

THE
BETTER
HOME

APRIL • MAY • JUNE • 1945

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION SERIES

Honorably

DISCHARGED--

what next?



Why naturally, he is going home! Thousands before him have been handed their discharge papers, and thousands more will follow him back into civilian life. He may be your son, your husband, your nephew, or the boy down the street: the important thing is that the dream which has made the months away livable is about to become a reality.

But what next? While he has been in service his thinking—in fact, his whole system of reacting—has had to adjust itself to a new world, one which is fast-moving, virile, and tense.

Soon he will be at home, a private citizen. Civilian clothes will seem strange at first; it will be difficult to remember not to salute officers who are still in uniform. But the hardest adjustment will be a subtle inner change—an experience impossible for even the closest loved one to share fully. This, however, does not absolve you from your responsibility.

It is up to the Christian home—your home, which has been called America's second-line of defense—to be the chief steadying factor in the days of rebuilding. Everyone, and especially the men and women who have been in service, will need the reservoir of good humor, co-operation, strength, and courage which only a Christian home can provide.

Christian homes are called upon now to demonstrate in a practical way the more abundant life which Jesus Christ has promised. It is an undertaking of vital importance. What has your home to offer in reply to the returning service man's "What next?"

Observe Christian Home Week

MAY 6-13

The Better HOME

VOL. II

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NO. III

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HOWARD M. REAVES, EDITOR

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Editorially Speaking

The Enthusiasm of Youth

Enthusiasm is one of the most characteristic and valuable traits of youth. Healthy boys and girls are naturally joyful, buoyant, and enthusiastic. Nothing seems impossible to the enthusiasm of youth.

The attitude of parents toward the enthusiasm which their children manifest has a profound effect upon them. The enthusiasm of youth can be destroyed or seriously retarded by parents who are indifferent to the interests of their children, who ridicule or criticize their zeal, or who let them do foolish things which cause them to be laughed at by others.

Fortunate are those children whose parents seek to encourage and develop the enthusiastic spirit which they possess. The enthusiasm of boys and girls can be conserved and developed by parents who will take a genuine interest in the things which fascinate and concern them and who by their wise counsels so advise them as to save them from foolish and harmful mistakes and guide their energies into useful channels.

Things Which Parents Do Unconsciously

It is not always the conscious instruction which parents give their children which makes the most lasting impression upon them. Often the unconscious attitudes and actions of parents leave the deepest marks.

Parents may talk much about morality, religion, and democracy and may seek to inculcate in their children an appreciation of truth, honor, justice, and love. But their own unconscious attitudes may sometimes defeat their conscious efforts at instruction unless the parents have honestly thought these matters through and have arrived at convictions which they feel deeply. Children need parents who hold positive convictions, who live in accordance with them, and who are willing to stand for them. The children may not fully understand these matters, but it will be for them a wholesome and stimulating experience to grow up under the influence of parents who hold positive convictions and whose conscious teachings and unconscious attitudes are in hearty agreement.

Learning How to Meet Injustice

Injustice is a part of life. Sooner or later every boy and girl will have some experience in which he will believe himself discriminated against and treated unfairly. One of the most important lessons of life is to learn how to meet injustice without being overwhelmed by it.

What attitude should parents take toward the injustices which are meted out to their children? Should they take up the cudgels and fight their children's battles for them or should they seek to help their children see it through for themselves? There may be occasions when the former course of action seems necessary, but as a rule parents should endeavor to help their children fight their own battles.

There are times when injustice should be met with resistance, but there are other times when it must be endured and met with a persistent refusal to become embittered and sorry for oneself. Jesus is the perfect example of one who met injustice and emerged as victor. In the expressive words of modern slang we can learn from him "how to take it." From him we can learn the lessons of patient endurance, of obedience to the will of God, and of love which never fails.

Howard M. Reeves

Does God's Word LIVE in Your Home?

Only as the members of a family live by the Bible does it become for them the Living Book. A Christian mother tells how this can be accomplished.

MRS. WALDO E. WOOD

Even if it did not bear in its title the word "holy," most people would say that they reverence the Bible. But reverence for the Book does not mean that it should be kept shut and out of reach of the members of the family. Nor does it mean that one should feel afraid to use it—even to mark it. A Bible should be one's most personal, most intimate possession. It is in a Christian home that the child learns to make the Bible really his.

If one should by chance open another's Bible, he would immediately know a great deal about the owner. It might reveal, for instance, that he had read the Bible only in spots and not in its entirety. It would doubtless show also whether the owner had been merely reading it or actually studying and delving deep into the Word. It would certainly reveal favorite passages. It might show plainly some of the spiritual victories won. It would unerringly reveal the attitude of its owner. The attitude one has toward God's Word is of supreme importance.

Even little children can catch the spirit of their parents toward the Word of God. One day while I was sewing, my little boy who was only fifteen months old brought me a Bible. I had not tried to teach him the word "Bible" and I had not made any effort to get him acquainted with it. He handled it carefully and said very plainly, "Bible." I took his hands in mine so that we could hold it together. We opened the pages slowly. "Yea, dear," I said, "this is a Bible. It is God's Book." He repeated, "God's Book." When I said to him that the Bible tells about Jesus who loves us, he left the Book in his hands and went happily about the room saying over and over, "Jesus, Jesus." In his lisping, baby voice. What a thrill it brought to my heart to hear him say the precious words for the first

time. No matter what the size of the book, he accurately names a Bible any time he sees one. And he always handles it with care. His presence at our family devotionals must have given him the impression that there is something different and precious about a Bible that sets it apart from all other books.

A three-year-old lad was busy playing with his blocks. He was very proud of the tall structure which he had built. His older brother came along and sent it crashing to the floor. The little boy got up, left the room without a word, and soon returned with his own little zipper Bible. "See here, brother," he said, "it says in this Book, 'Be ye kind one to another.'" Three is rather early to learn two of life's biggest lessons! But he had learned where to go when in trouble, and he expected the Word to be put into practice.

Happy is the home and the nursery class with such an influence that the small child has learned in his own way that Scripture is given for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. Competitively few adults seem to realize that the source of help for their difficulties is God's Word. Therefore few have the habit of going to it when in trouble. Many others have never learned that God's Word is to be put into everyday living. It has never occurred to them to live by the Book. No wonder the Bible has little influence in their lives. Somehow in their early years there was failure to make the Bible a living book.

Children will respect reproof that comes from God's Word if it is given in the proper spirit. Suppose a child has been speaking unkindly about someone or has been hurt by the unkind words of another. The third chapter of James provides abundant material concerning the tongue. Of course a parent will have to explain in simple

terms what is meant. And a wise parent will select just one idea to discuss, saving others for further discussions, for one discussion will hardly be sufficient on the subject of unkind words. If this practice is followed, the child will gradually come to realize that God's Word has much to say to him personally about the things in which he is interested. He cannot but take a more sober view of his misdeeds than if he were merely punished for them. Used over and over again, the Scriptures will have a restraining influence when temptation comes.

It might prove helpful for the mother, with the child's assistance, to provide a small easel or picture frame to set on his table or chest of drawers. He might find a picture of a tongue (to continue with our example), cut it out, and paste it on a sheet of paper that fits the easel or frame. A chosen verse may be printed, using the picture to replace the word "tongue." Children enjoy making such posters and will soon learn many Bible verses in this way. They may be kept in a loose-leaf book as a register of personal experiences with God's Word.

Not all the verses thus introduced to a child should be negative, however, nor should occasions for changing the poster invariably be when reproof is needed. Some needs can be anticipated. Many verses are good at any time. Happy occasions should also be marked with appropriate verses. Thus a child will not come to regard God as merely an "All-seeing Eye" looking for badness. Instead, he will know that God loves him and wants to share his joys and achievements. Later he will come to feel that God wants to be his Partner in making his life rich and happy and useful. He will realize that God's Word is personal, having for him a message and help for every sort of need.

Such an achievement is worth all the time, prayer, study, and effort so patiently expended. To plant in a child the practice of going to God's Word for instruction is to give him one of the most valuable habits he can acquire. The memory of his parents (for they need to work together in this important matter) using the Bible when he needed correction will become dearer to him as he grows older. These times of correction should be quiet ones when the parent sits down alone with the child for a heart-

to-heart talk. The child needs to know that the parents' love is abundant and that their faith in their child has not been shaken by his present misdemeanor. He needs also to be assured that God loves and trusts him. A vital part of the correction period should be a simple prayer by both parent and child in which they tell God how they feel about it and what they are going to do about it.

Parents of young children will observe that very frequently the Sunday school lesson cards, paper, or quarterlies carry suggestions for living out the lessons. Parents will do well to follow out these suggestions and to provide helpful opportunities. Such co-operation with the Sunday school is imperative for best results. The teacher deserves to have the help of the parent. If the teacher spends time in preparation of the lesson, visiting the pupils, attending teachers' meetings, and teaching on Sunday morning, surely the parent should spend some time with the child and his lesson so that he will know what is being taught and how he can best supplement the teaching.

One really learns when he begins to put into practice that which he has been taught. Missionaries have told of some of their illiterate converts who have learned to quote the Scriptures by chapters. When questioned as to how they could so easily memorize when they were totally unlettered, they replied that it was not so hard when they began practicing the Scriptures verse by verse. In the home it is possible to provide opportunities for practicing the Scriptures and for becoming "doers of the word, and not hearers only."

Suppose again that the current difficulty is with unkind words. The verses in Luke 6:31-36 could be studied and plans made to carry out their spirit. If the child has been hurt by the unkind words of another, help him to plan to use some kind ones in return immediately. This may take some moral persuasion, but it will help the child achieve understanding essential to a socially adjusted life and to happy Christian living. After he has tried it a few times, he will experience a real joy in "heaping coals of fire" upon the head of his tormentor.

Bible stories can be used very effectively to encourage the child to choose high ideals for himself. Sometimes practicing the

Scriptures may prove to be a game. Suppose the child is learning the "inasmuch" verse, Matthew 25:40. Let him set his baby cup, or some other pretty one, on his table. Ask him to see how quickly he can fill it with "inasmuch" deeds, writing on a slip of paper what he has done for each good deed. He will enjoy doing this especially if a brother or sister has an "inasmuch" cup.

The parent will not need to make all the suggestions, for with a little practice, the child will begin to look for opportunities himself. The parent must exhibit as much enthusiasm over the child's suggestions as he expects his own to receive. The child needs to experience the fact that his parents are also trying to live by God's Book.

Therefore, opportunities for sharing experiences should not be overlooked.

It should be as natural for the parent as for the preacher to turn to God's Word, remembering that it is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). Perhaps at the daily devotional period an idea will suggest itself for putting the Scriptures into the day's living. But more often there will arise from the day's experience unexpected opportunities. Parents will need to be on the alert not to miss them. And they will discover that their own lives are being greatly enriched as they seek to help their children find that the Living Book is a book to be lived.

A Cup of Rice—Returned

A. T. H.

"I suppose I should be goin' seein' as you're tryin' to get things straight. I always try to be kind of neighborly like; so I thought I would just run an' tell you somethin' about the folks around here. You can ask any of the people who have lived in this place an' mostly they will tell you they moved away 'count of the mean kids on this block. Now, Mrs. Stem that lived here last, she said that do what she would to keep her young 'uns home, they was always on the street runnin' with the crowd. An' she had children; leastwise they was nice when they come. An' you say you got three of your own? Well, I just thought you'd like to know somethin' about the neighborhood. If I had time, I could give you an earful, but my clothes is still in the tub an' I guess you got a plenty to do. You sure got nice things, not as I care so much for this old antique stuff, but there is them that likes it. Now I hope you runs in right often, and let the kids come over. I'll be seeing you."

As the visitor left, Mrs. Morton gave a sigh of relief. Then she felt that she must wash her hands; she wished that she might wash her mind too. So this was what they had moved to! She felt that she had a tight band about her heart. To lose the home where they had been so happy for fourteen years, the big yard, the lovely neighbors, and the children her boy and

girls had grown up with had been bad enough, but to have to face this!

She was thankful that there was so much to do. They had moved in only the day before and although her husband had insisted that she get someone to help her for the first two or three days, she thought of what the cost would be, and knowing that there would be plenty of places where the money would be needed, she set to work alone to get the kitchen shelves in order. It was a big sunny room with an apple tree near the east window. She looked at the south window and could almost see a shelf with potted plants!

The words of her visitor came to her mind again. What could she do? She hated to burden her husband with any more trouble. They had hoped that this big, rambling, old house with its many drawbacks, but with its low rent, would tide them over for awhile. But now this! Then, as often before, these words came to her, "So long Thy power has blessed me, sure it still will lead me on." Somehow she relaxed as she found herself singing the words of the beautiful hymn.

The first weeks in the new home passed quickly and busily. Mr. Morton with the help of ten-year-old Tommy had trimmed the straggly shrubs and had mowed what grass there was. The broken places in the

hedge were filled and the front walk was straightened. Ellen, feeling important with all of her twelve years, was a great help to her mother and even little Mary saved many steps. The shelf was under the kitchen window and already several ferns were growing there.

Late one Saturday afternoon Mrs. Morton was busy in the kitchen when Mary came running in. "Mother," she said, "that Mrs. Ross up the street says please lend her a cup of rice. She wants me to take it to her. And Mother, as I came down the street the lady in the yellow house was sweeping her walk and she laughed and said, 'Tell your mother she might as well kiss that rice good-by if she lets Mrs. Ross have it.' What did she mean by that? And Mother, those little girls with the funny names are kind. One of 'em gave me some chewing gum. Can I play with 'em till supertime."

"I think you had better come and help me dear. I want you to take this to Mrs. Ross. How would you like to make an egg-shell cake when you come back?"

Mary had hardly gone skipping out of the door when Ellen came. Her face was serious. "Mother, I heard Mary ask you to let her play with the little Sigler children up the street and I thought I ought to tell you that Mrs. Long, who lives in the yellow house, told me she didn't think that Mary ought to play with Urcelle and Tiny. And she says that those Smith boys use awful language. I just thought you ought to know. She says they never go to Sunday school and they don't even go to school unless they want to. You know, all of their mothers work, and that's why they sleep on Sundays."

Mrs. Morton thought afterward that the idea came to her on that afternoon. She considered it thoroughly and consulted her husband about it. Later, when she saw a group of children playing on the sidewalk, she walked out into the yard and said, "I don't think I know all of your names, although I have heard my children speak of you. I wonder if you wouldn't like to come over tomorrow night. We always have a story hour on Saturday night. I should like to have all of you come. We have lots of fun."

At first there was silence, and then one of the larger boys, who must have been

about eleven, said, "I listen to the radio on Saturday nights." Black-haired Urcelle said, "Sure me and Tiny'll come; you'll come, too, won't you Bobby?" Bobby shifted his chewing gum and looked at the larger boys before he answered, "I'll come if Fred comes."

"You don't have to say now whether you will be there. I'll be glad to see you about seven. And listen, each of you bring a sofa pillow."

As she turned away she heard the largest Smith boy say, "I thought she'd come to bless us out like old lady Stem!"

When Saturday night came, Tommy and his father started a fire in the fireplace in the sitting room. When the children arrived, Mrs. Morton greeted them cordially. Soon they were seated on their pillows in a big circle about the fire and the story began. She had chosen the favorite of her own children—the story of Joseph—and it was a pleasure to tell it to such an interested audience.

At the end of the story there were many questions. Then she asked four of the older children to come and help her in the kitchen. This was indeed a delightful surprise! Soon cups of hot cocoa and cookies were served. After they had finished, another group took the dishes back, and someone suggested a song.

Mrs. Morton took her place at the piano and asked what it would be. After some discussion they all sang "Onward, Christian Soldiers." This was followed by several others, and when finally they started for home, the children were saying that they could hardly wait until the next time!

As the weeks went by the circle about the fireplace grew. On several occasions water had to be added to the cocoa at the last minute so that all could be served. At first one, and then several, of the parents dropped in, and how they loved to sing!

Late one afternoon in early spring the doorbell rang and there stood Mrs. Ross with a cup in her hand. She looked a little sheepish as she handed it to Mrs. Morton and said, "Ever' thing in the neighborhood has improved since you come. I's been checkin' up on all the things I done borrowed, and here's your rice. An' I want to know can't I come over of a Saturday evenin', even if I ain't got no chillun of my own?"

CONCLUSION AT NOON

EVA WILLES WANGSGAARD

This I would say, though I could say no more,
And be forever dumb when it was said:
I knew a mother's love at life's first door
And by a father's care was comforted;
I've thrilled to baby fingers round my own,
Watched infant minds unfolding like a leaf,
Rejoiced in children and their strength when grown,
And kept their friendship through both joy and grief.
I have been intimate with earth and seen
A seed grow tall enough to shade a lawn;
I've climbed in breathless joy a sharp ravine
And glimpsed a heaven through the bars of dawn,
But this I count the choicest gift of life—
To have known love and been a well-loved wife.

THE SEEKERS

CLARENCE EDWIN FLYNN

We have sought happiness in distant
lands,
On all the seas, in cities rich and gay,
On jungle trails and over desert sands,
In flashing courts full half a world
away.
We have spent gold and strength and
time and care
Hoping to overtake it with our train
At the next stopping place, but reaching
there
We always found that we had failed
again.
The grass was no more green, nor was
the sky
More blue. Land still was land and
sea was sea.
The sun rose in the east and trundled
through
The selfsame course across immensity.
Hearts seemed to have no more nor less
of grace.
Life was the same old story every-
where.
Happiness seemed as far from every
place.
Let us go home. It may be waiting
there.

A MOTHER PRAYS

FRANCES McENNON MORTON

God of the fragrant rose and tall green
tree,
Let your divine sweet patience dwell
with me
That I may give my children's growing
days
The heritage of quiet and kindly ways.
Let me be still and feel your presence
kind.
Calm all the anxious worries of my mind
That day by day my little ones may see
Your strength, your peace, your poise
revealed in me.
Let me know laughter and walk gladly
here
With grace and gratitude and friendly
cheer,
With faith and courage, zest and energy
To make my home a holy place to be.
This is my hour, this my appointed task—
Strength to achieve it is the boon I ask;
And if I fail or falter by the way
I ask for power to redeem the day.
Amen.

The Use of Sunday

HERMAN J. SWEET

The use of Sunday is a major problem for parents in modern times. It is not a problem for which there are easy solutions, yet it does seem that we complicate it unnecessarily. Given a positive, constructive point of view which can be followed with some degree of consistency, the average family can make Sunday a "holy day."

First, let us remind ourselves of Jesus' attitude: "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." . . . A few years ago, the writer stepped into a Church School department when the children were reciting the Ten Commandments. As they repeated, "In it thou shalt not do any work," et cetera, there suddenly came the question, "What is the meaning of that to children who are here because street-car conductors and motormen are working, and in whose homes even now cooks and maids are preparing the family dinner?" "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." By all means. But the negative admonitions of an ancient day are not now sufficient. We must help children to use Sunday wisely and happily.

A high-school girl came to her pastor greatly distressed by a conflict with her father over horseback riding on Sunday. Her father considered it very wicked. "But," she said, "he goes for long drives in the car, and I can't see the difference." It was pointed out to her that her father had been taught as a boy that horseback riding on Sunday is wrong. He was not so taught concerning automobile-driving because there were no cars then. This failure to see the principle which is involved and to apply it consistently in differing circumstances is the source of much difficulty. Our children need the bases of judgment, not rules.

If you ask a group of children whose parents have any concern for Sunday how their families observe the day, you will get from some the sad statement, "We are not allowed to do so and so," or "Our mothers and fathers think it is wrong to do this or

that." From others you will get joyous answers, "Oh, on Sunday we always do this or that!" One set of answers is negative; the other, positive. . . . What makes the Sabbath holy? Not what we refrain from doing, but what we do.

What is Sunday for? Sunday is a day of rest (not much meaning in that for the little child, perhaps). Sunday is a day of praise. (So should every day be.) Sunday is a day of family fellowship, or surcease from the pressures of life. It is a day of spiritual renewal. It is a day to break the humdrum life, to collect our forces, to get ready for a fresh start.

Sunday is a day of rejoicing; a day for friends and for music. It is a day for restoring the soul. Indeed, it is a very special day! How shall we make it so for our children? First of all, by making it such a day for ourselves, and then by associating them with us more closely than on any other day in its beauty, contentment, joy, and praise.

We want our children to learn how to use Sunday to the glory of God. To that purpose all which exalts life is acceptable to him. We want the habit of good and satisfying things to leave no room for that which stultifies and degrades life. . . .

The Christian life demands a Sunday. Parents who fill Sunday with joyous living, with a time of worship, an intimate fellowship, and constructive activity for active minds and bodies will have little difficulty in guiding their children.

What about Sunday entertainment? What about picnics and all-day Sunday outings? One cannot be dogmatic. Certainly there are some things that are inappropriate. There will be in most Christian families some things about which there will be little argument. "We simply do not do that," we say.

Many things are not necessarily wrong in themselves, but there is time for them during other days of the week. Sunday is too precious to be used carelessly. What we do is a matter of wise choice and propriety.

[Concluded on page 9]

Reprinted from "Opening the Door for God," pp. 110-113, reviewed on p. 26 of this issue.

What Is the Youth of America?

CORINNE STAIGG

What is the youth of America?

It is the young couple strolling down the quiet streets of town on a Saturday night, the boy on the football field and his girl in the bleachers. It is the delivery boy and the girl behind the soda fountain. It is the high school graduate ready for his first job and the college girl home for the summer. And perhaps most of all it is the men in uniform, those, gay, laughing, bright-eyed boys who are fighting and dying that others may live.

The boys I went to school with are scattered across the world. Some of them are officers, many are not; some are missing in action, some are prisoners of war, and some will never come back. Nearly all of them are in uniform. But when I see them, it is not the stripes on their arms or the bars on their shoulders that I ponder over. I remember instead a carefree crowd on class picnics, Friday evenings in the kitchen with potato salad and ham sandwiches. I see long rides in the country, the senior play, and a solemn group at graduation looking forward eagerly to the future. I see one of my professors as he is saying, prophetically enough, "We shall have another war and it will come just in time to catch you boys." I see all that and more.

I see the peace rally we had in 1940—to keep us out of war. The long snakelike line of young people marched around the campus and down through town with signs that read, "Books—not Bullets" and "We Won't

The Use of Sunday

[Continued from page 8]

A good rule for Sunday is this: Make central a fine family experience of worship in Church School or Church or both; then do nothing else on Sunday that seems out of keeping with the praise and high resolve of that experience. Remember that the Christian seeks to make every day glorify God, but the right use of Sunday helps us to choose the right at all times.

