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Children's Sermons in Stories

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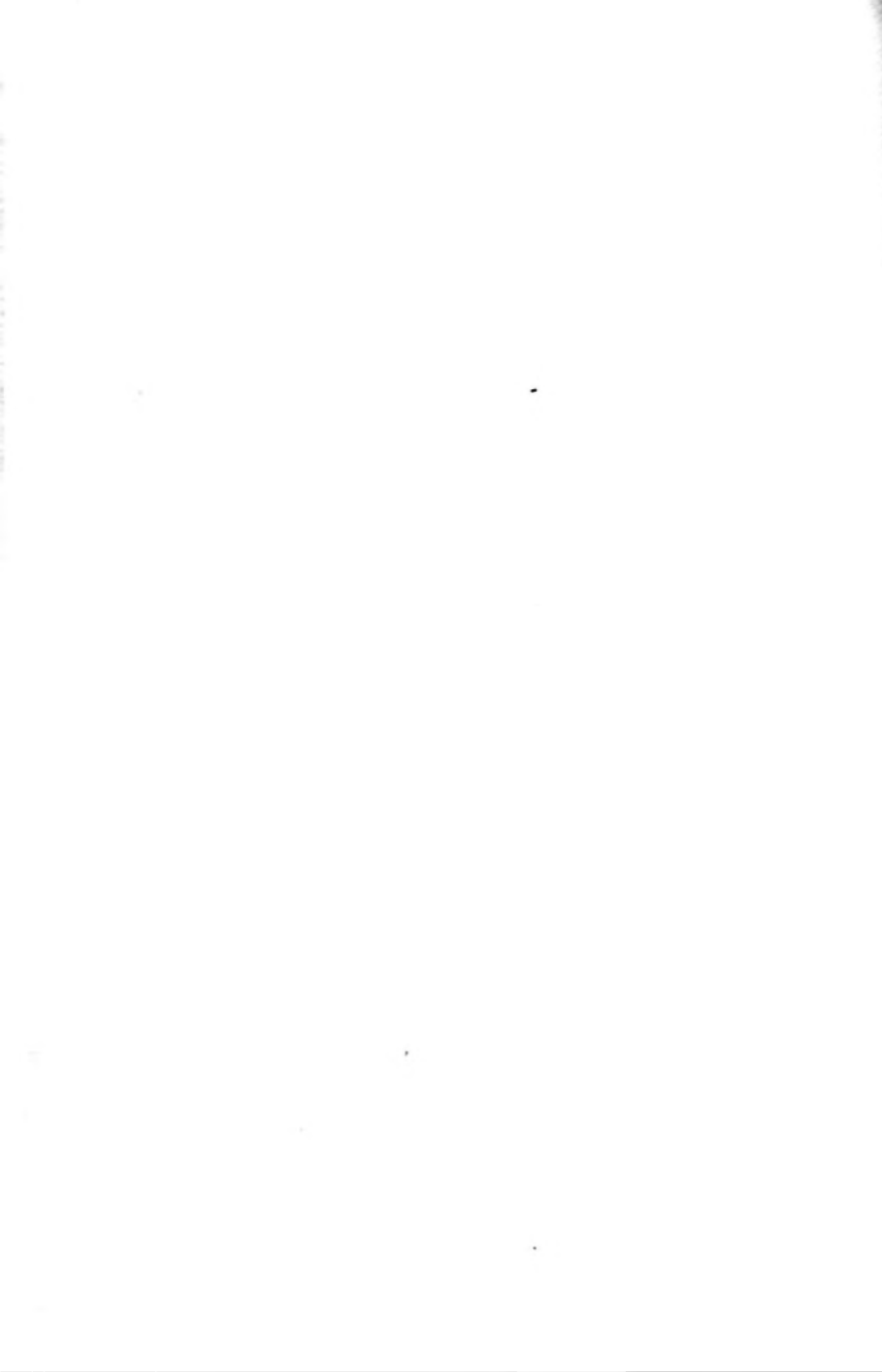


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Children's Sermons in Stories

JULIUS FISCHBACH

Julius



ABINGDON PRESS

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CHILDREN'S SERMONS IN STORIES

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SET UP, PRINTED, AND BOUND BY THE
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To

Catherine Lynn Fischbach

our first grandchild
and our personalized chal-
lenge to continued interest in
the younger generation this
book is affectionately dedicated

LANSING, MICHIGAN, MARCH 12, 1955

OUR PASTOR'S NEW BOOK

From time to time our pastor has put together the sermons delivered to the boys and girls of our church and offered them for publication. Three of these books have been published and you are familiar with them. On May 9th, a fourth book will be published by the Abingdon Press, bearing the title, *Children's Sermons in Stories*. You will be hearing more about this book, but at the present time, we wish only to quote the dedicatory paragraph:

"To Catherine Lynn Fischbach our first grandchild and our personalized challenge to continued interest in the younger generation, this book is affectionately dedicated."

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Preface

A LONG TIME AGO THOSE WHO HAD A MESSAGE TO share found it was most acceptable in story form. In recent years radio and television programs have demonstrated that a story is no less effective today.

It is natural to associate storytelling with children's programs. There is no question about the matter: boys and girls enjoy hearing stories, and any truth can be explained to them better in this form. Children have no monopoly on the story, however. Everyone is a child to the extent that he enjoys a good story. Furthermore, most of us would rather have matters presented to us in this attractive form than a drab recitation of the facts involved.

The stories presented in this collection were given to the children of the First Baptist Church, Lansing, Michigan, during the morning worship programs. It is the custom to invite the children to come forward at the time for their sermon. Then the story is told in front of the chancel, with the pastor in the midst of the children. They are encouraged to participate by answering questions or adding their own comments. Although the temptation to talk to the congregation over the heads of the children is carefully resisted, it is true that the

story is always in harmony with the theme of the morning sermon. In fact it could be used as an illustration in the body of the sermon. This is to say that the children are not talked down to. Rather they are told, in simple language, the central idea which will be presented to the congregation of adults later.

It is sometimes true that I spend as much time in working out the children's story as in preparing the adult sermon. This is not to say that I neglect either, but rather that in my thinking and planning they are of equal importance. Children are the church of tomorrow, and they must learn today if they are to be good leaders later. Furthermore, they should keep step with the rest of the church in the main stream of interest and endeavor and be conversant with the program as it is being advanced in the church family. For these reasons it is the custom in my church for the children to sit with their parents for the worship program, come down front to hear the story sermon that is carefully fitted into the theme of the morning, and then go to their graded program of study.

These stories are therefore not just anecdotes to amuse children or keep them quiet for a few minutes. They are carefully worded statements of truth aimed at the child's interest and understanding. Changed in wording, the same stories can serve to illustrate the adult sermon and, I believe, will add to its color and attractiveness.

JULIUS FISCHBACH

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I

How Tall Should a Boy Be?

He sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature.

—Luke 19:3

TIM WAS WORRIED. HE HAD A BIG PROBLEM, BUT there was nothing he could do about it. You see, the trouble was, he was smaller than the other boys his age. They called him "Shorty," and he didn't like it at all. Of course he knew his friends did not mean any harm by the nickname, but still it always hurt him to be reminded that he was little.

Tim decided to talk with his father about the matter. One evening when he and his father had carried up wood from the basement for the fireplace, and while mother and sister Jane were washing the dishes, he thought it was a good time to ask his father what he thought about it and what could be done. Tim was laying the kindling in place, and father was bringing a log to start the fire in the fireplace. Tim said: "Dad, how tall ought a fellow be, anyway?"

"Well, son," said his father, "that is a rather hard question to answer. You see, a boy grows; and he is taller today than he was a year ago. It is also true that boys do not all grow at the same rate or at the same age. Some boys start growing tall in junior high school. Some

really shoot up in high school. Some grow faster, and others slower; and some grow taller, while others never grow so tall."

"But look at me," said Tim. "I am the shortest boy in our gang, and they all call me 'Shorty.' Jim always calls me 'the Runt,' and I don't like it. Just how tall ought a boy to be, do you think?"

"Now since you ask me that way, I do have some definite ideas about how tall a boy ought to be," replied his dad. "I believe a boy ought to be tall enough to see what is right; and, I'll add, brave enough to do it."

"But just what does that mean?" said Tim.

"Perhaps I can tell it best in a story," said his father. "Once there was a little man, a very short fellow, who wanted to see Jesus. He had heard so many wonderful things about him, and he wanted to hear him preach and teach. When he heard Jesus was to come through his city of Jericho, he was glad and took the day off from work so he would be sure to see and hear him.

"One thing this little chap had not thought about: the crowd. When Jesus came to Jericho, quite a crowd of people was following him; and then it seemed that everyone in Jericho who could possibly get away from work ran out to see him and followed along with the rest. Our friend saw how impossible it would be to get a good view of Jesus, but he was quick-witted. He ran ahead and climbed up in a tree. There he had the best vantage place of any. He had a front balcony seat."

"Oh, I know who that man was," broke in Tim. "It was Zacchaeus!"

"Yes," said his father. "I'm glad you know your Bible stories so well. But let's go on with this story. Zacchaeus

was tall enough—with his wit—to get where he could see Jesus. And he was tall enough in his judgment to realize that Jesus was so important that his claim on life came before everything else. So Zacchaeus, even though a very small man physically, was plenty tall enough to be called a real man—even a tall man—of vision and understanding.

“But the second thing I mentioned was strength. A man must not only be tall enough to see what is right, but also strong and brave enough to do it. Zacchaeus proved that he was both. He knew he had been unfair in business and had taken advantage of others. He repented of his sins and said: ‘The half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded one of anything, I restore it fourfold.’ That was a fine statement, and Jesus liked it. He said to Zacchaeus: ‘Today salvation has come to this house.’”

Tim had heard this story many times, but this was the first time he applied it to himself. He and Zacchaeus had something in common: both were short. He determined to prove that he, like Zacchaeus, was tall enough to see what was right, and brave and strong enough to do it.

A few days later that same week, Tim and several of his school friends were walking downtown. At a street corner they heard a crash and looked around to see a fruit cart overturned and the vendor sprawled on the street. A car had struck the truck as it turned the corner, tipping the truck over and knocking the man down. At once the other boys ran toward the upset truck and began picking up the oranges, pears, and apples, and stuffing them into their pockets. Tim was tall

enough to see this was not the right thing to do. He rushed over and helped the man up. The vendor was not hurt, but his clothes were messed up. Then Tim called to his friends. "Listen, fellows," he said, "this fruit belongs to this poor man who was knocked down. Let's pick it up for him and help him get his truck back on the sidewalk."

The other boys knew Tim was right. They took out the fruit they had put into their pockets, and together they got it all arranged again on the truck. A policeman was talking with the driver of the car that had caused the damage, and the driver admitted he was in the wrong. He settled with the vendor for ten dollars, and both were satisfied.

Tim was not satisfied, however. He talked with the fruit vendor and found out where he lived. He also found out that he had a small child and there was not enough money to buy the things needed in their simple house. The child had no bed but an old clothesbasket, and no play pen. To keep him from crawling into the street his mother tied him with a rope when he played in the tiny yard in front of the house.

When Tim learned this, he called his friends together, and they made some big plans. They already had some pretty big plans, but the ones they made now were even bigger. Their big plans were in connection with a play they were giving at school. They were expecting to make money to buy some furniture for the social room. Now they had a better idea to suggest to the class.

The class play was a great success. They made more money than they had expected. They bought some of the furniture they planned, but *first* they bought a

baby bed and a play pen and Tim and his friends delivered them. They reported back to the class that they had never attended a happier surprise party in their lives. The vendor and his wife were so very grateful, and even the baby smiled and waved his hand.

Tim was small, but he was tall, strong, and brave: tall enough to see the right, strong enough to handle a problem, and brave enough to set an example in honesty and good neighborliness.

2

The Boy Who Wanted to Know

They found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

—Luke 2:46

HOW MANY OF YOU REALLY LIKE TO GO TO SCHOOL? Hold up your hands. I'm glad so many held up their hands, and I believe all of you will when you realize what school means for you tomorrow as well as today.

This morning we will talk about a boy who so very much wanted to know, he sought out the teachers and asked them questions and talked with them before school opened! As I tell you the story, you will know the name of the boy I am talking about; and I will be able to tell by your faces when you recognize who he was.

The incident happened many years ago, long before

people rode in automobiles or buses or even in trains. I mention this because this boy's parents, and quite a crowd of people from his home town, went every year to a big city many miles distant to attend a great celebration at the temple there. Some of them owned donkeys and rode donkey-back or in little carts, but most of the people walked. It took several days, even though they got up early and started before the sun was up. But they did not mind the long walk for they had a wonderful time together.

Before the people from the town started on their journey, all those who were planning to go would get together; and the rest of their neighbors would meet with them and give them a party and help them get ready for the trip. Then, when the day for their departure came, the neighbors sang and waved them goodbye, and everyone was happy.

As the pilgrims started on their way, they sang hymns and religious songs; and the children probably had the best time of all, for they sang and played along the way and met all the other children in the party. As they traveled down the highway, they met pilgrims from other towns also making the journey to the festival. In these other groups there would often be relatives and friends, and all the travelers looked eagerly over the other groups of pilgrims to recognize those good friends and loved ones whom they saw only on such occasions.

When mealtime came, these pilgrims would build a campfire and cook their food or open their baskets and have a picnic meal. Of course it was fun, as it is on any picnic; and many families would get together and have their meal spread out on the ground. They enjoyed the

refreshments and the conversation as they rested for awhile. When night came, they would sometimes pitch tents by the roadside or just lie on the grass with blankets for pallet and cover.

The boys and girls often remained with the families of other boys and girls with whom they had been playing during the day, and there was a big family spirit among them all.

This is the kind of picnic-journey which was enjoyed by the boy in our story. He and his parents joined with the other pilgrims to attend the festival in the distant city. All was excitement, not only in meeting so many fellow pilgrims, but also in looking forward to the wonderful time to be enjoyed at the festival itself.

Their eagerness increased as they neared the city and as they passed by places of special interest. The children had read the history of their people and had heard stories about the famous heroes of their nation. It was thrilling to visit the places where important events had actually happened.

The pilgrimage to the city having been completed, all went to the temple area and took part in the great religious celebration. This was an exciting experience for a boy of twelve, and we are sure his eyes were wide open and his heart beat fast as he saw and heard many wonderful things.

Finally the festival was over, and the pilgrims started homeward. The parents of the boy of our story journeyed a day on their way before they realized their son was not in the company. Of course they were worried. They had thought he was with his cousins and their parents, and had not thought to look for him until the second day.

When they found he was not in the group, they rushed back to the city to look for him. Now I know all of you realize what the boy's name was and where he was found. Yes, it was Jesus; and he was not lost at all, but he was in the temple talking with the great teachers there. The scripture says he was "sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions."

Here was a boy who wanted to know. I am sure he had been a good student back home at Nazareth. Perhaps the local rabbi, who was the teacher of the village school which met in the synagogue, had not been able to answer all his questions. Jesus had looked forward to the time when he could come to Jerusalem and talk with the great religious leaders who were the authorities of his day and ask them these questions. He was so interested in getting answers to his questions that he did not realize how long he had been there. We sometimes say a person becomes so interested he forgets to eat at mealtime. I think this was true of the boy Jesus. Time meant nothing to him. He wanted to take advantage of this unusual opportunity to talk with the leaders of the church and to find out what they thought about the questions in his mind.

You know the rest of the story. Mary and Joseph found Jesus in the temple. They were surprised to find him there. I suppose they had looked on the playgrounds and other places where boys were gathered and had not expected to find him in the schoolroom—for really that is where he was. You see, boys and girls were taught in the local synagogue; and young men studying to be rabbis were taught by the teachers in the temple in Jerusalem. So the temple was both a school and a place of worship.

The example of Jesus as a boy of twelve is the best example I know for a boy or girl today to follow. He wanted to know. He wanted to show himself approved of God his heavenly Father.

3

Yokefellows

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me.

—Matt. 11:29

JOHN WAS SAD. HE WAS WORSE THAN SAD. HE WAS melancholy. This is a big word, but even that does not describe how bad John really felt. Of course he had reason to feel bad, because his very best friend, Tom, had moved away and he was lonely as lonely could be. John and Tom had always been together. In fact people called them "the twins," although they did not look alike at all, because they were inseparable. When you saw one, you usually saw the other too; and if you did not, you knew he must be close by. They went to school together; they played together; they studied together; they worked together; they practically lived together. And now Tom's father had been promoted to another position, and the family had moved away.

