

SERMONS FOR 1956

- January 2 "An Open Door"
"Our Faith and Christian Science"
- January 9 "The God We Worship"
"Our Faith and the Jehovah Witnesses"
- January 16 "Built On a Rock"
"Our Faith and the Holiness Sects"
- January 23 "The Strategy of Salt"
"The Religion of the Negro Spiritual"
- January 30 "Lord, Send Me"
"Rekindle the Gift"
- February 6 "One Fellowship in Christ"
Christian Witnesses
- February 13 "Responsible Family Living"
"Parents Are Important People"
- February 20 "A Friend At Midnight"
"Dimensions of the Great Commandment"
B. Smith Haworth
- February 27 "When Christ Passes By"
"Weighed and Found Wanting"
- March 6 "The Great Shepherd of the Sheep"
Movie of Christian work in Japan -- John Epp
- March 13 "When Religion Is a Fad"
"Christ and the City"
Prof. H. William Myers
- March 20 Dr. Paul Whiteker
Mr. Orville Chapman
- March 27 "Is Your Life Successful or Significant?"
"Our Christian Obligation to the American Indian"
- April 3 "The King Who Left a City"
City Auditorium -- Dr. Frank Johnson Pippin
- April 10 "To Be Continued"
"The Symbol of a Cross" a religious drama
- April 17 "Going Back to Our Nets"
An Evening at Seth Parkers
- April 24 "Our Spiritual Warfare"
Service of Recognition -- Dr. Elliott

May 1	"The Dilemma Facing Christian Teaching" Ottawa University Concert Choir
May 8	"Keeper of the Springs" "The Christian Interpretation of Dating"
May 15	"The Cost of Discipleship" Washington Seminar
May 22	"Reaching for the Highest" High School Baccalaureate
May 29	"For the Healing of the Nations" "Practicing the Presence of God"
June 5	Baccalaureate Service, Ottawa University Dr. Andrew B. Martin
June 12	"Dare We Have a Mature Faith?"
June 19	"Should We Pray for Healing?" "The Unfolding Drama of the Old Testament" Session I
June 26	"Does God Judge Men?" "The Unfolding Drama of the Old Testament" Session II
July 3	"Davy Crockett and the American Dream" "The Unfolding Drama of the Old Testament" Session III
July 10	"The Diary of a Pilgrim" "The Unfolding Drama of the Old Testament" Session IV
July 17	"Our Eternal Home" "The Unfolding Drama of the Old Testament" Session V
July 24	"The Cry for Pardon" "The Unfolding Drama of the Old Testament" Session VI
July 31	"Enter His Gates Singing" "Baptized Into His Death"
August 14	"An Audience Or an Army?"

September 11	"First Things First" "Facing Up to One's Debts"
September 18	"A Life Worthy of the Calling" "A Feast for All Needy Folk"
September 25	"Faith of Our Children" "Frontiers of Our Faith"
October 2	"The Church That Jesus Founded" "The Lamb Has Conquered"
October 9	"Love Covereth a Multitude of Sins" An Evening of Music
October 16	"The Game We All Play" "Christ Speaks to the Churches"
October 23	"All God's Chillun' Ain't Got Shoes" "The Vision Glorious"
October 30	"Get Out of the Church" Union Reformation Service
November 6	"They Have Their Reward" "Christ Is Able"
November 13	"God's Hand on Your Shoulder" "The Christian and His Daily Work"
November 20	"Leaving All for the Sake of the Gospel" "A Hymn of Praise"
December 4	Rev. Richard Cummings "No Longer Strangers"
December 11	"The Cost of Loving a World" Christmas Vespers
December 18	"A Saviour Has Been Born" Christmas Family Night Program
December 25	"Sorry, No Room!"

