations" (ASV). The only necessary promise is "I am with you." The fulfilment of this promise involves man's realization of all that he can want to be or have—God with him here; he with God hereafter. No wonder one of Christ's designations is Emmanuel (God with us).

*May we today, dear Lord, so give ourselves to going with thee that thou canst go with us. Amen.*

### BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

M.—Judah's Appeal. Genesis 44:18-24  
T.—Reunion. Genesis 45:1-15  
W.—Sending for Jacob. Genesis 45:16-28  
Th.—Jacob and Pharaoh. Genesis 47:1-12  
F.—Machpelah. Genesis 50:7-26  
S.—Egypt's Training School. Exodus 1:1-14

## Treasures of the Kingdom

Matthew 13:44-46; 14:13-21

Explained in Daily Readings for Monday and Tuesday

**Golden Text:** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. James 1:17.

### MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12

The Value of the Kingdom—Matthew 13:44-46

"One of the great tragedies of life is that we get used to things," someone has observed. When this happens, things lose their wonder and we derive little pleasure and no exultant, delight from them. It is so with our religion. Many Christians can well pray with the psalmist, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation."

Jesus meant for us to enjoy our religion. He set forth the experience of entering the kingdom as one of incredible delight. This first thrill of joy echoes again and again and becomes one of the dominant notes of the Christian life. Jesus described the experience of entering and enjoying the kingdom in terms of discovering a treasure hid in a field and finding the pearl of great price at the end of a long quest. Imagine the joy of the fanner who discovered and possessed the undreamed-of treasure hidden in his field. Imagine, too, the satisfaction which the merchant experienced when he found and possessed the pearl he had dreamed of and had diligently sought through the years. So, said Jesus, is the joy of discovering and entering the kingdom of God through the Christian experience.

*O God, restore unto us today that fulness of joy we knew when first we gave ourselves to thee. Amen.*

### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Jesus Feeds the Multitude—Matthew 14:13-21

In Matthew's account of the feeding of the five thousand there is only one reference to the feelings of Jesus. The rest of his narrative deals with the physical facts of this colorful incident. But the one reference to Jesus' inner feelings is revealing and significant. Matthew records that Jesus took in the distressing situation of the crowds and "was moved with compassion toward them." Always Jesus saw people and suffered with them, for this is the meaning of compassion.

It is interesting to note that immediately following his feeling of compassion Jesus healed their sick. Later in the day his compassion prompted him to feed the hungry multitudes.

This is still Christ's reaction to people. He has compassion on them for their spiritual and physical needs. His method today is to work through men to bring comfort to our world of suffering and hungry people. He works through Christians who share his compassion as they see the multitudes through the eyes he has made keen to see where help is needed.

We need to consider seriously Christ's command to look on the fields, for only when we are convinced of need will we act.

*We are ready to serve, dear Lord; send us on thy errands of compassion today. Amen.*

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Rich in Healing Ministry—Matthew 14:34-36

"As many as touched were made perfectly whole." This is Matthew's way of closing his brief narrative of Jesus' ministry in the land around Gennesaret. He tells of the gathering unto Jesus of people from the whole region who had loved ones and friends who needed physical healing. What a motley crowd of sick and suffering people!

Usually Jesus healed people by touching them or by speaking to them. In this instance he allowed them to touch the hem of his garment. The people seem to have had a remarkable faith in Jesus' power to heal the diseased. No doubt the news of Christ's visit had stimulated the people's faith. They had heard of his healing ministry in Galilee; perhaps some of them had witnessed his miracles of healing. And so the diseased were brought to Jesus by men who shared with their afflicted friends the belief that those who but touched the hem of Christ's garment would be healed. It must have been with high hopes that they came unto Jesus.

"As many as touched were made perfectly whole." And so, a story which began with hope and faith, and continued to include disease and suffering, ended with health and rejoicing through a triumphant faith.

Dear Heavenly Father, grant to us today the enjoyment of perfect wholeness of soul. Amen.

### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Rich in Love—Ephesians 3:14-21

Today's reading is the prayer of a missionary pastor for his people. This prayer reveals the heart's desire of Paul for his Christian friends at Ephesus. Notice that Paul prays that God increase the spiritual

understanding of the Ephesian Christians so that they might "be able to comprehend with all saints" the immeasurable love of Christ.

Note the significant phrase, "with all saints." It is as though a number of persons looked at the Atlantic Ocean from different points along its shores. Not one of these spectators could see all of the ocean. However, if each could share his own view with all the others, then each spectator would be able to comprehend something of the vast scope of the ocean. So it is with individual Christians (called "saints" in the Epistles). Each Christian has a view of the love of Christ from the vantage point of his own experience of grace. No one of us can comprehend all of the vast sweep of Christ's love. As each saint shares his view with every other saint, however, he comes to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth of the wonderful love of Christ. What a soul-stirring spectacle!

May our hearts, O God, be thrilled today by a larger view of thy love in Christ. Amen.

### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16

The Growth of the Kingdom—Matthew 13:31-33

Understanding a parable is like viewing an oil painting. One has to get back several feet from the picture to see it as the artist intended that he should. So it is with Jesus' parables. They must be seen in proper perspective, each detail related to every other and together constituting the central, dominant teaching of the parable. For example, in the parable of the mustard seed, the detail of the birds lodging in the branches is meaningless except to show the growth of the tiny seed.

Looking thus at the two parables in today's reading, one sees unmistakably the central teaching which Jesus hoped that

his hearers would see. It is that the kingdom of God is characterized in this world by growth from a small beginning to a large consummation, both extensively (the mustard seed) and intensively (the leaven).

Today we need to renew our faith in the growth of the kingdom—extensively throughout the world and intensively into the nooks and corners of all areas of life.