Anyone could understand why John was lonely and felt glum, but neither his mother nor his father could see why he must act so forlorn all the time. All he could

talk about was Tom's going away. All he could think about was his own loss of a chum. All he did all day long was to mope away and look like nobody loved him and like the bottom had dropped out of his world.

Mother and father tried to cheer him up, but it did no good. John was neglecting his work at school, and the teacher had called up about it. When mother explained about Tom's leaving and how John had taken it so hard, the teacher did not feel that was any excuse for allowing John to do such poor work in school. She said he must be told to get his work done whether he felt like it or not.

Mother and father knew that John wanted to be a good student but that he could not get Tom out of his mind. They wanted to help him but did not know just how to do it. As they were talking the matter over, Father said: "How about letting John go for a little visit to his grandfather's? Dad knows how to handle such matters better than we do, and John always has liked to be on the farm with his grandfather. If John would like to go, let's suggest that he go out over the week end."

The idea pleased mother, and it pleased John when his parents suggested it to him. John had always enjoyed being on the farm, especially when he could work with his grandfather. Grandfather was such an interesting person to chat with, and so understanding. These two seemed to have a lot in common.

So it was that John was on his way to the farm shortly after school was out on Friday afternoon. He arrived at supper time, and grandmother had John's favorite dish for supper: fried chicken, with gravy and hot biscuits. It

didn't take John long to find his place at the table and get started on that fine supper.

After supper, grandfather, grandmother, John, and Shep (the shaggy old sheep dog) had a fine time around the fireplace, listening to grandfather's stories of the early days when he and his grandfather came west and settled on the farm. Grandmother got out the corn popper, and they popped corn over the open fire and ate popped corn and apples. All too soon it was bedtime, for farmers go to bed early so they can get up early in the morning. John enjoyed the evening so much he forgot all about his loneliness.

Next day John got up early, for he wanted to try to keep up with his grandfather in doing the chores and making the rounds of the farm buildings. The sun was not yet up when grandmother called, but John jumped out of bed and was soon dressed and downstairs. He did not want grandfather to think he was a sissy and unable to do a hard day's work. John liked the cows and the sheep. He did not care much for the hogs, but they had to be fed too—and so had the turkeys, ducks, and chickens.

Both grandfather and John were pretty tired by the middle of the afternoon, and they sat down in the barn to rest a bit. Now grandfather knew about John's problem, because his father had explained it over the telephone before John arrived. That is probably why grandfather pointed to a crooked piece of wood hanging over the barn door and said: "John, do you know what that thing is?"

"Why, yes, grandfather," said John, "that is an ox yoke."

"So it is," said grandfather, "and whenever I look at it, I think of the words the great master maker of ox yokes once spoke. He said, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me.'"

"Why, Jesus said that," said John.

"Certainly," said grandfather. "Jesus was a carpenter, and one of the things carpenters made in Jesus' day was ox yokes. You know, I believe Jesus meant the ox yoke to be a symbol of Christianity. Of course the cross is the most important, for that is where he suffered and died for our salvation; but the yoke is the symbol of Christian service. When we take his yoke upon us, as he invited us to do, we become yokefellow with Christ."

"You are lonely," continued grandfather, "because your chum has moved away. Just because you are lonely, you ought to know how other lonely boys feel. Since you do, you can help them find happiness and, in doing so, can be a yokefellow with Christ. And an interesting thing happens. When a follower of Jesus serves as a yokefellow, he begins to find his own problem has been solved; and he has a wonderful feeling inside because he knows Christ is pleased with him."

This was all grandfather said about the ox yoke, but it was like opening a window or lighting a bright light for the soul of John. He thought of Andrik at school. He was really lonely. No one paid any attention to him. He looked funny, and he dressed funny. He was a displaced person from Europe. John knew exactly what he would do as soon as he got back home. He would befriend Andrik. John could be a real friend to Andrik, for he knew now just what it means to be lonely.

4

Which Way Is Up?

Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things.

—Heb. 13:18

IF I WERE TO ASK YOU, "WHICH WAY IS UP?" YOU might wonder if something was wrong with me. Anyone ought to know straight up!

Yes, that would seem to be true; but men of science now tell us it is not always easy to tell directions—even straight up.

At Brooklyn College a scientific experiment was carried out for the Navy Department. You see, men who fly planes sometimes get all turned around and lose their sense of direction. The Navy Department wanted to find out how we get our sense of direction and what causes us to lose it.

The scientists who worked out the experiment arranged a "tilting room." The room was built on movable supports, so that the whole room could be turned around or tilted high on one side and low on the other or even turned upside down. Then a student was asked to sit on a chair which was suspended from the ceiling. The room was moved around, and the student was asked to point straight up. Since the whole room had been moved, he did not know which direction was up.

This experiment not only proved that it is not always easy to know which way is up, but it also showed how we decide which way is up. We look at the trees, the houses, and all the other objects around us; and they give us the clue to our directions. Of course we also have the pull of gravity, and we know that "what goes up must come down." But there are many things that help us to have a sense of direction, and it is not always easy to know straight up.

This reminds us that there are many things which we usually think of as being dependable, but which may not be at all times. Take a compass, for instance. Usually the compass needle points straight to the north. When we know which direction is north, we can face the north; and our right hand will be toward the east, our left hand toward the west, and our back toward the south. But a compass is not always true. If a piece of steel is near by, the needle will turn toward the steel instead of pointing northward. So we must be very sure there is no steel deflecting the needle if we want to depend upon a compass for our direction.

The writer to the Hebrews suggests that even conscience may not be a sure and true guide. He says: "Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things." Since he uses the word "clear," it would seem that he means there are some consciences that are not clear, or good. Some are bad and not to be trusted to guide in the direction of what is right.

Did you know that in England, many years ago, in the time of Charles Dickens, there were children who were taught to steal? There were many orphaned children,

and there were no orphanages such as we have today. These poor children were even sold for adoption. Some of them were bought by men and women who were robbers and thieves. These foster parents taught their adopted children to steal. Naturally these children thought it was right to steal. In fact they were scolded and whipped when they did not steal, and so their consciences actually hurt them when they were unable to pick a pocket without getting caught. Their consciences were bad. They were like compasses that could not be depended upon.

So the question "Which way is up?" is not a foolish one. Neither is the question "What is right and wrong?"

There are ways to correct a compass, and there is a way to make our consciences dependable. The Bible is our guidebook. In it we find the rules for right living. In our church-school classes we study our Bibles and learn how to use them to "true up" our ideas of right and wrong and to get our consciences in line with God's purpose for us.

We can thank God for an inner compass, or conscience, that helps us find our direction in matters of right and wrong. We must remember, however, that our consciences must be trued up and kept true by squaring them up with God's word and will.

5

Freedom Is Everyone's Business

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. —John 15:12

WE CALL OUR COUNTRY THE LAND OF THE FREE, AND we pride ourselves on our liberty and opportunity to do as we wish. An important thing to remember, however, is that freedom is for everyone; and we must all be free together.

Let me illustrate. I have a perfect right to exercise my arms, haven't I? Of course—so I'll just do it right now. I swing my arms up and out, up and out, and certainly no one can object to that. But I move over where you are standing, and I continue to swing my arms, and I notice you jerk your head away and move out of my reach. You are very kind and do not complain, but I would not be surprised if you did. In exercising my freedom—and my arms—I was interfering with your freedom. In fact if you had not moved, I could have done you harm. I might have punched you in the nose or the eye.

So, you see, if everyone is to enjoy freedom, each one must respect the freedom of all the rest. In this case of my exercising, my freedom to exercise stops right where your nose begins. You have freedom too. Both of us

can be free to do as we like, only as long as we do not bump into each other in doing it.

I knew a boy who had a trombone. He had just started to junior high school and wanted to play in the band. His father bought him a nice instrument, and it was so bright and shiny he wanted it near him all the time. When he went to bed at night, he put it on a chair right next to the bed. About midnight Bob awakened, and he saw the trombone shining in the moonlight. It looked so good to him, and he liked so much to play that horn, that he got right out of bed, picked up the trombone, and started to play a tune.

You can imagine what happened. A window went up in the house next door, and a man shouted: "Stop all that noise. I'm trying to get some sleep!" Another window went up in another house near by, and a voice cried out: "Please! Please! I'm studying for an exam tomorrow. Let up on the racket!" A few moments later the phone rang, and Bob's mother answered it. A nurse who was attending a very sick person two doors down the block was calling to say that her patient was very seriously ill and must not be disturbed by the horn playing.

Of course Bob put down the trombone and went back to bed, but he did not go back to sleep for a long time. At first he was angry. "It's my trombone," he said. "Why can't I play it if I want to?"

His mother had answered that question when she was awakened by the first blast. Other people had a right to their wishes too, and most of them wanted to sleep at that time of night. After thinking it over, Bob realized that it was all right to play the trombone if he chose the proper time and the proper place. In fact he could play

it at midnight if he would go out in the woods somewhere and not disturb other people.

There are rules for freedom just as there are rules for everything. In fact there is one big rule; and if you can remember and follow that, the other rules just fall in line without any trouble. It is like a big rule I once learned about politeness. You know there are hundreds of little rules of etiquette. In fact whole books are written about them. It would be hard to remember all the rules and what the books say is right to do in this case and that case. But there is this big rule that will take care of most of those cases. I learned the big rule in a jingle, and here it is:

Politeness is to do and say,
The kindest thing in the kindest way.

If a person really cares for other people and wants to be kind to them, he will not find it difficult to know what he should do to be most helpful. Of course it takes some imagination and some thought; but if you and I try to be kind to other people, we will usually see how we can show that kindness.

The big rule in freedom is the special commandment Jesus gave to his disciples. Said he, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." When we love people, we want to be kind to them; and when we want to be kind, we will not be rude or insist on our own rights. We will forget ourselves and think of them. We will not need to talk about what we are free to do or not free to do. We will only want to do what

is good for both ourselves and our neighbor. That is real freedom.

In the early days in our country the settlers would help each other. It may have been in the building of a log house or in gathering in the crop or doing any of a number of things that needed to be done. Perhaps a man was sick and unable to plow his field or harvest his crop. It must be done right away, or it would be too late. His neighbors would come over and do his work for him after their own work was done. None of them ever said: "I have enough work of my own without doing Brown's work." Of course they were free to sit down after they finished at home, but they knew that freedom must be for everyone and they could not have freedom when others suffered.

So freedom in this country of ours was built by men and women, boys and girls who believed in the motto: "The best of each for the good of all." And this is another way of saying the commandment of Jesus, and a very practical way of carrying it out.

6

God's Great Cobbler of Souls

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.

—Matt. 28:19

AT THE CROSSROADS IN THE LITTLE ENGLISH VILLAGE of Moulton there is a one-room brick church building.

It is very old but is still used as a place of worship. In the church courtyard is another building, a small house. If you were traveling in England and happened to go through Moulton, you would not likely stop there even to rest awhile; for it is just another sleepy country village. But if you knew something about William Carey and were told that he once preached in this old church building and that he once lived and cobbled shoes in this old house, then everything would be different. You would want to see the house where this great man once lived, and you would want to stand in the little church whose pulpit echoed the gospel around the world.

William Carey was the father, or founder, of modern missions. Until he aroused Christians to see their responsibility for heathen people who did not know God's love, the churches had no program of foreign missions.

William Carey's parents were poor. His schooling stopped when he was twelve years of age. At sixteen he was apprenticed to a shoemaker and became a cobbler of shoes. A cobbler was one who repaired shoes and sometimes made shoes and boots for his customers. Although Carey's formal education was over, he did not stop learning. As he cobbled his shoes, he studied his Bible and also learned several languages, including Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. He had a deep conviction that the commission Jesus gave to his disciples to preach to the entire world applied to all Christians through the years. He believed that missionaries should be sent to all parts of the world to tell the story of God's love for mankind. He kept a map of the world in his little shop, and he liked to read *The Voyages of Captain Cook*.

Carey was a lay preacher, that is, a layman preaching

when he had opportunity. Dr. Ryland, who baptized him, and Dr. Andrew Fuller, pastor at Kettering, recognized his earnestness and believed that God was calling him to be a preacher. They helped Carey to hear his call to the gospel ministry.

As he preached to his congregation on Sunday, and as he talked with other ministers and Christian people from time to time, he always emphasized the interest closest to his heart: taking the gospel to the heathen. Because it was a new idea in his day, most of those who heard him were opposed to such a program. One day when Carey was speaking to a group, Dr. Ryland himself broke in and said: "Sit down, young man; when the Lord gets ready to convert the heathen he will do it without your help or mine!"

William Carey sat down, but he did not stay down long. He was constantly talking about missions. It was only natural that, when he was asked to preach at the annual association meeting in Nottingham in May, 1792, he chose missions as the subject of his sermon. Using the text from Isaiah 54:2, "Enlarge the place of your tent . . . lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes," he announced as the two points of his sermon: "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God."

There are two great dates in history that all of us should remember. The first one everyone knows: 1492, when Columbus discovered America. The second one is also quite worth remembering. It was 1792 when Carey challenged his fellow Christians to accept Christ's commission and carry the gospel to the whole world.

Carey's sermon was heard by only a few people in a little meeting in Nottingham, England, but God ap-

proved of it; and it was destined to shake the whole world. Even that meeting was about to break up without anything being done, until Carey turned to his friend Dr. Fuller and insisted that some step be taken to get some movement started. Dr. Fuller made a motion, which was adopted, calling for a committee to report at the next meeting of the ministers in Kettering. They were to suggest some plan for the forming of a foreign mission organization.

The rest of the story covers forty-two years and is filled with important events and accomplishments, both in India and in England—yes, and in the whole world, for the mission movement caught fire and spread around the globe.

On October 2, 1792, the committee of ministers met in Widow Wallis's house in Kettering. Here is the inscription from the tablet in the stone wall along the street in front of that old house:

In this house on October 2, 1792, a meeting was held to form a society for propagating the gospel among the heathen and £13 2s. and 6d. was contributed for that purpose. Andrew Fuller was elected secretary and Reynold Hogg, treasurer. William Carey, to whose sermon at Nottingham in May of the same year the movement was due, embarked for India on June 13, 1793. This meeting marks the inauguration of modern Foreign Missions.

William Carey, his wife and family, together with John Thomas, a doctor, took ship for India. The first years were difficult beyond description. But Carey never lost hope. His great faith held him firm. His first convert

was baptized after seven years of faithful service, and this man, Krishna Pal, became a preacher and for twenty-two years preached the gospel to his people. William Carey did more than preach. He taught in the government school to make money to help with the work, and he translated the Bible into the languages of the people. It is hard to conceive of the great work Carey accomplished in his lifetime. He knew not one language or two, but a score. He and his helpers translated the Bible into thirty-six different languages and dialects for the Indian people. Then he established a printing press to print these Bibles and other Christian literature. He also established a hospital, churches, and schools.

The poor boy who began by cobbling the soles of shoes to make a living became the "consecrated cobbler" of the souls of men for God. He was one of the truly great men of all time. He faithfully tried to be God's servant, following his will literally to the ends of the earth.

7

Four-Dimensional Living

*Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and
in favor with God and man.* —Luke 2:52

TODAY WE SHALL TALK ABOUT FOUR-DIMENSIONAL living. Yes, I mean *four*—not three. I know that movies today are shown in three dimensions, and that makes

them very real and lifelike. Our bodies have three dimensions, and a picture is not a true likeness unless it has three dimensions too.

Did you know that an animal does not see the same sort of image you and I see when we look at a picture? We see a boy when we look at a picture of a boy, and a bird when we look at a picture of a bird. We are able to do this because we have learned how to understand pictures. A cat or a dog has not had such training, and he sees just the paper on which the picture is printed, and, perhaps, the blotches of color. A mirror is different. A cat, a dog, or a bird can catch the idea of the image in the mirror because it gives the appearance of the third dimension. I well remember a tame bantam rooster I had as a boy. He was quite a scrapper. He was always fighting with other roosters, no matter how big they were. I used to have fun with him by putting him in front of a large mirror. Seeing his own image reflected in the mirror, he thought another rooster was sidling up to him. Watching the other fellow, he would bristle up, flutter his wings, and strut from side to side; and then, when he thought his other self was about to strike, he would hit the mirror with both spurs.