SERMONS 1956

New Year's Eve Communion Service, 1955

January 1, morning	"Can These Bones Live?"
January 8, morning	"Why Are You Afraid?"
January 15, morning	"Give Me Oil in My Lamp"
January 22, morning	"Glory in the Valley"
January 29, morning	"Dare We Make the Investment?"
February 5, morning	"Our Citizenship Under Christ"
February 19, morning	"No Borrowed Creed"
26, morning	"I Believe in God the Father"
March 4 morning	"Jesus Christ, His Only Son"
18 morning	"I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church"
11 morning	"I Believe in the Holy Spirit"
25 morning	"I Believe in the Forgiveness of Sins"
April 1 morning	"Is This April Fool's Day?"
15 morning	"Loaves and Fish"
22 morning	"By the Power of God"
29 morning	"Church and Family - Allies or Enemies?"
May 6 morning	"Walking Around a Revolution"
13 morning	"Growing into Maturity"
20 morning	"The Integrity of our Membership"
27 morning	"Living By False Pressures"
June 10 morning	"Can a Man be Saved?"
24 morning	"I Will Build My Church"
July 1 morning	"Brotherhood - Fiction or Fact?"
8 morning	"Dare We Be Free Within?"
15 morning	"Suffering and the Christian Hope"
22 morning	"Who says Christianity isn't Practical?"
August 12 morning	"Suffering and the Christian Hope"
19 morning	"Things that Cannot be Measured"
26 morning	"How Should a Christian Vote?"
September 2 morning	"Personal Message to Our Congregation."
8 morning	"What is Our Ministry of Reconciliation?"
16 morning	"The Gate is Narrow."
23 morning	"The Winds of God" ?
30 morning	"What is That in Your Hand?"
October 14 morning	"Clothed and in His Right Mind"
21 morning	"When Religion Gets into Overalls"
28 morning	"A Costly Citizenship"
November 4 morning	"Have We Outgrown Prayer?"
11 morning	"I Will Repay You"
18 morning	"They First Gave Themselves to the Lord"
25 morning	"Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant"
evening	"When God's Peace Guards The Door"
December 2 morning	"And the Glory of the Lord"
evening	"The Darkness Has Not Overcome the Light"
9 morning	"I Will Not Forsake Them"
16 morning	"Like a Root in Dry Ground"
23 morning	"His Name Shall Be Called Wonderful"

(over)

December 30 morning

"Going Home Another Way"

sermon

YOUR MONEY IS YOU
Text: Luke 12:34

A deep rooted conviction have I which changes not. I believe if any church is zealous in proclaiming Jesus Christ and His Gospel, that church will never have to prod people to give nor beg for offerings. People will naturally give because they want to give. This ministry is so dedicated with firm personal conviction.

Other convictions had I which have changed. It used to be my manner to apologize to people on the Sunday the stewardship sermon was to be given. First of all I have always apologized to visitors thinking they might get the wrong impression that this church always had it's hand out. Secondly, I was always apologetic in spirit if not in so many words to some members whom I knew were very sensitive about the pulpit speaking of God's claim on our money. Now, not due to a hardened heart but by a clearer Scriptural view of Christian Stewardship, I feel no need of apology to anyone for what I am to say this morning. I am in nowise ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It needs no apologies from man. In the Scripture God speaks. This morning we but echo what God has already said. I act only as His mouthpiece. What I say is not original with me -- it originated with the Lord, God, therefore I deserve no credit nor condemnation.

On this stewardship Sunday it is not the church holding a tin cup begging your money. The church nor her Christ needs your giving half as much as you need the blessing and the spiritual experience of giving. This day and this sermon is more to enrich your soul than it is to enrich the church treasury. It is a strange quirk of our human nature -- "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also". One translator puts these words of Jesus -- "Your heart is sure to be in the same place as your treasure".

Many people know of Jesus -- they know something of the kingdom of God. After a fashion they are members of the church, but all of this is passive and not a dynamic interest. But let one be persuaded to invest his money -- let one honestly understand his obligation to God in the full tithe -- let one catch the feel of honorable giving and watch how his heart becomes set on God and fixed in his church. Surely it is true -- "Unless one's money is on the altar his heart will not be there".

This morning we are not asking for your money as much as we are seeking you to give yourself. We are not asking for your pocket book -- we are asking for your heart. We are not seeking from you a pledge as much as we are seeking for you a deeper more meaningful experience of Jesus Christ. Christ never possesses you until He possesses what is yours.

It is my contention that our money is us. Into the getting of our money we put blood, sweat, and tears. Some of us work as many as 40 hours a week and some of us work 80 hours a week for our incomes. What won't we give of ourselves to get money! With all of us that goes into that money one can rightfully say -- "Your money is you." As Jesus put it -- "Your heart is sure to be in the same place as your treasure".

You have always heard it said, "Money talks." And how does money talk! It talks in words eloquent and loud. Your money tells you and God all about yourself. Your check stubs form the table of contents of your life. How you spend your money is the thermometer of your heart. Your spending tells what you think is important. Your money talks about you. I don't like to hear gossip about other people so I refuse to hear the gossip of your money you give through your church.