May our faith in the progress of thy kingdom, O God, be steady and unwavering. Amen.

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17

The Prosperity of the Kingdom—Isaiah 11:1-9

The kingdom of God is such a vast reality that it can be viewed from many different viewpoints, each of which emphasizes a distinct aspect or characteristic of the kingdom. In today's passage in Isaiah the ancient prophet is evidently speaking about the glorious consummation of the kingdom with reference to life on this earth.

Note the central figure of Isaiah's prophetic picture—the Christ who reigns over the earth with righteousness. A righteous world will come as the result of the rule of the divine Sovereign in the hearts and lives of men.

Note the central figure of Isaiah's prophetic picture—the Christ who reigns over and lions will dwell peaceably with the domestic animals, the lamb and the calf. Moreover, these fierce animals like pets will play with little children.

Note also that all this orderly and peaceful life of man and beast is made possible by a divine control from within each through a knowledge of the Lord which will fill the earth "as the waters cover the sea."

Help us today, dear Lord to make our full contribution to thy kingdom's prosperity, ever rejoicing in the hope of its glorious consummation. Amen.

### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18

The Son of God Supreme—Hebrews 1:1-14

"God . . . hath . . . spoken unto us by his Son." This is the main point of the letter to the Hebrews. Much of this remarkable book is devoted to showing the superiority of Jesus Christ to all others by whom God has ever dealt with man. What God has spoken "by his Son" is therefore final and supreme, for God's revelation of himself by his Son not only supersedes all others but it corrects and fulfills all previous knowledge of God. Moreover, Christianity, which came into being as the result of this revelation is in so far as it remains true to its Founder, man's supreme religion.

Practical-minded men who first read this great book must have asked, "And so what?" The writer anticipates this reaction. He answers, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For . . . how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

The book may be regarded as a mighty sermon on indifference. The point is this: if God's final and supreme revelation of himself through his Son does not stir us and keep us stirred, what under heaven will?

O God, may our enthusiasm for promoting thy kingdom prompt us to exert ourselves in thy service today. Amen.

### BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

- M.—Moses Spared. Exodus 2:1-15
- T.—The Burning Bush. Exodus 3:1-12
- W.—Moses' Task. Exodus 4:18-23; 5:1-4
- T.—Burdens. Exodus 5:4-14
- F.—The First Plague. Exodus 7:14-24
- S.—Three Plagues. Exodus 8:1-24

# Jesus, the Son of God

Matthew 16:13-17; 17:1-8

Explained in Daily Readings for Monday and Friday

**Golden Text:** Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. Matthew 10:32.

## MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Confessing Christ—Matthew 16:13-20

We begin another week of reading in the Bible with a searching question from Jesus. The question which he asked the twelve then and which he asks today is "Whom say ye that I am?"

The question is not merely, Who is Jesus? but, Who is Jesus to you? Peter answered this question by asserting his own personal conviction—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus discerned in Peter's answer and in the manner of his reply evidence of divine influence in the mind and heart of the apostle. Jesus thereupon spoke of the marvelous privilege and responsibility which God would also give to Peter and to all the twelve, even to all true believers.

So it is with each of us. Who is Jesus to me? What conviction have I in my heart about Jesus? Do I know him personally as "the Christ, the Son of the living God"? Can I make this affirmative answer to Jesus' question? Does my life convincingly demonstrate to the people who know me best that Jesus is my divine Saviour and Lord?

*Help us today, dear Lord, to be so utterly committed to thee that thou canst entrust a part in the affairs of thy kingdom to each of us. Amen.*

## TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Following Christ—Matthew 16:21-28

Peter was willing enough to follow Jesus but his conception of the mission of the Christ was by no means wholly correct. This explains why he protested against Jesus' idea of a Christ who "must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer, . . . and be killed. . . ." He even remonstrated with Jesus, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord!" Evidently Peter thought that the Christ would be a mighty national leader. Therefore, he abrank from a Christ who declared that he would suffer and die. Peter's unwillingness to give up his ideas about the Christ brought forth from Jesus the severest rebuke he ever spoke to a friend.

Later Jesus challenged his disciples to follow him, saying "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Following Jesus Christ means renouncing self and giving up all inadequate human ideas about life. It involves also a committal to carry out the purpose of God, whatever this may require.

We, like Peter, are sometimes willing to follow Christ only so far. We need to face, as Peter did, the heart-searching challenge of Jesus to deny self and to accept Christ as Lord and Saviour of our lives.

*May no self-seeking cause us today to miss thy clear call to follow thee, dear Lord. Amen.*

## WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

The Christian's Test—1 John 2:18-25

This epistle sets forth tests by which one may know whether or not he is a Christian. John declares his purpose in writing the letter by saying, "that ye may know that ye have eternal life." If this letter had first appeared in our day it would probably have been known as a religious tract on the subject, "Tests of Possessing Life Eternal." John gives three tests by which we may know that we are true Christians. These tests are expressed in the words "righteousness," "love," and "faith." One who is a true believer in Christ will manifest it by a life compounded of these qualities.

In today's reading John discusses the test of faith. He shows how false Christs will appear, even antichrists, but that Christians will not be deceived by them, for they are enabled by God's Spirit to discern false character. Nevertheless, John gives the Christians, a test by which to discern false Christs—the acceptance or denial of Jesus as the Son of God.

This is still a good test by which to judge the true and false religions in the world today—the test of whether they deny or affirm Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God.

*We thank thee, dear Heavenly Father, for the unerring guidance of thy Spirit. Amen.*

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Confession and Salvation—Romans 10:1-13

In the tenth chapter of Romans Paul contrasts two ways of looking at religion. One way seeks God's approval and blessing on the basis of a righteousness which one achieves. The other way accepts God's proffered gift of salvation and blessing and thereafter seeks to show gratitude by living for him and according to his will. Therefore the believer enjoys right standing with

God and right relations with his fellow men.