A VICTORY

JAMES LAKE DOYLE

My bitterest foe has become my friend—
What greater joy can victory yield?
Success in sordid and worldly gain
Or triumph won on the battlefield
Are empty and futile mockeries,
But enemies changed into loyal friends
Reveal man's spark of divinity.
Victory is won when hatred ends.

Be Over." Parades like this one were staged that day on many campuses throughout the nation. I remember the speech by the important professor who, when the student government president asked leave to voice his opinion, said "You are not old enough to have an opinion." No, he was not old enough to have an opinion—but he was old enough to fight!

I see the office—the boys leaving one by one and their places filled by women. I see the service flag and the gold star for the first casualty—he was one of my best friends. I see those who went away as boys return in a year as serious-minded men.

It has been said that young people are carefree, unthinking, full of fun—that nothing ever hurts them much, that they will get over it. But will they? When this war has been won, will they go on and act as though it never happened? Will they cash in their war bonds and sit back complacently and let the world whirl around them—and push their children into another war? I think not. I hope not. I think that like true Americans they will face the facts squarely and say, "The fighting is over; Old Glory is triumphant again; now we have to work to see that she will stay that way and that never again shall the agents of Satan storm the earth and cover it with blood and tears."

I see the future too. I see the boys coming home—there are weddings and houses with smoke drifting from the chimneys, and there are children with their dogs in the yards. I see the boys I went to school with becoming doctors, farmers, lawyers, and merchants—maybe a statesman or two—becoming the fathers of a generation that may not know the meaning of war. In short, I see the America of tomorrow which is shaping itself in the young people of today.

c/o Postmaster, New York
Sunday, June 4, 1944

Dear Dad,

Next Sunday is Father's Day and I want to express to you my appreciation for so many things you've done for me. Please find enclosed my check for \$25 which I want you to have. Summer is here and maybe this would help toward a new suit that would be cool for business, or a new hat, shirts, etc., would be nice. At any rate, this is to be used only for your own comfort and pleasure. I know how unselfish you have been and how little you spend on yourself, but I want you to use this for your own pleasure. I wish I were there to see you and give you this personally. I know this could never repay you for the things you've given me and I don't intend it to be that, but I do want it to be an expression of my gratitude.

Perhaps I'm being a little sentimental but I don't think that's wrong. I have thought many times about our family life and I see many things now very clearly that I didn't see at first. I see how heartbreaking your misfortune was, how you withstood the storm when your material possessions were swept away, how your honor and name were never disgraced or compromised, and how things that hurt were said to you because some did not understand. All of this would have crushed an average man and even strong men, but you fought it off and kept your good name and your honor.

As I realize this I also realize what a fine and wonderful man I have for a father and I can see where I have gotten my strength to fight the battles of my own life. You and Mom gave your sons a way of life, ideals, pride in themselves, their name, their honor, and a loyalty to each other which is their strength and heritage. I have been exposed, and I'm sure that the others have too, to temptations, ideas, prejudices, and ways of life which are not only different from our own, but are of such nature that if accepted would destroy us as men. I stand to tell you now that nothing you have given me has been changed one bit; no, it has been strengthened ever so much and I am a stronger, finer man because of it. I have watched, yes actually seen, men gradually disintegrate from wrongdoing and false ideas until now they are worth nothing and are only hunks of flesh of value to no one. I have seen men become diseased and I saw one man lose his mind on this station last year and I know it was because he had nothing as I have to fight off this terrible loneliness and to make him live for the things in which he believes.

Dad, you and Mom, my family and my belief in God have kept me from all this, and every idea and ideal you both have given me have been tested in the very fire of experience and not one of them has proved false or has been changed in any way. I owe you much for these traits of character and personal honor and respect—they are my inheritance, a far greater one than any material thing you could ever give me. I just wanted you to know how I feel and I took this opportunity to tell you.

Your Son

AIR MAIL

My Mother's Day Corsage

KATHLEEN DURHAM REAVES

It was ever my desire as a child to wear two roses on Mother's Day, a white one and a red one, for I insisted that I had two mothers. My first mother was no longer with me, for her beautiful body had grown ill and of no more value to her gloriously radiant spirit and so God had relieved her of it. Since I was only an infant when she died, I have come to know her through others who loved and appreciated her, and in that way perhaps I have come to know her better than if I had seen her with my own eyes. She became for me the radiant ideal, the exquisite perfection, which every young girl needs. It was with an exalted emotion that once a year I wore a perfect white rose in honor of this one who had given me birth and who ever signified for me the crystal beauty of life.

My white rose always had an ethereal quality about it because it represented a spiritual being rather than a human personality. Therefore, it seemed only appropriate to me that alongside this ethereal white flower I should also wear a vibrant red rose in honor of the one who was laboring faithfully and lovingly in my behalf. It was this one who patiently combed my tangled hair, mended my socks, made my dresses, and nursed me through scarlet

fever and the countless ills of childhood. She it was who intelligently answered the many questions of my childhood years and with imagination bore with me through the moody teens. Surely, I thought, I should wear a red rose for this very dear and very real mother with whom I had fallen in love at first sight. Yet because ours is a conventional family and also because my second mother is a gracious individual who has helped us to keep alive the memory of our first mother, I was never allowed to wear a red rose.

The years have not lessened my Mother's Day desire. Instead, they have intensified it, and with the passing of the years my corsage has increased. There are three roses now which I should like to wear on Mother's Day, one white and two red. The additional red one is for my husband's mother, a genuine mother indeed, who has brought to her relationship of mother-in-law all the love, understanding, humor, and encouragement that a true mother gives to her daughter.

Remaining a conservative I shall no doubt wear only a white rose on this significant day of the year, and yet I shall not feel bereft, for within my heart I shall be wearing a beautiful and complete corsage.

HOW BRIEF THE WHILE

VIRGINIA MORAN EVANS

So short a time is one allowed
The glory of a sunset cloud,
A rainbow vaulting through the skies,
Or moonlight in a lover's eyes,
The scent of April in the street,
Youth's carefree song and dancing feet,
October's leaf so swiftly fled,
A new-born baby's downy head:
How brief the while for such as these—
How long the time for memories!

THE KEEPER OF THE LIGHT

FRANCES McKINNON MORTON

Because my husband's mother lived in a distant state and kept a small antique shop, she was not able to visit us until our Donald was four years old. I dreaded the visit for several reasons, but she thrilled me with pleasure when on first sight she pronounced Donald "a charming child."

He was a charming child. I knew that he was but I knew also that he had a very serious fault which I dreaded for her to know about and yet which I was sure she would perceive before she had been with us long. I wondered how she would react to it--if she would politely ignore the fault and just decide in her own mind that he had either inherited the fault from my side of the house or acquired it through poor discipline, or if she would be disagreeable about it. She did neither.

Donald had been a good baby but in the last year he had developed not only a strong will but an ugly temper when his will was crossed in any way. I had disciplined him in every way that I knew, and I had made an intensive study of his case. Then I prayed about it often, but I little dreamed that my mother-in-law was to be God's answer to my prayers.

She had been there only three days when Donald had a tantrum. She was very quiet and sweet about it and seemed to understand my hurt and embarrassment. I punished Donald by shutting him out of the room until he could come back and behave properly. To my surprise it did not take him long to repent, although I had an idea that it was more curiosity than repentance, as I knew he wanted to get in on the conversation which was going on without him.

When he came back into the living room his grandmother flashed him a bright, believing smile which was a brave contrast to the reserve of doubt which must have marked my own expression. He warmed to it immediately and said, "Grandmother, when you smile you have a light in your face."

"Yes," she said pleasantly, "your mother has a light in her face when she smiles, and you have a light when you smile too."

"Do I really?" he asked, beaming his own radiant smile around indiscriminately on both of us.

Then she explained to him that God has given each of us a light and has made each one of us a keeper of the light. She told him also that God needs this kind of light in the world and that that is why he has made each one of us a keeper of the light. "Only," she concluded, "our light cannot shine unless we are kind and friendly and cheerful."

Donald's mind went to work on the idea at once, and so did mine. It was a beautiful idea, and later I thanked her and told her that it might solve our problem.

She replied, "It will not solve it by magic but it may be the key to unlock his own reserve of power to conquer his fault himself. Donald is essentially a creative child and frustration angers him. We shall have to enlist his own creative power on the constructive side. We shall have to let him forget that he has a fault to fight in himself and help him to realize that he has a wonderful light to keep."

Eventually this proved to be the creative idea which helped him to overcome his fault. We took him to visit a lighthouse where the lighthouse keeper explained to him about the importance of keeping the light shining. We took him to visit an airport and the man who looked after the beacons had still more to tell him about how the lights worked and how the planes depended upon their shining. We discussed street lights, automobile lights which help us drive through the dark, and house lights.

Then we talked of the light which God sends us through the sun and the stars. We got some grand new ideas about the value of light in the world and all of the time our little keeper of the light clung to the idea that he, four-year-old Donald Ransome, had a light of his own to keep shining. This great purpose, utilizing all of his creative power in the right direction, succeeded in doing away entirely with the sense of frustration which had been at the root of his bad temper.

MUSIC in the CHRISTIAN HOME

MARION BROWNFIELD

Most of us enjoy music whether we hear it at church, at a concert, or at home over the radio. We know that music has value for entertainment and also for making religious services joyous and reverent.

Many individuals lack an appreciation of the best music and need guidance in their choice of music. It is generally recognized that condemnation alone is not sufficient. If we deplore that which is cheap and tawdry sentiment in popular music, we must combat it actively by suggesting something better. Remembering with Martin Luther that music "is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given us," we shall find gay and spirited songs to sing in our homes instead of sordid imitations of sophistication. We shall consider such songs as "Invictus" (Huhn), "Home on the Range" (David Guion), "Hills of Home" (Fox), "Short'nin' Bread," "Tally-ho," and "Boots and Saddles" as part of the educational budget. These songs are full of action and fresh air, and they cost no more than those of dubious value.

As a further suggestion for songs that the teens will enjoy, here is a brief list: "Little Gray Home in the West" (Lohr), "Trees" (Rasbach), "Homing" (Del Reigo), "Donkey Serenade" (Friml), "At Dawning" (Cadman), "Ah, Moon of My Delight" (Lehmann), "Who Is Sylvia?" and "Serenade" (Schubert), "Give a Man a Horse He Can Ride" (O'Hara), "The Lost Chord" (Sullivan), "Songs My Mother Taught Me" (Dvorak), "Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life" (Herbert), and "Would God I Were a Tender Apple Blossom" (Bibb).

The above list includes considerable variety because it must be remembered that music is a great emotional outlet and that youth craves action and romance. Pure gaiety and laughter are served in "encore" songs of the type that glee clubs sing. Religious songs which are not strictly hymns deserve to be sung in the home as well as

by church soloists. Many boys, perhaps because they have difficulty in expressing themselves, have an innate feeling for this type of song. The Lord's Prayer and many psalms have been given beautiful musical settings.

Of course, singing is only one means of bringing peace, harmony, and culture into the home. Whistling is a charming accomplishment. Bird imitations appeal to both boys and girls and lead them to an interest in nature as well as music. That a piano is a great help goes without saying, for it may be used solo or as an accompaniment for other instruments or for singing.

Many homes, particularly those where there are several children, have found that a family orchestra can yield huge dividends in fun and relaxation. Does Mother play the piano? There is the foundation of your ensemble. And Junior with his trumpet! After a few sessions you will find his blasts taking on a new sureness and richness. The tortuous hours of violin practice, when Sister was passing the squeak, scrape, and wall stage, are worth the live tone quality which a stringed instrument can give. And who said Dad was limited to a comb? He is apt to surprise the whole group with an enthusiastic, if rusty, obligato on his clarinet. As for the percussion section, what have the twins been beating on dishpans all these years for, after all? Stick to familiar tunes with well-defined rhythm and simple harmony at first; there is time enough for modern harmony and counter melodies later!

Never be daunted, however, if your family is not particularly gifted or trained. Given one instrument to carry the melody, you can have all manner of fun developing a rhythm section for the background. For this, variety of tone and timbre is your concern. Empty cheese boxes, tin cans, and metal wastebaskets make excellent drums, or you might try gourds or ice-

cream cartons containing a few seeds, or a length of iron pipe hung by a rope and struck with a kitchen spoon. Racket? Maybe so at first, but give yourselves time.

The diversity of the instruments brings up the question of who shall be given musical training. We know one family in which both parents and the daughter took piano lessons. The daughter's lessons were considered an important part of her education. The mother took lessons so that she might use her leisure more profitably and might revive her earlier training sufficiently to supervise her daughter's music co-operatively. The father studied because he enjoyed music and wanted to make some himself!

However, the practice in many homes is to give instruction to the most talented. This seems logical, but there is another angle. Music training for the seemingly unmusical is as helpful as athletics is for the near-sighted, studious child who shuns exercise and yet needs fresh air, better muscles, and the social contacts involved.

Is it not the prime function of music in the Christian home to prepare all its members, if possible, for normal social contacts? Music being a universal language, it behooves parents to see that their children speak it!

And yet, "I am not going to make him practice" or "Janet is talented and Peggy just isn't" are two frequent excuses for neglecting musical training. If Bill does not like to practice there may be numerous reasons that can be overcome. It may be

that the room is cold or noisy or full of interruptions, that Bill is tired or sleepy, that he has not had his breakfast, that the stool or chair is of uncomfortable height, that he needs glasses, that his playmates are constantly whistling outside for him, or that his interest in athletics or mechanics is taking too large a portion of his time. Modern life is complex and the things that have value in the long run must take precedence over those that seem consequential at the moment. Again, children may do better with one instrument than with another. Some children crave rhythm and others are made fidgety by speed. Pieces that appeal to them—sometimes with words—make a world of difference. Just to play the drum may be all the music that will fit Bill for taking his part in any group.

Often the musically talented child so outshines others that his brothers and sisters are ashamed to compete. However, more and more, sensible modern parents are saying, "Music is fun," and whether our youngsters do anything with it or not, we want them to have the chance to learn to play and sing."

Music is part of happy family life, whether it be singing while performing household chores or entertaining guests. But it is equally a resource during convalescence, solitude, or sorrow. It can be one of the home's greatest assets in relieving tension and anxiety, for words, rhythm, and melody all contribute courage and beauty to life.

ENTHUSIASM

Strike a spark in someone's mind,
Soar and sing above the grind,
Proving when you love and lift
That life itself bestows a gift.

Pour your strength into your task,
Giving more than you can ask.
Dare to start what can't be done;
End with zeal what was begun.

Stride along the uphill roads;
Hoist with laughter heavy loads;
Eager for the new world's birth,
Recreate a friendly earth.

LYDIA L. ROBERTS

Getting Obedience the Better Way

Children must obey their parents, but how shall this obedience be secured? Many parents fail because they use the wrong methods. A better way is suggested here.

FLORA E. BRECK

If we who are teachers and parents would only remember to take the children into our confidence more often, how much more we might accomplish! We should not think of them as "dear little darlings" who have no more ability to think things out than wooden dummies. Are we not a bit inclined to underrate the ability of youngsters to think logically, and do we not sometimes question their inherent right to know the whys and wherefores?

The policy of "You do this because I tell you to" is definitely outmoded. If Junior knows why he must not wear his best clothes every day while he is climbing trees, he will not rebel at your ultimatum, for he will not wish to look untidy when the other children are resplendent in their best clothes.

But children are so very different and their behavior under given conditions is so unpredictable that the rearing of them successfully is a challenge to patience and brains and ingenuity.

Nancy rebelled against drinking dally the seven glasses of water prescribed by her mother. Even less was she inclined to obey when her mother commanded, "Do as I tell you and don't ask me why. I know best." The solution of this particular problem was found when Dad came home that afternoon. Not mere verbal instructions but visual education was what won.

"Look here, Nancy," he said animatedly. "Here is a pan of potato parings. When I try to pour them into the garbage can, the last ones won't move, will they? They stick to the sides of the pan. Now what do you think I could put into the pan to make the left-over peelings move quickly and easily when I tip the pan?"

"Put water in it," suggested Nancy.

"Exactly. Now just see how quickly the whole batch goes out of the pan and into the garbage can."

"The water helps shove it along," agreed the child.

"That's right," beamed her father. He applied his parable to the body's waste disposal system and concluded, "So that is why people who want to keep well and happy drink lots of water each day." Suddenly Nancy jumped off his lap.

"I'm thirsty, Daddy!" she said emphatically.

Difficult as girls are, boys are sometimes even more difficult to influence and direct. It took utmost delicacy and almost the wisdom of Solomon to deal effectively with her brother, twelve-year-old Don. Always he had eaten without murmur his daily dish of prunes, until one day his Aunt Emma patted him on the head, assuring him that "they are so good for the bowels." His eyes flared. He looked as though he felt that this was too personal a matter for a maiden aunt to pry into. After that, to the desperation of his mother, his morning dish of prunes was left untouched. Nothing which she said served to change him. Finally the family doctor had the chance to put in a word. "Yes," he assured the boy, "it was eating such things as stewed prunes, cereals, and fresh fruits, that helped such-and-such a person to win a foot race and to be at the head of his class at school." That was all. Next morning the lad asked for prunes.

A good many years ago I taught forty-two little children above a corner drugstore. I had asked them over and over to march up the stairs quietly, but the results were not all that could be desired. I knew that the fault must lie in my method. I decided to lay the matter before them and to let them draw their own conclusions. Previously I had just yelled at them to be quiet. The next day when the "thundering herd" had assembled for the afternoon session, I explained earnestly to them that in the

drugstore below there would likely be people with headaches and old people who would be bothered by loud tramping and noises. Now, would the children join me in coming upstairs always in a quiet, orderly way? Would John go downstairs right now and show the nicest way to come up? We could not hear him at all. And would Frances walk across the room to show everyone how a person could walk on tiptoes without bothering anyone? Yes, in the future we would all be polite boys and girls and come upstairs the right way. After this exposition who should walk in but our county

Are They Really YOUR Pictures?

MARTHA GWINN KISER

Could a stranger, coming into your home and seeing your pictures, know what kind of person you are? Do your friends, observing them, feel your personality reflected in them?

This was impressed upon me recently as I visited in the home of my friend Nila. In her living room were two large pictures, one of David Copperfield, trustfully and admiringly walking down the street with Mr. Micawber. Mr. Micawber, swaggering as usual, was evidently still expecting something to turn up around the corner. The other picture was of David riding in the cart with Barkis, who was "willin'." These pictures were an invitation to all to laugh with Nila, remembering the days when they obtained such pleasure from reading Dickens.

Above her mantel hung an old-fashioned scene of the country in winter. Snowbound hills, lovers in a sleigh, rail fence, and log cabin—all were there. And neighbor to it was the picture of a woman who might have lived in the cabin, hoopskirts, fichu across the bosom, and her hair puffed high and held with a shell comb. It is just as natural to see these prints upon Nila's wall as it would be to see the picture of a ship in the house of an old sea captain, for she writes of an old-time period, doing much research along this line.

Going into her workroom we found her walls almost completely covered with pictures of other authors. The earnest and

superintendent; I anticipated criticism, but instead he praised my method in no uncertain terms. "The children now know exactly what you want," he declared.

I found in my teaching that the method which I evolved by slow and painful experience paid best in the long run—not only to tell but also to show children the proper course of action; and most important of all, to explain just why the suggested course of action is right. They work with you if you confide in them—children like to help if we treat them as people instead of as puppets.

laughing and careless and quizzical faces of others who have done the same work that she does looked down upon us and upon her. "When I get tired and perhaps a little discouraged, I just take a long look at Lin Yutang's bright face and take myself for a walk!" she said. "When I return I throw serious old Hugo an apology and get down to better work!"

In the dining room where all may see and revere there was a Lincoln group—Honest Abe alone, Abe with his son Tad, and a reproduction of his log cabin birthplace. Opposite this, in color, was Whittier's home. We all looked at it and somebody remembered "Snowbound" and someone else murmured, "The sun, that brief December day. . . ." "We studied it in eighth grade," another said with a nostalgic sigh.

In another home I have seen expensive landscapes which cover most of the walls—for one who is bored by the country! There is the portrait of a child, in color, although the owner of the picture has little time or patience for children in the flesh. There are peasants at prayer for a woman who apparently knows neither.

They are on her walls because "One must have a few good pictures, of course!" And she is always ready to explain, apologetically, "They set me back really more than I could afford, but after all. . . ."

But after all—perhaps she too has reflected herself!

WHOSE CHILDREN?

NANCY BREWER

Teddy Weymouth and Donald were looking ahead to the years which all children term the most glorious—"the time when we'll be grown up." Donald spoke boastfully of the chemical laboratory he meant to have, of the marvelous equipment he would put in it, and of the research he would do there. He talked so loudly and so long that I expected his little guest to cry out impatiently, "Now it's my turn."

But not until Donald was exhausted did Teddy speak of the possessions—not a dream career—for which his heart longed. "When I get big, Don," he said in a matter-of-fact tone, "I'm going to own a big house, two automobiles, some dogs, and four children."

"You don't own children." Donald's voice was really amused. "You just have 'em."

Mary Jean stopped purling on the wrist of the Red Cross glove she was knitting. "Oh, yes, you do own children if you are Mrs. Weymouth," she affirmed. "And you never let them forget that they are really your possession."

Reprovingly I shook my head and tried to frame a speech which would tell of the devotion to her family which had made Mrs. Weymouth old before her time. But I could not do so, for in my heart I had long admitted that many of the tragedies in the Weymouth house had been brought about because the mother had tried to "own" her children.

I thought of Julie Weymouth, always the perfectly costumed pupil at school, at Sunday school, and at parties. I remembered mornings when she had stopped at our house, her eyes red because she had not been allowed to wear some favorite dress or hair ribbon. I could almost hear her say, "Gertrude doesn't think I like the Christmas hair bow she gave me, but I do. Mamma just won't let me wear it because it doesn't go good with any of my dresses."

When she had said that, I smiled over the auburn head of Mary Jean, topped with the red hair ribbon which Gertrude had given her. It was quite as much out of harmony with her lavender sweater, a gift

from Aunt Sue, as was her hair, but that didn't matter on a day when she would stop at her aunt's home and sit next to Gertrude at school. She knew that she would make two people happy that morning, and to her nothing else mattered.