But getting back to the photograph. Take that picture of yourself, for instance. No matter how good a job the cameraman and the developer have done, it is still a very poor likeness. Rub your fingers over the picture. It is perfectly flat. But your face is not flat. Your nose sticks out, as it should; your eyes are back in sockets to protect them from harm; your cheeks are rounded; and your chin sticks out from your neck. You see, the photograph makes you look as though a steam roller had run over your face

and flattened it out like a pancake. So we think of a picture as a good or bad likeness as we compare it with other pictures we have seen, but it really takes three dimensions to do the job correctly.

When I was your age, we used to look at pictures through a stereopticon, or eyepiece. A sort of wooden pair of goggles was at the front of the frame, and the picture was double. We moved it back and forth to get the right focus: and then, because it was taken with two lenses, looking at the object as our two eyes do, we saw the picture in three dimensions. It looked as though it was not only so high and so wide, but also so thick. There was depth to our picture just as there is depth to real objects and real life.

You are familiar with the 3-D pictures today. Most of you have seen them. Some require a special pair of Polaroid glasses as you look at the screen. Some have the effect produced by the shape of the screen itself. The objects and people on the 3-D screen do not look flat but appear like the actual people and objects moving about, and they move right up toward you as well as from side to side.

Awhile ago I said we were going to talk about four dimensional living. You probably thought I made a mistake and meant three dimensions, but I really meant four. We are told in the last verse of the second chapter of Luke, that Jesus, when he was a boy of twelve, lived in four dimensions. Notice what the scripture says: "Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man." Jesus not only lived in four dimensions, but he also grew in all four.

Let's see what these four sides of his life were. First,

mention is made of wisdom. Jesus learned day by day and year by year. He grew in knowledge and understanding. He went to the village synagogue and studied the textbook which the other boys of the village studied: the Old Testament. That he learned his textbook well, we are certain because he frequently quoted from it in his preaching later. Not only did he memorize the words, but also he understood what they meant; and he was able to apply them to help men solve their problems and live better lives.

The second side is the physical. Jesus grew taller and heavier and stronger just as other boys did, and do today. I believe the text also means to tell us that he learned to use physical things and to keep them in their proper places. We know that he helped Joseph in the carpenter shop. So he learned the use of the saw, hammer, chisel, and auger. He learned to cut wood and put it together to make chairs, stools, yokes for oxen, and other useful things. I believe he also learned that all such things are not important, except as they can help men and women do the work that needs to be done. They are not to be prized for themselves but only for their usefulness.

The third side of Jesus' life was the spiritual. That is the most important of all for it strikes the key for all the rest. A person's belief in God should put all the rest of his life in the proper tune to do God's will and to truly grow up in the image God intended. So Jesus grew in his knowledge and love of God and daily gave himself to God's will. Because he did this, his time, his talents, his interests, and all his life served God all day long.

The fourth side of Jesus' life was the social. He not only loved God, but he also loved people, everyone.

Later, in his teaching, Jesus said that the first commandment is to love God with all the heart and with all the soul and with all the mind. Then he said: "And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matt. 22:39.) Even as a boy, Jesus observed both these commandments. He loved all the people he met. He was a good neighbor, a good citizen, a good friend.

It is not enough to live in three dimensions. That may be all right for a picture, but a boy and a girl must live in four dimensions; and there is no better way to live and grow each day than to follow the example of Jesus, who "increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man."

8

The Blessings Tree

*Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits.*
—Ps. 103:2

IT WAS THANKSGIVING DAY. JOYCE AND FREDDY WERE home from school, and even Shorty knew it was holiday time. He barked and romped around the house and insisted on getting the children to play with him.

Mother was busy preparing dinner. The turkey was already in the oven and enticing smells were coming from the kitchen. Joyce was helping with the table setting, the salad making, and other things that needed to be

done to make ready for the big Thanksgiving dinner. The family was going to the community service to be held at ten o'clock in the Methodist church. It would be a real neighborhood meeting. The mayor would read the president's proclamation, and most of the downtown ministers would take part in the program. The new minister, who came only two months ago to be pastor of the Presbyterian church, was to be the preacher; and everyone wanted to see him and hear his message.

Father was reading the paper, and Freddy was working on a drawing he had started last night and had been unable to finish before bedtime. Suddenly father put down his paper and said—loud enough for mother and Joyce to hear in the kitchen: "Let's celebrate the day by making a blessings tree!"

"A blessings tree?" said Freddy. "What in the world is that?"

Mother and Joyce were in the living room now too, and they wanted to know what a blessings tree was, where it grew, and what kind of fruit it had.

"I see we have something important to learn in this family," said father with a chuckle. "Freddy and I will go out in the yard and see if we can find some blessings tree branches; and then this afternoon when dinner is over, we will make a family blessings tree."

Freddy put up his drawing materials in a hurry, for he was curious to know what kind of branches a blessings tree had, and where they were to be found. He was surprised when his father pointed to some twisted branches on the old apple tree in the garden and started whittling them off with his pocketknife. There were no leaves on the twigs, not even any buds. How could such

branches have blessings on them? But father seemed satisfied and gathered several other branches.

Freddy had a lot of questions to ask. "We are not cutting down a tree like we do at Christmas time, but just cutting some branches. Just what kind of a tree can this blessings tree be?"

"You'll see," said his father. "And you will help make it."

It was time now to go to the Thanksgiving service, and all got in the car and drove away, leaving Shorty very disappointed and very puzzled. With all the excitement and the preparations in the kitchen he was sure the family was going to celebrate at home and he would have a part in it. Of course he was right about most of this. You can fool a dog once in awhile, but he usually knows more than you think he does.

The service at the church was very interesting, for so many people were there from all the churches, and neighbors were greeting one another and wishing all a happy Thanksgiving Day as they shook hands. The hymns used were ones the children knew, and they joined in the singing as well as the Lord's Prayer. The mayor brought a smile to the congregation, for he felt the importance of the occasion and had worn his striped trousers and his coat with the long tails. The ministers were all wearing robes, which was new to some of the people in the service, but not to Joyce and Freddy, for their minister wore a robe on Sunday morning.

The sermon was one which all could understand, and everyone liked it. Dr. Brown took his text from Ps. 92:1, which says:

It is good to give thanks to the Lord,
to sing praises to thy name, O Most High.

Asking when, where, and for what, the preacher said: "Now is the time, here is the place, and our thanks should be for everything, great and small."

Then he began speaking of the many things we should be thankful for, and his words caused everyone in the congregation to think of scores of things they wanted to thank God for as blessings in their own lives. It was a good sermon, and all were glad they had come; and they went home counting their blessings and thinking how good God had been to them.

You don't have to be told that the dinner was a real treat, and everyone enjoyed every bite of it from the turkey and dressing to the mincemeat pie. But good as it was, Joyce and Freddy kept asking questions about the blessings tree. As soon as the dinner was over and the dishes were washed—for of course they could not be left to mess up the kitchen—the making of the tree began. And I forgot to say, mother was not allowed to go into the kitchen after dinner. Father told her he had rested while she cooked the dinner and now she must rest while he and the children cleaned up the place.

Making the blessings tree was fun. First, father and Freddy bored holes in a block of wood and fitted in the branches to make a little tree that would stand on the table. Then they all sat around the tree and thought of things for which they were thankful.

"Our home," said Joyce.

"Certainly," said father. "Now you take the scissors and cut out a piece of cardboard to look like a house."

They got the idea. A list was made of all the things they were thankful for, and then a symbol was cut out of cardboard and hung on the branches. Different colors of paper were used, and soon the tree was very attractive. Here are some of the cut-outs they placed on their tree: a loaf of bread; an automobile; a bicycle; a pair of skates; a schoolhouse; a church; a cross, to represent all that Christ means to us; a pair of skis; a bowling ball; two hands clasped, for friendship; a Bible; and many, many more blessings that all of us enjoy and should be putting on our blessings tree.

Then that little family held hands as they stood around their blessings tree and prayed a prayer of thanksgiving to God for his goodness and sang "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow."

9

How Far Can You Reach?

For we are not overextending ourselves, as though we did not reach you; we were the first to come all the way to you with the gospel of Christ.

—II Cor. 10:14

AS WE STAND HERE TOGETHER, I AM GOING TO ASK everyone to reach out just as far as you can and try to touch both walls of our sanctuary. You say it is impossible? I believe you can do it with a little help, and I am going to show you how. Russell, will you please come

over here and hold my right hand? Judy, will you please hold my left hand? All the rest of you boys and girls come up and hold hands and see how long a line we can make. All right. Mary, can you touch that south wall? John, can you touch the north wall? Of course you can, for you are standing right next to it.

You see, things that seem to be impossible can be done if we have imagination and faith, and if we will all work together. No one of us is big enough to stand here and stretch out his arms and touch both walls. But if we need to touch the walls and want to do it, we can hold hands and do it easily.

Today is World Fellowship Day for all Christian folk. Not only is our church observing the day, but also Christians of all denominations. As you know, there are followers of Christ in countries around the world. Because all these Christians are observing World Fellowship Communion today and each church group is thinking of all the rest and praying for Christians everywhere, it is possible for us to be one great circle of friends though we are thousands of miles and oceans apart. One day the apostle Paul was writing to the members of the Christian church in the city of Corinth. He was in Ephesus at the time, over in Asia Minor. Corinth is in Greece. The Aegean Sea is between these two cities. The distance, if one were to go by boat directly across from one city to the other, would be at least 250 miles, and probably further. Today such a distance would not seem to be very far, because we have power boats and steam ferries making regular trips. It would not take very long to cross the sea and travel from Ephesus to Corinth. In Paul's day one must go by sailboat and depend upon the wind.

It was probably quite a trip to make, both because of the slow speed of the sailboats and the fact that there were no regular ferries. One would need to wait until a boat happened to be going to that port and then would have to get permission to get on board.

Paul, however, was not worried about distance. Listen to what he says: "We are not overextending ourselves, as though we did not reach you; we were the first to come all the way to you with the gospel of Christ." He wrote a letter and reached across the sea by sending his words to them in writing.

But even getting a letter delivered to a distant city was not easy in Paul's day. Mail did not travel by ship and plane, by train and bus, as it does today. Usually a letter had to be sent by someone who happened to be going that way or who was sent especially to carry the message. In Paul's case he sent his friend Titus to carry the letter. Titus was a young minister whom Paul loved very much and who traveled with him on several of his missionary journeys. So by touching the hand of Titus and sending Titus to act as messenger for him, Paul was able to reach across the Aegean Sea and stretch his hand out some 250 miles. Titus became both a friend of Paul and a friend of the members of the church at Corinth.

Since the missionary work of the church has grown larger and larger, and churches, schools, and hospitals have been built in many lands around the world, we need to extend our hands even farther than did Paul. Across the oceans are India and China, Japan, the Philippines, and the many islands of the South Pacific; there is also the great continent of Africa. Closer at hand is Mexico,

Central America, and the whole continent of South America. Still closer are the strange and lonely people in our great cities and the thousands of families who have moved into new towns being built as our great industrial plants grow larger and larger. But you and I, as Christians, can reach out our hands and be friends to all of them, no matter how many there are or how far away they live.

Here is what one man, Judge E. J. Millington, said about the very thing we are talking about today, reaching out our hands far and wide:

I am standing here in one place, and yet by the miracle of missions my feet are treading the paths of mercy around the world. I have two unskilled hands, and yet by the miracle of missions these hands are performing delicate operations in many hospitals and doing deeds of kindness everywhere at this hour. I have one tongue and that tongue can speak only one language, and yet by the miracle of missions I am telling the story of Jesus Christ in a hundred languages at this hour.

You see how it is done. Just as we stand here holding hands and are able to reach from one wall to the other, so we can clasp the hands of our missionaries who preach, teach, and minister as doctors and nurses, in churches, schools, and hospitals on mission fields around the world. They learn to speak many languages as they go to different countries. They perform many duties. We clasp their hands by giving of our money, by our prayers, and by our deep interest and concern for all these people who need to know God's love. In this way we make real our fellowship and our friendship for people we have never seen

and will never actually meet, but who become brothers and sisters of ours in Christ.

Again we ask the question: "How far can you reach?" It will all depend upon your interest and your desire to help Christ. Remember his great commission to us: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations."

10

A Boy at the Manger

*Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among men with whom he is
pleased!*

—Luke 2:14

DAVID WAS EXCITED. YES, HE WAS VERY EXCITED AND had been ever since his father had promised he could stay with him. He could not even remember how long he had looked forward to the time when this would happen. As a very small boy, he had wondered what went on out there and dreamed of the time he would be permitted to go and see for himself. Of course he had many times been in the fields with the sheep in the daytime and always liked to watch them and fondle the lambs. They made such fine soft pets.

But he was old enough now, and large enough, to be with the men and to stand watch as well as any of them. Of course he was not sure about this. Only time would tell, but he wanted the chance to try to prove

himself. So, just this morning, his father had said that if the night was clear, as it promised to be following such a day of sunshine, he could stay with him as he watched the flock and could spend the night with the shepherds on the hillside. Father had made a suggestion that pleased David very much. He said David might take his harp along and play and sing for the men. They got pretty lonesome, he said, and always liked to hear a story or listen to a song. They would even sing themselves if they knew the song and could remember the words.

David was proud of his harp playing. Because he had been named David, he thought a great deal of the great David of old and tried to memorize most of his psalms. He wanted to be like the renowned shepherd king, and he practiced often and long that he might master his harp and sing the songs of David.

Long before sundown David was on his way to the hillside where he knew his father and the other shepherds would be watching their sheep. He carried his father's supper, and it was a larger package than usual, for there was a midnight snack included for himself, as well as his father, this time. He also carried his prized harp, slung by a thong of untanned sheepskin over his shoulder.

As he met other boys carrying lunches to their fathers and older brothers, he could not refrain from announcing: "I'm staying all night with the men!" There was pride in his voice and envy in theirs as they replied: "Gee, wish I could do that." As they walked together, they talked of the wonderful time David would have and made him promise to tell them all about it tomorrow.

As the other boys left for their homes and David remained behind with the men, he tried to be casual; but it was a bit hard when he knew they would be watching him and expecting him to get sleepy or tired or even frightened as the night wore on. They did joke with him and asked him if he had ever shaken hands with a bear or a lion. They asked what he would do if one suddenly roared and ran into the midst of the flock. David determined not to make any rash statement, for he really did not know what he would do in such a case.

He did know that he could play his harp and sing better than any of the men in the company, so he picked up his harp and began to hum a tune. He sang many of the psalms of David, and all the men joined in when he started to sing: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

"What's the matter with those sheep?" said one of the younger shepherds. "They are restless. They keep looking around."

"Yes, I noticed that," said an older man. "They don't seem to be afraid, but just looking around as though they are expecting something to happen."

"They are like our prophets," said another shepherd. "For hundreds of years they have been expecting a Messiah, and they keep looking for him even though he has never come."

"Not only the prophets," said the older man, "but quite a lot of the people I know are looking for this Messiah—or man sent from God. Who knows? They may be right. He may come . . . any time."

In the spirit of the conversation, David began playing and singing the favorite prophecy of Isaiah:

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shined.

And then, as though the very words brought brightness and the very music produced more music, it seemed that the night was suddenly light as day. And a great chorus of voices was singing. The words came as an answer to David's song:

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!

The men, as well as David, were frightened.

A stranger in dazzling white appeared and said: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

Though they were no longer afraid, they were more excited than ever; and with one voice they said: "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened."

And so it was that David, the youngest, was permitted to go along with the shepherds and see God's greatest miracle: the gift of his own Son to mankind. As he stood near the manger looking in wonder at a tiny baby, he knew in his heart that this was the one which Isaiah had written about. This was the one God had sent. This was Jesus, the Christ.

He said in a whisper (but God could hear), "I give him my heart, my life, my all—forever."

II

Ring in the New!

Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.
—II Cor. 5:17

JIMMY WAS TRYING HARD TO STAY AWAKE. I SAY hard, for it was already ten o'clock and this was later than he had been up for a long, long time.

Now there was a reason for this. You see, it was New Year's Eve; and Jimmy had never in his whole life been up to see the old year out and the new year in. He had heard about the bells ringing and the whistles blowing. He wanted to hear all the happy noises and take part in the great excitement. Dad said bells rang all over town: church bells, the courthouse bell, schoolhouse bells, the bells on locomotives that were going through town or shifting freight cars on the railway yards, and bells in the hands of neighbors standing on their porches to welcome in the new year.

One thing puzzled Jimmy a bit: why did they ring bells? Why blow whistles, shoot firecrackers, and make as much noise as possible? He was told it was to "ring out the old and ring in the new." Just what did that mean?