Some peoples' money says about them -- "They pay their food bills, they keep up the payments on their house, they make regular insurance payments, they pay their utilities, liquor bills, and entertainment expenses, and then of what remains they give God a proportion of the left-overs. They stood up before God when they joined the church, proudly confessing, "I believe in Jesus Christ as my Saviour and own Him as Lord of all things in my life." They agreed to seek first of all God's Kingdom and God's way. But says their money, "The way you spend me tells the secret truth of your life. God is not first with you, but last. He is not essential but incidental. You can get along without God but not without entertainment, insurance, wardrobes, automobiles and shelter!"

I know of a man whose money talked on him. This man had always heard of God's standard of giving -- the first ten percent of all our increase. When he was in a very low income bracket he felt he didn't dare tithe. When he was in a better income bracket the tithe would be such a large figure he was less able to tithe. Now in a fairly high income bracket computing the tithe he was flabbergasted by the sizeable amount and positive he couldn't afford to give that kind of money. His money was saying, "You were selfish with little -- you are more selfish with much. The way you figure things and God, you will never obey the commandment to tithe. Your selfishness has grown more mature -- it is well aged now -- you are enjoying it." His money asked, "What are you going to say when you stand before your heavenly Father and He asks you to give a full accounting of your stewardship?" His money said, "Embezzler, forger, fraud, squanderer." His money told the real story of this man who sat in church every Sunday -- "Your heart isn't in God so you won't put your treasure there. Put your treasure in God and your heart is sure to be with God also."

Jesus had seen demonstrated the fact that where one's treasure is his heart is sure to be. We take it that Jesus often sat over against the treasury and watched people in their worship through giving. He beheld how the people put their money into the treasury. He saw the more well-to-do put in much. He witnessed a poor widow as she tossed in her little -- equivalent of 2/5 of a cent. This scene always stops me -- people bringing their gifts and "God within the shadow keeping watch above His own". . . His own people and His own treasury. God watching! He watches us as we earn our money. He watches us as we place it in the offering. By seeing our money and how we use it God sees the real "us."

As the ministers, we do not know what anyone gives. That is none of our business. It isn't our treasury. It is only God's business for it is God's treasury. The congregation would protest if a list of givers together with their gifts should be published. It would not be a protest of the humble who do not wish their gifts to be known -- it would be the protest of the proud whose true self is shown up. No, in the Village Church the ministers don't know, the person who picks up your card can't know, your fellow church members will not know. But Jesus knows. By your giving Jesus knows the real you in spite of your finery of prayer, Bibles, and good deeds.

What was so great about the widow's gift? Her money talked. It said, "This woman puts God first. This woman has the faith that as she gives to God's needs, God will provide for her needs. This woman knows she can't afford not to give generously and live with the pained conscience of one who short-changed God." Her money said she loved God with her money as well as with her hymns -- "I Love Thy Church, O Lord", or her prayers, "Thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven."

The widow didn't ask what was expected of her. She did not ask or care about what the average pledge was so that she might gauge her giving by the giving of others. She didn't weigh her gift in the "scale of duty" but in the "scale of love." No wonder Jesus was pleased as he saw the real soul of that woman through her money.

Your money is you. As Jesus looks over your check book or your pledge card he sees not dollars and cents but the true reflection of you. The acid test of a person's love for Jesus Christ is his money.

We are familiar with the oft-told story of the young man who avowed his love for the lady of his choice. He wrote in a letter to her "I would climb the highest mountain for you. I would brave the broadest desert for you. I would swim the deepest ocean for you." He signed it most affectionately expressing his love. Then he added a p.s. -- "I'll be over to see you tonight if it doesn't rain."

We say to God, "I love you. I know I need you. I will give my body for you. I'll go where you want me to go, be what you want me to be, say what you want me to say." Then in a quiet voice we add a post script, "Ask anything of me just so long as it doesn't cost me much." A religion that costs little is worth little. A bargain counter faith is cheap merchandise.

Your money is you. Your money tells tales of truth. The acid test of your faith and love is your money.

If our money is the real us, it scares me. God commands -- "Bring unto me the full tithe." Our money reveals us to be robbers of God. The prophet Malachi says -- "Will a man rob God?" God answers, "You have robbed me in the tithes and offerings." It is a criminal act to rob our fellow man, but it is a heinous sin to rob God. Yet some of the finest appearing people -- people whose business integrity is unquestionable -- who never betray a contract -- whose signatures on a note are as good as any material collateral are dishonest when they come to their dealings with God.

We are horrified to read frequently that someone who receives charity turns on the giver and robs him. How low down can a human mortal be you say! But what about a man who receives life itself -- health and strength of body to earn a living, brains and opportunities, everything from God and turns around and robs God?