The first way seeks to manipulate Christ, bringing him down from heaven or raising him up from beneath. But believers in Christ accept the Lord Jesus as God has offered him unto men and as they have learned of him through Christian preaching. These enjoy a salvation in him which they cannot but confess with their lips. They are like those of whom the Scriptures speak, "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

*Help us today, dear Lord, to make persuasive and convincing our acceptance of the salvation which is offered through Christ. Amen.*

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Christ Transfigured—Matthew 17:1-8

The transfiguration of Jesus was a most dramatic and significant event, both for Jesus himself and for the three friends who witnessed it. The physical scenery was magnificent, for they were on a high mountain, probably a spur of snow-capped Mount Hermon. The change in the appearance of Jesus was overwhelming to behold.

This experience was significant for Jesus himself. A few days before this he had begun to talk to his disciples about his coming suffering and death. Even his closest earthly friends did not understand and offered no sympathy. In view of this fact Jesus' conversation with Moses and Elijah about his approaching death must have been most reassuring to the Master. These great servants of God did understand that which was central in the mind of Christ—his atoning death. The approving voice of the Heavenly Father doubtless expressed the divine approval upon Jesus' recommittal to the cross.

The three were overwhelmed by this spectacle. Peter's interesting but inappropriate suggestion was lost in the clouds. As the scene passed away, they were found on their faces in fearful awe and wonder.

Help us, O God, always to feel deep in our hearts that awe and wonder which match the greatness and splendor of thyself. Amen.

#### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24

"Eyewitness of His Majesty"—2 Peter 1:10-18

In explaining the great power of a famous preacher someone who knew him well remarked, "He has a sense of the sublime which he conveys to his hearers." It was thus with Moses as he communed with God and with Isaiah as he beheld the divine Sovereign on his throne. Ever afterward their lives were challenged and inspired by the eternal standard of perfect holiness. So it was with the apostle Peter as he saw Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration and had this vision confirmed repeatedly after the resurrection of the Lord and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Peter beheld with his own eyes Jesus' majesty. As he contemplated sheer greatness, he heard the divine voice saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Through the years this unforgettable scene had become more and more meaningful. Now, in his old age, he is convinced, beyond any possible doubt, of the abiding validity of the Christian gospel.

We, too, need in our hearts such a deep and all-pervading sense of the majesty and greatness of our Saviour and Lord that we shall be constrained and enabled to help others to love and worship God.

May the distant scene of thy matchless presence, O God, cast its golden glow al-

ways upon our upturned faces. Thus, constantly reminded of thy eternal greatness, may we serve thee always with joy. Amen.

#### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25

The Goal of Discipleship—Philippians 3:7-14

The goal of discipleship is the realization in life of the purpose and plan of God which have been made known through Christ. Few men have ever attained unto this goal as fully as did the apostle Paul. And yet, he disclaims having fully realized his goal. After more than twenty-five years of intensive and fruitful Christian living and service, he writes (from imprisonment at Rome), "I count not myself to have apprehended: . . . I press toward the mark."

Paul longed especially to experience fully "the power of his (Christ's) resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings." He probably had in mind the power that accomplished Christ's resurrection—the Holy Spirit—and that fellowship with Christ which only suffering for Christ and with him can supply. Then he would surely participate in "the resurrection from the dead" and continue forever in conscious fellowship with the risen Christ.

This passage and the verses immediately following suggest the paradox of the perfect. Is not the surest sign of perfection the consciousness of imperfection?

O God, let us not be satisfied with our achievements. Help us always to aspire to better things. Amen.

#### BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

- M.—Three Plagues. Exodus 9:1-28
- T.—Two Plagues. Exodus 10:13-29
- W.—The Passover. Exodus 12:1-14
- T.—The Last Plague. Exodus 12:29-36
- F.—Through the Red Sea. Exodus 14:13-27
- S.—Quails and Manna. Exodus 16:1-15

LESSON FOR MARCH 4, 1948

## Jesus Teaches Forgiveness

Matthew 18:21-35

Explained in Daily Reading for Monday

**Golden Text:** If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Matthew 6:14-15.

#### MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26

A Lesson in Forgiveness—Matthew 18:23-33

Jesus taught this lesson in forgiveness to the apostle Peter in answer to his question: "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" The question reflects Peter's attempt to be generous, for the current Jewish practice required forgiveness only three times. Jesus discerned the calculating legalism of Peter, and replied, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven." While Peter was reacting to this devastating Christian ideal, Jesus told the story of the unmerciful servant. He thereby caricatured the meanness of an unforgiving spirit against the background of God's amazing generosity in Christ.

Why did Jesus make the amount forgiven so immense? Is he not teaching Peter the infinite mercy of God in forgiving our sins? The debt of sin which God freely forgives is incredibly great. The mean and unappreciative servant, however, forgiven a debt of approximately \$10,000,000, in terms of our currency, refused forgiveness for a debt of \$15!

Is not Jesus saying to Peter, and to all Christians, that any wrongs we may suffer from our fellows are as nothing compared to the wrong God has freely forgiven us in Christ?

May we live today, kind Heavenly Father, with grateful consciousness of thy merciful forgiveness in the Crucified One. Amen.

#### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27

A Lesson in Greatness—Matthew 20:20-28

Today's reading contains the account of a mother's efforts to secure place and prominence for her sons. The spirit of self-seeking which they manifested spread rapidly among the twelve! Doubtless each one began to wonder about what he would get and become as Jesus dispensed the benefits of his kingdom among his friends. They were thus led to think of becoming great by getting.