Jimmy had asked his father that very question several times. He was just a little afraid to ask it again, for fear

he would be put to bed and not be allowed to sit up to hear the bells. Just then he thought he heard a very small voice near by speaking to him.

Jimmy looked all around the room, for he had been sitting before the fireplace with his father and mother and older sister, Sue. Sue had been so busy reading a new magazine she had gotten from the stand that afternoon that she had not said a word all evening. Father was reading the newspaper, and mother was darning socks. Neighbors often came in without knocking, but they usually said, "Yoo hoo," or something, to let the folks know they were around; and Jimmy had not heard anyone enter.

As he glanced around, he saw the Christmas tree aglow with beautiful lights and sparkling with tinsel. He looked at it from the little white angel on the top, to the family cat, Muffer, lying sound asleep on the floor below. He thought how funny it was that Muffer had almost taken over the Christmas tree for his very own. He liked it from the time Daddy brought it into the room. He would stand up on his hind legs and cuff at the branches with his forepaws. He never tired of playing with the long-needed twigs and shining trimming trinkets—except when he got sleepy, and then he would stretch out on the white sheet at the base of the tree and take a cat nap. Every little while he would open one eye to look up into the branches above.

Surely the cat had not spoken for Muffer never even bothered to say, "Meow." He got what he wanted by just looking at the icebox or the door, and then looking at whichever member of the family might be close by. He would look until he was waited upon; and if that was

not prompt enough, he would walk over to a piece of furniture and start scratching the upholstery. Then he got action!

Jimmy's eyes turned to the crèche on the table at the end of the room. There was a Nativity scene with an illuminated star over the manger. A flock of sheep was at one side, being watched by a collie dog. The shepherds were standing reverently before the Christ child. On the other side were the three wise men, and beyond, the camels on which they had ridden to Bethlehem.

As Jimmy looked at this miniature scene, he thought he saw one of the shepherds motioning to him. Yes, it was he who was talking. He was an old man, perhaps the oldest and wisest of the shepherds, and the one to whom they turned for advice. Jimmy listened eagerly.

"Perhaps I can explain why the bells ring tonight," said the shepherd. "They have been ringing ever since we heard the angels sing and told our neighbors the good news. You see this was the best news man ever heard."

Then the shepherd told the story of the angel announcer and the angel chorus singing to the men as they watched their flock on the hillside, but he told much more.

"As the Christ child grew, he fulfilled God's promise to men. Truly in him all things became new. When he was grown and went about preaching, he talked about a new birth that would make new men and women. He talked about new life, and he put a new song in the hearts of men as he said to all he met, 'Be of good cheer!'

"You see Christ, our Messiah, brought new hope to all men, the world around, and so true was this that we

began to count time from his birth. You have heard of years B.C. That means 'before Christ.' You have also heard of A.D. That is Latin for 'the year of our Lord.' When we speak of the year 1955, we mean it is 1,955 years since Christ came into the world and brought this newness of life. Everything is different since he came."

Jimmy began to understand. Of course everything is different with Christ in the world. Even when we have made mistakes, they will be forgiven if we ask Christ to forgive them. If we have failed, we can hope for success tomorrow; because he will help us if we ask him to do so. Yes, there is a good reason for being happy and ringing all the bells in town. Because of Christ, we can turn our backs on the old and look toward the new with real hope.

Then it seemed that the very bells on the Christmas tree began to ring. (I forgot to tell you the Sunday-school class at their party had made these bells out of the lids of cans, and they were very dainty and very pretty.)

As the Christmas tree bells began chiming, it seemed that the bells all over town caught the rhythm and all began to ring at once.

Suddenly Jimmy awakened. Father was shaking him, but the bells were ringing so loudly he would have been awake anyhow.

"Happy New Year," said father, and mother and sister Sue joined in: "Happy New Year, Jimmy!"

Jimmy rubbed his eyes hard as he looked at the shepherd on the table. He was standing just as he had been all through the Christmas holidays. He hadn't moved. Surely he had not spoken! Jimmy must have dozed off those few minutes before the bells chimed out. Anyway, he knew now why the bells rang.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow.
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

12

He Draws His Sermons

His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master."

—Matt. 25:21

WHEN JESUS TOLD THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS, he used a word that can be translated today to mean either money or ability. In Jesus' day the word "talent" meant a certain weight which usually applied to money. There might be a talent of silver or a talent of gold. When Jesus told the story of the man who was journeying to a distant country and divided up his wealth among his servants, giving one five talents, one two, and another one talent, the disciples undoubtedly thought of the talents as money. When we use the word "talent," we think of ability or skill, such as playing the piano, singing, public speaking, drawing pictures. So far as the truth illustrated by the story is concerned, it makes little difference whether we think of "talent" as money or ability. The important fact is that the Lord is the giver of both talent and treasure, and we should use them al-

ways in ways pleasing to him, proving ourselves good stewards of what he has entrusted to us.

Most of us look at the pictures in magazines and newspapers. Pictures tell a story quickly even without words underneath. Some of the best of these pictures are cartoons.

I wonder if you have ever noticed the religious cartoons which appear in most of our newspapers all over America. In fact these cartoons I'm talking about are seen not only in more than eight hundred papers in America but also in newspapers in seventeen foreign countries. If you have ever seen one of these, I am sure you must have said to yourself: "Why that is a sermon—and a good one."

Down in the corners of the drawings of these sermon-cartoons you will see the name of the artist Jack Hamm. The story of Jack Hamm's life is a sermon in itself. When Jack was a small boy, living in the town of Elkhart, Kansas, he felt that God was calling him to be a preacher. He wanted to do God's will, and so he began to get ready to be a preacher by going to a school where he could learn about the Bible.

While Jack was studying to be a preacher, he was bothered by another call. He liked to draw pictures, and he had talent in art. You have heard someone say, "I would rather do that than eat." I imagine Jack often said, "I would rather draw pictures than eat." So much did Jack like to draw that he wanted to learn more about art, and he attended an art school.

When he became so interested in his art, he became worried and felt perhaps he was not pleasing God. He received an invitation to become pastor of a small church, and he accepted. Soon after this he was offered a job

with a newspaper, illustrating articles with pictures and drawing comic strips.

Jack felt a call to the ministry. He also felt a call to draw pictures. He felt both calls so strongly he could not resist either, and he could not be happy in either without the other. He was puzzled and disturbed. He wanted to do God's will, but he found it hard to know just what God's will was. Certainly God wants us to enjoy what we are doing and be able to do it with real enthusiasm. Yes, when we have found just the thing God wants us to do as our calling, it should make us very happy; and we should find happiness every day as we work at that special assignment given to us.

Jack went to Baylor University in Waco, Texas, to finish his preparation for the ministry; and while he was studying there, he solved his problem. In prayer he found he could preach through drawing. This was a new kind of preaching. Perhaps that is why Jack was so puzzled at first and took so long to find his special work.

We might say Jack Hamm is a man to whom God gave at least two talents: teaching and art ability. As we think of the great business he has developed, sending his drawings to so many hundreds of newspapers, we might add a third talent: executive ability. Because Mr. Hamm was determined to dedicate all his talents to God and serve him well, he found how to use them all together for good. No one can measure how much good this adds up to. During the day, Jack Hamm teaches nine classes in commercial art at Baylor University. Then, in the evening he goes to his study, reads his Bible, gets an inspiration from the scripture, and goes out walking to "walk up" a cartoon idea to illustrate that scripture text.

When he gets the idea, he comes back and begins the work on his drawing board. When his drawing is finished, he can go to bed happy.

Boys and girls will be interested to know that when Mr. Hamm sends out his cartoons to the newspapers, it is a family affair, and his daughter, Dawna, age five, helps with her mother. So not only does Jack Hamm use all three of his talents for the Lord, but also his wife and daughter add theirs; and no one can possibly measure the influence for good that results as these picture sermons go to press and appear in the newspapers all over America and in many other parts of the world.

We could finish our story by listening quietly and hearing a still small voice saying: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

13

It Is Better to Forgive

If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you. —Matt. 6:14

TOM HAD WORKED HOURS ON HIS KITE AND FINALLY had it ready for the trial flight. Out to the park he went to join the other boys who were passing ball, playing marbles, and flying kites. Tom's friend Jim was there, and he asked Jim to hold the kite as he reeled off some line and got ready to launch it.

It is always a thrill to fly a kite, and especially a new one. One is not sure whether a new kite is properly balanced and will fly smoothly. Often a kite will dart right and left and even dart downward, and sometimes will catch in a tree or telephone wire or crash to the ground. But why am I telling you how to fly a kite?

Tom's kite had no more gotten into the air nicely than a big tear suddenly appeared in the center, and it came tumbling to the ground. The wind was not blowing hard enough to cause such an accident, and Tom was puzzled as well as terribly disappointed.

Jim came running over to where Tom stood. "Joe did it," he said. "I saw him. He is hiding back of that fence with an air gun."

Tom was furious. "I'll punch his face in and bang him over the head with his old air gun!" he said.

He meant it too and was starting for the fence when Jim insisted that they hurry home and mend the kite and try it again before suppertime. Tom did want to see how the kite would fly and knew he could mend it in a few minutes, so he and Jim went back to the house and soon had it ready to try again.

No sooner had Tom launched his kite the second time and had it climbing nicely, than rip it went again and dropped to the ground.

"He did it again," said Jim. "I was watching, and I saw Joe rise up from behind that fence and shoot your kite."

Tom was so mad he was blue in the face. "I'll tear him limb from limb!" he said and started for the fence behind which Joe was supposed to be hiding. But Joe had left for better cover and was not to be found. Tom was

so angry he kicked the fence and knocked a paling off, but Joe was well out of reach.

Just then Tom's mother came out on the porch and called Tom to come in for supper. Father was home and everything was ready. Tom knew that meant going at once, and he started for home; but he kept grumbling to himself and said he would catch Joe at school tomorrow and "knock his block off."

Although Tom's favorite dishes—fried chicken with biscuits and gravy—were on the supper table, he ate hardly any at all. Mother knew something was the matter. "Now what is wrong, Tom?" she said. "It isn't like you not to eat—especially when we have fried chicken."

Tom tried to let on like there was nothing wrong, but mother soon got it out of him; and he told her the whole story, ending with the threat: "Tomorrow I am going to black both his eyes: the coward!"

Mother and father both knew just how Tom felt, but they also knew that it would do neither Tom nor Joe any good if they tried to settle their quarrel with a fist fight. Mother knew something about Joe. The neighbors had been talking about him, and she had learned that his mother had died just before he and his father moved to their neighborhood last fall. Joe's father was a very busy man and did not seem to have much time to give to Joe. He was left to himself most of the time and got very lonely. He did not make friends easily and had the idea the other boys did not like him.

Mother felt that Joe did not realize what he had done. Perhaps he did not know any better. At any rate she suggested something to Tom which was just the opposite of what he had in mind. "Why don't you go

to Joe at school tomorrow and invite him to your Sunday-school class? I doubt if he has ever gotten started here. You know what the scripture says about the very words of our Lord's prayer: 'If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you.' It also says we must overcome evil with good."

Tom did not like the idea at all at first, but father agreed with mother. It was the right thing to do, and Tom knew it. He promised to try it when he saw Joe at school the next day.

When Tom talked to Joe on Friday, Joe had a sheepish look; and he seemed very much surprised when Tom asked him to visit his Sunday-school class. "I don't even know what a Sunday-school class is like," he said. "I have never been to one, but I'll go if you will come around and take me with you on Sunday."

This is how Tom and Joe came to be good friends. One day, some time afterward, when Tom and Joe were walking home from school together, Joe said: "Tom, I've got to tell you something. Do you remember that day when you were flying your kite, and it tore and came down twice? Well, it was my fault. I was hiding behind our fence, and I shot it down with my air gun. I'm terribly sorry, and I want you to forgive me."

"Oh, I forgave you a long time ago, Joe," said Tom. "I knew it was you who shot up my kite, and that day I wanted to smash your nose and black both your eyes. I'm glad I didn't try. If I had, we might never have gotten to be pals."

Both Tom and Joe agreed it was much better to forgive and be friends.

Roosters—And Some People—Are Funny

I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.

—Rom. 1:14

THE APOSTLE PAUL GAVE US SOMETHING TO THINK about when he wrote to the Romans, "I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish." All of us need each other, and God loves every member of his great family around the world.

Did you ever hear of Caruso? He was a Bantam rooster who thought altogether too much of himself. Early each morning he would fly up on the fence post, flap his wings, beat his chest, and crow: "Cock-a-doodle-doo." Then he would proceed to tell the whole world how important he was. After this haughty rooster had crowed to his complete satisfaction, and had disgusted the whole neighborhood by waking them out of sound sleep, he would look down upon the other members of the barnyard family and berate them one by one. "Look at the duck," he would say. "He is good-for-nothing; he is bowlegged; he waddles when he walks; and he can do nothing but go quacking around all day long." Then he would cast his eye toward the turkey and make more slighting remarks. "That turkey is a stuck-up bundle of feathers if I ever saw one. And what has he to be stuck up about? He is

bald-headed; he has a beard hanging down in front like a billy goat's; and he will be killed and served for dinner on Thanksgiving Day."

Of course Caruso, the rooster, would never have made such remarks or had such thoughts about other fowls if he had used his head for thinking instead of just strutting and crowing.

Springtime came to the barnyard, and with it the showers and the rising water. The creek that usually was only a tiny stream rose up and up and began to spread far and wide over the fields and meadows. One day Caruso was picking morsels of food off the ground and was so busily engaged that he did not see the water rising all around him until he suddenly found himself on a little island with water on every side. He was frightened. He cackled: "Cut-cut-cutt," which is a rooster's way of crying, "Help! Help!"

The duck heard Caruso's startled crying, and he rushed over to see what was the matter. When Caruso finally managed to say, "Please help me. I can't swim, and the water will drown me soon," the duck, good neighbor that he was, immediately began to figure out some way to save the rooster. He saw the water was coming up and something must be done at once. There was no time to teach Caruso how to swim. So the duck acted on the spur of the moment and began giving orders to the rooster. "Get on my back," he said, "and I will swim across to dry ground with you." Caruso was afraid to climb on the duck's back, but he was even more afraid to stay on the island; so finally he climbed on and held so tight the poor duck was nearly strangled, but managed to ferry the rooster safely to the other side.

Caruso was shaking so hard he could not even say, "Thank you," but the duck had seen another chicken that needed a ferry and was already paddling off to the rescue.

That night Caruso was still shaking with fear. He was afraid to go near his coop, for the water was coming closer and closer to it. He looked at the fence and decided he would roost there and share the top rail with the turkey who slept there each night. Up he hopped and was soon fast asleep with his head snugly tucked behind his wing.

The turkey was enjoying the light of the full moon and sat there awake on the top rail of the fence for a long while after bedtime. Then he noticed something darting, quiet as a shadow, along the ground. It was a fox, and you could tell by his sniffing and snooping that he had spied the rooster on the fence and was expecting to make a midnight meal of him very soon. The turkey closed his eyes, almost shut. He kept one eye open just enough to watch the fox, while making the fox think he was asleep. He knew what the fox was up to; and even though he did not like Caruso too well himself, he did not want to see him become fox food. He was a wise old turkey, just as the fox was a wise old fox. When the fox was directly below the fence rail, the turkey gave a loud gobble, jumped down on the fox's back, dug in with his claws, and flapped his wings so hard the poor fox must have thought he was hit by a dive bomber. At any rate that fox gave a shrill yap of pain and rushed away from that neighborhood as fast as his fleet legs would carry him.

The turkey flew back up on the top rail of the fence

just as Caruso was awakening from a sound sleep. "What was all that noise?" said Caruso.

"Oh, nothing much," said the turkey. "I just saved your life from a fox."

Then Caruso saw the fox darting off like a streak in the night, and again he was so frightened he could not talk. He just sat trembling there on the top rail. He decided he would keep at least one eye open the rest of the night, and next night he would sleep in the very top of the old cherry tree.

When morning came, it brought both a new day and a new rooster. During that long sleepless night on the top rail of the fence, Caruso had had time to think about the kindness of the duck who had saved his life from drowning and the turkey who had saved his life from the fox. He was downright ashamed of himself for calling the duck and the turkey names and talking about them the way he had.