Then I thought of the high school days when Julie had wanted to major in home economics. I thought too of the long evenings when she had worked late into the night translating Latin; which she hated, and trying to solve geometry problems which she did not understand. "Mamma says that she and her sisters took Latin and higher mathematics," she explained as the reason for the change in her course of study. "She says that sewing and art aren't real subjects—just pretended ones."

But now Julie, made free by her marriage to the soldier lad, is studying art and is having great success with it. Her husband's father, who is financing the course, told Mary Jean that Julie's great joy over her work inspires the other members of the family to do theirs better.

I thought of the other children "owned" by Mrs. Weymouth through the years—of Jerry, whose joy in scouting was dimmed by his mother's selection of the projects on which he had to work for his merit badges; of Noel, whose college shirts, ties, and hose were selected by his mother and sent to him even through his senior year.

Sometimes Mrs. Weymouth grew thin with weariness from caring for the five children whom she "owned." There was no time in her life for the neighborhood literary club to which most of us mothers on the street belonged. Sometimes at night I would look through my bedroom window and see a light in Mrs. Weymouth's laundry room, and I knew she was ironing shirts for her sons.

Our sons wore sweaters in those days. The Weymouth boys longed for sweaters too, but they were not a part of the garb which Mrs. Weymouth selected for her sons—any more than were high school athletics her choice of school activities for them.

"Noel Weymouth's got legs to win all the dashes for us in the state tournament,"

Robert told his father one night at our dinner table. "Coach Hilton went to see his father and told him so. And what do you think that Mr. Weymouth said? He told the coach to go to Mrs. Weymouth—that he felt that the children belonged more to her than to him. I'd like to hear you say that!"

Henry's eyes twinkled. "Perhaps your mother would like to hear that too," he chuckled.

"Not Mom," sixteen-year-old Robert was blunt. "She's not that kind. Mom believes in freedom. Why, she's read the Declaration of Independence in her time."

And then we all laughed, and I realized that what is counted fun in a family where freedom of speech is the rule would be considered impertinence in others. But back of that realization was another—I knew that to my children I was a chum and a friend as well as a mother, because of the freedom which we had always granted.

It was when the children were quite small that Henry and I realized that we must allow freedom in our home if our children were to be trained to use aright the freedom which would be theirs as American citizens. We had seen in our neighborhood young people who were untrained for freedom abuse it when they became of age. They had abused it with tragic results both for themselves and for society and with heartbreak for their parents, some of whom had mistaken parenthood's responsibilities for parental ownership of children.

Our children have learned from experience that freedom misused brings penalties. Mary Jean learned that to her own grief when she wasted her allowance on candy one week and had no money to buy a simple birthday gift for a friend. As a result she remained at home rather than go to the birthday party without a gift for her friend.

Again, there was the night when Henry held a lantern while Robert finished hauling some coal from the street in front of our house to the coal chute at the side. The task of hauling it had been assigned to him at noon. Henry had put no time limit upon the task except to say that it must be done that evening, stressing the fact that darkness would bring danger to drivers if the coal remained in the street. Robert had stopped at the branch library on the way home from school. He had lingered with

two boy friends to read the funny papers. Henry did not scold Robert when he arrived home and found him rushing like mad, trying to get the coal off the street before suppertime. Reproof, however, came from other members of the family. Elinor reminded her brother that each Wednesday work for their father was heavy, saying that this Wednesday had been especially so, according to one of the employees in his office. Little George wept openly the next morning because neither Daddy nor Bob had been available when he needed help with his arithmetic problems.

"Freedom entails judgment," Henry told Robert. "When you're given a task, you should do it immediately or at the first opportune time, never letting anything short of sickness interfere."

"Freedom does not mean abuse," is another statement Henry has often made. "Abuse of privileges in one's home today is as bad as abuse of privileges later—such abuses as those of a driver who abides by no traffic regulations, a bank employee who borrows from the funds he handles, a physician who delays making calls to people dangerously ill because he wants to go to club dinner, or a teacher who is a tyrant because he has unlimited power in his schoolroom.

On other occasions he has told the older children who wanted authority over the younger ones, "A home is an organization, like a church, a school, or even this country. It is smaller, but it has no room for a dictator."

Some of our relatives and friends, especially those who have tended to "own" their children, have prophesied calamity for us because we have regarded our family as an organization with certain freedoms as well as certain obligations for all its members. We have had problems, but they have been no more serious than those which have come to the homes of these friends. I know that our solution of difficulties has left no resentment in the hearts of our children but instead has left a feeling of great respect for the fair treatment which they have received.

I am convinced that educating children in the home for freedom will produce citizens who will have well-founded appreciation of liberty and who will build a nation in which tyranny will have no part.



TREE STRENGTH

BEULAH M. HUEY

May I be strong
As pines are strong,
Growing in whatever earth there be,
Climbing the boulders
Binding the land
That would wander out to sea.

May I look up
As pines look up,
Braving the peaks, the mist, the chill,
Standing upright,
Needle-pointed
Sharply threading the ridge of the hill.

THE LEGEND OF EASTER LILIES

ALICE CROWELL HOFFMAN

Oh, hear the ancient legend
Of the lilies of Eastertide.
It tells that when the Saviour
Left the tomb and stepped outside,
The world's first Easter lilies
Sprang up where his feet had trod,
And with their matchless beauty
They glorified the sod.

The legend is a fancy
By imagination wrought,
But the truth revealed is mighty.
Let us grasp it as we ought.
Where'er the Saviour's footsteps
Have touched this old world's gloom,
There purity, joy, and beauty
Burst forth in radiant bloom.

APRIL

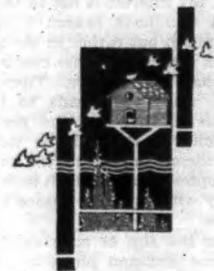
LEOLA LITRELL

This is young and sparkling April
With her captivating air,
Out to scatter stirring magic
Everywhere.

Growth and change and pulsing beauty
Fill the air with vibrant light.
Lovely April trips among us
Like a sprite.

This is April, sweet and tender,
Nurturing the blades of grass;
Hiding in a veil of snowflakes
As we pass.

Death may come, but life is constant—
After winter, spring's rebirth.
April waves her wand, transforming
All the earth.



MY POEM

PAULINE TYBON STEPHENS

My poem is of the things I love—
The flash of sunlight on a dove
As it flutters by in sudden flight;
The Milky Way on a star-flecked night
Draped in the sky like a bridal veil;
Wild roses by a woodland trail;
A chameleon creeping through the dew,
Mysteriously changing from hue to hue;
Gray moss suspended in a frieze
From limbs of ancient cedar trees;
Wind puffs across a pale green plain;
The dust-like fragrance of a rain.

My heart-deep poem is of these things
And more; and oh, such wondrous
springs
Of loveliness from sky and sod
Entwine my heart with the heart of God.

The Fun-Makers

ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH

Oliver Wendell Holmes in his poem, "The Boys," declared that "The angels laugh," and we have been told that laughter is one of the attributes of the divine. No one of us who knows laughter in its kindly and happy forms will question such sayings. There is something in wholesome laughter which is invigorating, comforting, and even healing to the spirit. So far as I know, no one has sought to learn how many laughter-makers have been remembered in monuments as compared with the number of conquerors and kings—probably the number is small. Nevertheless, humanity does remember those who have produced laughter, even if it does not do so in marble or bronze.

However, my interest is not in the laughter-makers who have caused a nation to sway with mirth but rather in the men and women in a community who can be called, simply enough, fun-makers. They are not individuals whose wit leads to hilarious mirth; instead, they are the creators of smiles which run through the stores, the post office, the creamery, and the homes like cheerful ripples—ripples which leave a smiling memory which may be passed along for generations.

As a rule the fun of such smiling ones touches some common phase of life. For instance, a village storekeeper, long since gathered to his fathers, once informed a friend that he was going to have a supper of "druthers." His puzzled friend had never heard of such a dish, but the next few words cleared away the mystery. "Well, on Monday for supper we always have 'druthers'—would you druther have this or would you druther have that?" In the background, of course, was the fact that supper revolved around leftovers from Sunday's expansive dinner. The little country story with its smile lingers on, and each new generation in the community learns in time that "druthers" are scheduled for some meal or other.

Another fun-maker tale has had a long life and throws its quiet meaning and little lesson on a problem that has long troubled mankind. It is told on a drummer who, meeting our storekeeper on the street, asked

him if he knew where a glass of the liquid "that cheers" could be obtained. He was informed that such a glass would be forthcoming. The storekeeper solemnly led the way through the door of the store, down into the cellar—the drummer following with growing cheerfulness—to a sink where his host quietly drew from the faucet a glass of cold spring water and handed it to the thirsty one.

Harmless pranks, of course, have their place in the list of a community's remembered and treasured smile-makers. One popular and widely known community leader with a flair for theatricals camouflaged his nose with a large artificial one. During the entire evening on "shopping night" he circulated through the stores, unrecognized and thought of as a stranger, although regarded with polite curiosity because of his decidedly protuberant nose. When he finally removed his false nose in front of a group of friends, the consternation of the onlookers turned into laughter, the echoes of which have long outlasted the prankster.

These are only a few of the incidents I have known, which have evolved into harmless and smiling tales. Anyone who lives in a small community—or possibly in a larger one—can easily gather such a harvest. Of course, there are the witty individuals whose fun is edged with acid and who create a passing laughter out of the foibles and weaknesses of others, but such laughter dies quickly. The fun which I commend lives long because it never hurts and because it bears a touch of kindness and gentleness which makes golden moments in a day which might otherwise be drab.

COLLECTOR'S ITEM

GLADYS BRICELY ASHOUR

I shall no longer vaguely cling
To treasures of the past,
Frail tapestries and china forms
Because they fade and do not last.

I shall, instead, for future years
Collect and cherish friends,
For friendships grow within the heart
And bring increasing dividends.

BOYS AND DOGS

SARA SMITH CAMPBELL

A boy without a dog? A lonely sight,
Obtected by something that is his by right.
He cares no whit about a pedigree
Or if the dog be large or small, but he
Lays for a dog to answer to his call,
To pull his sled, to bound after his ball,
Follow his every step or lick his hand
Sometimes, as if to say, "I understand"

A dog without a boy is quite as lonely,
Eyeing each passerby and wishing only
To hear a whistle, feel a boy's quick pat
Meant just for him. He'd do a lot for that:
Carry his master's books, join any light
That might arise, sleep by his bed at
night—
There is no telling what a dog would do,
For a dog without a boy is lonely too!

Miss Mattie, Mother

ANNIE LAURIE VON TUNGEN

Miss Mattie hated Mother's Day. She hated it as intensely as her kindly spirit would permit her to hate anything. It was, indeed, the only day of the year which she did not like, for Miss Mattie had a way of finding joy in everything about her—in life, people, incidents, sights.

Her neighbors' anticipation of family gatherings might cause her a momentary twinge of loneliness a few weeks before Christmas, but she soon became so engrossed in extra sewing that any hint of such feeling quickly vanished. The ladies for whom Miss Mattie sewed thoughtfully gave her the scraps left from their garments, and these she hoarded throughout the year. In November she started working at night and by Christmas Eve her needle had fashioned enough warm little clothes to make possible Santa Claus's visit to homes even poorer than her own.

At the beginning of the new year she planned ways by which she could share herself with more people during the next three hundred and sixty-five days. She always observed the first day of January by

keeping an old custom which her mother had had—that of giving a big, rosy apple and a loaf of maple sugar to the first New Year caller.

Valentine's Day was great fun for Miss Mattie. She enjoyed recycling the little scraps of paper with their wobbly printing which her child friends always brought. She knew what infinite pains they had taken in spelling out "To My Valentine." Most of all, she enjoyed baking heart-shaped cookies to bestow upon the Valentine donors and other children who chanced along.

She celebrated Thanksgiving by being more devoutly thankful than ever before for happenings in her life which she considered blessings and which most people would have scorned as misfortunes. Instead of complaining that the responsibilities which she had assumed years ago had deprived her of marriage, she was thankful that, knowing the sweetness of love, she had willingly turned from it to the rearing of five younger brothers and sisters when the family was orphaned. During the past few years she had had one cause for rejoicing seldom known in earlier life—she had food enough for herself and a bit to spare for someone else.

Easter was, perhaps, Miss Mattie's favorite of all days. She saved her pennies throughout the year, and the big white lily which she sent to some invalid was a source of infinite happiness. Indeed, everything about Easter was a joy. She liked the awakening life about her, the purity, the newness of it all. The sprightly old lady herself was symbolic of Easter; it seemed that she never grew any older and that life was just as intriguing as it had been forty years before.

Mother's Day, however, was different. Her suffering started several weeks before the day arrived. The minister usually conducted a series of studies of the great mothers of the Bible at the midweek prayer meetings, each of which was an increasing jab in Miss Mattie's wound. Had she pleased herself she would not have attended, but such an idea was unthinkable!

Then the dreaded day itself came. Miss Mattie always hoped fervently, and then chided herself for the hope, that a sprained ankle or a sudden attack of flu would spare her the ordeal of going to church on the

one Sunday of the year when she did not wish to attend. But since nothing as convenient as this ever happened, she held her head high, put on her best black dress, and tried to be very happy. She forced a smile while the choir sang a special anthem, and she held back a sob during the minister's glorification of motherhood. Usually she managed to maintain her courage when he asked the mothers under twenty years of age to stand, those between twenty and thirty, and on up to fifty. But when every other woman in the Dorcas Class arose, the poignant loneliness of her life swept up and engulfed her.

Then the miracle happened! The neighbors said that they had always known that anyone as good as Miss Mattie would receive a reward someday. An uncle whom she had never seen died in Canada, and Miss Mattie received a few thousand dollars. Although it was not a princely fortune such as one reads about in stories, it was tremendous to the old lady, for it enabled her to do what she had longed to do ever since her brothers and sisters had grown up.

Her best friend voiced the protest of most of the ladies in her circle at the church. "Why, Mattie, you're too old to care for a baby—she'll run you plumb crazy! Besides, at your age, you know—well, I'm much older than you, an' I expect to be took off any day."

"Now look here," Miss Mattie replied firmly, "you raised your seven and I'm goin' to raise my one. Besides, I'm only sixty, and somethin' just tells me I have a good twenty years in this world. Why just think of Uncle Pat who left me this money—he was ninety-three."

The next Mother's Day when the minister called for all the mothers who were over fifty years old to stand, the entire Dorcas Class arose. The baby girl in Miss Mattie's arms cooed softly, and the smile on the new mother's face was infinitely tender.

SUFFICIENCY

ALICE WHITSON NORTON

I've naught to fear in life or death
Since I have known three things:
A lover's kiss, a baby's smile
And faith that gives me wings.

WHEN MARY LEFT GOLGOTHA

ALICE CROWELL HOFFMAN

Perhaps as Mary tottered
From dark Golgotha's hill
She saw some children playing
As little children will.

Perhaps she looked upon them
To ease her breaking heart,
And saw in their glad faces
Small Jesus' counterpart.

The Happiness Fund

ELIZABETH WILLIAMS SUDLOW

All of us marveled at the Mason family. Their financial status was about that of most of our group, but the Masons seemed to have more than the rest of us and could always find time and money to help someone in need. In confidence, one to another we sometimes commented upon the "closeness" of Mrs. Mason and upon her eagerness to receive any possessions which we discarded as worthless.

At length we learned the explanation of these things when Mrs. Mason told us about the plan which the family had for salvaging junk and using the money for a happiness fund. Rags, newspapers, and metals were sold to a junkman. The rags were first sorted to see if anything might be salvaged for use. Buttons were removed; scraps for quilts or rugs were bundled; occasionally an entire garment was put aside. Magazines were checked for articles or stories which might be passed on to someone interested in the subject. The money realized from the sale of these things went into the happiness fund which was increased by voluntary contributions from all members of the family whenever a special favor had been rendered or something had occurred for which there was particular reason for thankfulness. The fund was never large, but from it were bought flowers for special occasions, books or magazines to cheer some shut-in, or a little gift which would help boost the morale or express love.

The Masons enjoyed their happiness fund as much as any of its beneficiaries, and all unwittingly they taught their neighbors much about ingenuity, thrift, and generosity.

Taps for Private Chuck

EDYTHE EGAN

When Bud Truman returned home from the Boy Scout meeting on a bright day in late October, he had thrilling news to tell his mother. He dashed up the steps of the little green house in Middleton and barged into the living room. Mrs. Truman was sitting by the window, reading a letter.

"Hi, Mom, wait till I tell you!" he panted and stopped for a moment to catch his breath. "What d'you think!" I've been made bugler of my troop! Isn't that great? I won over Eddie Martin and—why Mom, what's the matter?" he broke off suddenly, seeing tears in his mother's eyes. "No bad news about Art, is there?" He glanced apprehensively at the letter.

Mrs. Truman dried her eyes and looked at her son tenderly.

"Art's fine, dear," she said. "I have just had this letter from him. But—well, it's about Chuck."

"About Chuck!" he exclaimed, his body tensing. Chuck had been adopted into the family, and he and Chuck had been pals from the start. Dreading his mother's next words, he unconsciously tried to delay them by asking, "But how could Art know anything about Chuck, Mom? Or was he sent to Art's company?"

"No, Art didn't see Chuck," Mrs. Truman replied. "It seems that he met a soldier from the division with which Chuck was serving."

"And was he wounded?" Bud broke in, moistening his dry lips with his tongue. "Did the Nazis shoot him?"

Fearfully he searched his mother's face, hoping to see in it the assurance that his fears of a worse fate were groundless. But the look of sympathy which she gave him now and her slowness in replying told him that he was only kidding himself.

"All right, Mom," he went on quickly, the sick, cold feeling in the pit of his stomach growing worse. "Give it to me straight." Then seeing how difficult it was for her to tell him, he added, and his voice was low and halting, "Chuck's been—he's been killed, hasn't he?"

"Yes, dear," she answered quietly. "But he died a hero, Bud. Here, I'll read you



what Art wrote about his attack on a German sniper."

She picked up the letter from her lap and read aloud, "Sergeant Grable told me how it happened. He said that Chuck detected a sniper hidden behind a clump of bushes and went for him savagely. When the soldiers who had seen Chuck rush for the bushes followed him, they found the Nazi sniper badly wounded, but he had succeeded in using his gun on Chuck and had shot him—through the heart. He died instantly. Be sure—"

A choking sound caused Mrs. Truman to look up at her son, but he managed, "Go on, Mom, go on."

"Be sure," she continued reading, "to tell Bud that Chuck didn't suffer, and tell him the medal which was awarded him for 'getting his man' will be sent home in due time. In giving his life he no doubt saved the lives of many American soldiers who would probably have been killed by the sniper."

She laid the letter down, not looking at the boy who stood so motionless near her. Bud bit his lips and tightened his hold on the back of the chair. "Oh, Mom!" he said at last, chokingly. He couldn't say any more. He felt that he must get away by himself. This was his own very special loss which he could not share with anyone, not even with his mother. Letting go of the chair and still clutching his bugle, he dashed from the room and fled upstairs. Forcing back the sobs he walked over to his desk and picked up the snapshot of Chuck, his beautiful German police dog—the one snapped as he was leaping to scale the high wall at the back of their yard. Ten-

derly he handled the little wooden frame containing the picture.

"I've got to be brave like you, old pal," he muttered brokenly, "but it's going to be tough—knowing you'll never come home. We—we had such grand times together—didn't we, old boy?" Then all of a sudden an idea occurred to him. He stepped quickly over to his bed where he had laid his bugle. It was right and fitting, he told himself, that his dog should receive the same tribute which was paid to any other brave soldier who gave his life for his country.

As the sounds of the bugle reached Mrs. Truman's ears downstairs, she arose and stood at attention. Tears streamed down her cheeks as she whispered, "Taps—he's playing taps for a pal gone West—taps for Private Chuck."

A Usable Fifth Wheel

MARY S. STOVER

"I'm just an old fifth wheel now," Martha Grant sighed dolefully.

"Good usable fifth wheels all ready to apply are of priceless help in emergencies," commented her young neighbor with a heartiness which startled Martha. "Ted saw to it that the one in the back of our car was in good order for that long, hard trip to reach his sick mother. We had a bad blowout at a lonely spot, but he got the wheel off and our spare in place promptly. After that experience nobody around me is going to belittle fifth wheels and get away with it!"

"Thanks," said Martha humbly. "I never before had the sense to think of that silly old phrase in modern terms. I needed your jolt."

There was a new spring in her step as she went alone to the tiny apartment where she spent most of her time with old family things and with her memories. Martha's pace had the briskness of indignation: she seethed with self-disgust at the unintelligent way she had too long accepted the familiar phrase. "How unjust it is to apply these words to the lonely aunts and grandparents whose relatives have always relied upon them for gallant emergency help! Real angels of mercy some were—just as quick

to respond as God's heavenly angels too. Because they were ready—on call, as a nurse would put it."

Martha's mind went into a swift listing of capable women she had known or heard about as being at the whole neighborhood's beck and call.

"I've not been like them," she murmured. "People were too well aware I'd taken hours to get my clothes in order and things fixed to suit me for even a week's stay elsewhere." She marched purposefully to the storage room for her shabby Gladstone bag.

The bag wasn't required for her first "case," however. Nervous Mrs. Wrenn hailed her to inquire if she knew anyone who could help her to prepare for unexpected guests.

"I can come right now and help if you'd like," Martha responded. "I've just been honing for a job, as an old neighbor used to say."

Mrs. Wrenn looked dubious, but she accepted the offer with thanks and showed growing enthusiasm for Martha's assistance. "I didn't ask your rate," she said diffidently when they stopped to rest.

"Bless you, dear, I am not doing this for pay. It's just a little neighborly help."

Mrs. Wrenn insisted so strongly that Martha rummaged in her handbag. "Here's an envelope for the Bible Society. Just send an offering there. It will do lots of good and please me no end."

At first Mrs. Wrenn was lukewarm toward the idea, but Martha talked on about Bibles for servicemen, war prisoners, and others until Mrs. Wrenn said, "Let's send this five dollars I was going to use for mere foolishness!"

"You've put me in your debt still more, and I appreciate all you've done for me, Martha Grant!"

The yawning Gladstone bag gaped at its owner invitingly. "Human spares don't have to wait for somebody to yank 'em down and use 'em. I'll pack this very night for a helping visit at Cousin Em's. There's no reason to keep this particular fifth wheel from circulating around quite a bit among the relatives out her way if any seem desirous. If not, I'll just travel back again with my old bag in readiness for some other call."

The bag seemed to grin its approval.