Jesus turned their thinking around. He showed them the truth about greatness. One becomes great, he declared, not by what he gets but by what he gives, not by the energy and enterprise of his service to himself but by the enthusiasm and sacrifice of his service to others. The pagans are striving for greatness on the basis of getting and of personal prestige. What a shoving and pushing to get to the top is going on among them! "It shall not be so among you," announced Jesus. In contrast to this mad, selfish scramble for power and greatness, Christians will find greatness, unsought, at the end of the path of humble and often lonely service to others. Such is the greatness of Jesus, for "he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45).

Help us today, dear Father, like Jesus, to give ourselves in helpful service to others. Amen.

## WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

A Lesson in Reconciliation—Matthew 5:21-26

Jesus taught his disciples about reconciliation in connection with his discussion of the Sixth Commandment. "Thou shalt not kill." He extends the guilt and sinfulness involved in killing (especially murder) to the undisciplined anger and contemptuous attitude toward others from which the evil desire and purpose to kill spring. He deals positively with killing by applying the Christian spirit of persistent friendliness and good will to strained human relations. Thus not only killing and sinful anger but also contempt are avoided; in addition, the scene is set for wholesome human relations.

No personal advantage or gain is worth the price of being responsible for bad relations with one's fellow man. Jesus pointed out that even worship must await our doing our utmost to make all our relationships constructive and happy. Otherwise, our religion may become a pious cloak to cover unchristian attitudes toward others and may lead to equally unchristian acts against them. This matter of being right in our relationship with others is worth any money or property costs involved.

*O God, help us keep our hearts open always in loving interest toward others, so that thou mayest find access through us to any of our fellows. Amen.*

## THURSDAY, MARCH 1

Humility in Prayer—Luke 18:9-14

True humility is most becoming in prayer, for in prayer we finite humans are in the presence of the infinite God. No one but a fool or a hypocrite would be lacking in humility while at prayer. The Pharisee in the parable merely seemed to be praying to God. Jesus plainly said of him that he "stood and prayed thus with himself." There was no sense of the presence of God

in anything the man said or did. His action involved standing and talking. His words included only the commendation of himself and the condemnation of others. He felt and expressed no humility because, never having really seen God nor himself, he was incapable of being humble.

The publican was humble at prayer. What he did and said expressed the humility of his heart. He stood afar off, head bowed, and hands beating piteously upon his breast. All he said (and he repeated it over and over) was, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

As the two men left the Temple that day, the one went proudly home, confirmed in his self-satisfaction but knowing no forgiveness and feeling no gratitude to God or man. The other went his way with a song of joyous gratitude, being assured of the forgiveness which he sought.

*O God, may we live today humbly but with dignity, always keenly aware of thy presence. Amen.*

## FRIDAY, MARCH 2

Humility in Service—1 Peter 5:1-11

The apostle Peter's exhortation to humility is addressed to preachers, "the elders which are among you." What he counsels them might well be heeded by all who serve in the churches. The possession and cultivation of humility are most difficult for a leader. And yet, the fact of his leadership necessitates humility so that his service will be most effective and fruitful.

Peter counsels humility in two directions—respecting one's fellow workers, particularly those who are older, and respecting God. He first of all warns against an arrogant, boastful spirit in Christian leaders, causing them to aspire to "being lords over God's heritage." Instead, they are to be good examples and thus lead and challenge God's people. Leaders are also to "be sub-

ject one to another" and so to manifest humility. This spirit in the leaders will spread throughout the entire company of Christians and make for a happy and fruitful fellowship.

Christian leaders who are humble in their relations to one another will find it easy to be humble before God. Into the lives of humble and trustful Christian servants will come daily blessings and strengthening from the God of all grace.

*For thy abundant blessings, O God, we thank thee and praise thee and ascribe unto thee "glory and dominion for ever and ever." Amen.*

## SATURDAY, MARCH 3

Humility Illustrated—John 13:1-16

If an artist were painting a picture of Jesus as described in today's reading, he might well give his picture the title *A King with a Towel*. Jesus acted in this incident both as a king and a servant. He is no less king because he washed the feet of his friends. He is all the better servant because his is a royal service.

Jesus' conduct is all the more remarkable when viewed against the background of that of his disciples. None of them thought to render this necessary bit of lowly service to the other disciples and to the Master. On the contrary, they were doubtless thinking that such humble service was beneath their dignity. Yet Jesus, their Lord and Teacher, rose above their false pride when he took towel and basin and stooped to wash their feet. There was never a more convincing and yet more devastating demonstration of the kingly quality of true humility.

Small wonder that Peter was overwhelmed by this rebuke to his pride. His protest when Jesus came to wash his feet soon turned into a plea for a thorough cleansing, so sinful and guilty he felt in the presence of such incredible greatness.

*O God, deliver us today from the jolly of pride, and into the beauty and greatness of royal humility. Amen.*

## SUNDAY, MARCH 4

"The Mind of Christ"—Philippians 2:1-11

The reading today contains one of the sublimest passages in all the Bible—the description of the self-humiliation of Jesus Christ. This passage is all the more remarkable because it is part of an exhortation to follow the example of Christ's humility. Paul has been pleading, "in lowliness of mind let each esteem the other better" than himself. Then he adds, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." He proceeds to describe the quality and content of the "mind of Christ" by showing what it enabled Christ to do.

Just what did Jesus do by way of expressing the humility of his mind? He who is of equal deity with the eternal God became a man. Moreover, he "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." In a word, Christ gave up the most exalted position in the universe, and gave himself to the humblest station among men by whom he suffered a shameful death.