One minister of a fashionable congregation began his stewardship sermon saying to his congregation, "Many of you came to church this morning riding in stolen cars, wearing stolen clothes, and adorned with stolen jewelry because you paid for these things with tithe money which you withheld from God." Now don't blame me for intimating this indictment. God himself says it to us, "You have robbed Me in tithes and offerings."

Your money is you. It is the thermometer of your soul. God can look at your spending and know everything about your spirit. Your money talks louder than your religious vocabulary.

Good friends, everyone of us is well-to-do today. We have salvation. Christ paid with His blood for it. We have the necessities of life though we want more. We have luxuries the like of which no other people on earth have. God has been good to every family in this congregation. Let us take time out from complaining and begin counting our blessings.

Remember the words of the Old Testament, "Take heed that you don't forget the Lord your God, lest when you have eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses and live in them, and when your possessions and money are multiplied then you forget God. Beware lest you say in your heart, "My power and the might of my hand have gotten me these things." You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the power to get wealth.

Remember God when you decide what to give through your church. Do you want to give up to 80% in taxes to send your armed sons to the far ends of the earth to fight and die -- or give 10% to send the Gospel that changes men's hearts and makes for peace. Think of God when you decide to give. He watches. Is your giving proportionate to what you want Him to give you? Remember Jesus Christ when you go to pledge. Your gift given in secret tells Him exactly what He means to you and what you mean to His Kingdom. Forget about what others give -- forget the average pledge -- be an individualist -- think of you and your family and your blessings from God. Do I honor God with my money? Think of God's Word when you go to express your devotion in giving. You feel you don't dare try to pledge the tithe. Hear God say to you, "Bring the whole tithe unto Me -- try it -- test me and see if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive."

Remember your money is you. Count not the cost of being a son or daughter of God -- count not the cost but the privilege.

God doesn't count the gift, -- he weighs the heart of the giver.

This sermon delivered by
Robert H. Meneilly, Minister
October 9, 1955 at
The Village Church
Prairie Village, Kansas

SOME COMMENTS ON CHOSEN PEOPLES

by

Roger Fredrikson

Ottawa, Kansas

It is certainly true that "enlightened," sophisticated students, who breathe the air of self-sufficiency and rationalism, will rush in to do battle over any consideration of God and His right to arbitrarily choose anything or anyone. Students should have a great time with Mr. Baly's book, and it is hoped the Bible. Of course, any honest consideration of the biblical message brings one face to face with the profound fact and mystery of God, Who in His sovereign love chooses persons and nations to do His bidding. The story of Israel, the coming of Jesus Christ, the birth of the Christian Church--none of these "mighty acts" can be explained or understood aside from the Great God of the Bible Whose thoughts are not our thoughts and Whose ways are not our ways.

It is precisely here that the first sharp issue ought to be raised. How do we understand the God who chooses? Is the God of the Bible fundamentally power?--"intelligent, active, righteous"--but power? His creation then is a limiting of this power to the restrictions of space, time and history. He works redemptively then by limiting His awesome power to the restrictions of a Person --Jesus Christ--and peoples--Israel and the Church. Is this true? This is crucial to this entire discussion! Have we not become so overwhelmed by the power unleashed in our time on every hand that we tend to project this and make it God? The God revealed in the Bible and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ chooses, not only because He is sovereign power, but because He is sovereign love. The creative activity of God is the overflow of divine love, more than the working of divine power. The amazing center of this

creation by God is the making of man who is free within his deepest self. This means he is free to rebel and defy his Maker. If God were more truly power than love men would be mere automats and moral, spiritual freedom would be a farce. The incredible truth of the Bible is that God's love for man is unconditioned and unmerited. Over and over again men, whose stories are told in the Bible, ask the question, "Why did God love me?" This is dramatically revealed in the life of Israel. These people do not deserve God's love any more than any other nation or people, but God chooses Israel in the mystery of love to be a vessel for the salvation of all peoples. Israel is a chosen people whose election by God and covenant with God rests on God's election love, ('ahabah).¹ There is no "reasonable explanation" to be found within the Bible for God's choosing a particular people--only that "He found Israel as grapes in the wilderness."² God's judgments are unsearchable and His ways are past finding out. The exclusiveness and arbitrariness of God's love/^{have}always been stumbling blocks to the wisdom of men.