As the bright sun began to come over the hill and shine down on the barnyard, Caruso jumped up on the fence post; and he crowed a new tune. This morning he called out: "Duck-a-doodle-doo" and "Turk-a-doodle-doo," and then he told the world how grateful he was for the kindness of his two neighbors who had actually saved his life, not once but twice. Never again did Caruso think harshly of other fowl, and never again did he think himself the most important thing in the whole world.

15

The Good Fight

Fight the good fight of the faith. —I Tim. 6:12

EVERY BOY AND GIRL KNOWS WHAT IT MEANS TO fight, You have seen fights. Perhaps you have been in fights. We will not ask how many have been fighting or who started the fights, but I want to say this morning that some fights are right and boys and girls ought to be encouraged to fight when they fight the right way.

Now let me explain what I mean. Did you ever see a boy get so mad that he would pick up a rock and actually throw it at another boy? If the rock hit its mark, it probably made a terrible lump and might even have knocked the boy out like the blow of a prize fighter's fist. Sometimes boys pick up rocks and throw them at windows in vacant buildings and break the windows and destroy other people's property. I do not need to tell you that such things are bad. They are very bad, and we would all agree to that.

A fly swatter is also an instrument for fighting, but it can be used for a good fight. Flies and mosquitoes carry filth and disease germs, and cause people to become sick. We ought to kill flies and mosquitoes whenever we see them. The fight against these pests is a good fight.

So you see fighting may be good, or it may be bad. God has given us our muscles and our fighting ability,

and he expects us to use them—but only in the right way and at the right time.

How can we know a good fight from a bad fight?

Could we not say that good fighting is fighting against anything that hurts or hinders human life and bad fighting is hurting or injuring people themselves.

Let's see how this definition works out. A doctor fights against disease germs. He vaccinates boys and girls at school so that no epidemic can spread there. He comes to the bedside of the boy or girl who is ill and fights against the disease with medicines and treatments and does all he can to kill off the disease germs that cause the sickness. Certainly this is good fighting.

But take another case. On the playground we see two boys who are very angry about something. They stand and make faces at each other for awhile and dare each other to fight, and then one of them punches the other on the nose or blacks his eye, and then they poke their fists and pound away at each other like two wild animals in the jungle. Such a fight is a bad fight and ought never to happen on any playground. It happens only when boys or girls forget themselves and act like cats and dogs instead of boys or girls.

All of us have temptations. Ideas suggesting that we do this and that which we know we ought not to do at all come into our minds. When such ideas come to us, we should always fight against them and say, "No! I will never do what is wrong, no matter who asks me to do it and no matter how attractive it may look at the time."

When we resist evil suggestions and fight against temptations, we are certainly fighting a good fight.

The apostle Paul, when writing to the young minister

Timothy, gave this splendid advice: "Fight the good fight of the faith." You see Timothy had seen a lot of fighting, and most of it was bad fighting—fighting for selfish purposes and fighting that hurt other people. Paul wanted him to know that there is plenty of fighting to be done, but it must be the kind that resists evil and seeks to do God's will.

The good fight is the fight that fights against everything that would keep us from doing what God wants us to do and that opposes wrong wherever it shows its head.

In another book of the New Testament, Paul tells just how to arm for the good fight. He probably was looking at the armor of a Roman soldier, for he was chained to this soldier in the prison cell while he was doing the writing. He names every piece of armor we need for the good fight of faith. He says, "Be strong in the Lord. . . . Put on the whole armor of God." Then he tells what this armor is. Listen: You need a belt of truth, a "breastplate of righteousness," shoes of peace, a "shield of faith," a "helmet of salvation," a "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." The fighting is done by watching, praying, and working to carry out God's will.

God needs soldiers—brave boys and girls who will not be frightened, no matter what happens; who will never run away; and who will follow his commands faithfully. Every boy and girl is called to be a Christian soldier and to "fight the good fight of the faith."

Little—But, Oh, My!

*There is a lad here who has five barley loaves
and two fish; but what are they among so many?*

—John 6:9

DID YOU EVER SEE A HUMMINGBIRD BUZZING OVER a flower bed and flitting from blossom to blossom? Just yesterday I watched one of these little fellows, and he was unafraid as I stood so close I could have reached out and touched him with my hand.

The hummingbird is a very interesting creature. He is the smallest of the birds, and although there are some four hundred species of hummingbirds in the world, all of them are in the Western Hemisphere—that is, in North and South America. Only one kind is found east of the Mississippi River and north of Florida. This one is the ruby-throated hummingbird. This is the one most of us think of when we speak of a hummingbird.

The Rubythroat is really a tiny bird. He weighs only as much as one single copper penny. He is less than four inches long, bill and all. He is so light he can perch on a stem of timothy grass.

The nest of the Rubythroat is about the size of one-half shell of an English walnut, and the female lays only two eggs. When the young birds hatch out, they are no larger than bumblebees.

The hummingbird is an acrobat in the air. He can fly straight up or down, forward or backward like a helicopter and can poise at will as his long bill reaches into the deep cup of a flower to suck its nectar. He has a long tongue too and can dart it out as fast as lightning to catch an insect resting on a plant stem or caught in a spider's web. When the hummingbird finishes his feast on nectar and insects, and starts for home, he darts forward like a bullet. Yes, he can travel sixty miles an hour—so fast he is just a streak in the air.

In the winter the Rubythroat goes south, probably to Central America. I say probably, because it has been impossible for bird fanciers to band the hummingbird. It is impossible for them to get a leg band small enough and light enough for the tiny bird's leg and at the same time large enough to carry an identification number. So this little bird remains something of a mystery as it defies exact scientific study in its migration movements.

When I was watching that hummingbird in the flower bed, I thought of some boys and girls I know—not many, but some. I have heard one or two, when asked to do something, say: "I can't do that; I'm too little!" It is not like a boy or girl to say such a thing as that, for usually you say: "I'll try to do my best." This is certainly the spirit of the little hummingbird. He is so small he could very well beg off and ask other birds to build his nest for him, bring him his food day by day, and protect him from his enemies. But the hummingbird is able and ready to do his own work, and he doesn't ask any favors at all. He is very businesslike as he flits from flower to flower, and never loafs or dallies around. He even seems to be always in a hurry and always on the run—or, rather,

on the fly, for he almost never alights on a stem but stays in the air with his little wings going like a buzzer.

The hummingbird is small—but, oh, my! He reminds us of stories in the Bible in which people standing around thought a gift or an act was not important, but Jesus thought otherwise. When the poor widow put two little mites in the treasury at the temple, most people did not even see her gift. In fact she was very timid and did not want anyone to see her dropping the pennies in the box. But Jesus saw her and said: "This poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For they all contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, her whole living" (Mark 12:43-44).

At another time when Jesus was teaching, as you well remember, the disciples thought mothers and fathers were bothering Jesus by bringing their small children to him for his blessing. Jesus thought differently. He said to the disciples: "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 19:14.)

But the story which you probably remember best is the story of the boy with the five buns and two sardines who helped Jesus feed the great crowd of people on that day when he was preaching to the multitude. He was just a boy, probably a junior, but he did more than the disciples themselves. They were discouraged and wanted to send the crowd away to their homes. Jesus saw how tired and hungry the people were, and he knew that many of them were a long way from home. He said to the disciples: "You feed them." These disciples, though grown men, accustomed to facing problems and tackling

difficult things, did not see how they could handle such a big task. They thought of the great amount of money it would take to buy food for so many people, and they did not have the money even if there were a grocery store close by. But the boy did not do any figuring about the cost or think of the impossible. He simply offered his lunch to Jesus. It was a small offering, but the important fact is that he gave it to Jesus. Then Jesus gave the offering his blessing, and it was sufficient for the need of the hour.

You know, whether it be a tiny hummingbird or a boy or a girl, whether our ability is small or large, the important thing—and the fact that makes all the difference in the world—is how we use it. Christ wants our interest, our time, our talents, and our love. When we give what we have—and all that we have—to him, then miracles always happen. Our gift may be small—but, oh, my! What amazing things can take place when Jesus adds his blessing and uses us and our gifts to do the Father's will.

Just Like a Boy/Girl

*When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I
thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.*

—I Cor. 13:11

THERE WAS A BIT OF COMMOTION DOWN AT THE corner. A car was crosswise of the street, and the drivers of the other cars were blowing their horns and making a lot of noise. In a short time the car in the awkward spot got swung around, and the traffic jam cleared up. As I walked by, I heard a man say in a loud voice: "Just what I expected. It was a woman driver!"

How often I have heard that expression regarding women drivers: "It's just like a woman!" But actually the statement is uncalled for. There are women drivers who are very poor drivers. The same is true of some men. In fact, if we look at the records, we will find that more men have accidents on the highway than do women. It seems that women are better drivers than men, at least more careful. So one should not hastily say, "That is just like a woman," whenever he sees a bit of bad driving. It isn't fair to the other women drivers, and it is not an honest kind of statement to make.

I wonder if you have ever heard your mother say (perhaps of your father), "That is just like a man!" If I were to guess the occasion of such a remark, I would say

it was house cleaning time. Your mother had been busy all day scrubbing, scouring, washing windows, and dusting. To get the feeling of cleanness and freshness, she moved the furniture into different places in the room and probably changed some from room to room. The arrangement was entirely different. The room looked like new.

When father came home, he started to put his hat on the table by the door, and the table wasn't there. He walked over to lay his coat over a chair that usually stood close by, and it was gone. He was so puzzled he went to sit down on his favorite easy lounge by the window, and he almost landed on the floor, for the lounge was moved clear over to the other side of the room.

Then father expressed himself. He did not understand why things always had to be moved around and changed so that he did not know whether he was home or had made a mistake and entered a neighbor's house. He just couldn't see the sense in all this confusion just because it was house cleaning time—or any other time, for that matter.

Then mother appeared from the kitchen, and she was smiling at dad's blustering and complaining. "That's just like a man," she said. "Are you so old you don't want to see anything changed—even moved from one side of the room to the other?"

It was all just a friendly argument, but you see there are times when we hear someone say, "It's just like a man." and give the idea that all men are alike, at least in the matter of opposing any change in the furniture at home.

Did you ever hear anyone say: "That is just like a

boy" or "That is just like a girl"? I did, only yesterday. A neighbor family had been away on vacation; and when they got back, they found a path cut across their lot. You see, they live on the corner. Before they knew who had been cutting across their lot and trampling down the grass, they said, "Those paper boys did that. It's just like a boy to cut across the grass." Now really it was not the paper boys at all, for both of them—the one who brings the morning paper, and the one who brings the evening paper—come down the street on bicycles and throw the paper from the street. I have watched them often, and they are very expert in pitching that paper right up on the porch. If they do happen to throw it short, they will park their bikes, come up the walk, and put the paper on the porch. I have never seen either of the boys ride or walk across the grass.

Now it may be that some careless boys had run across the grass and caused my neighbors to think that all boys are careless and thoughtless about the property of other people. But this is not true. There are many boys and girls who are always kind and thoughtful and are helpful rather than harmful. In fact if I were to say, "That is just like a boy or a girl," I would think of many kind things I have seen boys and girls do. It is just like a boy to stop and pick up a package a lady has dropped. It is just like a boy to comfort a lost dog, pat him on the head, and help him find his master. It is just like a girl to take a bunch of flowers to a sick neighbor and ask if there are any errands she can run. It is just like a girl to help her mother cook the supper and wash the dishes afterward. Yes, when I think of boys and girls, I know so many

interesting ways they have that I know it is just like them to do something to make someone happy.

In his wonderful poem about love Paul makes a statement about his own boyhood. He says: "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child." (I Cor. 13:11.) Of course he did, and we can well imagine that the words he spoke were kind words; his thoughts were bright, happy thoughts; and his reasoning was clear for a boy his age. Knowing the great man he became, we might imagine his dreams and plans as a boy. You know the great men of today were boys with great ideas yesterday, and the kind of boys they were yesterday played a large part in making them successful today.

That phrase, "just like a boy," and the other one, "just like a girl," are phrases which you can put meaning into. I am sure that in the neighborhood where you live, and on the playground where you go to school, you are helping to prove that boys and girls can be depended upon to be good neighbors and good citizens all the time.

This Is a Church

*For we are fellow workmen for God; you are
God's field, God's building.* —I Cor. 3:9

WE ARE GOING TO TALK WITH OUR HANDS TODAY—
or, rather, let our hands talk to us. You know how to
make a church, I'm sure. Let's all make a church with our
hands. You remember the little jingle that goes with that
hand-church:

Here is the church
And here is the steeple:
Open the door
And see all the people.

Yes, there are all the people in rows inside the church
building. But let's look at that building again. The fingers
are the people, of course. But the fingers are also the
steeple and the door. You see, the first two fingers stick
up there and make the steeple, and the two thumbs make
the door.

Now notice the rest of the building. Look at the roof,
and then look under the roof, and you see that the
same fingers that make the people in the church are the
fingers that make the roof of the building.

There is something to think about here. I have heard
people say: "Our church is on the corner of Main and

State." Really this is not true. The building is there but not the church. What if we had decided to have our worship service this morning over on the vacant lot? It is a lovely day, and it would be very pleasant out there. If we were having our service there this morning, where would the church be? Right on the vacant lot. That is correct. The church building would still be here, but the church itself would be on the vacant lot; for a church is made of people, and not of stone, mortar, wood, and glass.

Look at that hand-church again, and you will see it tells the same story. The fingers that represent the people at the service form the steeple, the door, the roof, and the walls of the church building. This is just as it really is. A church is always made of people. They meet in a building usually, but they do not need to. In the days of the disciples the church sometimes met on the river bank or in the home of one of the members. In the early days they did not have church buildings.

When Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, he spoke of a building; but it was a building of Christian people. Said he: "For we are fellow workmen for God; you are God's field, God's building." Paul also thought of the church as being a body—the body of Christ. Some of the members are hands, some feet, some arms and legs. The idea he had in mind was the fact that just as a building must have walls, windows, roof, floor, and all the rest; and just as a person's body must have arms, legs, hands, and feet to live and be useful; so a church must have all its members working together. This word "members" is therefore a very good one for a church.

This reminds me of another little jingle:

What kind of a church would our church be,
If all the members were just like me?

This is a fine question for each of us to ask ourselves. It is true that a church is made up of members, and it is weak or strong as the members are loyal or disloyal, active or inactive. A lazy church member not only makes a bad impression and is displeasing to God, but also he holds the rest of the church group back; for all must work together and each do his part if the work is to be done as Christ would have it done.

I like to think of it this way: God has divided up the talents and the skills and abilities and passed them out to all the people. Some can sing; some can teach; some can manage the business affairs; some can prepare meals and arrange attractive social gatherings; and so on and on. Each has his work to do according to his ability. All can be neighborly, and all can tell others how much Christ means to them; and each one has friends who look to him and are influenced by him more than by anyone else. So each person in the church is responsible for his part. He can talk to others about Christ, help others when they are in trouble, be a true Christian friend, and in all ways represent Christ wherever and whenever he has an opportunity.

If any member in the whole church body fails to do his part, then the body itself is crippled—the building is partly dismantled and broken down. No one has all the talents that are needed. Only as all work together are the talents gathered up so the church as a body, the church as a building, can serve Christ. We need the very

best of each for the good of all, and for the work of our Lord.

So I have just one more little jingle for you:

I am part of the church of today,
So I'll come,
I'll give,
I'll work, and
I'll pray.

19

Love Thinketh No Evil

Is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.

—I Cor. 13:5 (K.J.V.)

WHEN I WAS A COLLEGE STUDENT LIVING IN A dormitory with some twenty other boys, an incident occurred which taught all of us a lesson. It is probably remembered by most of those who lived in the dormitory at that time, though it happened many years ago.

Bob and Joe were roommates. These are not their real names, but we will use them instead of the actual ones. Bob and Joe were rooming together because they were such pals they always wanted to be together. They had met when registering as freshmen. The Y.M.C.A. had an information table and helped the new students find rooms. They also made arrangements for roommates. So it happened that Bob and Joe met each other at the

registration desk, although Bob came from Ohio and Joe from Colorado.

One reason these two boys became friends at the start was because both of them were interested in athletics. As they chatted while waiting in line to be registered, each found that the other was interested in field and track sports. Joe was a long-distance runner, and Bob was a pole vaulter and broad jumper. Both had played some baseball and hoped they might have a chance to get on the varsity baseball team.

Although Bob and Joe had different plans for their lifework, the requirements for the first two years were practically the same; and they attended several classes together. They often worked on their assignments together, and one would pick up books at the library for the other. They also got their meals at the same boarding-house and, in fact, were together almost constantly. Their friendship was something the other boys talked about as being very fine indeed.