What should it mean for us to have this mind? Does not having Christ's mind mean that we have fully accepted God's purpose for our lives regardless of what this may involve? A life controlled by such a mind would, of course, be free from selfish pride and would constantly manifest Christlike humility.

*We bring our lives to thee today, Lord, for thy blessing and thy use. Amen.*

## BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

- M.—The Commandments. Exodus 20:1-17
- T.—The Altar. Exodus 20:18-26
- W.—The Golden Calf. Exodus 32:1-34
- F.—The Tabernacle. Exodus 40:17-38
- S.—Bethlehem. Matthew 2:1-12
- S.—"Then Cometh." Matthew 2:1-17

## The Cost of Discipleship

Matthew 19:16-26, 29

Explained in Daily Reading for Monday

**Golden Text:** If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. Matthew 16:24.

### MONDAY, MARCH 5

The Rich Young Ruler—Matthew 19:16-22

This incident begins with the words, "And, behold, one came," and ends, "he went away sorrowful." Between the beginning and the end the rich young ruler made his personal evaluation of eternal life and wealth and found wealth to be the more valuable. And so his going away from Jesus and eternal life is explained by the statement, "for he had great possessions."

The crisis of this incident is contained in verse 21. Here Jesus opened the door unto eternal life for the young man. Jesus set forth terms of becoming his disciple breaking it down into specific acts which express faith. In doing so Jesus used five imperatives: go, sell, give, come, follow. It was as though the man stood before a small door with a huge sack full of riches on his back. Before he could enter, he must unload and "put away the sack."

And so it came to pass that he hesitated for a moment. How badly did he really want eternal life, which he knew was inside that door? How deeply did he love his riches? How fully was he wrapped up with a life of wealth and power? No, he did not want Jesus and life with him that deeply; but he realized something of the doom in his decision. It showed in his face as "he went away sorrowful."

*We would let nothing be dearer to us, O God, than thy blessed presence. Amen.*

### TUESDAY, MARCH 6

Treasures in Heaven—Matthew 6:19-24

Today Jesus speaks to us about "togetherness" or integration. We sometimes exhort others to pull themselves together when we see them going to pieces. One's life is often distracted as it is pulled this way and that by conflicting loyalties, such as those to family, church, business, friends. We feel deeply our need of being together.

Jesus approached the problem of integration by dealing with the question of primary loyalty. He raised the question, What are you treasuring? In what, he meant, are you centering your life? An individual, like a crowd, will gather himself around that which he treasures. It is, therefore, of tremendous importance what a man's treasure is, whether of this world—money, property, power—or of the other world—spiritual and abiding realities which are of God.

Jesus challenges his disciples to a God-centered life as the only life which puts a man together and keeps him whole forever. Any other life is inferior and unappealing. "Ye cannot serve God and. . ." One must commit his life to God if he is to become "whole" and integrated, for when one's prime allegiance is given to God, other loyalties find their rightful place.

*We would affirm, O God, our full devotion to thee today as our one sovereign Lord. Amen.*

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7

Treasures on Earth—1 Timothy 6:9-19

Paul's heart-to-heart talk about earthly riches was spoken to a preacher. Paul exhorts a fellow minister to flee a money-centered life. The preacher is not exempt from the lure of gold, for to him, as to everyone else, "the love of money is the root of all [every kind of] evil."

Even more dangerous is "the love of money" for a lay Christian, because the making and use of money is necessarily a part of his business. Paul, therefore, exhorts Timothy to warn "them that are rich in this world." He makes four suggestions about the matter. First, wealthy Christians are to guard against being highminded or arrogant. Second, rich Christians must not "trust in uncertain riches," depending primarily upon wealth for security even in this world. Third, they should be sure that their chief reliance is "the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." Fourth, rich Christians are to use their wealth generously and wisely in doing good unto others. In short, Christian wealth is to be a means by which to live helpfully for others and not an end for which to live for oneself.

*Help me today, dear Heavenly Father, to be rich in good works. Amen.*

### THURSDAY, MARCH 8

Poor Though Rich—Luke 12:13-21

Rich toward whom? This is the question with which Jesus ended the parable of the rich fool. He was rich only toward himself, for he had been laying up treasures for himself. How did the two brothers who brought their quarrel over their inheritance react? Did they commit themselves to becoming "rich toward God"? Luke does not tell us.

The rich man in the parable is very much like many of our "eminently successful" men. If he had lived in our day, he would have been known in any American community as a prosperous farmer who did well. He would have been regarded as a highly respected citizen—member of a civic club, bank director, member of the chamber of commerce and the school board, possibly a member and leader in a church. Ambitious mothers would hold him up to their sons as a man worth following if they expected to "get somewhere" in the world. He was probably a social leader. But Jesus represents God as addressing him, "Thou fool." Why? His was the folly of selfishness (egoism), of thinking primarily of things (materialism), and of leaving God out of his life (practical atheism). In a word, he was rich, not toward God, but toward himself. He was poor in the sight of God.

*Help us keep a safe distance between ourselves and our things so that thou, dear Lord, will never be crowded from the center of our lives. Amen.*

### FRIDAY, MARCH 9

Rich Though Poor—2 Corinthians 6:1-10

A minister once classified people in four groups: the rich poor, the poor rich, the poor poor, and the rich rich. The rich poor are poor in money and property but rich in personal character and spiritual life. The poor rich are rich in this world's goods but poor in spiritual possessions. The poor poor have little or nothing in both property and spiritual possessions. The rich rich possess an abundance of material and spiritual wealth. The ideal for the Christian consists primarily of being rich toward God, no matter what his status is with reference to material wealth. But most of us are

human enough to desire to be numbered among the rich rich.