This same selective love is seen in the New Testament. It is uncaused, for there is no reason for the love to be found in the one who is loved. Observe Jesus dealing with outcasts, publicans and sinners! The fundamental difference in the New Covenant is that God's choosing love now includes all men of every nation and tongue. A new way for fellowship between God and man has been opened. All this has happened because of God's 'agape', His unconditioned love, has chosen us and destined us to be His sons! Every page of the New Testament is marked with joy and thanksgiving because sinful, unworthy men have experienced the electing, redeeming love of God. While they cannot

1. Norman H. Snaith, The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament, Epworth Press, London, 1955, (particularly chapters 5 and 6)

2. Hosea 9:10.

comprehend the length, breadth, depth or height of this love, yet they know that God has chosen them to sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. The basic premise from which any consideration of "chosen peoples" must begin is that of God's sovereign love!

Neither the nation nor the university is constituted or sustained by the same election or covenant as the Church. The purpose of God which brought the Church into being and the demand for obedience, which is the very life of the Church, is radically different from that which sustains the state and the university. It could be that in our discussion at this point we will easily slip back and forth between Church, state and school as if they were all chosen for the same purpose. There is a quality of love which the redeemed community has known that is not true of the orders of creation.

God seeks after man. He comes in the garden in the cool of the day and poignantly asks "Adam, where art thou?" Man's affirmative answer to this question--"Here I am"--is a response that saves him, makes him whole and finally constitutes the redeemed community.

However, it is man who seeks for truth and forms political institutions. He does this because he is a political and truth-seeking animal. He is so enmeshed in creation that he must express himself by finding the truth and organizing political communities. These communities have been ordained by God for the well-being of man. They can deliver men from oppression, fear and superstition and can be instruments of justice, law and order. Certainly the Christian can make of his struggle for truth and justice an offering acceptable to God. We stand within the prophetic tradition which cries out for righteousness and we worship the God of Truth and Beauty.

At the same time it is entirely possible that these institutions can become the instruments of rebellion and disobedience. The demonic elements within human existence can defy God in the name of truth and the state. There is great danger in saying that America at this point is a chosen nation because of her power and resources! Has there ever been a truly chosen nation since the people Israel who were in a unique sense both a religious and a political community?

Therefore, there is frequently a tension that exists between the "redeemed community" and the political and educational institutions. Every age has to wrestle in its own way with what belongs to God and what belongs to Caesar, but the burning issue of Church and state has been handed to us in a peculiar way because of the increasing power of the state and because of the tremendous claims and achievements of science. This student generation may well have been chosen, if it listens to God, to speak to the Church that it may recover its calling. For the Church must live in the midst of tensions and learn to communicate with the state and school in a new creative way if its witness is to be known. The issue cannot be confused. The Church has been uniquely chosen to go outside the city wall bearing the Cross with its Lord and dying that the world may live.

We come finally to the question of the Church. Here all of us speak with the prejudices of our own Church traditions and from our own way of looking at the biblical revelation. Certainly it is true that we will only find the life, power and unity, which the Church needs, in Christ! Our discussion about the Church should grow out of our being "in Christ" and the mind which he gives us. The norm and standard we have for our understanding of the Church is the Apostolic witness. They have spiritual priority because "they were there" when

the Church moved out of the confines of being a Jewish community and became a fellowship of all those who accepted God's choosing.

The keynote of that new, fresh community was not necessarily order or structure. It was basically and fundamentally a fellowship of persons united in Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit. This fellowship was a togetherness, a community life in which there was deep, common participation. It is not some thing that held them together, but Someone--Jesus Christ. It is our experience of His living Presence even today that constitutes the Church! The Church is the Body of Christ--nothing less and nothing more. The Church must once again adapt itself, it must be as creative as it's Head wills it to be. All our discussions concerning baptism, the Lord's Supper, unity and witness must be a seeking for the mind of Christ in the creative power of the Spirit.

The thesis of my remarks, this message, is fundamentally this: All of us in one sense or another or another are fools, but there are two kinds of fools and this day in a sense decides which kind of a fool we are. I think that many of you know there is a kind of world in which folks live which is largely ^a the world of illusion. People think the world is real, after all, ^{we} ~~you~~ can define it by your own senses. It is objective, you can see it, you can handle it. When on the other hand, there is a world which is unseen. And some people living in one of these worlds are looked upon as fools. And folks who live in the latter world are also looked upon as fools. Let us not forget that on one occasion Jesus said, "Thou fool, this night thy soul is required of ^{thee} you." and on another occasion ^{Apostle} Paul said, "We are fools for Christ's sake."