Then something happened which seemed impossible. Bob and Joe suddenly stopped being friends, quit working and playing together, and each got another roommate. They seemed not to want to speak to each other again.

When their friends inquired about the matter, they did not learn anything at first. Then the story gradually leaked out. Bob had received a twenty-dollar bill from home one day and left it on his desk as he hurried off to class. When he returned to the room, the bill was gone. Since only he and Joe had a key to the room, he naturally asked Joe if he had seen it. Joe said he knew nothing about it. However, Joe came home that very

same day with a new sweater he had been talking about wanting for a long time. He had said he did not have enough money to buy it. Today he came home wearing that sweater.

As far as Bob was concerned, there was just one answer to the question: where did the twenty dollars go? Joe took it and bought that sweater. He did not ask Joe where he got the money for the sweater. He thought he knew. He just told Joe their friendship was over and he was finding another room and another roommate.

Isn't it too bad that people sometimes jump at conclusions and think they know all the answers without talking things over with anyone else? As I said, for days no one in the house knew what had caused the trouble between Bob and Joe. If they had, they might have made some investigations and found where the money had gone. Bob did not want to talk with anyone. He had already made up his mind, and that was all there was to it.

For months the lives of both Bob and Joe were rather glum. Bob was sure Joe was a thief, and Joe did not have a chance to right himself before Bob. Bob simply would not listen or even give him a chance to explain.

When the other boys learned what had happened, they went to Bob and tried to get him to be reasonable; but he would not listen to any of them. No matter what anyone said about Joe's honesty, Bob was sure he was a thief.

I feel certain that the grades of those two boys showed their troubled minds. No one can do good work when he is worried, and both of them were terribly worried. They could not concentrate or study, because they were

always thinking about that twenty-dollar bill and what the other thought about its disappearance.

Now you are wondering if Joe really was a thief. The other boys in the dormitory wondered too. They would look at Joe as he sat in the study room, or as he walked by, and say to themselves: "Could Joe really have stolen that money? Why would he do it?"

Several months later all the boys of the dormitory were out in the yard, cleaning up the premises. Yes, it was a real spring cleaning. They were picking up rubbish, burning trash, raking, sweeping, and getting everything ready for the day their parents and friends would be coming for a visit. One of the trees in the yard was dead and had many hollow places in the trunk. Everyone thought it ought to be cut down, because it was dangerous. It might be blown down in a storm and hurt someone. So the boys got busy with their axes, and down it came.

When that tree hit the ground, out jumped two squirrels and ran as fast as their little legs could carry them. That surprised the boys, and they ran over to the hollow tree to find the nest. They found the nest all right, and something more. Yes, you guessed: two baby squirrels were there, cuddled up close together. But they found something else too. *They found a twenty-dollar bill!*

You know, squirrels sometimes climb into windows and rummage around for paper and bits of cloth for their nests. This little rascal had been in Bob's room and picked up his twenty-dollar bill to help with his nest building!

You can finish the story. Bob was so ashamed he would not go to see Joe, but Joe was big-hearted and he came to Bob and told him he did not hold anything

against him at all. All the boys helped out, and soon that old friendship was strong as ever, and Bob and Joe were pals again. But they had learned a big lesson. Paul put it this way: Love "thinketh no evil."

20

The Smallest Room

They ought always to pray and not lose heart.

—Luke 18:1

WHEN YOU GO TO NEW YORK CITY, THERE ARE A number of things you will want to see, such as the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, Rockefeller Center, and Times Square. You will want to ride on a subway train and perhaps take a boat trip around Manhattan Island. But, by all means, do not fail to visit the United Nations buildings, located in midtown New York along the East River.

As you wait in the reception hall of the General Assembly Building, you will be given a badge for identification; and soon a guide will take your party around and explain the various buildings and rooms. You will see where the General Assembly of the representatives of the nations meets. Then you will be shown the main committee rooms: political and security; economic and financial; social, humanitarian, and cultural; trusteeship; and administration. You will be interested in sitting in

one of the fine leather-cushioned seats and trying on the earphones by which it is possible to hear a speech in any one of five different languages: Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish. This is made possible by interpreters who translate the words, as rapidly as the speaker gives them, into the other four languages.

You see the tall office building that has so many windows it seems to be made of glass, and the post office which is truly an international office. In the courtyard you may also see the fountain which was presented to the United Nations as a gift from the children of the United States and some of its territories. There are many gifts presented by various nations, and the architecture and furnishings represent many countries around the world.

Near the end of your tour the guide will show you the smallest room of all. In fact it is not exactly a room, but a curtained-off section of the hallway. It is the meditation room: a place set aside as a prayer room for the delegates and employees of the United Nations. It is not a Christian chapel or a Jewish synagogue, but truly a place of prayer for all the nations where each one can worship in terms of his own understanding of God.

I first learned about this room from the chairman of the Laymen's Movement of America. He said that for many months a number of devout men had been concerned because God was not given a place in the United Nations program. These men talked and planned, as they prayed, to know God's will about the matter. Then the way was opened, and permission granted for a prayer room to be curtained off.

The smallest room was dedicated and set aside for

prayer and meditation by a group of laymen representing three faiths: Jewish, Protestant, and Roman Catholic. This occurred on October 4, 1952; and since that time, hundreds of men and women of the United Nations staff have come there seeking God's guidance and blessing.

Since this prayer room is used by men and women of many religions from many nations, it is not arranged as our churches, with an altar, pulpit, and such symbols as a cross, candlesticks, or picture windows. The walls are formed of gray draperies, and the floor is covered with a green rug. Chairs are arranged to seat about twenty-five people. This is not intended to be a meeting place for large groups.

Up front is a table or altar made of a single block of a tree trunk. It is a section cut from a three-hundred-year-old mahogany tree from Equatorial Africa. This great block of wood measures three feet across. A United Nations flag stands at one side, and a beautiful bouquet of flowers is placed there each morning. The only other objects in the room are a spotlight that sends its rays of light down upon the mahogany-block pedestal and ten lights in the ceiling that light the room.

Although there is no cross and no Bible, a Christian can still find symbols of his faith here; and he can certainly find God in this quiet place. One might look at the spot of light and think of the Light of the world. The ten lights in the ceiling might remind him of the Ten Commandments, and the several chairs recall the words of Jesus, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." One does not

need pictures and symbols to remind him of the heavenly Father if his heart is truly seeking for God.

How happy we are that the prayer room is now a part of the United Nations buildings. God has a plan for his world. Men's plans are not good enough unless God guides their minds and directs their work. Wise men will know their own wisdom is not enough and will seek God's help. No matter how dark the day or how difficult the problem, "They ought always to pray and not lose heart."

The United Nations' plan of having representatives meet around a table to talk things over is the new way men are trying to find solutions to international problems. It may be that because many of these men meet first in the smallest room for God's guidance, the peace table may become the place where brotherhood will be better understood and the prophet's dream may come true:

and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more. (Isa. 2:4)

Things That Make for Peace

*Let us then pursue what makes for peace and
for mutual upbuilding.* —Rom. 14:19

UNDER A DATE LINE ADDRESSED INNSBRUCK, AUSTRIA, the following news item appeared in newspapers all over America: "A 'miracle serum' flown from Lansing, Michigan, and brought here by jeep through a raging snow-storm today stopped the flow of blood which threatened the life of an eight-year-old Austrian boy."

The story back of that brief statement tells of a deed of mercy that sent men rushing to help on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. It was truly an international incident, with a small boy in the center.

Hemophilia is a rare disease. It is a condition in which the blood, when once started by a cut or wound, will not stop flowing. When you or I get a cut by accident, we put a bit of antiseptic on it and a piece of bandage to protect it; and in no time it is all right again. In fact the doctor says it is a good thing for a wound to bleed so that it will not become infected.

When a person has hemophilia, however, any bleeding is dangerous. Gottfried Eder, just eight years old, had this blood disease. Evidently no one knew it, but they found it out when he had a tooth pulled. Pulling a tooth is nothing to worry about. In fact we want a tooth

pulled if it is hurting us and we know our tooth is bad and the trouble will not clear up as long as the tooth is there.

When the doctor realized that Gottfried had this blood disease, he did everything he could to help; but nothing did any good, except transfusions. But he could not keep on giving transfusions. Then he remembered a new drug or serum that causes the blood to dry up or stop flowing. Even though the doctor thought about this, it seemed impossible to do anything about it; for there was not an ounce of antihemophilic globulin in all Austria.

But you know nothing is impossible if there are men of good-will ready to undertake the task. They will do all they can and then enlist other men of good-will to help them reach beyond where they themselves are able to go. This was the case when Gottfried was in trouble. American Ambassador Llewellyn E. Thompson, Jr., sent a request to America. A doctor in Washington D.C. knew what to do. There is just one place in the world where this miracle serum is made. This is in the laboratories of the State Health Department at Lansing, Michigan. The Washington doctor called Dr. Harlan D. Anderson, of Lansing, and requested that he send the serum at once.

When this request came, the wheels really began turning. Dr. Anderson had the serum packed and rushed it to the airport, where it was put on a plane and flown to Washington. Then it was sent to a United States Air Force base in Massachusetts. An Air Force plane carried it across the Atlantic Ocean to Frankfurt, Germany.

From there it was carried to Munich, and then the slowest and most difficult part of the journey began.

We are told a helicopter, a jeep, and a sedan were all called upon to help in the final delivery. There was a terrible snowstorm in the mountains, but brave men determined to push through no matter how cold or how slippery it was. It took these men eight hours to plow through the snow and reach the Children's Hospital in Innsbruck. They got there in time, and the doctor administered the serum to Gottfried.

In no time at all Gottfried was better. The doctor said: "It is too early to say definitely, but I believe the boy has been saved."

That was good news, but people all over the world were interested and so the newspapers and radio stations continued to get more news. Then, a few days later, the best news of all came: "Gottfried Eder is well now and sound as any boy of eight could be. He is smiling and happy and thankful for all that has been done for him by so many people on both sides of the ocean."

Yes, it was good news that this one boy's life was saved. It was made possible by many people working together to help. Such co-operation and kindness by men of goodwill is the sort of thing the apostle Paul must have had in mind when he said: "Let us then pursue what makes for peace."

There have been many times in the past when men of different nations have worked together in war, and terrible destruction has resulted. This time it was the Air Force that helped the most, but it was carrying a package of mercy, not delivering deadly bombs. What a fine thing it is for people to work together for good:

in a family circle, in a school, in a church, in a neighborhood, in a nation, and in a world.

22

The High Call

We must obey God rather than men.

—Acts 5:29

SITTING IN A DOCTOR'S WAITING ROOM IN HUNTINGTON, West Virginia, I was struck by an unusual picture on the wall. It was old-fashioned, showing a horse tied to a hitching post beside a house with green shutters on the windows. In the foreground stood several men with long beards and slouch hats. Each man had a long rifle in his hands, and all were looking toward a window of the house as though threatening someone inside. Through the window could be seen a man bending over, apparently working on a table.

I studied the picture and wondered what the story was back of it. When the doctor came in, I asked him about it. "Why that picture," he said, "is the artist's conception of one of the most famous operations performed in America."

Then he told me about this important incident in the history of medicine in the United States. The operation was performed by a young doctor named Ephraim McDowell, at his own home in Danville, Kentucky. Dr.

McDowell was a very good doctor and quite a student. He had studied medicine in America and then had done graduate work in Edinburgh, Scotland. He was a pioneer in surgical work. The picture told the story of the difficulty he had in performing his most important operation.

It seems that Dr. McDowell was called to the home of a Mrs. Crawford who was suffering severe pains. When the doctor examined her, he realized she had a tumor. He also knew that she could not get well unless the tumor was removed. In the past no doctor in America had performed such an operation successfully, but Dr. McDowell had learned of tumor operations in Edinburgh. He told Mrs. Crawford what her trouble was and offered to perform the operation. Mrs. Crawford wanted to have the operation performed, but her husband objected. He was sure it would mean her death, and he said he would never consent to having it done.

Mrs. Crawford continued to have such pains she begged her husband to allow the doctor to operate. He gave his consent very reluctantly; and they went to the doctor's home, where he had rigged up the kitchen table for the operation. Mr. Crawford was still inwardly objecting to the operation. Several of Mr. Crawford's friends had come with him to town and brought their rifles along. As Dr. McDowell prepared to operate, they stood just outside the window—ready to shoot him if he failed. Mr. Crawford cocked his rifle and cried: "If the woman dies, you die too!"

This was a tense situation. Dr. McDowell was certainly on the spot—and it was a dangerous one indeed. But Dr. McDowell was no coward. He was a Christian and, regardless of opposition, always tried to do what he be-

lieved was right. He thought of himself as a steward of the talents and skill God had entrusted to him. He wanted to be a faithful steward. No matter what happened to him, he was determined to do what he believed God wanted him to do.

Doesn't this remind you of those disciples who had gotten into trouble because they were healing the sick in the name of Christ? They were thrown into prison, but the prison could not keep them; for the Lord freed them, and they preached to the crowds in the temple. When they were again taken and brought before the high priest, he shouted at them "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching."

Then Peter made one of the bravest statements to be found in the New Testament. He said: "We must obey God rather than men." Peter was not afraid of men. He wanted to be sure he was doing what God wanted him to do.

Like Peter, Dr. McDowell said, in spirit if not in words: "I will do what my conscience before God tells me I should do, even if it costs me my life!"

Of course you want to know how such a thrilling story of heroism came out. I will tell you. Dr. McDowell did not hesitate a minute. He got ready at once and began the operation. The men outside kept glaring at the window, trying to see what was going on. They were determined and dangerous men. They meant just what they had said. They would shoot the doctor if the operation was not successful.

God was certainly with Dr. McDowell that day. In fact the good doctor always tried to be certain God was

with him. This was why he usually operated on Sunday morning after telling the minister about it and asking the congregation to pray for his success as he worked. This particular operation was performed on Christmas Day, 1809, and God used him to bring health to Mrs. Crawford. The operation was highly successful, and in a very short time Mrs. Crawford was back working in the kitchen of her home, caring for her family, and feeling fine.

Dr. Ephraim McDowell lived a long time ago, but he was the kind of Christian pioneer who served God in the medical profession. He was active in the church and in Christian education. He was liberal with his money and used it to help Christian causes. He helped build a church and was one of the founders of Centre College in Kentucky.

Yes, this good doctor did many big things; but best of all, he served day by day as a Christian as he worked as a doctor. He always answered a call for help and rode on long journeys on horseback to visit the sick. Much of this was done without pay, for he would not take pay if his patient was too poor to give him money. After all, he felt he was serving as God's doctor and trying to do as God would have him do. We sometimes speak of a man's profession as his "calling." This was especially true of Dr. McDowell. His patients called him for service. He answered their calls for help because, first of all, he had heard the high call of God.

Beyond the Bend

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth,
and the life."*

—John 14:6

EASTER SUNDAY IS THE GREATEST DAY IN THE CHRISTIAN calendar. The largest crowds come to church that day. The most beautiful anthems are sung at the worship service that morning. The finest sermons of the entire year are preached that Sunday. Why?

The answer can be given in three words: "Christ is risen!"

The truth back of these three little words has been the inspiration for all the wonderful anthems of the Christian faith, the most eloquent sermons, the most beautiful pictures and hymns, the finest poetry, the greatest Christian character.

That Christ is risen means that death is not the end. It means that life can be eternal, and that is more than saying it is without end. Eternal means having something of the same nature as God himself. One big word we use is "immortality."

No one really understands all that Easter means. Some understand more than others do, but not even the wisest teacher understands it fully. We cannot know until we have gone beyond this life into the part of life that is behind the curtain we call "death."

One of the best ways to think about something that is too big to understand entirely is to use symbols or pictures. There are many symbols of Easter. One of them is the Easter lily bulb. Another is the egg, and still another is the butterfly cocoon. All of them have something in common. All have life that seems at first to be dead and then awakens into a new form of life. The bulb of the lily looks like an onion—or even a rock. But it is alive; and when we plant it in the ground, it sprouts and grows and produces the lovely white, fragrant lily. The egg may also remind you of a rock—a smooth one; but it hatches out and becomes a chicken, a duck, or a bird. The cocoon has an ugly worm in it, all wound around with silk. After sleeping all winter, the worm awakens, breaks out of the cocoon shell, and, behold, he is a beautiful butterfly.

All of these objects, or symbols of life that changes form, are pictures of Easter; but the best symbol, and the one Jesus himself used, is the symbol of the way or road. He said: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." He also said: "Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more." And again, "When I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself."