The apostle Paul would be classified in the rich poor group. He was poor in money and goods and had to work at tent-making to obtain a living. And yet he was so rich in the wealth of the Spirit that he made many rich. Indeed with nothing of material wealth, he possessed all things. He was rich toward God and had a feeling of security and abundance because of the wealth he possessed in Christ.

*We would live today, dear Heavenly Father, so as to share of our wealth in thee with those about us. Amen.*

#### SATURDAY, MARCH 10

Following Christ—Luke 9:57-62

In today's reading we see how three would-be followers of Christ failed to make the grade. The first was a self-confident, superficial fellow who took the initiative, offering to follow Christ whithersoever he might be going. He had not reckoned the cost. The going will often be strenuous, for "the Son of man hath not where to lay his head," as Jesus pointed out. His enthusiasm vanished quickly. He disappeared in the throng. There were too many difficulties involved. He failed the test of courage.

The second was unwilling to put first things first. He would eventually take up following Jesus but not now. First, he must attend to other important matters. He was not ready to make following Jesus the cardinal business of life. He failed the test of the sense of values.

The third man was as aggressive as the first. He offered to follow Jesus, but on his own terms. Jesus discerned in the man's caution that half-hearted committal which unfitted him for the kingdom. Like a man plowing a field, one who follows Jesus must

attend wholly to the business in hand. This man failed the test of wholeheartedness.

*We would put our hands to the plow today, dear Lord, and commit ourselves to unlimited, ardent service to thee. Amen.*

#### SUNDAY, MARCH 11

Our Father's World—Psalm 50:7-15

The psalmist represents God as declaring his ownership of the world and all that is in it. This thought must have given a sense of security and "at-homeness" to all those in Israel who sincerely shared this belief. Doubtless Jesus was always conscious of the Heavenly Father's ownership of the world when he was on earth. "This," he must have said to himself often, "is my Father's world."

The psalmist emphasizes another aspect of this glorious truth. Since this is our Father's world, the individual man enjoys temporary possession, as a steward of a part of God's property. What, then, should be man's attitude and response? The psalmist suggests that he should always be thankful unto God and should pay his vows unto him. The psalmist declares that God will deliver those faithful stewards who call upon him in time of trouble. Out of it all—faithful stewardship, deliverance in trouble—will come glory unto God.

*Aware that we live in thy world, dear Heavenly Father, help us to walk today unafraid and filled with grateful joy. Amen.*

#### BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

- M.—The Devil. Matthew 4:1-11
- T.—Example of Teaching. Matthew 6:1-12
- W.—Father. Matthew 8:1-14
- T.—The Golden Rule. Matthew 7:1-12
- F.—Healing. Matthew 8:1-17
- R.—In Capernaum. Matthew 9:1-12

The Better Home

## The Law of Life

Matthew 22:37-39; 28:34-44

Explained in Daily Readings for Monday and Sunday

**Golden Text:** Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Matthew 22:37-39.

#### MONDAY, MARCH 12

The Great Commandment—Matthew 22:34-40

The great commandment is not so much a command as it is a lofty principle by which men may live. The two aspects of this principle correspond to the two tables of the Ten Commandments—the first four Commandments having to do with man's relation to God and the last six having to do with man's relation to his fellows. Indeed, Jesus points out that "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Is not Jesus saying that God desires above all else that men shall love him and their fellows? For only love will enable men to carry out sincerely the divine intentions in all that the law includes.

From today's reading we can understand why Jesus taught that the practice of love is the only convincing proof of discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples," Jesus said, "if ye have love one to another." We can understand, too, why the apostle John, writing as an old man, should declare that "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

After all, the purpose of God in our world is to gather together his redeemed family into an eternal life of love.

*Increase, dear Lord, our love for thee and for our fellows. Amen.*

#### TUESDAY, MARCH 13

The Royal Law—James 2:8-13

James deals with an all too common violation of the royal law of Christian love for one's fellows. This violation is all the more reprehensible because it takes place in church services. He speaks of Christians showing deference to wealthy persons who worship with them. This, however, is not the worst of it. While showing "respect to persons" toward the rich, they show contempt or indifference toward the poor man in vile raiment. Thus they sin by violating the law of love and perhaps also by alienating their fellow men from God.

The rebuke and advice of James fall on present-day Christians, too. We should so speak and so do in our relations with our fellows—rich and poor—"as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." In a word, we are free in our conduct, and being free to act as we will, we should choose to act as Christians. Our lives are thus transferred from the realm of law and judgment to that of freedom and mercy.

"If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well; but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin.

*Keep our hearts and lives, O God, free from contempt, so that they shall always be governed by love. Amen.*

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14

Good Citizenship—Romans 13:1-7

The reading of today's passage recalls memories of childhood fear of a policeman. A boy's fear of the "cop" probably grows out of a feeling that the officer of the law may take an unfriendly point of view toward his innocent pranks. He, therefore, regards the law and all its officers as more or less hostile.

The boy outgrows this mistaken notion when he discovers for himself that the policeman and the law he represents are on his side. He learns that the whole system of law enforcement and orderly government is set up to enable him to live a free, prosperous, and happy life.

A still more significant discovery is made about officers and laws and courts when one comes to realize that these are God's wise arrangement for man's happiness and well-being in this world. A Christian citizen therefore will wish to thank God for government and for the gift of freedom and security it bestows. Moreover, he will gladly pay his just portion of taxes and show due respect to officers of the law. All this is included in being a Christian citizen.

*We thank thee, dear Heavenly Father, for our country and for the rich blessings thou hast given us through it. Amen.*

### THURSDAY, MARCH 15

Love Fulfilling the Law—Romans 13:8-14

The force of the human laws governing conduct is negative, and likewise the function of officers of the law is largely to restrain or forbid would-be transgressors or to arrest and punish those who are guilty of violating the law. Even the Ten Commandments are four-fifths negative, "Thou shalt not. . ."