Now there has been a story which has been coming back in American memories in these recent days which seems to speak ^{very} profoundly of the first kind of world. This is the story of the sinking of the Titanic. It is a strang thing--some of you may have read this story in the Kansas City Star in the last few days--that this has been a kind of parable of our time. Because men said that this was an unsinkable vessel. This was the last time man ever said that. And the tragedy of the facts of the ^{sinking of} Titanic was not the fact that there were roughly 1500 people who lost their lives. The greatest tragedy of the Titanic was the foolishness of it. So that point after point ~~were~~ colossal blunders were made because somebody was living in a world of illusion. You will recall the simple fact of ^{how near} ~~that~~ midnight, April 14, 1912. (This has be put down in the book, "A Night to Remember".) How there seemed to be danger--a ship had brushed an iceberg--but all during the night prior to that time a ship, standing near at hand, the California, had been sending warnings, "You are on the ice fields in the North Atlantic." But hadn't it been true, the argument ran, this vessel was unsinkable. As a matter of fact, on ^{4 days} ~~that~~ night before when the Titanic left South Hampton, one of the dock hands in talking to the people who were going up the gangplanks ^{had} said, "God himself could not even sink her". So in the night the warnings

came. But the telegrapher, the wireless operator, was busy sending greetings to New York City. He was saying how "Mary had bought new clothes in Paris" and *telling folks* "Joe had been to the Vatican", etc. etc. So the message he sent back to the California who was trying to warn them was, "Shut up, shut up, I'm busy, I'm working at cape race." Later on he went to bed. He closed the board so when the SOS began to clack through the air, a boat standing by ten miles away did not move to help because they did not know about it.

Or consider, for example, a man--~~a man~~ ^{a man like} no less than John Jacob Astor, listed among the people on the ship, who at the very moment that a gash 300 feet long along the side of an 800 ft. vessel was letting water in, ^{like a} pouring in ~~in~~ torrents, when his wife asked him what was in the life preservers took his pin knife and cut it open to show here what was in it. He was later listed as one of those who lost their lives.

~~He said~~ When the life boats were being let down, he said to his wife, "Why should I get into one of those little boats when I can stay on this big safe boat. ^{The} The terrible thing about this was the fact that there was an awful blunder--colossal foolishness. So that men thinking that they were living in something that was unsinkable actually found themselves floundering in the North Atlantic in a coldness that would ^{almost} freeze a man to death. And later on when they put the pieces together *and*

We have been told that one of the reasons that this ^{so captivated our attention} has ~~happened~~ was because of the fact that so many things that we thought in the 20th century were unsinkable have actually failed us.

You see, my friends, there is a kind of *philosophy* that says, "Not only can you nail Jesus to a cross, that you can kill goodness, that you can wipe out love, but there is a kind of thing that says ultimately, you can shove Him in a grave, you can roll a stone to the mouth of a tomb, you can stand a guard up, and you can say, "It is all over, it is done! We are through with Him!" This, I say, is a kind of foolishness. ^{which is really} It is a kind of foolishness which is like living in a world/of illusory and saying

that it is real. For example, think of the people living in our time who try to insulate their lives spiritually. They are not willing to think about deep questions. When they do, they want to make another kind of conversation. When the questions of life and death, of human destiny, of the meaning of it all begin to break in on them, then they say, "Let's talk about something that I'm far more familiar with." Or take for example some spiritual truths which they say "Well, after all you can shove it way back there" ^{harmless} This story of a Galilean who walked around way back there. What does that amount to? And the talk that you Christians make that you can bring Him back and let Him live now. Isn't this stupid? Illusory. And one of the awful things becomes when ^{the} people who build around themselves a wall, they pad themselves. They define their own world and live within it, and finally the time comes when there is even a knocking at the life. They have no care, no interest. This is to be a fool.

Or consider the people who believe in men rather than ⁱⁿ God. This has been the case of all of us at some time or another. We have ~~set~~ ^{seen} ~~us as~~ ^{seen} ~~we are~~ ^{seen} We are smart; we are intellectual, aren't we? We can answer all of life's questions ourselves. So we begin to put our faith in men's answers. And beyond this we begin to live by our gadgets. We take the things we have made and we look at them and say, "aren't we wonderful?" The

The other night I sat in a fraternity house in Franklin College and saw an army officer, a chaplain, show movies of the dropping of bombs at Bikini and I heard boys gasp as the waters began to spread one mile, two miles and then he shut the movie off and talked about the illusory world we live in. But go beyond this--there is a sense in which we set up our own standards. It is so easy for us to judge others. We say we think this is what they are because of our own standards. We cut people down to our size. We judge life by what things people have. And this is one of the terrifying things ^{that} we are constantly doing even in the Christian church.