Let me tell you a little story I remember from my boyhood. We lived in the city, and I had always wanted to go to a farm. Both my mother and my father had lived on farms, but, up to the time I mentioned, I had never been to a farm even for a visit. So one day father and mother took my two sisters and me on a visit to Uncle Will's. He lived on a farm up in the hills.

Although it was a long time ago, I can still remember

that trip very vividly. We went part way on the train. Then we got off at the station and were met by my uncle Will and his son, my cousin Joe. Uncle Will had driven to the station in a spring wagon drawn by two horses, and Joe in a carriage drawn by a fine black horse. My aunt Betty was also with us on that trip. (I forgot to mention her.) Aunt Betty wanted to drive, so she got in the buggy and my sister Flora got in with her—and off they went at a fast trot. The rest of us climbed into the wagon and sat on planks resting on the wagon sides and drove along slowly with the horses walking.

There are many things I might tell about that visit. Uncle Will drove the horses right through a creek, and the water came halfway up to the wagon bed. We rode over big rocks and through deep ruts, and it was rough going; but it was fun all the way.

I also remember the fine dinners we had when we got to the farm, and I can still see Aunt Betty sitting at the end of the table, waving a long stick with strips of newspaper hanging from the end, to shoo the flies away. After the meal was over, a second tablecloth was placed over the food that was left—most of it in covered dishes—and we children would sneak into the dining room whenever we felt hungry and get a piece of chicken or a slice of bread. I also remember the rugs on the floor. They were the skins of sheep with the wool left on. They were soft and nice for bare feet. I enjoyed putting one on my back and crawling around saying, "Baa, baa."

But I almost forgot the most important part of my story. Shortly after we had gotten into the wagon and Aunt Betty had switched up her horse, we lost sight of the buggy altogether. I was worried. I was afraid Aunt

Betty and my sister were lost or that the horse had run away with them. It was all very strange to me. Uncle Will just laughed and said: "Don't you worry at all. They have just gone around the bend. We will see them again in a little while. They can go faster than we can, and they will be at the house to meet us when we get home."

Uncle Will was right. When we came in sight of the farm house at the foot of a round hill, there were Aunt Betty and Flora and my aunt Susan waving at us and smiling a big greeting.

Easter has always reminded me of the bend in the road. Our loved ones who die have just gone on further along the road—around the curve. We will see them again, by-and-by, when we reach home. Christ is our Guide and our Friend as we travel. He is the Way. With him we walk now and with him we go around the bend yonder.

24

Christ in You

Christ in you, the hope of glory. —Col. 1:27

WE SPEAK OF BIRDS "SINGING." ACTUALLY THEY do not sing, but warble or whistle. Their notes are more like instrumental music than like vocal singing. They do seem to express their happiness in this way. How many times we are awakened in the early morning by the sweet

music of the birds. It may be a robin under our window, or a mockingbird, or a cardinal. In fact it may be a mixed chorus of many kinds of birds, all piping out in full-throated melody as though they were happy to be alive and wanted to tell the whole world about it.

Sometimes birds seem to be talking. At least, they try to tell us something. With a little bit of imagination it is not difficult to know just what they are trying to say. The other morning such a conversation took place in our back yard. Some robins had built a nest in a maple tree whose branches swing down over our yard. On this particular day a couple of the young birds had jumped out of the nest and were hopping around somewhere under the bushes in our back yard. Now we did not see them and did not know about it until the mother robin "told" us.

You see, we have a cat. He is a black fellow, and we call him "Muffer." This mother robin knew about Muffer, and she knew her baby robins were in danger with a cat roaming around in the open. So, just as soon as we opened the door to let Muffer out that morning, the mother robin flew excitedly to the fence, then to the rail around the back porch, then to the walk, and back to the fence again, chattering, chirping, scolding, all the time. By this time the father robin was there too, and he was just as nervous and jumpy as the mother robin. He scolded and protested in shrill cries, and even Muffer was impressed. The cat crouched down and watched, not making a move toward the yard.

Our cat is old and not much interested in trying to catch birds any more. He spends most of the day sleeping in the sun if it is warm outside, or lying on the radiator

in the house if it is a cold day. But these robins were not taking any chances. They considered all cats to be alike, and all bad. I am sure they were trying to tell us that their baby robins were out of the nest and on the ground. They very definitely wanted Muffer kept inside the house until those baby robins were able to fly and protect themselves.

Of course we tried to be good neighbors. We thought how worried we would be if our baby son or daughter were in danger because of a wild animal in the neighborhood. So we kept Muffer in the house all that day and the next. The robins were apparently very grateful and satisfied that their babies were safe for the present. They flew back up in the tree and were quiet for some time. Once, later in the day, we heard the robins again giving their distress signal, and we went out to see what the trouble was. We knew our cat was safely inside the house, but evidently some other danger had approached. Sure enough, when we followed the sound of the shrill cries and found the robins, they were protesting against another cat. He was a gray stranger who had just recently started prowling around the neighborhood. We drove the strange cat away, and again the robins were satisfied and flew back to the maple tree to watch their youngsters from that high point where they could get a good view of the whole yard.

As I went back to the house, I thought about these birds, the cats, and human nature. It is true that a cat's nature and habits cannot be changed very much. We have tried to teach our cat tricks and have again and again attempted to make him obey when we give commands. He will mind when he feels like it or when it is to his advantage. But his nature is just like it has been all the

time, and he does just what suits him and nothing else. He is a wild, savage, little beast, and no amount of quiet life in our home or petting or teaching has made any great change in him. Of course he will purr and arch his back and be gentle when he wants attention. But he can scratch and bite and be as mean as a wild cat when you cross his plans.

Now boys and girls are entirely different. Cats cannot be changed. Boys and girls can. Their very natures and dispositions can be completely changed. I have known boys, and girls too, who were cruel to birds and animals. I am sure they did not mean to be cruel, but they did not know how they were hurting these little creatures. When they were taught better, they were kind and helpful, not harmful.

The whole lives of boys and girls are re-made when Christ is allowed to take over their thinking and their living. This is what being a Christian means. It means becoming like Christ and acting as he would have us to act—in everything.

I thought of this in connection with the robins because one day I met a boy whose heart had been changed. He did not tell me this. I could see for myself by the way he acted. Again it was a case of baby robins and a distressed mother bird. As I came along the street, this boy was waiting for me; and when I came up, he said: "Will you please help me, sir?"

"Of course," I said. "What can I do for you?"

I noticed he was holding his hands cupped together, and I heard a mother robin giving the distress signal. Then he told me what he was trying to do. He had found a baby robin that had fallen from the nest. He wanted

me to hold the robin while he climbed up in the tree, and then he would take it and put it back into the nest.

Of course I helped. As I went on down the street, I felt I knew better than before what Paul meant when he said: "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

25

Fathers, Sons—And God

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.
—I Cor. 3:6

CUB PACK 239 WAS MAKING PLANS FOR FATHER'S Day. This was not just a last minute idea, however. All year long boys and dads had been working together and having a fine time as pals. As Bill said one day, "We not only got better acquainted with our own dads, but we got to know our friends' dads too."

There were many things that needed guidance from the dads. Then, too, dad could give quite a lift when he was around. It was fun to talk over ideas, to make plans, to gather up materials, and then to use tools to make things yourself. These were just as good as, or even better than, what you can buy at the stores. They were really better, because they had something of the boys and the dads themselves built right into them. Then, too, they had memories tied around them. Yes, they were far more valuable than anything you could buy downtown.

The plans for Dad's Day, however, were made by the boys themselves. They wanted to show their dads their appreciation. They wanted the special occasion to be a sort of demonstration of their feelings in this matter.

There would be refreshments, of course. Now this needed mother's help, and mother did not object at all. It was not as though the mothers were joining in a sort of plot to surprise the dads, but they did enjoy having some part in the big preparations. Being a man's affair, and a special Father's Day at that, it was felt that no mothers or sisters should be present on the big day. So mother had her hand in the before-time preparations.

There would be a grand display of the projects which dads and boys had made together during the year. This was the real show part of the program, and every boy in the pack was proud of his part in the exhibit. Each had done his very best and tried to be a master craftsman. The most careful kind of work was demanded even in the smallest details.

Mr. Williams, the cubmaster, made a suggestion; and every boy agreed it was just the right thing to make the program super. He said it would be a fine time to invite Mr. Neitz, the council scout executive, to attend and give a little talk.

So the big day arrived. A lot of last minute work had to be done, but it was all finished; and dads and boys gathered for a good time together. The meeting was opened in proper cub-scout form, and the first part was very much like a regular cub-pack night, except that the crowd was much larger.

Then the cubmaster, Mr. Williams, explained the idea of the special program and introduced Ronnie Black to

give a word of welcome to the dads. Ronnie did not say very much, for every dad knew he was welcome anyway and everyone wanted to get on with the program. Mr. Williams spoke a bit about the general purpose of cubscouting and gave his word of appreciation for the help given the pack by fathers and mothers, for, as he said, "Such a program as this would be impossible without your help."

When the time came to look at the display, it was arranged that, instead of allowing everyone to go up and see it for himself, each boy would introduce his dad and show what they had made together. He would also explain why they decided on that special project and tell where they got the materials and how the work was done.

It would be hard for you to imagine all the kinds of handwork on display that night. There were model airplanes, boats, kites, bird boxes, bows and arrows, pictures, wooden and metal plaques, wastebaskets, book ends, rock collections, arrow heads, and a list far too long to give in detail here.

Boys and dads sat on the floor for this part of the program, and a lot of questions were asked. As one boy explained the project he and his dad had worked on, other boys wanted to know more about it. It seemed as though every boy there would like to make all the things all the other boys had made.

After all the interesting objects had been displayed and explained, and Mr. Williams was just about to introduce Mr. Neitz as speaker of the evening, an unexpected thing happened. Ronnie's father, Mr. Black, said he would like to say a few words of appreciation for all the dads present. He made a very short speech—for all the boys

knew their dads were glad to be there—but his speech really ended with a bang. “As proof of our appreciation, and as a special ‘thank you,’ we dads are taking all of you lads to the baseball game next Monday night.”

You can imagine the effect of that announcement. It almost broke up the meeting, the boys were so excited. But there were two important things yet to be done: the talk by Mr. Neitz and the refreshments.

Mr. Neitz was a very wise man as well as a good scout executive. His talk was short, but he said a great deal. He went over to the table where the projects were displayed and picked up the plaque which Dick and his dad had made. It was a copper wolf head mounted on wood.

“This is a fine piece of work,” he said, “but I do not mean to infer it is better than any of the rest. I choose it to make a point. Dick and his father, Mr. Mulder, did this together. They decided how it was to be made, worked out the measurements, drew the design, and tooled the materials. It is made of panel wood, copper, and brads. Is it enough to say that Dick and his father made this plaque? Where did they get the panel wood, the copper, and the tacks? The lumber mill and the hardware store? If so, where did the lumberman and the hardware merchant get their materials?

“I think we can all answer these questions best by looking at Arvid’s project. He brought a quart of strawberries, some of the largest and most beautiful I ever saw. They are downright tempting too! Arvid and his father, Mr. Driskna, dug the garden, planted the strawberry plants, and cultivated the bed. Where did they get the plants? Where did the strawberries come from?

“All of us know the answer, and the answer is just the

same for Dick's plaque and John's airplane and Bill's rock collection as it is for Arvid's strawberries. So I wish to close with a text from the apostle Paul. He put it this way: 'I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.' "

26

What Are You Planting?

Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.
—Gal. 6:7

BACK IN THE EARLY DAYS OF OUR COUNTRY, WHEN the settlers were moving onto the land along the Ohio River in what is now Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, many strange characters might have been seen. One of these, well known and well liked throughout the countryside, was nicknamed "Johnny Appleseed." His real name was John Chapman, but no one knows exactly where he came from. He is said to have been born somewhere in Massachusetts. Legend says that, as a boy, he often wandered away from home and was gone for days in search of strange birds and wild flowers.

Johnny Appleseed was first noticed as he guided down the Ohio River two canoes lashed together and loaded with apple mash. He had gotten this mash from the cider mills in western Pennsylvania. He had a big plan in mind. He sorted out the apple seeds and planted them all along the path of his journey.

This man who wished to serve his fellows by providing them with fresh apples to eat was peculiar in appearance. He always was barefoot. He wore a ragged pair of trousers, and for a shirt he wore a coffee sack with holes cut for his head and arms. On his head he wore a saucepan. This served as a hat as he journeyed on his way and as a cooking pan when he stopped to prepare a meal.

Johnny Appleseed carried a Bible with him wherever he went. He read his Bible, and he believed and tried to practice its message. In early life he had felt a call to the Lord's work. The planting of apple trees and serving his fellow men in simple ways day by day was the way he answered his call.

Often a settler would invite him to stop at his house for a meal and a night's rest. Johnny would gladly accept the invitation. In appreciation for the kindness of these friends, he would read his Bible as they listened. He liked to read while lying prone on the floor, and he did not tire of reading hour after hour.

It was said that Johnny Appleseed was a friend to all he met: the white settlers, the Indians, the animals, the birds, and the flowers. He would not hurt or injure any living thing. It was said he would not kill a rattlesnake, even if it bit him. So kind was this simple man, and so ready to do a good turn to all who needed his help, that he was known as a border saint. Legends grew up about him as people told what they knew about him, repeated what they had heard, and added some from their imaginations. The Indians called him a medicine man and came to him for herbs and bitters which he gave them to cure their diseases and sicknesses. He wanted such medicines to be at hand for all who needed them, so he

planted seeds of healing herbs: catnip, rattlesnake weed, horehound, and pennyroyal.

Time after time Johnny Appleseed would travel back over his own trail for hundreds of miles to visit his apple orchards and trim and prune them in order that they would bear more and better apples. This fruit was for anyone who wanted it. It was a gift to the hungry, a refreshment for the weary traveler, a symbol of good neighborliness and friendliness to men of all races as they came along the way.

Johnny Appleseed could hardly have chosen a better seed to plant and scatter widespread over the country. Apples have so many fine uses. Almost everyone eats them and enjoys their taste. You can eat them raw or cooked. They make fine jelly and applesauce. They are tasty in pies or dumplings, and they are delicious when baked and served with cream or ice cream. They are also used in salads. They are said to be good for one's health. They contain important minerals and are rich in vitamins. This is why the jingle: "An apple a day keeps the doctor away." You can also play games with apples, such as bobbing for them in water, trying to eat them as they hang on strings, or playing catch with them.

We do not know what text Johnny Appleseed was studying when he heard God's call to plant apple seeds. He might have thought about Paul's words in his letter to the Galatians when he said: "Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." At any rate this kind man decided to sow something that would be good for his fellows and would continue to serve them for years to come. Apple trees produce fruit, not just for a year, but for many,

many years. They produce not just a few apples but bushels and bushels of them, if the season is good.

What Johnny Appleseed did so many years ago caused people to think about God and about life. When we hear his story now, it leads us to the same kind of serious thinking. An apple seed is a small mite indeed. You can easily hide it in one of the creases in the palm of your hand. As you look at that tiny seed, what can you see? If you look only at the seed, you will not see very much. But if you look at the future through the seed with the help of your imagination, you will see wonderful things. In that tiny seed is a whole tree. It may become twelve, fifteen, or even twenty feet high. The trunk will grow larger and larger, and the branches spread wider and wider, year after year. It will have blossoms, leaves, and fruit.

Your imagination, no matter how big it is, cannot count all the apples that may grow on that tree in the many years to come. Neither can your imagination, no matter how far out you stretch it, picture all the people, men and women, boys and girls, who will enjoy eating the fruit from that tree.

Johnny planted apple seeds. He also planted many other seeds, for words and smiles and deeds also bear fruit. From the record it seems that he was careful always to plant good seed. His words were cheerful and kind, his acts were helpful, and he lived his life in faith.

Since all of us are planting some kind of seed every day, how important it is to ask ourselves the question: What kind of seed am I sowing as I go along the way?

Ideals with Faces

*I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have
believed.* —II Tim. 1:12

PEOPLE WHO WISH TO SEE AMERICA, AND WHO travel to various parts of the country on their vacations, usually include the Black Hills of South Dakota. There, twenty-two miles southwest of Rapid City, they visit Mount Rushmore National Memorial. If you have not already paid a visit to Mount Rushmore, you probably will some day. Whether or not you have been there in person, you have undoubtedly seen pictures of this unusual work of the sculptor's art.