Hank, the Hermit

MARJORIE ZIMMERMAN

Hank the Hermit was our village eccentricity. Every small town usually has at least one. Hank lived in an old shack in the woods on the outskirts of our little town, coming in at rare intervals to Folger's for supplies. When we children saw him tramping down the road, his feet bare, his long, gray locks straggling out from his high-crowned old hat, we always stopped our play to stare and point and conjecture.

One summer evening as Hank sat at his tumble-down threshold, he was surprised to observe two well-dressed strangers coming up the winding footpath to his door. With a pleasant word of greeting these men engaged the hermit in conversation; they admired his flourishing beans and corn, strolled up to the brow of the hill to get the full benefit of the view, and finally came to the point. Hank had a nice place they waved their hands at his shack and the surrounding land with an encompassing gesture; they liked the situation; in short, would Hank consider selling? They had been authorized to offer him ten thousand dollars for this old homestead of his.

Ten thousand dollars! Hank's pipe grew cold in his hand. He had never thought the site especially beautiful; the soil was only fair; the house—! But one of his visitors produced a document and Hank found himself signing an agreement to sell. Arrangements were made to conclude the negotiations within the next day or two and the two men took their departure.

When they had gone the old man looked about him. Had it been a fair bargain? The strangers had hardly looked at the house. The hermit knew the roof leaked, the floor boards were loose, there was no glass in the windows. The house needed scrubbing, painting, patching, remodeling. Hank arose early the next morning, for he had a full day ahead of him. The cottage must be made presentable to merit that ten thousand dollars. He plugged the holes in the kitchen where the rats came in; he nailed some old shingles over the leaky places in the roof; he propped the sagging sink, latched wrapping paper over the glassless windows, cleared out the vegetation around the front door and even got hold of

a can of paint somewhere and painted the front of the house. He was proud of the dreary looking old ruin when he had completed his patchwork—now it looked almost habitable, he thought.

The deal went through according to expectations and Hank received his thousands, but to his disappointment the new owners did not even notice the difference in the cottage. They were jubilant over the transaction, for they had secured the desired site for their new rubber factory. The old hut was immediately torn down, the woods were cleared, and on the spot where Hank had weeded his radishes men were soon engaged in turning out tires and tubes for a waiting world.

Amused, I repeated the incident to a friend of mine. Instead of laughing at this picture of old Hank, as I had expected she sat quite silent when I had finished. At last, turning to me, she said slowly, "How strange! Do you know, that's a picture of my life! It came to me all of a sudden while you were speaking."

"What do you mean?" I asked, completely mystified.

"Why, I've been trying to patch up my life, just as your hermit did his old house, before turning it over to the Owner—and I've been making just about as much progress."

I began to see. "You mean you've been struggling with all your little efforts at reform—in your own strength—when you could simply have turned your 'dwelling' over to God to remake you?"

"That's it. That's what I'm trying to say. Doesn't the Bible say we are bought with a price? I belong to him, but I've never let him take complete possession. I didn't want to invite him in to such a shabby old place, and so all this time I've been trying to patch it up."

"And he doesn't want our patchwork. He wants to remake us in himself. If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.' How many of us there are." I murmured, impressed, "who come to God with a can of paint and a few nails, and expect him to be satisfied with a little slapdash remodeling."

"And his promise is that if we'll let him have his way, he'll make us 'all glorious within.'"

Parents,

have you read . . . ?

OPENING THE DOOR FOR GOD

Herman J. Sweet

One of the greatest privileges which parents have is that of making their children acquainted with God. Often they are puzzled to know how to proceed in their endeavor, what to say, and what to do. Such parents will find *Opening the Door for God* a very practical help in introducing their children to God and in guiding them into Christian faith and life.

Dr. Herman J. Sweet, writing out of an experience of twenty years in the field of religious education, is convinced that religious faith is both caught and taught. Parents must themselves have a vital religious faith which is interwoven in the fabric of everyday living and they must grow spiritually through the years if they would have their children do likewise. Dr. Sweet says, "Parents cannot give to children what they do not have themselves. They cannot radiate a religious faith if they have none. They cannot teach if they do not know. It is futile to teach what we accept with our minds and do not know with our hearts." But more than this, parents must know how to interpret their faith to their children so that it will be within their mental grasp and will appeal to them.

Dr. Sweet is convinced that the religious development of children begins very early and that it is transmitted in the very atmosphere of the home. The love which parents have for their children and the parents' own attitude of calmness, trust, and joy provide the basis for all religious instruction.

Many children have erroneous and even terrifying conceptions of God. Parents can prevent and correct this situation by teaching them to know the God of loving care and protection, the Creator of life and beauty who is present here and now, and the God of justice and love whom we know as the Father of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

There are helpful and practical chapters in this volume which deal with the best ways of acquainting boys and girls with Jesus, what children should believe about the Bible and how they should use it, the meaning and practice of prayer, and religious observances in the home. In discussing the family and the church Dr. Sweet says, "The attitude of parents is of supreme importance in bringing children into vital and lasting relationship to the Church. Whether they accept the role or not, parents are teachers. Indifference, neglect, criticism, and lack of appreciation carry their own lessons. . . . In countless ways we may defeat our hope of bringing our children to full and satisfying participation in the life of the Church: by infrequent attendance, by only casual knowledge of its purpose and program, by inadequate and grudging financial support, and by letting the pressures of life crowd it far down in the scale of our interests. In these ways, without meaning to, perhaps, we place a low valuation on the Church. . . . We will not always ask, 'What is the Church doing for me?' but, 'What do I owe to the Church?' We will see that while the Church is an institution, it is also a spirit, an ideal, and a quest, and that it can be for each one of us more meaningful only as we ourselves make it so."

Parents will not find in this book specific answers to all the questions about religion which will arise in the home but they will find here definite and practical suggestions as to what they themselves should be and do and as to how they should proceed in opening the door for God into the lives of their children. The author's positive convictions concerning the great truths of Christianity, his sound psychological approach, the practical usefulness of this volume in dealing with situations which arise frequently in every home, and its reasonable price will commend this volume to parents who are earnest in their desire to transmit a vital Christian faith to their children.

Opening the Door for God, A Manual for Parents, by Herman J. Sweet. The Westminster Press, 160 pages, \$1.00

MY FATHER'S PRAYERS

AMY COMPERE HICKERSON

One of my earliest memories is that of having the measles and then of what was far more interesting, having a "relapse." That which made this memorable in my life is not that it was my first experience with earache and a hot salt pad or that I had my first drink of hot lemonade; it was a change in the way we had family prayers and what my father prayed for. Instead of sitting around the fireside while my mother and father read the Scripture verses alternately and then everybody knelt down to pray, they sat around my bedside and when my father prayed he called my name and asked God to make me well and the next day he thanked God for making me better. To a child of four it was most astonishing that she was important enough either to her father or to God to be included by name in their conversation. It was truly amazing!

Back in those seminary days when Dad was memorizing the first chapter of Genesis in Hebrew I tagged behind him as he paced the floor and learned to say "B're-shith'bara Elohim eth hasha mayim," he always thanked God for "health and strength and the right exercise of our minds." Many times I have mullered over the latter phrase and have wondered just what prompted it. It was probably a feeling of thanksgiving that since the Lord had called him to preach and had sent him to the seminary, he had also endowed him with the ability to take advantage of his opportunities. I have never quite come

to the point where I could thank God for "the right exercise of my mind," but I have often prayed for such a boon both for myself and for others. If only we could "think straight," unhampered by some emotional urge such as prejudice, jealousy, or pride which tolors our logic, or even by love, which gives undue consideration to one and too little to another! I should like to be able to thank God for "the right exercise of my mind."

I learned first from my father's prayers "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." To me it was a part not of the psalms but of Dad's prayer, until many years later. However, prayer or psalm, it is a comforting thought for every child of God, and we know that we can depend upon it.

Every Sunday morning from my earliest recollection down to the present day Dad has prayed for those "in thousands of churches all over the land where thy name is proclaimed." It is an inspiration to know that on the Lord's Day others "in thousands of churches all over the land" are also worshipping God through service and that we are all working together to bring in his kingdom.

I thank God for the phrases from my father's prayers which have come back to me many times in hours of trouble and temptation to comfort and strengthen me. I thank him for "the heritage of them that fear Jehovah."

IN ANSWER TO YOUR REQUESTS—

The necessity of reducing the number of pages in *The Better Home* and of conserving paper led to the decision to omit the printing of the Scripture passages for the home daily Bible readings beginning with the third quarter issue of 1944. However, there has been such a general desire to have the home daily Bible readings printed that it has been decided to restore the Scripture passages and to make other adjustments. Since the material for the first and second quarters of 1945 was already in type, this change could not become effective until the appearance of the issue for July, August, September, 1945. You may expect to find the Scripture passages included in the next issue.

ALTAR FIRES

Recommended for Daily Worship in the Home

Prepared by Edward H. Pruden

SECOND QUARTER, 1945

THE UNFOLDING DRAMA OF BIBLE HISTORY

LESSON FOR APRIL 1

The Author and Perfecter of Our Faith

Matthew 27:62 to 28:9

Explained in Daily Reading for Tuesday

MEMORY SELECTION: Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. Hebrews 12:1-2.

MONDAY, MARCH 26

A Song of Victory—Psalm 2:6-12

In this second Psalm we find the inspired writer giving expression to a profound spiritual confidence in the ultimate victory of God's Son. This confidence is not based upon wishful thinking or upon any arbitrary statements but upon his firm belief that God has decreed victory for his Son and for those principles which find expression in him. What God has determined, his servants will bring to pass in the fulness of time.

One of the greatest services we can render our fellow man is to demonstrate our own assurance of Christ's ultimate triumph in the earth. Someone has said that the faith of a great many people is faith in somebody else's faith, and all of us know how greatly we can influence others by our own unflinching confidence that "he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet" (1 Cor. 15:25). This sure confidence of ours should not be a meaningless boast, but should be based on a deep and vital experience with him who is destined to rule as King of kings and Lord of lords. No one can be closely asso-

ciated with him without sensing his ultimate triumph. He possesses within his personality both the promise and the means of victory.

Our Father, we thank thee for those who have looked across the years and have beheld the final victory of Christ. Give us the assurance in our own hearts that we are a part of a movement which is destined to succeed. Let us never be weary in well-doing. Amen.

TUESDAY, MARCH 27

The Empty Tomb—Matthew 28:1-10

All kinds of arguments have been made by critics and skeptics against the resurrection of Jesus, but not one of them has ever denied that the tomb was empty when the followers of Christ went to visit it on the third day. Those who do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus attempt to show that something was done with his body, but they have to admit that the tomb in which our Lord was placed contained no body on that historic "first day of the week," and the fact of the empty tomb speaks volumes to us concerning our risen Lord.

It tells us that he was victor over death, man's dreaded foe and last enemy. It reveals to us that love is stronger than hate, and that God is able to overrule all the evil plans of men. It confirms our faith in our own future, and adds dignity and purpose to life. It puts a song on our lips and an undying hope in our hearts. It tells us all this and more.

What finer epitaph could our Lord have had than this: "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said." This means far more to us than all the words of praise and commendation that men could ever utter. It not only tells us what he was, but what he did, and what he can make it possible for us to do at the end of life's journey.

We thank thee, Lord, for that blessed hope which thou hast given us in the victory of our Saviour over the grave. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28

Mary's Joy—John 20:11-18

How like Jesus it is to turn sorrow into rejoicing! Mary went to the tomb for the purpose of showing honor and respect for the body of Jesus, but she discovered rather the living presence of the Master. The Christian life is full of happy surprises. Our highest hopes and anticipations are always exceeded, and our Lord is constantly doing for us so much "abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20).

It is interesting to note that Mary recognized Jesus when he called her name, and we are reminded of his words concerning the Good Shepherd: "He calleth his own sheep by name" (John 10:3). It is a great comfort to us to realize that God knows us individually and not simply in groups and congregations. He is aware of our personal needs and is always ready to supply them. Mary needed Jesus more than she did any earthly or material thing, and it was himself that he gave her in that happy hour.

As soon as Mary had received this good news she went to tell the disciples. That is certainly the duty and privilege of the faithful Christian. The message of the risen Lord is too wonderful a message to be kept a secret even for a short while.

Accept our gratitude, dear Father, for the joy that we receive when we discover that Jesus is alive forevermore. May he live without a rival in our hearts. Amen.

THURSDAY, MARCH 29

Walking with Jesus—Luke 24:13-24

Our Scripture lesson today tells us the story of the conversation which Jesus had with the two disciples who were returning to Emmaus after the crucifixion. They did not recognize Jesus, and as they walked, they shared with him their keen disappointment. It is doubtful whether one could find in all literature words more full of pathos than those words, "But we trusted that it had been he." In these few words are summed up all their anguish and bitter disillusionment. They had left everything to follow Jesus of Nazareth, and now to all appearance he had been hopelessly defeated by his enemies. It looked as though they had invested their lives in a lost cause. They dreaded to go home and face their friends who had advised them against such a venture in the first place.

The picture of Jesus walking with them in their sorrow is all the assurance we need that he walks with us too in our sorrows and disappointments. If men ever stop to wonder where Jesus is to be found, they need to be reminded that he will be found wherever there is human need. He is in the homes of bereavement and along the highways of life with men who feel that all is lost and that life is hopeless.

Our Father, comfort our hearts in the thought that we are never far from the presence of our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

FRIDAY, MARCH 30

Learning from Jesus—Luke 24:25-35

The fact that the two sorrowful disciples told Jesus of their disappointment and grief gave the Master a chance to lead them into a fuller understanding of the Scriptures. "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them . . . the things concerning himself." What a wonderful experience that must have been!

Dr. Russell H. Conwell tells us that on one occasion while he was visiting in Jerusalem he took this walk from the Holy City to Emmaus. On the way he met an old priest who asked him if he knew what the disciples meant when they said, "Did not our heart burn within us?" Then he explained that in the original language the words had reference to "a fire-place feeling"—that supreme sense of security and contentment which a man feels when he sits in his own home before an open fire. It was this comfort which Jesus imparted to the Emmaus disciples as he broke bread with them in their own home, and it is this same comfort which he shares with us if we are wise enough to invite him into our hearts and homes. He is able to turn our seeming defeats into glorious victories.

For the privilege of making a place for Christ in our hearts and homes we thank thee, O God, and praise thy dear name. May we never keep him "just outside the door." Amen.

SATURDAY, MARCH 31

A Happy Meeting—John 21:15-19

When Peter met Jesus on the lakeside after his resurrection, it must have been both a joyful and an embarrassing meeting. In spite of all his joy, Peter could not forget that he had denied his Lord three times before a servant girl. It was very gracious of Jesus therefore to give Peter a chance to say three times that he loved him. It must have seemed both to Jesus and to Peter that these three expressions of sincere loyalty and devotion had done much to conceal forever the shame of those three denials in the court of Pilate's hall. For that reason it must have been one of the most joyous occasions in the life of Peter and one of the most satisfying in the experience of our Lord.

It will be well for us to notice that love for Christ carries with it definite responsibilities. No sooner had Peter expressed his love for Christ than he was told to "Feed my sheep." No service for the Master will be very effectively done unless it is done with a heart full of love for him who loved us and gave himself for us, nor is there much incentive to service where

this love is lacking. Any person who has known the love of God as it is revealed in Christ can never be at rest as long as there are other human beings in the world who have not experienced that love.

Our Father, teach us to love thee more and help us to demonstrate our love by the service which we render our fellow men. Amen.

SUNDAY, APRIL 1

Looking unto Jesus—Hebrews 12:1-3

On this glorious day when we think particularly about the resurrection of our Lord, how reassuring it is to recall that we are constantly "compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses." If we are at all inclined to waver and give up, surely the memory of these victorious ones looking on will serve to strengthen and encourage us. There are times when we need to remind ourselves that these redeemed ones endured untold suffering and privation for their faith, and that through patient endurance they finally triumphed.

Among these witnesses is One who is both the "author and finisher of our faith." He did not find it easy to do his Father's will. He was not encouraged by the plaudits of his generation. He clung tenaciously, however, to his divinely appointed mission and was ultimately crowned with glory and honor. It is this spirit which we must have if we are to be his worthy followers.

It isn't easy to be a faithful Christian today. It is much easier to conform to the ways of the world than it is to stand up valiantly for Christ and Christian principles. We shall need the strength which comes with the assurance that he is looking on and anticipating our success.

May we never lose sight, O God, of our heavenly witnesses, and may we win our victories, as they won theirs, by thy help. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

- M.—Woe, Matt. 23:12-23
- T.—Explains Last Things, Matt. 24:2-14
- W.—Young Virgins, Matt. 25:1-13
- T.—Zion's King Betrayed, Matt. 26:46-55
- F.—Perfected Salvation, Matt. 28:1-10
- S.—Author and Perfector of Our Faith, Matt. 27:22 to 28:9
- S.—The Burnt Offering, Lev. 1:1-13

The Book and the Faith

Proverbs 2:1-9; 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:14-17

MEMORY SELECTION: The word of the Lord endureth for ever. 1 Peter 1:25.

MONDAY, APRIL 2

Walking in the Law—Psalm 119:1-8

This week our readings are to be found in the longest chapter in the Bible—Psalm 119. Each verse of this psalm contains some reference to God's law, and the verses are grouped together in sections over which are placed the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

The verses today remind us that we are to walk in the law if we would walk as we should. This is another way of saying that life must be limited by certain disciplines, and that to ignore these boundaries is to invite unhappiness and ultimate defeat.

It is customary for us to think of discipline as a means of correcting those who have misbehaved. It is also a means of getting the most out of life. The person who ignores all restraint and allows himself all sorts of foolish indulgences is destined to discover sooner or later that life has lost its meaning and its joy.

There are certain things we cannot do, not because they are unlawful, but because they are foolish. To do these things would rob us of the privilege of doing more important things and more enjoyable things. Life is entirely too short an experience to spend it on things of secondary value and importance. We want the best.

Help us, our Father, to welcome the disciplines of life as a means of guaranteeing for us the best that life can offer. Amen.

TUESDAY, APRIL 3

The Cleansing Word—Psalm 119:9-16

Not one of us can examine his heart in all honesty and frankness without admitting himself to be unclean. All of us know that we have sinned and come short of the

glory of God. We know too that God's Word possesses a cleansing influence, and that by giving ourselves to its study and following its precepts, we can rid our hearts of the sins that soil.

The saints of all ages have not been those who were born good or who were privileged to live in a sheltered environment, but those who were such devoted students of the Holy Scriptures that their lives were purified by the crystal-clear waters that flow from the very throne of God. They knew that the world in which they lived was an evil world, and that it would be easy for them to partake of the nature of their surroundings. They therefore received into their souls day and night that inspired and inspiring Word of God in order that they might possess within themselves a means of spiritual purification. All types and ages need this experience, but particularly is it important for those who stand on the very threshold of life, facing its many temptations and its great possibilities.

Our Father, cleanse our hearts of all sin as we open them to the inflow of thy Word, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4

Understanding the Testimonies—Psalm 119:33-40

It matters not how much truth the Law contains, it will benefit us none at all if we do not understand it. We would suggest therefore three means of reaching a proper understanding of its message.

First of all, study the Word with great care and faithfulness. Paul wrote to his young friend Timothy, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 3:15). It is not enough just to read the Bible; we

must give serious study to its divine message for us.

Next, we must observe that which we learn. Nothing is more instructive to us than the discovery that the teachings of God's Word really work in our own experience. Until we practice what we have read, it is all just a theory. In observing the precepts we find how true they are.

The third suggestion is that we must give the Holy Spirit a chance to interpret his own message to our hearts. Not only has he inspired holy men of old to give us this message, but he stands ready to reveal its truth to our minds and make it live. The author of our book is naturally its best interpreter, and this truth certainly holds for the greatest of all books.

Lead us, O God, into those rich experiences which will open to us completely the deep meaning of thy truth. Amen.

THURSDAY, APRIL 5

Loving the Precepts—Psalm 119:97-104

As we have already seen, it will be very easy to resent the restrictions provided by the Law unless we see these restrictions as a definite means to a happy life. If we need any argument to convince us that observance of law is wise, we need only remind ourselves of what would happen in an average community if there were no legal restrictions. Instead of being a law-abiding community, it would become a lawless place, and no one would feel safe within its boundaries. The law, therefore, is the thing that makes life possible and the pursuit of happiness a reality in our experience.

It is no wonder, then, that intelligent persons love the law, and certainly it is not at all strange that intelligent Christians love the Word of God. Instead of being for us a repressive and coercive thing, it has become for us a means of deliverance from all those lawless impulses that would turn orderly living into sinful chaos. The best way, of course, to express that love is through a faithful demonstration in our own lives of the message to be found in God's Word. This will convince God and men of our love for its truth far more than volumes of praise.

We thank thee, our Father, that thou hast taught us to love thy Word. Help us to teach others to love it also. Amen.

FRIDAY, APRIL 6

Light from the Word—Psalm 119:105-112

Living in a world that is dark with sin, we need the light which God's Word provides. Many have stumbled and fallen along the pathway of life because they neglected or refused to use that divine light which God has made possible for all men. When we view these tragedies, we are inspired to guarantee our own future by a faithful dependence upon this light from above. All intelligent men will admit that it is foolish to grope in the shadows when adequate light is available.

The Bible contains the records of those who used this light and those who neglected it. Men like Abraham, Joseph, Isaiah, and scores of others depended upon it and thereby found life to be an interesting and rewarding experience. Men like Cain, Absalom, Judas, and many others charted life upon the basis of their own meager knowledge and understanding, and life for them was a burden to be borne and an utter failure. It matters not how much we think we know, we are terribly foolish if we ignore the experiences of others. God's Word reveals to us the important discoveries which various types of men have made throughout the centuries. Their findings can be light for us if we will use them.

Give us the wisdom, O God, to take into our hearts that light from above without which we shall surely stumble and fall. Amen.

SATURDAY, APRIL 7

Wonderful Words of Life—Psalm 119:129-136

One is guilty of no exaggeration when he describes the words found in the Scriptures as wonderful. They are truly wonderful in their revelation of God. As we go through the pages of Holy Writ we find the character of God unfolded before our eyes. We see revealed his love for his children and his patience with them in all their failures and unfaithfulness. We see

his redemptive plan expressed in the life and death of our Saviour and the hope of everlasting life extended to us in his resurrection from the dead.

The words of Scripture are also wonderful in their wisdom. Men will not make a tragedy of life if they follow the guidance that is granted in the Word of God. Life is spoiled and all its possibilities frustrated when men deliberately close their eyes to the wisdom of the Bible and base their choices and decisions on their own faulty and finite understanding.