So Jesus, in a sense, if one understands His message, was fundamentally attempting to smash the false standards. "Judge not that you be not judged," that men live by. This is the world that many of us live in, a world of foolishness, and we are fools in ^{the deep and tragic sense that} We think somehow that this is the real world, and so we take things like the great stories of Jesus and the message of ~~its~~ meaning, ^{its livingness} and say this can be shoved in a tomb for it just doesn't cut ice in the 20th century.

Now before the story is finished, I have to say this to you--that there were some men a long time ago on the streets of a city called Jerusalem who moved out with the strangest, most fantastic story that has ever been told. It is very important that we understand what kind of men they were. These were not idealists; they were not philosophers or poets, or even theologians. They were working men. Some of them were fishermen. One of them at least had worked as a tax collector. One of them was a ^{dowler}

When the stories began to move out by word of mouth that third day, "The tomb is empty! The stone is moved away! The guards who were standing at the door are gone! We saw men in shining white ^{clothing} standing there in ~~white clothing~~." Now, I say, judge it well. This is either true or it is a lie. Either Christ is alive or He is not. And the scriptures say, particularly in the epistles, say that some of us live by this foolishness. This is the other kind of foolishness. It says in effect that the real meaning of life is to be defined inwardly, spiritually. That the thing that men live by is not by what they see, but by ^{cannot see} what they ~~say~~, the inner and eternal.

And the witness of these men who stood up against death and tribulations and the most terrible kind of killings. The witness of these men was that He ^{is} ~~was~~ alive not dead.

Over and over again the church has to say this. That God did not stop with Good Friday, that He moved through and as our songs and poetry and scriptures put it, death could not hold Him, for if He was the creator of the universe, then as redeemer, He could not stay in the tomb but He had to break forth in newness of life. The witness of the scripture says this, the witness of the Christian church

says this. How can you define the church without it? And the witness of our own experiences says this.

So that this other kind of foolishness is rooted in something that men believed had happened to them, and I say it can happen. It does happen to us again. Think of some of the things that the resurrection brings to us. For example, the resurrection says *1000 B.C. etc.* that God's purposes will be vindicated, and the strange place where this has become the central message has been where people ~~who~~ live in prosperity like us but has been where people who have suffered. I remember ~~in~~ East Germany students, the witness of the German pastors -- the stories of people who had gone through the most phenomenal kinds of suffering. It has been in their *writings* and what they said that one discovers the fact that in history God is at work. That even though the sun becomes darkened and blood covers the land, in the midst of this, God is at work. What is the reason we can believe this? We can believe it because of what has happened on Easter. For God, in a sense, has begun a work which will not be completed until His kingdom has come and there is a new heaven and a new earth. We need to understand this.

We become so over-awed by the fact that Russia has great power and America has great power and all this type of thing that we give up with an awful kind of futility. And we say what is the use? Yet, the fact of the matter is--in quiet places and high places there are men who have known the meaning of the resurrection and are living it, who understand that God still holds the world in His hands and ~~who~~ "though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet".

P We had as the president of our convention at one time a man called Dr. Franklin who made a series of speeches across the country to youth groups and I recall so vividly hearing Dr. Cranford of Washington, D. C., tell of how he made a great speech on the Kingdom of God and when he came to the end of it, he turned and said, "Cranny,

I don't believe I'll ever see that day come but by the grace of God, when I fall, I want to fall that way." And the greatest Christians have lived that way. *that*

This fact of Easter is the most profound issue in human destiny and it says that God will win out, but may I go beyond this to say, that I believe that Easter gives to a man (a kind of foolishness *again*) shout of victory and a kind of song of joy. How true this is.

The greatest thing many of us ^{are} battling ^{with} (right in this congregation) is the fact that our lives have become so futile and monotonous and boring. This is a terrible thing. That life which could be radiant and full of joy and meaning has become a kind of endless monotony of days that we look so much in upon ourselves that the deepest things we know are our own little aches and pains and we cry and whine because there has never come into our lives a kind of radiance - which in a sense, He gives us when we let Him into our lives. I should like to say in connection with this that a person can never know the meaning of the resurrection or of Easter until He has known the meaning of Good Friday. You see, that precedes it. In other words, forgiveness precedes new life. And the reason many of us find that there is little meaning in this fact, the ^{of Christ and all that it means} resurrection / is because we have not sought forgiveness meaning of Easter. which opens to us then the ~~resurrection of Christ and all that it means~~

Good Friday and Easter day are one in the same. Two sides of the same fact - if we will but grasp it.