A Christian who lives in an orderly community will naturally observe all the nega-

tive laws, both those of God and of man. He is controlled, not from without by fear of punishment, but from within by love. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law," Paul adds. Neither will a Christian do those things not forbidden by the law which are hurtful, simply because he does not want to influence others in this direction.

The positive side of love, however, is indicated by the last verse. "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." The Christian "puts on" Christ, like a becoming suit or dress for the body, as he commits himself daily to Christian living. Thus love fulfils the law through a Christian life.

*Help us live today, dear Lord, so that we shall make it easy for others to know and love thee. Amen.*

### FRIDAY, MARCH 16

The Ten Virgins—Matthew 25:1-13

Chapters 24 and 25 of Matthew contain a heart-to-heart talk Jesus had with his disciples while they sat together one evening on the Mount of Olives. As they had passed by the Temple on their way out of the city a short while before, Jesus had responded to their proud reference to those massive buildings by the startling announcement: "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." And so when they were together, the disciples asked, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

Jesus did not fix a time for any of these events. Instead, he declared that neither he nor the angels knew the time, only the Father. He pointed out the signs by which they would recognise the approach of these events.

Jesus placed great emphasis on preparing his disciples for these events. The one all-inclusive requirement of a disciple of Jesus is contained in the command, "Watch!" And so, Jesus concluded the parable of the ten virgins by saying, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

*Help us to live today, dear Lord, watching faithfully. Amen.*

### SATURDAY, MARCH 17

The Talents—Matthew 25:14-29

The parables of the talents and of the ten virgins are connected and both are a part of the total discussion by Jesus of future events relating to the consummation of the kingdom. In the parable of the ten virgins Jesus exhorts Christians to be watching in order to be ready for these events. But the disciples were practical men and they must have asked Jesus the question, "How can we best be watching?" Or, "Surely you do not mean quitting all work and standing idly looking up into the heavens?"

No, Jesus did not mean this. In the parable of the talents the conduct of the first two servants illustrates how one can best watch. The conduct of the third servant illustrates how not to watch. The disciples are to be watching by giving themselves to an enterprising faithfulness in the use of what they are and have in promoting Christ's kingdom on earth. Our talents are God's investment in us, an investment made with a view to returns. The most adequate preparation any Christian can make for the return of Christ is the practice of Christian stewardship of the whole life.

*O God, grant us wisdom and courage today to make the most for thee of thy rich investment in us. Amen.*

### SUNDAY, MARCH 18

The Great Judgment—Matthew 25:31-46

One of the questions in the minds of the disciples as Jesus talked with them was that about the signs that would indicate the approaching end of the world. When Jesus discussed the all-important question of preparation for this event by watching, naturally they wanted to know about preparation for judgment which they expected at the end. If his disciples watched faithfully according to the teaching of the parable of the talents, how would they stand in the judgment?

Jesus answered this question by showing that a good steward of God will demonstrate his loyalty to his divine Master by using his talents so as to render the largest possible help to others in need, realizing that any service rendered unto others is rendered to Christ. The faithful use of talents, then, involves our serving other people, for Christ himself is identified with them. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Jesus Christ fully identified himself with mankind. To help man, then, is to use one's life so as to please God. In this way a Christian may watch and be always ready.

*Help us, dear Lord, to forget ourselves in our desire and effort to help others, mindful of thy compassion and death for all men. Amen.*

#### BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS For Individual Devotions

- M.—Jesus' Helpers. Matthew 10:1-5
- T.—Kingship Investigated. Matthew 11:20-30
- W.—Lord of Sabbath. Matthew 12:1-12
- Th.—Many Parables. Matthew 13:31-45
- F.—News from John. Matthew 14:1-12
- S.—Other Fields Invite. Matthew 18:21-31

## The Triumphal Entry

Matthew 21:8-16.

Expounded in Daily Reading for Friday

**Golden Text:** Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark 16:15.

### MONDAY, MARCH 19

The King's Missionary Advent—Matthew 2:1-12

How different was the advent of the divine Saviour-King from the expectation of the people to whom he came. They were looking for the coming of one like unto David or Solomon—a king of royal birth who would become a mighty ruler in Israel and establish the Jews as the leading earthly power. To such a king they had attached their hopes of personal and national deliverance. From such a conception of the Christ they had derived the materials of their dreams of future greatness and power and happiness.

Then, in the fulness of time, the King came into the world. He was born, not in a palace but in a stable. He was cradled, not in a silken cradle but in a manger. He was entrusted to the motherly care of a lowly, peasant woman from a despised village in Galilee. About him at his birth were, not the courtiers and nursemaids of a royal house but the cattle. The first air he breathed was not laden with perfume and fragrance but with the smell of a stable.

For after all, the Christ came to be our Saviour and Lord from sin unto a kingdom of "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17).

*Help us today to share with thee, dear Lord, somewhat of thy kingly compassion for all people everywhere. Amen.*

### TUESDAY, MARCH 20

The King's Missionary Appeal—Matthew 5:1-12

The Beatitudes indicate the kind of people to whom Christ made his missionary appeal. They, most of all, would be responsive to his gospel and the challenge of entering his kingdom. Note that these were the people who were popularly regarded as least likely to profit by religion. This fact, in turn, indicates the radical difference between Jesus' true conception of religion and the current Jewish idea: the contrast between inner fellowship with God and outward acts of conformity to a system.