The words of Scripture are wonderful too in their warning against sin. It is the practice of some to treat sin lightly and to minimize its effect upon individuals and society. The Bible convinces us that sin is deceptive and that it is so tragic a thing that it sent the purest of men to a cruel cross to die in man's stead.

Holy Father, increase our appreciation for these wonderful words of life. Amen.

SUNDAY, APRIL 8

Righteousness of the Commandments—
Psalm 119:169-176

It will be well for us to remember that the word "righteousness" means more than goodness, purity, and truth. It also means a "rightness of relationship" that should characterize all of life for us. Occasionally we see people who have applied their re-

ligion to life so wisely that everything about them seems right. They seem to know how to adjust themselves to life's disappointments. They appear to be able to overcome all of life's temptations. They have acquired the habit of maintaining an optimistic spirit, and they refuse to harbor haunting fears in their hearts. They have very evidently hungered and thirsted for righteousness (or rightness) until they have been filled.

It is this righteousness which the commandments of God encourage. They provide us signposts which point to this right kind of life. If we have ever considered the commandments to be oppressive, it is because we have failed to understand their purpose and intent. How could God be a loving Father and fail to throw around his children those protective standards of life which serve to eliminate the destructive forces that beset us on every hand?

Dear Lord, we are truly grateful for thy commandments and for the righteousness they teach us. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

M—Meal Offering. Lev. 2:1-11
T—Peace Offering. Lev. 3:1-11
W—Sin Offering. Lev. 4:1-12
T—Trespass Offering. Lev. 5:1-10
F—Priests Anointed. Lev. 8:6-16, 30
S—The Book and the Faith. Prov. 2:1-6; 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Tim. 2:16-17
S—Atonement. Lev. 16:16-22

LESSON FOR APRIL 15

Pioneers of Faith

Genesis 12:1-2; Act. 7:4-7, 12-14; Hebrews 11:8-10

MEMORY SELECTION: By faith Abraham, when he was called . . . obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. Hebrews 11:8.

MONDAY, APRIL 9

God's Promise to Abraham—Genesis 13:14-18

Abraham has been called "The Father of the Faithful," and as such should certainly head the list of the pioneers of faith. We have precedent for much that we do today, and we have learned much

from the experiences of others. Abraham, however, had to act on the basis of his own understanding of God's will, for he stood among the first in all history to hear and heed the voice of the Almighty.

In our Scripture reading today we have an account of God's covenant with Abraham in which a wide expanse of territory

is given to him and to his people and an innumerable posterity is promised him. It is worthy of note that Abraham did not question the reality of his experience, nor did he hesitate to act upon it. He moved his tent immediately and took up his dwelling in Hebron.

It is interesting too to note that his first act in the new land to which he had gone was to build an altar. It gives unmistakable evidence of the primary place which God held in his life. None of the people among whom he had moved could have any doubt as to the kind of man he was. He had borne witness to his belief in the living God without saying a word.

Help us, our Heavenly Father, to give thee first place in all our plans. May we be people of great faith. Amen.

TUESDAY, APRIL 10

Living in Tent—Genesis 18:1-8

In our Bible reading for today we find Abraham and Sarah dwelling in a tent on the plains of Mamre. From this tent door Abraham saw three men, and according to the courteous customs of the East, he gave them a cordial invitation to pause for rest and food. He then set before them the best that he had, and brought water that they might wash their feet.

In subsequent verses we learn that Abraham and Sarah were entertaining angels unawares, and that the angel of the Lord made to this faithful couple the promise of a son. It is worthy of note that God is able to discover us wherever we may dwell, whether it be in a tent or a palace, if there is in our hearts the spiritual hospitality which longs for his presence.

Every dwelling place of man may be glorified by the kind of people who live there. A stately mansion may become a place of torment if God is not known there, while a humble cottage may radiate the sunshine of heaven if God is loved and honored there. It is not the substance of which the house is made or its dimensions which really matter; the thing of importance is the presence of the Almighty.

Make in our hearts and homes, O God, a dwelling place for thyself, and come and dwell therein. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11

Abraham and Isaac—Genesis 22:1-13

It is difficult to think of a greater sacrifice being asked of any person than the sacrifice of an only child. That sacrifice has been made by many in recent years upon the battlefields of the world, and many are able therefore to understand something of the grief which must have filled Abraham's heart as he traveled for three days toward the mount upon which God had directed that he should offer up his son Isaac. This experience provided a mighty test of his faith, but even in this he did not fail God.

The world today is tremendously in need of men and women who stand ready at any time to place all they have on the altar of God. If there is one sin that is more common than all others, it is the sin of selfishness. Such an attitude exalts self to the neglect of God and of one's fellow men. It is idolatry at its worst. Much of the human misery that has come upon the world in the last decade can be traced to this evil among men. It can be uprooted only by those to whom God is everything, and for whom his will is the law of life. The required sacrifices may seem great, but to withhold them is to rob oneself of life's deepest satisfactions.

Help us to see in the way of sacrifice, our Father, the way of fullest fellowship with thee, both in time and in eternity. Amen.

THURSDAY, APRIL 12

God's Promise to Isaac—Genesis 26:23-25

It is a good thing to have godly parents. Although Isaac became spiritually indifferent because of his increased material prosperity, God did not forget him. God still remembered the faithful life of Abraham and was anxious therefore to bless the son of such a father.

Few of us stop to consider how many of our blessings come to us through God's faithfulness to somebody else. There are times when we know that we deserve very little, if anything, and we are made to wonder at the continued goodness of our Heavenly Father. It is altogether possible that we are the recipients of the blessings that

are being granted for the sake of some loyal Abraham with whom we are closely associated in one way or another.

Such favor should not leave us satisfied to remain as we are but should stimulate us to arouse in our own hearts those high purposes and unquestioned loyalties that have characterized those for whom God has such abiding admiration. No true Christian can ever be content to bask in the sunshine of another man's accomplishments. It is not enough that we should boast of being Abraham's children; we must bring forth fruit meet for repentance. God expects this of us.

Give us the joy, O Father, that comes from a life wholly surrendered to thee. Amen.

FRIDAY, APRIL 13

Jacob's Dream—Genesis 28:10-17

Jacob's dream reminds us of the sanctity which we associate with certain places because of the sacred experiences which we have had there. When Jacob, weary from traveling, stopped for his night's rest, the spot had little significance. It must have been a rather rocky, barren place, and indeed he made a pillow out of some of the stones. The next morning, however, it had become "the house of God, and . . . the gate of heaven." From that day forward the name "Bethel" has been a sacred name.

It is truly remarkable how God can reach down and touch a life and make it a thing of beauty and usefulness; how he can reveal himself to a man in a certain place and make it forever a shrine; how he can break through into our humdrum experiences and bathe them in the glory of heaven. We need to remember that God is not far from any of us, and that rich experiences with him are ours for the asking. We can assist him in making our shops and homes and schools and wherever we may work or play places worth remembering. No event in life is insignificant if all of life is lived unto God. In the light of this fact, every day should be approached with keen expectancy.

Help us to find thee at every turn in life's journey, our Father, and may all of life be a ladder leading to heaven. Amen.

SATURDAY, APRIL 14

Joseph Made Ruler—Genesis 41:33-40

A pagan world is not always able to recognize the true worth of God's faithful servants, but Pharaoh was wise enough to sense the powers that were present in the life of Joseph, and he placed Joseph in a most strategic position. We can thus see God's hand at work even in the life of a pagan ruler and in the history of a country that knew not the true God.

God was able to honor Joseph because Joseph had honored him all the days of his life. Some people wonder why they are never recognized nor honored, but they never seem to realize that probably they have done nothing worthy of honor and recognition. There are isolated instances of rapid advances to power that may be traced to "political pull" and favoritism of one sort or another, but most advancement is due to recognition of true worth and accomplishment. If we spent as much time trying to make ourselves worthy of prominence as we ordinarily spend wondering why we have not been granted it, we should probably achieve it in a comparatively short period of time. Joseph had passed through some trying experiences but he had never failed God or the divine purpose which he felt at work in his heart.

Help us to be worthy of places of leadership, O God, and may we give to each task the best of which we are capable. Amen.

SUNDAY, APRIL 15

Pioneers of Faith—Hebrews 11:17-22

As we read of these Old Testament pioneers of faith, we recall the stimulating words of Longfellow when he said,

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime.

Our knowledge of great men is given us not simply for purposes of information, but in order that we may be inspired to emulate their good qualities and reproduce their outstanding achievements.

It is a fine thing to be a pioneer in any worth-while field, but it is particularly praiseworthy to be a pioneer in the realm

of faith. Most of the geographical frontiers have been crossed, but the world is still waiting for further discoveries in the realm of the spirit. We need men who will champion unpopular causes, who will not hesitate to stand with minorities, who will wage a lone battle, if necessary, for what is right and just. We have a sufficient number of average men, an overabundance of conformers, but we could use a great many more fearless pioneers in those fields that are related to our relationships both to God and men. Many will hesitate to go into virgin territory, but they will walk in once the trail has been blazed by a fearless pioneer.

LESSON FOR APRIL 22

The Founding of the Nation

Exodus 18:19-24; 19:3-8

Expounded in Daily Reading for Thursday

MEMORY SELECTION: All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. Exodus 19:8.

MONDAY, APRIL 16

Israel Afflicted in Egypt—Exodus 1:8-14

Although Joseph, the former Hebrew captive, had meant a great deal to the land of Egypt, his memory was not kept alive by the Pharaohs that came after him. It was one of these later ones who had not known Joseph who began to afflict the Israelites because he thought they were growing too strong in the land. He was fearful lest they should become mightier than the Egyptians themselves and co-operate with the enemies of Egypt in its destruction.

It is an interesting side light on this Pharaoh, and on human nature in general, that he characterized his actions as wise without pausing to consider whether or not they were just and fair. We usually find it possible to justify our actions on the basis of wisdom even when our consciences tell us that we are being grossly unfair to our fellow men. It will be interesting to see just at what time in world history men will come to the conclusion that nothing is wise which is not right. Wisdom and righteousness have never been enemies of each other. They are handmaidens in the life of God, and should be so related in our own.

Save us from spiritual cowardice, our Father, and grant us the courage to be among those who push back frontiers. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

M.—Righteous Laws Lev. 19:1-18
T.—Sabbath Lev. 23:1-21
W.—Sabbath Year Lev. 25:1-17
Th.—Blessings of Obedience Lev. 26:1-12
F.—Disobedience Punished Lev. 26:14-33
S.—Pioneers of Faith Gen. 12:1-9; Acts 7:4-7, 12-14; Heb. 11:8-10
S.—Levites Num. 3:1-13

TUESDAY, APRIL 17

The Child Moses—Exodus 2:1-10

Our Scripture verses today reveal to us the fact that cruel national leaders are very much alike whether they live in the long ago or in more recent times. A Pharaoh who could decree the death of all the Hebrew male children, a Herod who could instigate the slaughter of innocents, and more recent dictators who start out on a program of aggression which results in the indiscriminate destruction of countless homes, including families with little children, all have a great deal in common. This fact illustrates the timelessness of sin.

The story of the preservation of Moses reminds us that God has a way of watching over his anointed leaders, and though they may be subjected to all kinds of dangers, he will keep them in safety for that great task to which he has called them. God was not unmindful of the tragic situation confronting the Hebrews in Egypt and he was

determined to raise up one who would be the deliverer of his oppressed people. God's children should never reach the conclusion that they have been overlooked or forgotten, for in due season the Heavenly Father will bring about their deliverance in his matchless way.

Give us faith in our moments of darkness, O God, to believe that thou wilt bring us once again into the sunshine. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18

God Calls Moses—Exodus 3:1-10

The most effective servants of God are those who are conscious of a definite call to service. Moses received his call in the desert of Midian, and it came in connection with an unusual occurrence. Moses saw a bush aflame, but the bush was not consumed, and it was when he turned aside to see this great sight that God spoke to him.

God does not always present his call to men in the same way, but those who are capable of outstanding service and who are sufficiently in tune with God to receive it will surely receive a summons for service which they will not be able to ignore. We should not think of these calls as being confined to ministers and missionaries, but as coming to all of those whom God can use. Serving God is not always in some conspicuous capacity. It may be in some very out-of-the-way place and in some lowly form of service, but the spirit in which we perform it can make it a hallowed experience indeed. Often the greatest heroes of faith have been those unsung and unheralded ones whose reward is not in the plaudits of men but in the approval of their Heavenly Father. That is the most coveted reward of all.

May we be keenly aware of thy call to service, our Father, for it matters not how few our talents may be. We know, thou hast use us all.

THURSDAY, APRIL 19

Choosing Wise Leaders—Exodus 18:13-27

No one man can do all the work that is required by God's people, it matters not how gifted or energetic he may be. There

are definite limits to every man's ability to serve. It was the thoughtful father-in-law of Moses who suggested that the great leader select helpers to assist him in his tremendous work. In this way both the responsibility and the privilege of leadership were shared.

In so many churches the work is left to the pastor alone, or to two or three willing laymen or laywomen, and then some wonder why the work of Christ does not progress more rapidly. God has so arranged the work of his kingdom that it requires the faithful labors of the largest possible number of individuals. This divine arrangement is not for the purpose of making the work burdensome to a great many, but for the purpose of sharing the joys and satisfactions that come from such service. It would not seem fair for a small handful of persons to reap such a rich harvest while others remained empty-handed. The future of our Lord's cause depends upon co-operation. We are called to serve, and any man who takes any other view of his commission has missed the point altogether. We need God and he needs us.

O God, help us to respond willingly to thy call for faithful workers. In Jesus' name. Amen.

FRIDAY, APRIL 20

Laws for Living—Exodus 20:3-17

Some individuals have the mistaken idea that the Ten Commandments are merely verses to be memorized or theories which should be held by right-thinking people. Actually, however, they are laws for living. God created us for the purpose of living intelligent, constructive, and happy lives, and this goal for men is impossible unless we have certain guiding principles by which to govern our behavior.

Although these commandments were given many centuries ago to people living in an environment very different from our own, they are as necessary and appropriate for us today as they were for the Israelites at the time God delivered them to Moses. We sometimes hear it said that times have changed, and while it is true that the conditions under which we live are constantly in a state of transition, it is nevertheless true that man remains the same, and his

temptations to do evil vary very little from one generation to another. Without guiding principles and spiritual ideals we readily go astray, and each new generation has to learn for itself the wisdom of God's laws for man.

Our Father, teach us the wisdom of following faithfully the inspired rules for living which we have received as a proved heritage from our forefathers. Amen.

SATURDAY, APRIL 21

Erecting the Tabernacle—Exodus 40:1-16

The erection of the tabernacle was an outstanding event in the life of Israel. From thenceforth this place was to be a holy place and a symbol around which the life of Israel would revolve. It would be a place of worship for all the people and a reminder that God was in the midst of them and should therefore be recognized by them.

In our own communities the church should be a rallying place for all those who desire the best things for the people. Too many look upon the church merely as an ancient institution, a sort of antique to be honored and perpetuated. It is, however, a great deal more than that. It is the most practical and indispensable institution in the world. It inspires and undergirds the finest influences to be found anywhere, and it makes practical our charitable and beneficent impulses. The church makes it possible for us to do collectively what we could never do by ourselves. It awakens in us our spiritual responsibilities and keeps alive the flame of love for God and for our fellow men. The church, then, cannot be thought of as a luxury which is optional, but as an absolute necessity for all men.

How grateful we are, O Father, for what the church has meant to us personally and as citizens of the community. Amen.

SUNDAY, APRIL 22

Christian Fellowship—Psalm 133:1-3

In recent years we have seen the divisive elements which have been at work in the world and the suspicions, misunderstandings, and bloodshed which have resulted. Someone has said that science has made the world into a neighborhood and that it is the task of Christianity to make it

a brotherhood. We know that unity cannot be created by wishful thinking or by haphazard methods. It is the result of common ideals and loyalties.

We have every reason to believe that the only means of bringing about unity among the nations of the world is to establish a spiritual unity between God and individual men. When men are in perfect harmony with God they are readily conscious of an essential harmony among themselves. Pacts, treaties, and agreements among nations are all helpful, but they are no stronger than the characters of the men who draw them up, and character can be no stronger than the extent to which men are surrendered to the will of God. While our task is one of worldwide proportions, it must begin with ourselves and touch all those whose lives are influenced by our own. As heaven, it will one day work its way into the whole lump. This is our inescapable task.

Create in our hearts, O God the spirit of world brotherhood. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE ANSWER

LOIS SWELLING

Perchance they asked of him, "But why dost thou not, Master, give reproof To Rome, to governmental shame, To Empire's devastating hoof? Is this not humankind's despair— The rot that lurks in statehood's plan? And yet thou touchest not on this, But ever singlest out the man."

He would reply, " 'Tis Caesar's part To rule o'er Rome; 'tis his to pen The word that sets a victim free Or binds with chains his fellow men. Not politics, my mission here— 'Tis in the heart my spirit delves. When individual souls are cleansed The ills of state will cure themselves."

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

- M—Memories Num. 6:1-9
- T—The Cloud Num. 9:15-23
- W—The March Num. 10:11-34
- T—Murmurings Num. 11:1-15
- F—Moses and Miriam Num. 12:1-13
- S—The Founding of a Nation Ex. 16:10-30
- 19:3-8
- S—The Spies Num. 13:17-33

LESSON FOR APRIL 29

Settlement and Struggles in Canaan

Judges 2:6-7, 11-12, 18-19; 6:11-16

Expounded in Daily Reading for Wednesday

MEMORY SELECTION: Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. Joshua 1:9.

MONDAY, APRIL 23

Instructions to Joshua—Joshua 1:6-9

One assumes a serious responsibility when he undertakes to follow in the footsteps of a great man. Joshua was called of God to take over the work which Moses had laid down at the time of his death. It was therefore necessary that God should provide Joshua with definite instructions as to how he should conduct himself in this strategic position.

While commanding him to give diligence to the study of the book of the Law, God uses two words again and again as if he would by their very repetition impress them upon the young leader's mind. Those words are "strength" and "courage." "Be strong and of a good courage." These are qualities which all of us need whether our responsibilities be great or small. We require spiritual strength to meet all our weakness and all our temptations and we need courage to persevere in our labors when it seems that we are doomed to failure. Those who have made the finest records of achievement either in the spiritual or the secular realms of life have been those who possessed the resources which guarantee great strength and unflinching courage. Too much depends on God's people today for any one of them to be weak or afraid.

Lead us, Heavenly Father, into those intimate experiences with thee which result in spiritual strength and courage. Amen.

TUESDAY, APRIL 24

Joshua's Choice—Joshua 24:14-16

Life is full of choices for all of us, and its success or failure depends on the wisdom we use in the choices which we make. Any spiritual leader discovers that he must make decisions before he can ask those to whom he ministers to make them.

We therefore find in our Scripture verses today an account of the definite choice Joshua made at the time he was asking the children of Israel to take a definite stand for God. "As for me and my house," he said, "we will serve the Lord." That was not only a good choice to make, but it was one that was calculated to have great influence upon the people generally.

We are surrounded in our day with material objects and secular interests which serve as gods for a great many people. These are the things to which they give the major portion of their time and upon which they spend the major portion of their substance. They would be insulted if you should call them idol worshippers, but that is exactly what they are. They have never decided to make a definite choice between the true and living God and these objects which consume so much of their time and thought.

May we not delay the day of great choices, our Father, but may we choose today to give thee the first place in all our efforts and affections. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25

Dangers in Canaan—Judges 2:16-23

It is much easier to conform to the ways of one's environment than it is to take an independent stand and maintain it. It is much easier to be like other people than it is to get other people to become like yourself. The Israelites were inclined to adopt the pagan gods of their neighbors in preference to the God and Father of their faithful forebears. They probably hated to appear different. They did not want to seem peculiar. We see this process at work in the lives of many today. It takes real conviction to stand alone when most other people are of a different opinion. The writer was having dinner in a hotel recently

when the faint strains of "The Star-Spangled Banner" were heard on the radio which had been placed in the dining room. Most of the people present did not hear it or else paid no attention to it, but a naval officer rose to his feet and remained standing, alone, until the national anthem was completed. How fine it would be if we had more Christians who were willing to stand alone on moral issues. Even if we know that our ideas will not prevail, we should at least be willing to stand up and be counted.

May we never be ashamed to champion the cause of right, O God, even if we are compelled to stand alone. Help us to remember that Jesus too stood alone. Amen.

THURSDAY, APRIL 26

Gideon's Victory—Judges 7:19-23

The victory which Gideon and his faithful few won over their enemies is a perfect illustration of the great power that is present in fully surrendered followers of any movement. There is little that a leader can do with a great multitude of halfhearted individuals, but there is hardly any limit to what he can do with a small group that is wholly committed to the task in hand. Gideon had put his army to the test and had discovered that the vast majority of them were unfit for the stupendous task awaiting them. He therefore sent these lukewarm ones back home and undertook his task with the few faithful ones who stood the test. We are not surprised that he was successful.

It is one of our weaknesses today that we seek strength in great numbers. We seem to feel that any movement must be a mass movement in order to succeed. We forget that Jesus selected a few surrendered individuals and based the future of his cause on them. The moral and spiritual battles to be fought in the communities in which we live do not require the efforts of great multitudes. They can be won by a concentrated minority who believe unreservedly in their Leader and in their cause.

May we see to what extent we are being put to the test today, our Father. May we be numbered among the faithful few. Amen.

FRIDAY, APRIL 27

Moving to a New Country—Ruth 1:1-5

Moving to a new environment is always an exciting experience. One never knows just what is in store for him, and certainly he has no way of telling whether or not his new venture will succeed. Our Scripture verses today tell us about a Hebrew who moved out of his own country into another because of necessity. Famine had descended upon the land of his birth and he had to go elsewhere in search of food. His wife and two sons accompanied him, but before long he and the two sons died. The wife remained for a short time with her two Moabitish daughters-in-law, but the tug of her homeland was finally more than she could endure, and she decided to return to Bethlehem.

It is well for all of us to realize that we are merely sojourners in a strange country lest we become too absorbed in the affairs of this world. This is no plea that we neglect our earthly citizenship, but rather a warning against allowing ourselves to become blinded by the purely material all around us. Temporal concerns can loom so large at times that we lose sight entirely of that which is eternal. We are not permanent residents of this planet, but pilgrims on our way to a house not made with hands.

Our Father, may the glare of the present never blind our eyes to the future. Amen.