There is the simple story told about a French peasant who when he came home from work one day *Found* His wife said, "the pastor called on us today." "And what did the pastor have to say?" *She said* "He asked me only one question after we had chatted about some things. He said, "Does Christ live here?" "Well", the husband said, "You told him we are respectable, well thought of people, didn't you?" And she said, "Yes, I tried to but the question still was there." *Well,* "You told him that we read the Bible and go to church, didn't you?" "Yes, but the question was still there." "Does Christ live here?" And finally says the Methodist bishop who tells

this story, that question so haunted and drove those people that their lives were changed. "Does Christ live here?"

Ah
All this is the fact of Easter. You meet folks who somehow stand high in society and folks who are low on the scale socially. You meet folks that are black and white; folks who are American, Canadians or Germans and there is a common kind of oneness because they have discovered that Christ is alive and He gives to them a shout of joy and great victory.

Last of all, it is this that I believe that Easter says. That there is life beyond the grave. Now you say, we have heard this before. Well, let me ask you, how many of you believe this? The reason some of us live in fear and find ourselves defeated is because we have never faced within ourselves the issues of death and a man cannot be free, really free, until he has faced this issue. You begin to discover the you become how terribly central this is to life. And I would like to say, if Easter says anything, it casts its long shadow into the next world. It says this world is a preface. It is the first chapter. It isn't the last chapter. And as you read the book and begin to discover the lines in what it says, it begins to throw a light on the next world.

True it is, we cannot settle all the issues and get all the answers but there is something wonderfully profound about the meaning of Christ moving among His disciples and sharing with them of His resurrection life, the meaning of what
"This is why we read the scriptures what say the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with which is then to be."

J. Patterson Smythe says, "It is a great deal like a man in New York trying to understand what the country is like. All he knows is Central Park and the Hudson River when he goes up Riverside drive. Somebody tries to tell him what Kansas, the Midwest, is like with great plains and the trees and the birds, etc. "Why," he says, "all there is is this little park here." Ah, but take him outside New York and he begins to see that that little thing he had known and now was a profound thing of life out there.

Or take a father who tries to tell his son what life is like. "Son, this is what it is going to be like." "Sure, I know." But he doesn't. Or tell a ^{young} couple who is going to be married and say, "This is what it is like after you get married." and they say, "Sure, we know." But they don't.

The fact of the matter is there are ^{intimations} inclinations, there are signs that say, with deep and profound insight, this is what life is going to be like. It has victory in it, it has joy, it has forgiveness. There is the world of eternity in it, and when ~~many~~ ^{men} discover that, they are released and redeemed and they live on a different plain.

You have heard of General Booth who was for so long general of the Salvation Army. There is a wonderful story about how when he was becoming old and found his eyesight was becoming bad. Day by day his friends tried to continue to interpret what the universe was like because his sight became more and more restricted. One evening his daughter was trying to tell him what the sunset was like and she, Evangeline, his daughter, said, "Look father, don't you see the lovely colors, don't you sense the beauty of the evening?" And he said, "My daughter, I do not see the sunset, but I know that I shall see the sunrise." This, my friends, is at the heart of our faith and I would not be fair if I did not say to you that the people who in one sense have been the most other-worldly/^{who} have believed the most in that world, have have gotten the best hold of this world, and have brought these two worlds together so that men like Wesley and Francis of Assisi and people like ^{this} ~~that~~ because they have seen that world, ^{have} ~~and~~ understood this world and ^{they} ~~and~~ have held them together with a guide of eternal love.

You who believe in the fact of the resurrection, you are fools in one deep sense, but it might be, it might be, that you are the right kind of fools.

I think of Elizabeth Frye, Elizabeth Fry who went to the women of Great Britain who sat in jail. In the winter of 1817 it was Christmas day. The guards stood at the prison door and said, "If you go in there, the women will tear you to shreds. They are not human beings, they are animals." But Elizabeth Frye in the year of

our Lord, 1817, moved in, picked up a dirty, illegitimate child, held the child on her knee and talked to it of love. And there came into the prison a quality that had not been there before so that Elizabeth Frye became one of the first women who gave her life to the cause of Christ in prisons.

A Roman Catholic in writing of the wonderful man we call ^{Albert} Schwitzer of Africa, called him "God's eager fool". I would like to be that kind of a fool.

For we live, my friends, not by the things that are seen but by the things that are unseen.

I believe in the life everlasting.