Observe the people to whom Jesus made his appeal. What a motley crowd! What leader besides Jesus would ever have picked out such a group from which to recruit a following? And yet these are the very ones who aspire to something more or better than what they have and are. They are the dissatisfied, the growing, the seeking, the pioneering. Among them there is no smug complacency, no self-praise or self-satisfaction, no joy regularly or meaningless compliance. They are the people who rejoice because they are "going somewhere" wholeheartedly and one-directionally, without reservation and without regret—and with Christ.

*Help us always, dear Master, to be able to thrill to thy challenge to march forward with thee. Amen.*

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21

The King's Missionary Activities—Matthew 9:35 to 10:1

"Because they . . . were . . . as sheep having no shepherd." Matthew gives this as the reason for Christ's compassion on the multitudes. He is also suggesting that Christ's missionary activities stem from his shepherd heart. He looked upon the crowds of people and saw that they had no one who cared as a shepherd cares for his sheep. To be sure, they had their religious leaders—priests, scribes, rabbis—but even the common people sensed their lack of vital personal interest. At the sight of them Jesus felt deep within him a great compassion for them; his was the heart of a shepherd who cares enough for his sheep to give his life for their eternal safety. Thus it came about that his entire ministry was the loving, tender care of the divine Shepherd for his sheep.

Is it not true, too, that the one most important qualification of any Christian who would engage in missionary activities for Christ is the possession of the shepherd heart? All other qualities and training are of little worth without a shepherd's compassion. Small wonder, then, that Paul should write about Christian love as "a more excellent way," the only spirit in which effective service for Christ can be rendered.

*Deepen in us, gracious Father, our capacity for compassion for others. Amen.*

### THURSDAY, MARCH 22

The King's Missionary Associates—Matthew 15:21-28

The incident of the healing of the Syrophenician woman's daughter must have been most instructive to the missionary associates of Jesus. This non-Jewish woman followed after Jesus and kept crying out to him, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David!" Indeed she was so persistent that the disciples decided to take a hand

since Jesus seemed unwilling to do anything. They were plainly troubled by her persistent appeal to Jesus for help.

As Jesus stopped to explain to his disciples that his ministry was "unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," the woman spoke again to him, "Lord, help me." Jesus first responded by telling her what he had just told the disciples, using a household illustration. No one, he pointed out to her, would deprive the children in order to feed house pets. She instantly caught the implication and asked for the crumbs which were over and above what the children needed. Jesus recognized her faith and responded to it by granting the request of her heart.

The associates of Jesus thus discovered in their Lord one whose gracious ministry is accessible by faith to those not of the house of Israel.

*Help us share more and more, dear Lord, in thy spirit of loving care for all thy children. Amen.*

### FRIDAY, MARCH 23

The King's Missionary Acceptance—Matthew 21:1-11

This incident is usually referred to in Sunday school lessons as the triumphal entry of Jesus. As one reads this story, keeping in mind what happened to Jesus a few days afterward at the hands of the crowds in Jerusalem, he sees little of triumph in the incident. To be sure the disciples and other friends acclaimed Jesus as King, and yet, Jesus appears little like a conquering hero. He was aware of the doom awaiting him. He knew that even his enthusiastic disciples and friends were assuming that he would be a world-conquering ruler. He foresaw the fickleness of these people, knowing that those who cheered him today would soon be influenced by designing enemies to clamor for his crucifixion. There is therefore an element of pathos and sadness

in the conduct of Jesus on this occasion.

After all, the only acclaim of Jesus which really matters is expressed in wholehearted faith by which he becomes the individual's Saviour and Lord. This is the true missionary acceptance of Christ. The program of God's kingdom was not dependent upon those gala occasions when Jesus has been hailed by the crowds but upon the acceptance of him by individual men and women as divine Saviour.

*Help us to live today, dear Lord, so that our lives will help others to find it easy to accept thee as Saviour. Amen.*

#### SATURDAY, MARCH 24

The King's Missionary Atonement—Matthew 27:27-44

"He saved others; himself he cannot save." So mocked the chief priests and scribes and elders, the real crucifiers of Jesus. Little did they realize the profound truth of what they were saying in derision and in gleeful hatred. They could not see that as the obedient Son of God, who voluntarily humbled himself and became obedient unto death, Jesus would save others. This decision to give his life involved the decision not to save himself from suffering and death. In truth it is a marvelous reality of grace that Jesus saved others but would not save himself.

Thus it was that the king gave himself to accomplish the missionary purpose of the Heavenly Father by providing an atonement for the sin of the world. Thus it was that he died in order that believing men might live. Thus it was that the instrument of human torture became the symbol of the Christians freedom from guilt. In Jesus' atoning death all Christians have their personal salvation, their central message, and the everlasting challenge of their Lord to love one another, even as Jesus loved us.

*Help us to live each day, O God, in gratitude which springs from a sense of the great cost to thee of our salvation. Amen.*

#### SUNDAY, MARCH 25

The King's Missionary Aim—Matthew 28:16-20

The risen Lord stated his missionary aim in the Great Commission. He attached to it his promise to be with those who were committed to carrying it out. The history of true Christianity is the record of men and churches who have earnestly sought to share and execute this threefold aim. Christ's followers are, first, to make disciples of all nations. This involves winning people to Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Christians are also to baptize the new disciples as they win them. By Christian baptism, believers are openly attached to Jesus Christ and introduced into the fellowship of a Christian church. This brings about the creating of an active Christian fellowship. Moreover, it sets forth in symbol the fact of Christ—his death, his resurrection, his vitalizing presence in a Christian life.

Christ's followers are also to teach newly won disciples. This insures the passing on from one generation to another of the Word of God.

Small wonder that the apostle Paul, who perhaps came nearest to carrying out the Great Commission, should refer to himself as "a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher."

*In heart and life, help us, dear Lord, to share thy eternal missionary aim. Amen.*

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