SATURDAY, APRIL 28

Ruth, a Loving Daughter—Ruth 2:14-18

Ruth's love for Naomi tells us a great deal about the kind of persons both of them were. There was no law which made it necessary for Ruth to give such consideration to her mother-in-law, and certainly it would have been the most natural thing in the world for the younger woman to have remained in her own country and among her own people. The love existing between these two women convinces us that they measured up to the highest that might be expected of mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.

We frequently hear of people who are having what is called "in-law trouble," and

it should be emphasized that such trouble is not due to a difficult relationship but to the inability to carry over into our relationships the spiritual ideals to which we profess to have committed ourselves. If our religion cannot solve problems of relationship, it is hardly an adequate religion. If we will give him a chance, God will break down the barriers that keep us apart and sweeten our relationships with all our fellow men. It is a sin to nurse grievances when a generous application of real religion can remove them forever.

Make us so much like our Master, O God, that we shall find it possible to live peaceably and happily with all men. Amen.

SUNDAY, APRIL 29

God Cares for His Own—Isaiah 41:10-13

Nothing gives us quite as much comfort and assurance as the conviction that God watches over and protects us. We sometimes make the mistake of saying that God is on our side, but after more sober reflection we realize that it is more becoming to say that we are seeking to be on his side. We do have every assurance that as our Father in heaven he has our best interests at heart, and that he is more anxious to give us good gifts than we are to receive them.

LESSON FOR MAY 4

The Hebrew Monarchy at Its Height

1 Kings 9:1-7, 24; 10:26-28; 11:4, 11

MEMORY SELECTION: Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. Psalm 33:12.

MONDAY, APRIL 30

The First King—1 Samuel 10:9-13

The great honor of being Israel's first king fell upon Saul. From the description we have of him in the Old Testament we are led to the conclusion that he was the sort of man who would attract attention in any company. Head and shoulders above his fellows, well-equipped mentally, and a natural leader, Saul gave promise of being one of Israel's great men.

There has never been a time in the experience of the race when we have not needed this blessed assurance, but in the past few years especially we have been more conscious than ever of our need of him. As the hymn writer, Edward Mote, put it:

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

It is an old saying, but everlastingly true, that "man's extremity is God's opportunity." As much as we dread experiences of danger and peril, we nevertheless welcome every event in life which brings us closer to his side—which makes us lean more heavily upon him. God is indeed our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

Teach us to trust thee more implicitly, gracious Father, and may we inspire a like faith in others. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS For Individual Devotions

- M.—Rebellion. Num. 14:26-38
- T.—Place. Num. 16:41-50
- W.—Moses' Sin. Num. 20:1-13
- T.—Fiery Serpents. Num. 21:1-9, John 8:14-15
- F.—Balaam. Num. 22:21-35
- S.—Settlement and Struggle in Canaan. Judg. 2:6-7, 11-12, 18-19; 6:11-14
- S.—Two Prophecies. Num. 23:1-24

Christians through the experience of the new birth by which we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus. There are far too many professing Christians today whose religion is merely an inherited thing—they have never had an experience of their own. Such religion, however sincere, can never produce the fruits of the Spirit.

May we surrender ourselves anew to thee, O God, that thy Spirit may have his way in us and make us new creatures. Amen.

TUESDAY, MAY 1

How Saul Failed—1 Samuel 15:13-22

After getting such a splendid picture of Saul at the time of his selection as king of Israel, we are grieved to read today of the pride which has entered into his life. Samuel had told him that it was God's will that he should lead Israel in battle against the Amalekites and that he should see to it that this enemy was completely defeated and all his substance utterly destroyed. As they were returning from the victorious battle, Saul was met by Samuel who inquired as to the sound of the lowing of cattle, and Saul sought to excuse himself by saying that the best of the enemy's cattle had been saved for the purpose of sacrificing it unto God. Saul may have been perfectly sincere in this intention, and certainly Samuel does not dispute it; however, it was contrary to the instructions he had received from God's prophet and his disobedience could not be treated lightly. He had followed his own inclinations and put his own ideas above the detailed commands of God's messenger.

A great many people today treat lightly the express injunctions of the Holy Scriptures and substitute for them their own desires. Then they wonder why life is filled with such tragic experiences.

Help us, our Father, to be obedient always to the voice of thy Holy Spirit. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 2

David's Lament—2 Samuel 1:17-27

It would be difficult to find in all literature a cry of anguish filled with more pathos and tragedy than that which we find in our Scripture lesson today. The friendship of David and Jonathan is one of

the classic friendships of history, and it was only natural that the bereaved friend should give way to intense sorrow at the passing of one who had occupied such a large place in his heart. It must be said to David's credit that he did not allow Saul's enmity toward him to poison his heart against the king. David was too big a man to allow himself to render evil for evil, and it is altogether possible that this trait of character was strengthened by the deep affection which he had for Saul's son.

There are many individuals who are mourning today over the loss of loved ones in the mighty conflict through which the world has been passing. They will find courage and strength in the knowledge that sorrow has been the lot of all people in every generation, but that God has been able to sustain and keep those who have put their trust in him. Across the years we can catch anew the words of Jesus when he said, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:18).

We thank thee for our friends, O God, and pray that we shall mean more to them. Above all, we are grateful that thou art our Friend. May we never violate that friendship. Amen.

THURSDAY, MAY 3

David's Sweet Song—Psalm 23:1-6

It is possible that some of the truths expressed in the twenty-third Psalm are those which David discovered during his time of sorrow over the death of Saul and Jonathan. Most of our deepest convictions are those which have come to us out of experience. That is why this psalm has been such a source of comfort to so many. As one reads it, he discovers that it is not based upon theory but upon fact; not upon observation but upon experience.

It is probably true that no other passage of Scripture is quite so beloved as this, and certainly no passage has been quoted so often by so many different types of people under so many different kinds of circumstances. It has been the word of hope to those in the midst of discouragement. It has been the word of assurance to those who have been overtaken by fear. It has been the word of comfort to those who have experienced bereavement. It has been

the philosophy upon which many have founded their lives, and it has been the last words which many have spoken in the moment of death.

It is as timeless as truth and as universal in its application as the human race itself. It is an expression of truth to which all types of theological opinion can look with sympathy and unanimity.

How grateful we are, dear Shepherd, for these comforting words. May our lives demonstrate our unshakable faith in thee and thy goodness. For we ask it through Christ. Amen.

FRIDAY, MAY 4

The Wise King—1 Kings 4:29-34

Solomon lacked many of the fine qualities which characterized his father David, but he established a reputation for wisdom which spread throughout the world of his day. At the beginning of his reign God offered to grant him any favor which he might ask. Solomon's choice was that God should give to him understanding of mind and of heart. His request was fully granted and his decisions and choices revealed the wisdom which God had given him.

We learn in our lesson text that his songs and proverbs were numerous and that the ends of the earth marveled at his ability to approach delicate problems and arrive at satisfactory solutions with such unusual wisdom and understanding.

Each of us requires spiritual wisdom for the choices and decisions he is called upon to make every day, and those of us who attempt to rely on our own understanding will make mistakes and failures which will be tragic indeed. No man is truly wise who is unaware of his dependence upon God for guidance, and no man can live abundantly who feels sufficient unto himself.

We would pray with Solomon, our Father, for an understanding heart. Give us the wisdom to act intelligently amid all the confusion of our day. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SATURDAY, MAY 5

The Temple Dedicated—1 Kings 8:22-30

It must have been a high day in the life of Solomon and in the life of Israel when the

magnificent Temple had been completed and was ready for dedication. It had been the hope of David that he might be allowed to construct a house of worship for God, but this privilege had been reserved for his son. Solomon had labored under the conviction that the house of God should be the kind of place that would symbolize to some degree the greatness and power of him in whose honor it had been erected. From all the descriptions we have of it, we receive the impression that it was a magnificent edifice and that there were many things about it to inspire the hearts of those who entered its sacred walls.

His prayer of dedication reveals much concerning his faith in God and his belief that the promises of God would be fulfilled to Israel. He recognized that God is too great for any one house to contain him, and all of the words of his prayer are calculated to arouse in the minds of the people a conception of God that was altogether worthy. This day of dedication represents in a real way the high peak in Israel's history, and it was a day to which future generations would look back with a great deal of pride and longing.

We thank thee, O God, for our beautiful church buildings. May we use them as means to a spiritual end and never as material ends in themselves. Through Christ we pray. Amen.

SUNDAY, MAY 6

Citizens of the Kingdom—Psalm 24:1-10

The psalmist sets forth in our Scripture passage today the fact that this world in which we live is God's world. It is not the result of accidental processes and forces but the result of his creative purpose and will. Those who would be numbered among the citizens of his divine kingdom must, therefore, meet certain specific spiritual qualifications. They must be, in the first place, people with clean hands. This is just another way of saying that they must be devoid of all evil actions and that the impact of their lives must be entirely for good. The Hebrew was accustomed to washing his hands before entering upon any sacred exercise, which symbolized the fact that only the person with a clean life could enter into close fellowship with a holy God.

The second qualification for citizens of God's kingdom is that they must have pure hearts. The person who enters into vital comradeship with God must keep his mind as well as his actions free from all stain. The overt acts of life are but the overflowing of that which has already taken place within the mind and heart. The most potent factor in avoiding ungodly behavior is the maintenance of a heart and mind that are free from all evil imaginations.

Help us, O God, to be good citizens, both of this physical world and of that spiritual world in which thou art the recognized Ruler. Amen.

LESSON FOR MAY 13

The Tragedy of the Northern Kingdom

1 Kings 12:26-28; 16:30-33; 19:13-14; 2 Kings 17:6
Explained in Daily Readings for Tuesday and Saturday

MEMORY SELECTION: Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Galatians 6:7.

MONDAY, MAY 7

The Kingdom Divided—1 Kings 12:16-24

Rehoboam made the mistake of following the advice of the young men in his court rather than the more mature and reasonable suggestions offered him by the older men who had borne heavy burdens during the reign of Solomon. It was a time of crisis in the history of Israel when Rehoboam decided to make changes in the policies which his father had followed. He had a unique opportunity at this time to bring together some of the different factions and to create a spirit of unity which evidently was sorely lacking. He chose rather to follow a policy which was to be even more severe than that followed by his father. The result of this was that the kingdom was split asunder and that ten tribes chose Jeroboam to be their king. Only the tribe of Judah remained under the rule of Rehoboam.

Practically every man has a chance some time in his life to be either a harmonizing or a divisive factor in some organization or

KNOWLEDGE

PAULINE TITMOM STEPHENS

I wandered far and searched for God
From dawn until the set of sun;
Then, looking deep inside my heart,
I learned that God and I are one.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

- M—Midianites Slain Num. 21:1-12
T—Moses' Death Foretold Num. 27 12-23
W—Tribes East of Jordan Num. 32:1-19
T—Canaan to Be Conquered Num. 33:50-56
F—Cities of Refuge Num. 35 1-15
S—Hebrew Monarchy at Its Height 1 Kings 9:1-7,
26; 10:26-28; 11:4, 11
S—History Retold Deut. 1:19-33

group. If he maintains a reasonable attitude and honestly seeks to give sympathetic consideration to all the different points of view held by all those concerned, he will have in all likelihood the privilege of cementing the group together in closer harmony than it has ever known before.

Living as we do in such a divided world, our Father, help us to be the means of bringing men together through Christ. Amen.

TUESDAY, MAY 8

Jeroboam's Sin—1 Kings 12:26-33

Jeroboam did not make the most of his opportunity. Instead of seeing in his new position a spiritual opportunity for real service to God and to the people of Israel, he began thinking of his own interests and of how he might hold the people to himself and perpetuate their animosity toward their former king. When the time came for the Israelites to go up to Jerusalem to worship, Jeroboam feared that they might

renew their loyalty to Rehoboam; and he, therefore, constructed idols in two of the cities and commanded the people to worship them as the gods who brought them up out of the land in Egypt. It may seem inconceivable to us that the Israelites obeyed his command, but the fact that they did only indicates how great was the influence of the king over his people. This influence made it all the more important that he should be the right kind of man and that he should remain in close fellowship with God.

Our own jealousies and misgivings sometimes lead us into spiritual compromises and the acceptance of unworthy substitutes which weaken our influence and destroy our Christian witness. Each of us must be on guard lest we be guilty of committing the sin of Jeroboam.

Give us that largeness of spirit, dear God, that should characterize all the disciples of Christ, and save us from petty jealousies and presumptuous sins. In Jesus' name. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 9

Elijah on Mount Carmel—1 Kings 18:36-39

One of the most interesting incidents in the Old Testament is the contest into which Elijah entered with the prophets of Baal. He had resented the influence which these pagan leaders had exerted over the people and he was indignant at the claims which they had made for their idol. He, therefore, challenged them to place upon their altar the slain animals and then call down fire to consume the sacrifice. This they attempted to do, and called on their god from morning until noon, but there was no response and the fire did not fall. Then Elijah prepared his own altar and sacrifice, and calling upon God to send down fire from heaven, he was able to demonstrate to all who were looking on that his God was alive and responsive to the prayers of his people, for the fire fell and consumed the sacrifice and the altar.

The pagan world in which we live today is waiting to see the way in which our God differs from the idols which men worship in our time, and the difference they desire to see must be expressed in the lives of those

who profess to believe in the true and living God. Men must see in us those qualities of character which are not to be found among unbelievers.

May our lives, O God, be a demonstration that will convince men that thou art the true and living God. In Jesus' name. Amen.

THURSDAY, MAY 10

The Widow's Oil—2 Kings 4:1-7

Among the women of Israel was the widow of a son of one of the prophets. Her income had been exhausted and she was threatened by her creditors. In desperation she appealed to Elisha, and he inquired of her just what resources she had at her disposal. When he discovered that she possessed nothing but a vessel of oil, he told her to borrow other containers, and it came to pass that she poured the oil from her pot into these other vessels until she had a sufficient quantity which she was able to sell and thus free herself of debt.

Each of us should be reminded that we have some talent or gift within ourselves which God can increase for our own good and for the welfare of humanity. Too many of us are inclined to ignore our possibilities and to hoard any resources which may be ours. We find that the Christian religion, however, is not so much a religion of conservation as it is a religion of increase, of sharing, and of an inexhaustible spiritual abundance. When we become properly related to Christ, he makes us a source of continuing and unlimited blessings to mankind. The more we give to others, the more we shall realize for ourselves.

Help us to take what small talents we have, gracious God, and lay them on the altar before thee. Make us a blessing to all men. Amen.

FRIDAY, MAY 11

Jehu's Reforms—2 Kings 10:23-28

It was during the reign of Jehu that drastic reforms were instituted looking toward the eradication of Baal worship from among the people. Jehu arranged to capture those who offered sacrifices and burnt offerings unto idols, and when these had been slain by the edge of the sword and

the images destroyed, the pagan practice was eliminated from the life of Israel.

While we may not have among us today idols of wood and stone which compete with God for the affections of men, it is, nevertheless, true that men still have their idols and whatever it is that they put before God in their affections and interests and expenditure of time and labor becomes for them a deity. We sometimes jump to the conclusion that we have made great spiritual progress because we do not have among us today the pagan customs described in the Old Testament, but while the customs may have changed in certain details, the attitudes behind them may be as evil in the sight of God as those of an older period. God deserves our best, and when we give him anything less than our best, we are making it necessary for him to share our loyalty with an idol.

Help us to put from our hearts all those things that tend to compete with thee for our supreme loyalty, O God, and may we never be numbered among the idolaters. Amen.

SATURDAY, MAY 12

The Fall of the Northern Kingdom—2 Kings 17:5-8

The fall of the Northern Kingdom is a warning to all those nations and individuals who tend to ignore and disobey God. As long as they followed the spiritual instructions which God's appointed leaders provided, the nation prospered and was secure, but when they persisted in disobedience and seemed determined to have their own way, they soon fell a prey to the Assyrians and were carried away into captivity. This has been the experience of many nations, and it is being repeated in the life of some nations today.

It has taken the human race a long time to discover that there is a definite connection between the way men live and the circumstances of life. In spite of all which we profess to believe about the justice of God and the fact that this is a moral universe, we still go on living as though the Ruler and Sustainer of this world took no note of our actions. Sometimes we agree that God's discipline has overtaken some acquaintance of ours, or someone about whom we read in history, but we deceive

ourselves into thinking that perhaps, after all, our case will be exceptional and that probably God will overlook our personal sins. This is a tragic assumption and is followed by tragic consequences.

O God, save us from the folly of sin, and teach us that the way of righteousness is the only sensible way of life. Amen.

SUNDAY, MAY 13

Sowing and Reaping—Galatians 6:7-10

It may safely be said that the tragedy of the Northern Kingdom was the tragedy of falling to remember that men reap just exactly what they sow. We frequently speak of the ways in which God punishes the sinner, but it would be more accurate to say that men who disobey God and refuse to co-operate with his divine plan sooner or later face the natural consequences of their folly. Wise men recognize that God has created the world in such a way that evil behavior brings its own reward. A man is therefore punishing himself when he deliberately flies in the face of universal laws and divine decrees.

There are some who feel that such an arrangement of things is cruel and that it would be far more merciful if certain offenders were allowed to escape. In reply to such objectors, we can only say that this would be a chaotic world indeed if there were no painful consequences in store for evil men. If this world is as tragic as it is today with men knowing that they must suffer for their sins, what kind of world would it be if all such restraints were removed? We tremble to think of what it would be like.

Our Father, help us to sow the kind of seed that will yield us a pleasant and enjoyable harvest. Give us the wisdom to live nobly. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

- M.—Wilderness Experiences. Deut. 1:34-46
- T.—Wilderness Experiences. Deut. 8:2-9
- W.—Exhortation. Deut. 4:1-23
- T.—The Commandments. Deut. 5:1-22
- F.—The Great Commandment. Deut. 6:1-15
- S.—Tragedy of the Northern Kingdom. 1 Kings 17:20-23; 18:20-23; 19:13-16; 2 Kings 17:2-7
- S.—God's Goodness. Deut. 8:1-16

LESSON FOR MAY 20

The Defeat of the Southern Kingdom

Jeremiah 18:1-10, 15, 17

Explicated in Daily Reading for Thursday

MEMORY SELECTION: The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish. Psalm 1:6.

MONDAY, MAY 14

Rehoboam's Folly—1 Kings 12:1-5, 12-14

The ultimate defeat of the Southern Kingdom was assured when Rehoboam displayed his lack of wisdom upon his ascension to the throne of his father, Solomon. Having been approached by a group of citizens who felt aggrieved at the heavy burdens which they were called upon to bear under the former king, he promised to take the matter under consideration. The older men among his advisers tried to persuade him to decide upon a more lenient policy, but the advice of his younger advisers sounded more courageous and daring, and he finally decided to make the lot of the people even more difficult than it had been.

The ability to follow good advice is an art which few men fully acquire. The average man is more inclined to follow his own personal inclinations, and when he seeks advice it is more frequently for the purpose of getting approval than it is for anything else. Rehoboam stood at a strategic place in his own life and in the life of Israel, and this first mistake was a fatal one. Men will put up with a great many faults in a ruler as long as he is kind and sympathetic and understanding, but their loyalty is strained almost to the breaking point when he proves himself cruel and hard.

Give us, O Lord, a kind and an understanding heart toward all mankind. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

TUESDAY, MAY 15

Hosiah, a Good King—2 Kings 18:1-4

After reading of Rehoboam's folly we find it refreshing to read of a king who was acceptable in the sight of God and man. When he came to the kingdom he put away

all the idols and the idolatrous practices of the people and made a sincere effort to bring his entire life into conformity with the will of God.

It is a great thing for any nation to have a godly man as its ruler. We read in the Scriptures, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 33:12), and if God is the Lord of the head of a nation, that nation is indeed fortunate. No man has sufficient wisdom within himself to meet all the complex problems that arise in the life of any country, and it is in the moment of national crisis that one finds in God that leadership which guarantees a hopeful future.

We should remember that a nation's ruler usually reflects the attitudes and beliefs of the men and women who make up the nation's citizenship, and if we desire better rulers, we must be better persons ourselves. This is especially true in a democracy for the people themselves select the kind of leader they want.

Give us a sense of our great responsibility, our Father, when we come to choose our national leaders. May we select those who will look to thee. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 16

Helping Each Other—Jeremiah 38:7-13

It is always inspiring to read of man's kindness to his fellow man. In our Scripture text today we read of the thoughtfulness of one who might well have reached the conclusion that the imprisonment of the prophet was no concern of his. He took it upon himself, however, to make a plea for Jeremiah's life, and the king granted his request. If someone had not championed the cause of Jeremiah, he would probably have perished in the dungeon.

The world is made up of two kinds of people: those who do just what they are paid to do and those who do more than is required of them. The difference between these two is the difference between selfishness and unselfishness. Some men are not concerned over the welfare of others and they do not intend to exert themselves on behalf of those from whom they cannot expect some remuneration. This is the way of utter selfishness. There are others, and we thank God for them, whose every thought is for somebody else. They do not draw a small circle around themselves and their loved ones, but make a circle large enough to include all mankind. We are not surprised that the memory of this man who rescued Jeremiah has been perpetuated in Holy Scripture—it deserves to be.

Make us more mindful of the needs of others, O God, our gracious Father. Amen.

THURSDAY, MAY 17

Visiting a Pottery—Jeremiah 18:1-10

Jeremiah's visit to the potter's house was a rich experience for him. He saw in the way the potter handled the clay a demonstration of the way in which God deals with men and nations. When a piece of clay has been made into a vessel and in some way is marred in the making, the potter takes the clay and puts it back on the wheel to be reshaped into another vessel. The voice of God revealed to the prophet that this procedure of the potter was an illustration of how God gave the nations another chance after they had been marred and broken by sin.

The way in which God continues to believe in faithless men, offering them another opportunity, is expressive of his great grace and mercy. Many have responded to this gracious approach and have blotted out the past in a new life of Christian service and sacrifice. It is both comforting and inspiring to know that God is able to take us with all our faults and failures and make us over again into the men and women we long to be. We do not have to remain as we are. If we are willing to put ourselves at the Heavenly Father's disposal, he can make us into new creatures.

Make us and mold us, O God, according to thy will, and to thee shall be all the praise, both now and always. Amen.

FRIDAY, MAY 18

Life or Death—Jeremiah 21:8-14

The fact that God has given to each of us the responsibility of making our own choices and decisions is a fact that should drive us to our knees constantly in search of the wisdom which only God can bestow. If we were led around like helpless, incompetent children, life would be a very simple matter indeed. The errors and mistakes of life could then be accredited to God and not to ourselves. As the world is now constituted, however, this grave responsibility rests upon us and we have only ourselves to blame if we make the wrong choice or arrive at the wrong decision.

On every hand we see men who have chosen the way of death instead of the way of life, and the earthly experience for them is nothing but a nightmare. On the other hand, we see those who have been wise enough to choose life, and every day is a new and thrilling experience.

In view of this fact, it is rather amazing to discover the number of people who treat life as though it were an unimportant thing, and its issues matters of insignificance. "Life" and "death" are big words, but not at all too big for the things they symbolize in this life and the next.

As we see life's choices before us, our Father, help us to seek thy wisdom before we choose. In Christ's name. Amen.

SATURDAY, MAY 19

The Fall of Jerusalem—2 Kings 25:1-9

The fate of cities is sometimes settled by the type of men who live in them. Jerusalem might never have been captured had there not reigned within her gates a wicked king. The city that had witnessed the glory of other kings now became a place of great desolation. The people were scattered and the noble buildings were burned.

As we look out over the world today and think of the destruction that has taken place in the last few years, we are reminded

of the effect of human life upon the material dwellings of men. When enmity arises in the hearts of opposing individuals, the results of that enmity have a telling effect upon the physical environment in which those men live.

We are thereby reminded that we can make of this world almost anything we like. If we live righteously and co-operatively, we can turn it into a paradise. If we live sinfully and selfishly, we can transform it into a hell on earth. We know that it is God's intention that we should live happily and dwell in security, but if we ignore his will and follow the leading of our sinful natures, we need not be surprised that we bring tragedy into the world. The choice is before us always.

Forgive us, O God, for all our failure to make this world a happier and safer place for all men. Through Christ. Amen.

SUNDAY, MAY 20

The Way of the Wicked—Proverbs 12:15-22

The book of Proverbs sets before us in bold contrast the experiences of those who follow divine wisdom and of those who are led around by the folly of their own sins. It is a good thing for us that life provides these marked contrasts. We must never

forget that there is a vast difference between the way of righteousness and truth and the way of sin and falsehood.

Jesus too was constantly telling parables to illustrate the contrasts of life among those all about him. He was anxious to emphasize that it does make a difference how one lives and how he relates himself to the God of the universe.

Some of those who read these words may be confronted by decisions which must be made in the near future and they may be tempted to believe that it will not make much difference in the long run which alternative is selected. This is a grave mistake. Life is too important a thing to be treated so carelessly. The choice of wicked methods and goals will inevitably result in heartache and shame. The choice of goodness and truth guarantees an indestructible happiness both here and hereafter.

O God, may thy way be ours always. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

- M.—Two Stories. Deut. 8:10-21
- T.—Study the Law. Deut. 11:13-25
- W.—Other Gods. Deut. 13:1-11
- T.—The Sabbath Year. Deut. 15:1-18
- F.—Judgments. Deut. 17:1-13
- S.—Defeat of the Southern Kingdom. Jer. 18:1-10, 15, 17
- S.—Christ Promised. Deut. 18:9-19

LESSON FOR MAY 27

The Returned Exiles and Their Work

Nehemiah 8:1-6, 8, 12; 9:1-3

Explained in Daily Reading for Thursday

MEMORY SELECTION: Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:13.

MONDAY, MAY 21

A Gracious King—Ezra 1:1-6

While Cyrus was not of the household of faith, nevertheless he was capable of receiving and responding to the will of God. He did not hesitate to recognize the God of Israel as the God of the universe, and his willingness to carry out the command of God was immediate. As soon as he learned that it was God's desire that the Temple

in Jerusalem should be rebuilt, he issued a decree calling upon those who were interested and who were willing to give either money or materials to undertake the task.

It was truly a gracious thing for a conqueror to do. It was not customary for a victorious king to show such consideration for the religious needs of his captives. Such thoughtfulness must have helped to create a fine spirit of understanding between Cyrus and the Israelites, and this happy sit-

uation was undoubtedly due to God's grace in lessening the pain and embarrassment of the plight which the people of Israel had brought upon themselves. We must acknowledge too that the behavior of the Israelites probably contributed something to this feeling of kindness which Cyrus seemed to possess toward this conquered nation.

May we ever be alert, our Father, to the leading of thy voice. Help us to be obedient in all things. Amen.

TUESDAY, MAY 22

Working Together—Nehemiah 4:15-23

We have in our Scripture lesson today a classic example of co-operation. The enemies of Israel did all in their power to delay and thwart the efforts of the Israelites to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem after they had returned from the captivity. It was therefore necessary for the workers to be on guard constantly lest they be caught off guard and annihilated. Some of them even worked with a tool in one hand and a weapon in the other. Others were appointed to watch for one period of time, and then to labor for another. It was a time when all the people found it necessary to work co-operatively if the work were to be accomplished and the lives of the people spared. Man power was at a premium and no one could afford to shirk his duty.

As Christians we could achieve much more if we knew how to work together more co-operatively. We have stressed our individual freedom so much that at times we have overlooked the great privilege of working together. The future peace of the world depends upon whether or not this spirit of international co-operation can find expression in our lives. We must see that it does.

Teach us the art of working together, O God, so that we may be most useful to thee. In our Saviour's name we pray. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 23

Returning from Slavery—Nehemiah 2:1-8

Although Nehemiah had been greatly favored by the king during the days of his captivity, he could not forget the desolation that had overtaken Jerusalem, the holy city of his fathers. As cupbearer to Artaxerxes

he was in a place of comfort, influence, and security, but he was first of all a patriot, and a favorable position in a pagan land could never cause him to forget the needs of his own people and his homeland.

When the king noticed his sadness, he inquired concerning it, and upon learning its cause, permitted Nehemiah to go back to Jerusalem for the purpose of directing the rebuilding of the walls of the city. Letters of introduction were given him so that he might have safe passage through the intervening territory.

All of us are tempted at times to become so enamored by the comforts and pleasures which this world affords that we forget our loyalty and responsibility toward those spiritual institutions and ideals to which we once committed ourselves. We would do well to emulate the fine example of Nehemiah and remember our duty toward God and his church amid all the glitter and glamour the world provides.

Make us constant in our love for thee, our Father, and may we never forget our spiritual loyalties and responsibilities. Amen.

THURSDAY, MAY 24

Reading the Law—Nehemiah 8:5-8

No amount of material progress and advancement can ever take the place of spiritual growth, and Ezra and Nehemiah knew that Jerusalem needed more than reconstructed walls and restored buildings. The Word of God was needed by the people, and without the guidance it alone could provide, their future would be dark indeed.

We are interested in the thorough way in which the Word was read and explained to the people. The spiritual leaders were aware of the tremendous importance of the thing they were doing, and they left no stone unturned in their efforts to inform the people as to the mind and will of God.

The way some of us read the Bible hardly does credit to its divine origin and holy purpose. We feel that we have discharged our duty when we have read it casually as though by the very repetition of the words we were strengthened. This sacred literature deserves our closest study and most prayerful consideration. To be outstanding Christians we must be painstaking students

of God's holy Word. Paul wrote to Timothy that he should study to show himself "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

Interpret unto us thy truth, O Holy Spirit, for thou art our great Teacher. May we live by thy precepts. Amen.

FRIDAY, MAY 25

Sabbath Laws Enforced—Nehemiah 13:15-22

It is so much easier to be influenced by other people than it is to influence other people, and Nehemiah discovered that the Israelites were being influenced by their pagan fellow citizens to disregard and desecrate the sabbath. They were gathering their crops, transporting their produce, and buying and selling as they were accustomed to do on all other days, and Nehemiah was wise enough to know that desecration of the sabbath undermines the spiritual foundations of a nation in a short time. He protested against what he saw and finally commanded that the gates of the city be shut on the sabbath day, placing guards at the gates to make sure that his orders were obeyed. Some of the offenders lingered around the gates just outside the walls, as though they expected this new ruling to be of short duration, but Nehemiah served notice on them that this must not occur again, and they carried out his orders.

America has lost much of her spiritual power through disrespect for the Lord's Day. As soon as it becomes like any other day it loses its capacity to accomplish that for which God intended it. We should use our personal and collective influence to preserve the Lord's Day in our nation.

May we honor the day of worship, our Father, and use it according to thy plan. Amen.

SATURDAY, MAY 26

Builders of the Temple Encouraged—Haggai 2:1-9

Whenever there is anything that God's people should do, he encourages and inspires them to do it by the words and ministry of his prophets. During the days of Haggai, the prophet, the Temple of Jerusalem had suffered from the various conflicts that had raged in the city, and it needed

rebuilding. The people were discouraged, for it had been built and rebuilt, and no sooner would it be put in shape than another war or battle would result in its destruction. God, however, reminds them of former days when the Temple was the pride of the people, and seeks to stir up within their hearts a great desire to restore the house of God. He promises that the glory of the next edifice shall be even greater than that of the last.

The amount of interest which any people have in God and his kingdom can usually be gauged by the pride which they take in the church building. In many ways it symbolizes the Christian faith and the ideals for which Christians stand. We ought never allow the house of God to remain in a state of disrepair. It deserves better treatment than that.

Our Father, we thank thee for those in the past who looked ahead and erected places of worship for us. Help us to be just as thoughtful toward our generation and those who shall come after us. Amen.

SUNDAY, MAY 27

Zion's Strength and Glory—Psalm 48:9-14

There is such a thing as a pardonable pride in the progress and success of God's work, just so long as we do not take the credit to ourselves or allow ourselves to rest on our past accomplishments. We are anxious to see the cause of Christ prevail in the earth, and the multiplied activities of his church and the adequacy of the structures we rear in his name represent the progressive development of the Christian program in the earth. For all of this we have a right to be thankful.

We should not, however, allow ourselves to be trapped into thinking that the material symbols of our faith are ever ends in themselves, or that the mere construction of buildings is positive proof that we are making comparable spiritual growth in our souls. We must work constantly to make sure that our visible structures do not outdistance our growth "in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). Where a building houses a dwindling congregation and a decreasing spiritual zeal, it is little more than a sepulcher.

Help us to build more stately mansions of the soul, our Father, and to make our material edifices symbolic of our advancement in the things of the spirit. We ask this in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

- M.—Cities of Refuge. Deut. 19:1-13
T.—Tithes. Deut. 28:1-19
W.—Covenant at Moab. Deut. 29:10-20
T.—Choose Life. Deut. 30:11-20
F.—Moses' Blessing. Deut. 33:1-29
S.—The Returned Exiles. Neh. 8:1-6, 8, 12; 9:1-5
S.—Moses' Death. Deut. 34:1-12

LESSON FOR JUNE 3

Between the Testaments

Malachi 3:1-3, 16-17; Luke 1:68, 72, 77-78; Galatians 4:4-5
Explained in Daily Bible Readings for Wednesday and Saturday

MEMORY SELECTION: Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple. Malachi 3:1.

MONDAY, MAY 28

The Saviour Promised—Isaiah 53:1-9

In the dark years of Israel's long history there were occasional bright spots provided by the prophecies of God's servants concerning the Messiah who was to come. Isaiah has given us a graphic picture of the Messiah as the suffering servant of Jehovah. He foretold the manner in which men would react to his ministry and pointed out that his suffering would be for our transgressions. The manner in which he would endure his pain is also described, and even a suggestion as to his burial place is included.

Men are able to endure a great deal as long as they are in possession of a great hope, and much of Israel's pain and suffering was courageously borne because they could look to a better day which would surely come, if not for themselves, then certainly for their children. Those of us who have received Christ into our hearts look forward expectantly to the time when he shall find his way into the hearts of others who do not now possess him, and it is our privilege to help them discover him. The way in which he is received by men generally will depend to a great extent upon the impression of him which we give in our daily life.

May we remember, O God, that many who sit in darkness today should know our Saviour.

tour. Help us to make Christ known to all men thereby extending his power and increasing their joy. In Christ's name. Amen.

TUESDAY, MAY 29

The Coming One—Zechariah 14:8-11

The coming of Christ in the distant future was presented to the people by Zechariah as the going forth of living water from the holy city of Jerusalem, and it would be difficult to think of a more accurate figure with which to describe the effects of our Lord's ministry. He came at a time in which men were conscious of their spiritual thirst and at the close of a period that might be described as a desert place as far as a genuinely prophetic ministry was concerned. Jesus referred to himself as the water of life and suggested to his disciples that they too would become springs of water out of which would flow refreshing streams toward all those who thirsted after righteousness and truth.

Water is something for which all men crave and without which no man can live. Those who refer to the Christian religion as though it were a faith for Americans only, forget that it is as universally applicable and as universally required as is water itself. Our chief motivation to carry the gospel to lost men in every nation is not merely that we feel that it will add to the enjoyment of life, but that it is indispensable if men would know God and trust him

as Father. Our missionary enterprise is, therefore, not optional, but imperative.

May we never think of the gospel as an elective, but rather as an absolute necessity for ourselves and for all men. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 30

The Messenger of Christ—Malachi 3:1-4

We have in our verses today a definite reference to the ministry of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Christ. In announcing the One who should come after him John approached his task with profound humility, and refused to take for himself any of the honor and glory which he knew rightfully belonged to the Saviour.

As was intimated in a previous lesson, each of us has to a very large extent the inestimable privilege of serving in somewhat the same capacity in which John the Baptist served. There are countless individuals into whose lives the Master has not yet come and whose acceptance of him will depend to a remarkable degree on the kind of introduction we give to him. It was much easier for men to accept Christ as the Messiah after they had seen John and heard him preach, and our testimony and influence should be such that those who know us shall find it easier to commit their lives to Christ than it would have been had they not come in contact with us. Our influence on others is much greater than any of us can possibly estimate. It is both conscious and unconscious and only heaven itself can reveal the extent of its impact.

We are grateful for the privilege of being the forerunner of Christ to many souls, our Father. Give us the consecration and humility which John the Baptist possessed. Amen.

THURSDAY, MAY 31

The Magnificent—Luke 1:46-55

This spontaneous praise from the lips of Mary which we find in our Scripture text today is a further evidence that she was worthy of the great honor which came upon her when it was announced to her that she should become the mother of the long promised Messiah. Less worthy individuals might have reacted in a far less commendable fashion, assuming a sense of pride and personal importance, but Mary humbled

herself in the presence of God and felt that she was the recipient of such grace that she should from this day forward do more than ever to merit the approval of her Heavenly Father.

We need to remember that the characters of men are revealed just as surely in the presence of good fortune as they are in the day of sorrow and privation. Either extreme in a man's experience tends to bring out his real moral fiber. God, therefore, entrusts his choicest gifts and some of life's more poignant tragedies only to those who are able to bear them and who are capable of transforming such experiences into a ministry of helpfulness to their fellow men. Mary's hymn of adoration is one of the most inspiring bits of religious literature to be found within the Holy Scriptures.

Teach us how to praise thee more acceptably, our Father. We have been the recipients of great gifts from thee, and we would use them according to thy will. Through Christ we ask it. Amen.

FRIDAY, JUNE 1

When Jesus Came—Luke 2:1-7

Certainly we could find nowhere within the Bible a more moving scene than that described for us in the opening verses of the second chapter of Luke. The birth of Jesus would have been a significant event under any circumstances, but it possesses an added significance because of the manner and method by which he came into the world. We never tire of reading these passages which tell of the first Christmas in Bethlehem, and we feel that we can never sufficiently express our gratitude for a gift so rare and full of spiritual promise.

While giving our supreme homage and devotion to him around whom all the other figures naturally gather, let us not overlook the magnificent way in which both Mary and Joseph related themselves to this very unusual and, in many respects, delicate situation. There were a number of respects in which they might have revealed moral and spiritual weaknesses, but throughout the entire account of the days prior to the birth of Christ and the years which followed we find only that which causes us to admire this devoted couple. The future would not be easy for either of them, but

they would always feel that they were well compensated for the sacrifices and sufferings that they might be called upon to bear.

How can we ever be sufficiently grateful, our Father, for our Saviour! May we make room for him in our hearts. In his name we pray. Amen.

SATURDAY, JUNE 2

Children of God—Galatians 4:4-7

The disciples of Christ receive no greater honor in the New Testament than that of being called sons of God because of their vital relationship to the Saviour. We recall that Jesus said to his disciples on one occasion that he would no longer call them servants but friends, and in our Scripture lesson today, we find Paul writing to the Galatian Christians that they are no longer servants but sons.

This designation puts upon each of us a tremendous responsibility, for a son can either honor or disgrace the family name which he bears. Many parents have been brought with sorrow to their graves because their children in whom they had great hope lived the kind of life which brought into disrepute an honored name. Other parents have approached the sunset of life with great joy and deep satisfaction because their children have exemplified all the fine ideals for which their family has long had a reputation. Wherever we go we need to remember that the reputation of our faith and our Heavenly Father is largely within our own hands. We must not fail him. Our characteristics from this day forward must be those which we receive from our Heavenly Father rather than from any earthly relationship.

We are deeply grateful, our Father, that thou hast permitted us to be known as thy children. May we live up to the name we bear. Amen.

SUNDAY, JUNE 3

The Goodness of God—Psalm 118:19-29

We find in these words of the psalmist an expression of gratitude for the goodness of God as it is revealed in the gift of his Son. These Old Testament writers seemed as anxious to thank God for his gift of the future as they were to express their gratitude for the immediate blessings that had

come to them. They knew how sorely they needed a Saviour and rejoiced in the thought that one day Israel would be redeemed from her sins.

Our prayer life does not contain enough of gratitude. The average person thinks of prayer too much in terms of petition and not nearly enough in terms of praise. We can think of almost any number of things we should like to have God give us, but we are not always as alert in the recognition of those great blessings which he has already bestowed. In fact he would be far more inclined to entrust us with further blessings if we were more capable of appreciating and appropriating those that have already come from his hand. Guarantee of further gifts is to be found in the intelligent use of those that are already in our possession.

Make us good men and women, O God, that we may represent thee aright among our fellow men. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

SUMMER REVERIE

PAULINE TYSON STEPHENS

Crepe myrtle trees are clouds of pink
And larkspurs line the garden walk;
Gold roses bloom beside the hedge
And daisy beds are white as chalk.
Peach blossoms all have dropped to
earth
To leave the ripening fruit instead;
The woodland acres are aglow
With hues of green and rose and red;
Corn tassels wave above the corn
With promises of ripened grain;
Soft summer winds sweep far across
The mountain, valley, and the plain:
A thousand butterflies swing low
As lightly as a summer breeze.
For these rare beauties that God gives
Oh, let us thank him on our knees.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

- M.—Charge to Joshua. Josh. 1:1-18
T.—Rahab. Josh. 2:1-15
W.—Over Jordan. Josh. 3:1-17
T.—Memorial Set Up. Josh. 4:1-24
F.—Jericho Falls. Josh. 6:8-20
S.—Between the Testaments. Mal. 3:1-3, 16-17;
Luke 1:68, 72, 77-78; Gal. 4:4-5
S.—Achan's Sin. Josh. 7:1-21

LESSON FOR JUNE 10

The Ministry of Jesus

Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:16-21; Mark 8:27, 29, 31

Explained in Daily Reading for Monday

MEMORY SELECTION: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. John 10:10.

MONDAY, JUNE 4

Jesus Came to Help—Luke 4:16-21

We may say that in these verses which we have for our Scripture reading today we have outlined to us the program which Jesus set for himself during his earthly ministry. We have been tempted at times to spiritualize some of the points in this program, but we should come nearer to the truth if we accepted his desire to do exactly what he set forth here as the goal of his life. It must have been a new experience for many of those who heard him speak to hear an outstanding religious leader point to the poor, the brokenhearted, the captives, the blind, and the bruised as those for whom he felt a special responsibility and to whom he intended to offer help. Too much of the religion of his day was bound up in favoritism toward the well-to-do and the extremely fortunate, and many of those who were numbered among the disinherited had almost reached the conclusion that they had been totally forgotten. We are not surprised to read that the common people heard him gladly, for it was to the common people that he sounded a note of hope. It is evident from these verses that Jesus came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many.

May we follow the example of our Master, our Father, and go about doing good. We know that we best represent him when we exemplify his Spirit. Give us a wholesome discontent with ourselves until we become more like him. Amen.

TUESDAY, JUNE 5

Jesus Came to Heal—Mark 8:22-26

We have come to think of Jesus as the Great Physician who went about healing

men of their diseases and restoring social liabilities to a place of respectability in the community. Since we have a great deal of sickness among us today in spite of all of our scientific knowledge and sanitary measures, we can well imagine how devastating diseases must have been in the time of Christ. The multitudes generally were not long in discovering in him a sympathetic friend, and they came to believe in him so thoroughly that they felt sure he could do for them almost anything they required. The very fact that they continued to bring their afflicted ones to him for healing is all the proof we need that he was able to grant their requests.

It is a source of comfort to us to recall that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever and that he is as close to our beds of illness today as he was to the blind man referred to in our Scripture lesson. We know that God works through our physicians and that if we co-operate through faith, we can throw off many of the diseases that have overtaken us. Our God can do for us even more than we can ask or think.

O thou Great Physician, give us that healing faith which is essential to any appropriation of thy power. Make us whole and complete that we may serve thee better. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6

Jesus Came to Teach—Luke 6:20-26

Our Lord has been known as the world's supreme teacher, and those today who undertake to prepare our modern teachers point their students to Christ as the one in whom the teaching art found its finest expression. Not only was he well versed in the history and traditions of his people but

he was a thorough student of nature and was able to call into his service almost any object as an illustration of some fact he was trying to make plain. He was also in such complete fellowship with God that he received from his Heavenly Father that divine truth and knowledge which we can never get from books or at the feet of the best teachers the world has to offer. Jesus not only told men how to live—he showed them how to live, and his entire life among men was an object lesson which no one who had seen could ever forget. He knew that men needed not only good impulses and clean hearts but the kind of spiritual instruction that would give them a sense of direction in their efforts to translate into life that which they felt in their souls. The list of those who have sat at the feet of Christ includes the best in every generation throughout many centuries.

Help us to continue as faithful students in the school of Christ, O God. We thank thee for such a teacher, and pray for grace to reveal in our lives those lessons we have learned from him. For his own name's sake. Amen.

THURSDAY, JUNE 7

Jesus Came to Rule—Matthew 21:6-11

Our Scripture text today presents us with a picture of our Lord's triumphant entry into the city of Jerusalem. On that historic day he was received with great acclaim by the multitudes. They saw in him the fulfillment of all their fondest hopes and dreams, and while they may have been mistaken in some of their anticipations of what he would do, it is, nevertheless, true that he was received as a conqueror, and it was appropriate that he should have been so received.

He had learned how to rule all the impulses of his life and to keep them in harmony with the will of God. In the wilderness temptation and throughout all his earthly ministry, he was constantly being set upon by the tempter, and in every encounter he came out the victor.

Having discovered the means by which he could rule himself, he was worthy of being accepted as the spiritual ruler of the peo-

ple. Had he faltered at any point in his own experience, he might have forfeited his right to such a place of leadership and authority, but the records leave us in no doubt as to his constant triumph over the forces that would have delighted in his downfall. Such a victor deserved all the acclaim that the people could possibly give him.

May we receive thee, O Saviour, with the same gladness that the people of Jerusalem received thee in the long ago. We need thee just as much now as they needed thee then. Amen.

FRIDAY, JUNE 8

Jesus Came to Comfort—John 14:25-31

Just before his crucifixion Jesus called his disciples together and spoke to them words of great comfort. He knew that his death upon the cross would be both a shocking and a disappointing experience to them. In spite of all that he had told them many of them refused to believe that he would ever be tortured and put to death by his foes. He, therefore, found it necessary to speak to them words of assurance so that in that testing hour they should not be completely demoralized. His promise of the Comforter has been fulfilled in the experience of multitudes, and all of us who have known sorrow in any form have been upheld and supported in the hour of bereavement by the knowledge that we have the companionship of this unseen but very real spiritual friend.

The legacy which Jesus left to his disciples was his peace, and we can think of nothing which they needed or would appreciate more. There was much in his life to disturb and annoy him, but he was able to maintain a peaceful attitude through his unshakable relationship to his Heavenly Father. It was this kind of peace that he bequeathed them, and for that heritage they were to be eternally grateful. It is that blessing which has come down to us across the years and for which we also thank God today.

Grant thy peace which passeth all understanding to all sorrowing hearts, our Father, and help them to find rest in thee. Amen.

SATURDAY, JUNE 9

Jesus Came to Die—Luke 22:14-20

The Scriptures make it very plain that Jesus foresaw the kind of death he should die early in his ministry. He remembered what the people had done to the prophets in the Old Testament era and even though he knew that civilization had changed in many respects, mankind had not changed. Men are willing to receive spiritual instruction as long as it does not require too much of them or unveil before the eyes of their fellows the hypocrisy and insincerity of which they are guilty.

Men found in Christ a disturbing personality. His very presence seemed to call them into judgment and they felt uncomfortable when he was around because they sensed that he was able to read their minds and understand their motives. Instead of relating themselves to him in such a way as to bring purification into their lives, they found it more convenient to turn against him and plot his death.

Whenever we sit around the Lord's table to partake of the memorial meal we are reminded of his willingness to die for the things in which he believed and that we too must be prepared to suffer for our faith if we continue to bear his name.

May we never hesitate to suffer for thy cause, O Saviour of mankind, since we have become a part of a fellowship which includes the martyrs and all others who have endured pain for their faith. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SUNDAY, JUNE 10

Jesus Came to Save—Luke 19:1-10

As Jesus went about his homeland he discovered many types of people who needed his salvation. Zaccheus had probably reached the conclusion that all of his fellow countrymen had turned against him because he was a publican. The very fact that he was rich seems to indicate that he had profited by his connection with a pagan government under whose restrictions Israel had suffered a great deal. When Jesus took special note of Zaccheus and indicated that he desired to visit him in his home, he seemed to strike a responsive note in the

life of this publican, and we read that he "received him joyfully."

If we would only take the time to give more attention to those who feel that they are looked down upon, we might go a long way toward directing a good many of them to our Master. It is necessary for us to take the first step and to go even more than halfway if we are to awaken within them that hunger and thirst after righteousness which somehow they have been able to stifle and in some cases destroy. We know that Jesus came to seek and to save all types of men, even those who are now looked upon as being hopeless cases. We should remember that he came to minister unto the sick and not unto the well.

We are profoundly grateful, our Father, that Jesus is interested in each of us, and is able to take us as we are and make us into the persons he would have us become. Amen.

TABLE TALK

CLARENCE EDWIN FLYNN

Keep the moments sacred
At the table spent.
Let them be remembered
As a sacrament.
Speak of happy subjects
And of lovely things
Fit for hearts to treasure
As remembrings.

Do the mealtime honor
With bright moments blessed.
Make it an occasion.
Give it of your best.
As the children scatter
Let each heart be stored
With beloved moments
At the family board.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

M.—At Destroyed. Josh. 8:18-29
T.—Reading the Law. Josh. 8:30-35
W.—Caleb's Inheritance. Josh. 14:1-15
T.—Joshua's Farewell. Josh. 23:1-16
F.—Ministry Begun. Mark 1:1-20
S.—The Ministry of Jesus. Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:16-21; Mark 8:27, 29, 31
S.—Capernaum. Mark 2:1-18

The Church Begins Its Work

Luke 24:44-47; Acts 4:1-4; 5:29-32

Explained in Daily Readings for Monday and Saturday

MEMORY SELECTION: We ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5:29.

MONDAY, JUNE 11

Our Commission—Luke 24:44-48

Our lethargy and small accomplishments give the impression at times that we are at liberty to do as little or as much as we like in regard to the establishment of our Lord's kingdom among men. We do not always behave like commissioned men and women. The world has a right to expect a more zealous and thorough activity among Christians than it frequently beholds. Upon our shoulders have been placed great responsibilities, and when we are aware that it means spiritual life or spiritual death for multitudes, we know that we have no right to delay the completion of the task to which the Master has called us.

When we think of the number of Americans who have given their lives in the Orient since we went to war with Japan, we cannot help but wonder how many of these lives could have been saved had we been more alert in the past in carrying out the Great Commission. If just a fraction of what we have been spending on war had been spent on the Christian enterprise in Japan, we might have made innumerable friends for Christ, and incidentally for ourselves and our nation.

Forgive us, O God, for our failure to carry out more acceptably thy commission to us. May we be more faithful in the days before us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

TUESDAY, JUNE 12

Waiting for Power—Acts 1:12-14

We frequently make the mistake of assuming that we can succeed in our Lord's work if we are sufficiently organized, forgetting that we can do nothing which has permanent value apart from his power. The disciples were wise enough to follow

the injunction of Christ and to remain in Jerusalem in prayer until they had been empowered from above for their great task. As they thought of the job before them, they knew that they were insufficient within themselves to accomplish it. Their very sense of extremity was truly God's opportunity.

Nor is our task today any easier. The world we face is just as hostile to the message of Christ as was that world in which the early disciples lived. If we expect to make any discernible headway in bringing a lost humanity into a saving relationship to God, we must pray for and possess that spiritual power which God alone can give. There is no substitute for it. Those who have tried substitutes can testify to their ineffectiveness. The power comes when we meet the qualifications for receiving it. May we learn the wisdom of waiting on our knees for this indispensable gift from above.

Our Father, we acknowledge our folly, and pray that we shall never depend upon ourselves for success as disciples. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13

The Power Comes—Acts 2:1-4

Just as surely as we look to God for his power, we shall receive it. Our Father in heaven has no spiritual favorites. He is just as ready to give his Spirit as we are ready to receive him. When any one of us seems to succeed in God's work to a greater degree than others, it is not due to the fact that such a person has more of God but rather to the fact that God has more of such a person. God can use only as much of us as we are inclined to put at his disposal. When we think of men like Paul, we know that their superb accomplishments were not due so much to special talents

which they possessed as to the remarkable extent to which they surrendered themselves to the service of Christ.

It is said that Dwight L. Moody was challenged as a young man by some humble servant of God who remarked, "The world is waiting to see what God will do with a man who is wholly surrendered to his will." Moody determined at that moment to be such a man, and we have reason to believe that he realized this ambition. Without the power which God bestowed upon him, he would have remained a little-known shoe salesman. Instead, he shook two continents by his preaching of Christ's gospel.

We thank thee, our Father, for all those who have met the conditions of receiving thy power, and have thereby been used of thee to bless the world. Amen.

THURSDAY, JUNE 14

The Beautiful Gate—Acts 3:1-10

What Peter and John did for the lame man at the gate of the Temple is an illustration of what God can do for men through us if we are willing to be the channels of his grace and power. Too often, as we face a world in need, we begin to think of what we would do to supply those needs if we were only wealthy or wise or placed in a position of great influence. We ought to know by this time that God is not dependent on any of these things. Some of those whom he has used most have been those with little material possessions or native talent.

What God can do through us is therefore not dependent upon what we have, but rather upon the extent to which we will let him have us. When we recall how lacking in qualifications for greatness the various disciples seemed to be at the time Christ called them, we should be convinced that he is able to use any one of us far more than we can possibly realize. God knows us better than we know ourselves, and he is aware of talents and abilities of which we are wholly ignorant. We can think of no greater venture than the venture of putting ourselves completely at God's disposal and then waiting to see what he will do with us. Such a course of action will be full of surprises for each one of us.

Use us, O God as instruments of thy grace to all our fellow men. Amen.

FRIDAY, JUNE 15

Fearless Followers—Acts 4:13-20

The boldness with which Peter and John expressed their faith before the high priest and many of the ecclesiastical leaders was a demonstration of the change that had taken place in their hearts following the resurrection of Christ. Both Peter and John had felt helpless to do anything for Christ at the time he was arrested, tried, and crucified, but now that they had seen him risen from the dead, they were filled with an unconquerable courage which made it possible for them to bear their testimony in the midst of the most hostile environment.

We may be inclined to believe that our religion is now so universally understood and accepted that the time for spiritual boldness is past. Any such idea reveals a lack of understanding of just what the Christian message really is. The world may be quite prepared to accept or at least acquiesce in our Christian theology, but it is by no means prepared to follow the Christian way of life. Any effort on our part to influence men to emulate the sacrificial life of Jesus will be met with stiff opposition. The higher levels of the Christian message and the deeper understanding of what Christ came to teach have never been and are not now popular ideals. The boldness of these early disciples will be required of us.

Give us the courage to stand up for our faith when it is challenged, our Father. Amen.

SATURDAY, JUNE 16

Faithful Followers—Acts 5:26-32

It is one thing to follow Christ when no opposition is offered, but quite another thing to be a faithful disciple when the way is rough and the enemies numerous. Peter, who had seemed rather cowardly on the eve of the crucifixion and who protested that he was not numbered among the followers of Christ, later came to the place where he was prepared to say to those who threatened him because of his faith, "We ought

to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). It was not Jesus in the flesh who had been able to inspire such fortitude in Peter, but the resurrected, living Lord who appeared unto the disciples after his crucifixion.

We sometimes express the wish that we might have had the privilege of having fellowship with Christ during his earthly ministry and we intimate, at least, that we would be more faithful and more courageous Christians if we had had this experience. We need to remember that we have access to this same risen Saviour with whom Peter and the other disciples communed, and it is from him that we should receive sufficient courage to stand by all our convictions. The world will never be won to Christ by faithless disciples.

Cause us to be faithful in all things, our Father. We know that we can count upon thee at all times. Help us to be equally certain that thou canst count upon us. Amen.

SUNDAY, JUNE 17

A Psalm of Praise—Psalm 67:1-7

This sixty-seventh Psalm is an expression of praise which contains a note of missionary zeal. The psalmist asks for God's mercy and blessing, but he acknowledges that this petition is offered for the purpose of making known among the nations of the earth God's way and truth. He is anxious that all the people everywhere shall come to that knowledge of God which will make it possi-

ble for them to offer praise and thanksgiving unto him.

The psalmist is well aware that there can be no gladness among the nations as long as they sit in spiritual darkness and are in bondage to pagan superstitions. He knows that the only government which can bring peace and prosperity to the people is the government which recognizes and honors God as the creator, ruler, and sustainer of the universe.

In this week's lessons we have been studying about the beginnings of the early Christian church, and we know that the chief function of the church in the world is to call out and transform individuals who in due season will have a definite effect upon the life of the community, the state, the nation, and the world. Our task, therefore, is not only personal but social, and we believe that social righteousness depends upon individual consecration.

Assist us in becoming grateful Christians, O God. We have more to be thankful for than any other people in the world. May our lives be an expression of our gratitude. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

- M.—Enemies Watch Him. Mark 3:1-21
- T.—The Great Sermon. Mark 4:1-20
- W.—Two Miracles. Mark 5:21-43
- T.—Feeding the Five Thousand. Mark 6:32-46
- F.—To Tyre and Sidon. Mark 7:24-37
- S.—The Church Begins Its Work. Luke 24:44-47; Acts 4:1-4; 5:29-32
- S.—The Confession of Peter. Mark 8:27-38

LESSON FOR JUNE 24

The New Church in the Pagan World

1 Timothy 6:3-12; 1 Peter 4:12-16

Explained in Daily Reading for Saturday

MEMORY SELECTION: Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. Matthew 6:33.

MONDAY, JUNE 18

Stephen Helps the Apostles—Acts 6:1-8

It did not take the early church very long to discover that there were certain practical duties to be performed and that in these

the apostles would need assistance. Every effort was being made to provide physical as well as spiritual nourishment for the people, and this task became so complex that the disciples realized that sooner or later they would be neglecting the spiritual

side of their ministry if they continued to give an increasing amount of time to the practical service of the church. It was, therefore, decided to select seven men of honest report who were both wise and consecrated and to appoint them for this particular phase of the church's program.

Among these first seven who were chosen was Stephen, a man who is referred to in terms that leave us in no doubt as to his character and reputation. He was the kind of man whom God could use to a remarkable degree, and we are told that he "did great wonders and miracles among the people." He was the sort of man to whom Christ had meant a great deal and whose life had been transformed by his spiritual relationship with the Master. Such men are always needed, and the church today is calling for them.

We thank thee for men like Stephen, our Father, and pray that we shall be more like him ourselves. We know that the church can be no better than the individuals who make up its membership. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

TUESDAY, JUNE 19

The Church Grows Larger—Acts 11:19-26

We are distressed to read that the same Stephen about whom we read in our lesson text yesterday was stoned to death by his religious opponents. This crime seemed to be the beginning of a wave of persecutions that was set in motion against the early Christians. Immediately they began to scatter into various sections of the Mediterranean area in search of some place of refuge from their persecutors.

On the surface this seemed to be a tragic hour in the life of the church, but now in retrospect we can see that it was in many ways a providential event, for it was the means of spreading the knowledge of the Christian gospel into areas that might otherwise never have received it. Wherever the refugee Christians went they shared their faith in Christ with those among whom they went to live and in a real sense became the first missionaries of Christianity.

It was at this time that Barnabas was selected to go to Antioch. When he had

reached that place, he preached to the people and encouraged them to remain true to God. He was instrumental in bringing Saul of Tarsus to Antioch in order that he might assist him in the work of the church there.

May our service in the church help it to grow and become a more vital factor in the life of the world, we pray, O God. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20

Missionaries to the Gentiles—Acts 13:1-3

The first two missionaries of the early Christian church to be formally appointed for the specific task of carrying the gospel to the Gentiles were Barnabas and Saul. Their appointment came as the result of the leading of the Holy Spirit. After the people had fasted and prayed, they ordained the two chosen to this high calling and sent them forth among the people with the good news of salvation. This was a high day in the history of the church and one to which all Christians look with deep gratitude, for those two missionaries were the first in a long line of consecrated men and women stretching across the centuries, permeating every nation in the name and for the sake of their Lord and Saviour. The church has prospered in direct proportion to its missionary enthusiasm, and wherever any branch of the Christian church has neglected its missionary responsibilities, that group has suffered decline.

In the commission which Jesus gave to his disciples just prior to his ascension he left no doubt in their minds as to what their duty toward the rest of the world should be. They were conscious that they possessed something so remarkable that they could never be content until they had shared it with the rest of humanity.

Give us a greater concern for the salvation of a lost world, our Father. May we do all we can to strengthen the missionary program of our church. In Christ's name. Amen.

THURSDAY, JUNE 21

The Gospel in Europe—Acts 16:9-15

Those of us who live in what is generally called the Occident will ever be grateful for

the experience which Paul had in Troas, when the man of Macedonia called to him to come over and help them. Paul did not question the validity of the call, but immediately set forth and ultimately came to Philippi, which was the major city of that portion of Macedonia. There by the river-side on the sabbath day Paul and Silas spoke to a group of women and explained to them the message of the gospel. We are not at all surprised to read that there were converts and immediately a movement was begun in that place which resulted in the establishment of a church there.

Wherever the gospel is faithfully preached by consecrated messengers, there will be definite results. We regret only that the long period of time in which the gospel has been the possession of the Occidentals has not served to work a greater change in the characters of those who profess to have received it. The terrible events that have taken place on the European continent during the last nineteen hundred years make us realize that man must find in the gospel an influence which transforms life.

We are truly grateful, O Father, that in thy good providence the gospel came to us of the Occident through thy servants. Help us to share it with all our fellow men. Amen.

FRIDAY, JUNE 22

Rules for Leaders—1 Timothy 3:1-13

In this well-known chapter of Paul's first letter to Timothy we find the qualifications set forth for pastors and deacons. These qualifications make it plain that a man who aspires to either office must be prepared to live on a higher level than that which is customary among average men. This is as it should be, for anyone who accepts the position of a leader in the church accepts a responsibility of no small proportions.

It goes without saying that the church will hardly advance any farther than its leadership is able to carry it, and if men are to make spiritual progress, they must have visible and tangible examples of Christianity worthy of emulation. We have made the mistake at times of looking upon offices in the church as being more or less honorary, and we select people to fill them because of our desire to express to them

appreciation for some service they may have rendered in the past. We need to keep in mind that the work of the church is a strenuous thing and that only those who are physically, mentally, and morally capable of doing a good job should be selected. The standards of service in the church of Christ must always be high.

How grateful we are, O God, for our good leaders. May we bear them up in our prayers day and night. If we are called upon to lead, may we make ourselves worthy of such responsibility. We pray through Christ. Amen.

SATURDAY, JUNE 23

Suffering for the Gospel—1 Peter 4:12-19

In this letter which Peter wrote to some of the early Christians we find him making an effort to prepare them for the sufferings and persecutions which would surely come upon them. Already some of them had borne the brunt of the wrath of men who resented the growing influence of the church and others were soon to take their places in this great company of the martyrs. Peter did not want them to feel that this was anything strange or unexpected, but rather that they should rejoice in the thought that they were thereby becoming partakers of the sufferings of their Saviour, and that in due season they would share his glory.

He made a distinction between those who suffer because of their faith and those who suffer simply because they have transgressed the law. Man is not blessed simply by suffering, but only when his suffering is unavoidable and for some good cause. Suffering is a trust from God, and those who are called upon to bear it have a right to consider themselves to be numbered among a distinguished company. Contrary to popular opinion, the church grows and prospers under persecution, and in days of comfort and security it often becomes weak and ineffective.

Give us sufficient courage to suffer for our faith if it should become necessary, our Father. When we think of all that the gospel has done for us, we realize that we cannot sacrifice too much for it. In Christ's name. Amen.

SUNDAY, JUNE 24

Faithful unto Death—2 Timothy 4:1-8

The testimony which Paul was able to express in his words to Timothy in our Scripture text today is a testimony which all of us should seek to make as we come to the close of our earthly pilgrimage. Amid the complexities of life we sometimes feel that the sacrifices we are called upon to make are too great and the burdens we are called upon to bear are too heavy, but as we face the sunset and look back over a life that has been lived in a humble fashion, we realize that satisfaction thus gained is worth all the trouble that may have been required. Paul could look back over his own Christian experience without remorse. This in itself was a reward sufficient to gladden the heart of any man. He had waged a courageous battle and had maintained his faith in spite of all opposition. Now he could rest in the assurance that there awaited him a crown of righteousness, a reward which the Lord would give not only to him but to all others who loved him and were faithful unto him. If any one of us is facing today some painful ex-

perience which threatens our faith, let us remember these triumphant words of the great apostle and hold on faithfully to the end. We know that God can make us able.

Save us, O Father, from the tragedy of giving up when our circumstances become difficult. At such times we cling more tenaciously to thee. We know that thou canst keep us from falling. In Jesus' name. Amen.

TWO WAYS

PAULINE TYSON STEPHENS

Life is dark and fraught with woe
If you give up and take it so,
But storms may leave the sky aglow
If you let courage live and grow.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

- M.—The Transfiguration. Mark 9:1-13
- T.—Journeying to Jerusalem. Mark 10:32-52
- W.—The Triumphal Entry. Mark 11:1-19
- T.—In the Temple. Mark 12:28-44
- F.—On Olivet. Mark 13:3-23
- S.—The New Church in the Pagan World. 1 Tim. 6:3-12; Peter 4:12-16
- S.—The Lord's Supper. Mark 14:12-26

GRANDPA

ELIZABETH McCULLOUGH

Grandpa's hands were gnarled and rough,
His fingers stained and brown.
But if he saw some frightened thing
A bird with broken, dragging wing,
His touch was soft as down.

I guess he never read a lot
Except his Bible's page.
But he would take the loser's part
And he could read a small boy's heart
As keen as any sage.

Grandpa seemed so gruff and stern
But those were just his ways.
And Grandma knew his crotchethness
Was just to hide his tenderness,
And loved him all her days!

For Family Devotions

Morning Prayers

Now I wake and see the light,
'Tis God that kept me through the night.
To Him I lift my voice and pray
That He will keep me through the day.
—SELECTED

Heavenly Father, hear our prayer;
Keep us in Thy loving care.
Guard us through the livelong day,
In our work and in our play.
Keep us pure and strong and true,
In everything we say and do.
—SELECTED

Blessing at Table

Thou art great, and Thou art good,
And we thank Thee for this food.
By Thy hand must all be fed;
Give us, Lord, our daily bread.
—SELECTED

A Friend's Prayer

The Lord preserve thy going out.
The Lord preserve thy coming in;
God send His angels round about,
To keep thy soul from every sin.
—SELECTED

Blessed Are the Peacemakers

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love, for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

—FRANCIS OF ASSISI

In Illness

Lord Jesus, You were always good
To everyone in pain;
Please think of me while I am ill
And make me well again.
—SELECTED

A Family Prays

In this hour of worship
Grant Thy presence, Lord!
Here, the world forgotten,
Feed us on Thy Word.
From our sins and sorrows
Here we seek release;
Of Thy love persuaded,
Find the path of peace.
—SELECTED

Evening Prayer

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray Thee, Lord, Thy child to keep.
Thy love go with me all the night
And wake me with the morning light.
—SELECTED



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