Carved out of the solid rock of the mountain are four gigantic faces. These are likenesses of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt. To give you an idea of the huge size of these carvings of our four great American presidents, the head of Washington is 60 feet high. In terms of a building, the height of Washington's sculptured head, from the bottom of the chin to the top of the head, is as tall as a five-story building. This is higher than the Great Pyramid of Egypt. In fact the complete Rushmore Memorial is the largest work of carving to be found anywhere in the world. If the entire figures of the four

presidents were to be carved in proportion to the faces, they would stand as supergiants, 465 feet tall.

You would naturally suppose that such tremendous figures could be seen for quite a distance, and they can. As you approach on the highway, you can see the monument from many miles away. Then as you come nearer, you travel through tunnels. Each tunnel is like a telescope. The tunnels are all aimed straight at the monument; and as you ride through in the car, you see the great faces focused right before your eyes.

The idea back of this monument was suggested by the famous sculptor Gutzon Borglum. He believed that the greatness of America could be pictured by our national leaders and such a monument would remind all who saw it of our American ideals. He talked to many people before his plan was accepted. Then, by an act of Congress, he was given permission to proceed with his work in 1925. He and his helpers worked until his death in 1941, and then his son Lincoln Borglum continued the project. Of course it required many skilled artists. They worked with compressed-air drills as they hung in swings suspended over the face of the cliff.

The separate figures were unveiled as they were finished, but the monument as a whole has never been completed. The original plan was to include a carved statement of our national history from 1776 to the opening of the Panama Canal. This tablet was to be carved out of the solid rock just below the four faces. It would measure 80 by 120 feet. At present there is a great pile of stone chippings where the tablet is to be cut, and the monument has an unfinished appearance. It will prob-

ably be many more years before it is worked out according to the original plan.

Is this unusual national monument just a wonder work, or does it have meaning for Americans? I think it is very worth while. Mr. Borglum was thinking of the fact that people cannot see ideas and ideals. But they can see people who practice them.

The carved face of George Washington reminds us of the life of our first president. It also reminds us of the high ideals he stood for: truthfulness, self-sacrifice, and devotion to his country. If we have any doubt about the meaning of these virtues of good citizenship, we can read the biography of George Washington and see how he lived as a good citizen.

Abraham Lincoln stands for honesty, fair play, and freedom of opportunity for everyone regardless of color or race. We remember how he was honest to the very last penny. We also remember how he was determined that the black man should be free. He could not believe that God wanted one man to make a slave of another. Mr. Lincoln's own life proved to us that in such a free country as ours a poor boy can achieve a life worth while. As a boy, Lincoln lived in a three-sided log cabin. As a man, he lived in the White House. What he did, other boys can do; and many have since his day. He is a kind of symbol of America, the land of opportunity.

So too, with Jefferson and with Theodore Roosevelt. Throughout our national history every president and every great leader who has been the champion of some worthy idea or ideal has helped others to understand and achieve. Because great men have devoted their efforts and dedicated their lives to lofty purposes, these ideals

have been made alive and held high for all to see. Everyone has been helped to grasp the meaning and encouraged to live up to these ideals.

The need for people to demonstrate the meaning of ideals is particularly important in religion. Goodness is hard to describe, yet we can recognize it in good people. One day the psychologist William James was asked to give a definition of "spirituality." This is a big word and a big idea. It was difficult even for Dr. James to explain. He said that he could not define "spirituality" but could point to a man who had it—Phillips Brooks. Yes, the great preacher Phillips Brooks made the spiritual real in his own life.

Many of the statements about Christianity are hard to understand. Jesus did not expect us to be able to understand them all. He simply said: "Follow me." Paul explained his own faith by saying, "I know whom I have believed." Notice, he did not say *what* he believed, but *whom*. Our religion is not a set of rules, but a comradeship with our Christ. This is a religion all of us can accept, for we can accept the Master—and then follow him.

Keys

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.
—Matt. 16:19

THE GO-GETTERS CLASS OF JUNIORS WAS IN SERIOUS business session. The pastor had announced that the special program for the month was to be visitation evangelism. There was an opportunity for every member of the church to take part.

Mr. Horn, chairman of the board, had spoken to the Sunday school and said he felt this was the time for every Sunday-school class to organize a visiting campaign. He said every person who was a prospect for church membership should receive a personal invitation to accept Christ and join the church.

The method of the special program had been explained. It was simply this: All who were going visiting in the name of the church would come to the church on Sunday afternoon. There they would divide up into pairs and would be given names of two or three people. These were people who had been attending the church services as visitors. Now they were to be invited to become members. The prospect cards would be carefully selected so that boys and girls would call upon other boys and girls, young people would call upon young people, and adults upon adults.

The Go-Getters had always been ready to back the church in its programs, and this visitation program would be no exception. It was different, however, from any project they had yet undertaken. Could they do visiting? How does one make a church call?

These questions were answered by the pastor when the class in a body met with other classes and church members on Sunday afternoon. The pastor spoke on the subject: "Keys." He took his key case out of his pocket and held it up.

"Everyone here knows what these are, I am sure," he said. "Most of us carry several keys. Here I have the key to my house, the key to the church office, the key to my garage, and the key to my car. I'm glad a modern idea has come in keys. In olden times a key was often a foot long and weighed several pounds. Fancy trying to carry four or five such keys around in your pocket!

"But there are also other ideas about keys," he continued. "In the book of Luke I read about Jesus referring to the 'key of knowledge' which the lawyers had taken away from the people. On another occasion Jesus spoke to his disciples and said: 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.'

"So the thought comes to me that keys may open other things besides locks. There are other kinds of keys besides those made of metal. This afternoon I want to talk about one of these other kinds—the most important kind: key people."

The pastor said there were key people used of God to open doors of science and invention. Thomas Edison was such a keyman in electricity. He invented the electric light and the phonograph. Since his day, both the light

and the "talking machine" have been greatly improved; but Edison was a keyman in opening the door to their development.

Samuel Morse was the keyman of the telegraph, Marconi of the wireless and Alexander Graham Bell of the telephone. Since their time, so many changes have been made that the original instruments would hardly be recognized; but these men first opened the door to the use of electricity for carrying sound to distant places.

The Wright brothers were keymen in flying machines, and Charles Lindbergh was the keyman in transoceanic flight. There have also been keymen in electronics, radio, and television.

As the pastor said, there have been, and are, keymen in every field of service and endeavor; but he was especially interested in keymen in the kingdom of God. He reminded his hearers that Paul was such a keyman in the early church. He it was who organized churches throughout Asia. His preaching was the key to opening the understanding of thousands who accepted Christ as Saviour. His letters also proved to be keys for opening the doors of men's minds to the gospel and its meaning for their lives.

But Paul himself needed the help of a keyman to show him the way and give him a start in his great mission. That keyman was Barnabas. Because Paul, then called Saul, had been a persecutor of the Christians, they were afraid of him. This was true even after he had met Christ on the Damascus road and been changed from Christ's enemy to his follower and servant. Barnabas was the key which opened the door of opportunity for Paul. Barnabas had faith in Paul and befriended him. When

other Christians were afraid to be near Paul, Barnabas stood by him. He even asked him to come to the church at Antioch and preach there in a special meeting that lasted for a whole year.

So both Barnabas and Paul were keymen in the kingdom of God. So also were Peter and John and all the apostles as they went about telling others of Christ and his death on the cross for their salvation.

Then the pastor concluded: "Every person here is a kingdom-of-God key. There is some one just waiting for you to come and explain the gospel to him and invite him to come to Christ. You are the key to his understanding and his opportunity to find Christ. I am sure all of you will use your great privilege as keys to win these friends for Christ and his church."

Of course the Go-Getters wanted to do their part. They were given cards with names of boys and girls. They had a happy time making these calls, and they were so successful in winning new friends for Christ that the Go-Getters were given a new name. Their class name was changed, not because they intended to change it, but just because everyone started calling them by the new name. Yes, they became the Key Class simply because that is what they really were.

See the Birds!

Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. —Matt. 6:26

WHEN JESUS TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES A LESSON FROM the birds, I believe he was speaking about swallows. Of course any bird could teach us a lesson about trusting in the heavenly Father, but swallows seem to fit the text best. Jesus said: "Look at the birds of the air." Most song birds rest in trees or on the ground. They take their food from the branches and leaves of trees and from the earth. Swallows, on the other hand, seldom alight in a tree or on the ground. They take all their food on the wing. They eat insects and bugs of many varieties which they catch as they fly rapidly with their mouths open. They even drink by scooping up the water with their beaks as they skim low over the surface of lake or river.

Swallows are familiar birds all over the world. They appear in practically every country on the globe. Of course there are many varieties. I'm sure you have seen many kinds yourselves. Bank swallows make their nests in holes in the sides of cliffs; and, sometimes, when on a hike, you may discover a large colony of them. Barn swallows plaster their nests up under the rafters of barns and other buildings. The other day we found a swallow's nest right over the door of the motel cabin where we

spent the night. Chimney swallows hang their nests inside our chimneys and seem to drop from the sky as they dart down to their nesting places.

The most familiar swallow of all is the purple martin. These birds build their nests in the bird houses we make and set up on poles in our back yards. An interesting fact about martins is that they like to come back to the same box year after year, and they usually arrive on the same day each year. The young martins will often come back with their parents, and then there are many families of martins nesting in the apartment house on the high pole. In fact we are told that martins like to build their nests close together, and as many as fifty families may live in the same community.

Martins are happy little creatures. They are constantly singing, chirping, trilling, and chattering. When a number of them sit on the martin house and twitter away, it sounds like neighbors talking over the back fence. They never seem to get into any serious squabbles. If they do have a little misunderstanding, it is soon over and they are warbling in harmony again.

A great occasion is the flight school for the young martins. When it is time for the young to learn to fly, the whole clan gathers around to give encouragement. The older birds will circle and dive, zoom high and dart low, to show the youngsters how much fun it is to skim through the air. They then will alight on the roof of the house and nod to the young birds to make a try. The young birds will look down and shake their heads and push back from the edge. At first they are afraid to take off. Again the parent birds and their neighbors will dart away and swing around the martin house, chirping gaily

as much as to say: "See how easy it is. You can do it if you try."

Finally, after a great deal of coaxing, the young birds try their wings. They are awkward and usually land on the ground. Then the older birds swoop over them to encourage them to try again and keep chattering and flying in circles until the young birds get off the ground.

The days and weeks before the flight south are happy days of preparation. There is a convention every evening. All the martins in the neighborhood come to one spot and have a wonderful time. They fly and chatter and instruct the young in more expert wingmanship and sit on the telephone wires and make their plans for the long journey to the south country. Those who band birds tell us that martins winter as far south as the southern tip of South America. Then, of course, there are others that do not go so far. Some prefer to winter in Florida or some other southern state or Central America or Brazil.

Martins are very helpful birds. They like lots of company, and they band together both to enjoy a good time and to protect their common interests. Farmers like to have them around because they eat insects that are harmful to the crops. They also drive off the hawks and crows that endanger the young chicks. Although martins are small birds, they are feared by these larger birds when they attack in numbers. When a hawk or crow approaches a martin box, the alarm signal is sounded and the brave little birds rush to the defense of their homes. They make it so disagreeable for the invader that he is glad to scurry away and will not likely return to that neighborhood while the martins are around.

The lesson which Jesus drew from the birds is God's care of them. He said: "Your heavenly Father feeds them." And he added: "Are you not of more value than they?" Jesus also implied that birds do not worry and fret about problems as people do. They live from day to day, depending upon God to take care of them. Of course birds do not think about such matters, but men and women, boys and girls, do. We should not only think but also be thankful. Instead of worrying, we should be more trustful and patient.

The happy songs of the birds are the melodies of little creatures living in harmony with God in the world of nature. They invite us to be glad and sing, for "this is our Father's world."

30

Pencil Points on What Is Important

Everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving; for then it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

—I Tim. 4:4-5

YOU OFTEN HEAR A PERSON SAY: "THAT IS COMMON as a lead pencil." If by "common" one means that it is everywhere and all kinds of people use it, then the expression is correct. If we infer that it is commonplace or ordinary, then the statement is wrong. Pencils are uncommon

and extraordinary. This is true both in their making and in their use.

In the first place, a lead pencil is not made of lead at all. The writing part of a pencil is graphite, not lead. In the days of ancient history the Egyptians used lead for marking and writing, but that practice has long since been discontinued.

In the early days of pencil making, a mine in England, the Borrowdale mine, produced graphite of such pure quality it could be cut into sticks and used for writing. Usually these graphite sticks were wrapped with string, to protect the fingers from soil, and the string was unwound as the stick was worn down. But Borrowdale graphite was not plentiful enough to supply material for all the pencils needed, and so another process was developed. A Frenchman by the name of Conte found that graphite could be mixed with clay and produce a material better fitted for pencils than the pure graphite first used. By such a mixture any grade of softness or hardness can be obtained. So now, when we buy pencils, we may get a soft lead, a hard lead, or a medium one, and all the degrees of softness or hardness in between. But something more needs to be said, both about the graphite and the clay. And this brings us to the fact that pencils are international. Yes, good pencils require materials that come from several countries in different parts of the world. The best graphites come from Madagascar, Ceylon, and Mexico. These graphites are mixed with clay that comes from the Shippache mine at Klingenberg in the American zone in Germany. The clay from this German mine is of just the proper greasiness to produce good writing graphite.

To grind the clay and graphite and properly mix it, a tumbling process is used. The clay and graphite are pomeled and ground by flint pebbles placed in the mixing machine. It has been found that the best pebbles for this purpose come from the beaches of Denmark, Belgium, and France.

Now for the proper wood to make the best pencils, the manufacturers must have wood that is strong enough not to break yet soft enough to sharpen easily. Cedar answers these requirements, and the very best cedar for this purpose comes from the red cedar trees growing on the Sierra Nevada mountains along the west coast of the United States.

So you see a good lead pencil is a symbol of international co-operation. Graphite from Madagascar or Ceylon is mixed with clay from Germany by using pebbles from Denmark, and then the finished writing material is enclosed in red cedar from the United States.

One other item ought to be mentioned about the manufacture of pencils. You might think, from looking at a pencil, that a hole was drilled through the wood and the graphite stick inserted. No, pencils are made like sandwiches. Little grooves are cut in two flat pieces of cedar. The graphite leads are put in the grooves, and the wood halves are glued together. Then the wood is cut into individual pencils and tooled to shape. Usually eight or more pencils are made in this way at the same time.

Not only are pencils uncommon and extraordinary in their making, but also they can be very important in their use. Like anything else, they can be used carelessly or thoughtlessly and even for harmful purposes. Many peo-

ple doodle with a pencil while they are talking over the telephone or waiting for someone or even while sitting in church! But we like to think of the really big things that have been done and can be done with the help of a pencil.

We are told that Abraham Lincoln scribbled his great Gettysburg address with a pencil on the back of an envelope. Whether he used an envelope or not, it is true that most important messages and addresses are first jotted down with a pencil and later typewritten or printed.

Not only are words of importance written with pencils, but also plans of all kinds are worked out with pencil diagrams and drawings. When people are discussing great issues and trying to solve difficult problems, they usually do a lot of figuring and sketching with pencils. As you think of decisions, affecting millions of people and the destinies of nations, that have been made in the capitals of the world, you may know the diplomats and their secretaries did a lot of scribbling with pencils before they arrived at any definite programs of action.

As plans of action are first sketched with pencils, so also plans for buildings, small and large, are first drawn with pencils. Architects make pencil sketches that can be erased and modified before they decide on the lines they wish to make permanent. Then these lines are inked in with drawing pens. So the great cathedrals of the world, the factories and business buildings, and the homes of people around the globe were first sketched with pencils.

When Paul wrote his letter to Timothy and gave him good advice about many things, he reminded him not to think of anything as common or unimportant. Very

simple things may be used in unusual ways, and very ordinary things can serve extraordinary purposes. As he said to Timothy: "Everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving; for then it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer."

The lowly pencil should be received with thanksgiving and used to serve the Lord.

31

Doing Your Top-Level Best

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might.

—Eccl. 9:10

KENNETH WANTED A JOB FOR THE SUMMER. SCHOOL would be out in a few weeks, and he did not want to loaf around and do nothing. He liked to be busy, and he was never happy when he was just waiting or going nowhere in particular. Then, too, there were a number of things he wanted that cost money. He did not feel right in asking his father to buy them for him when he could work and save money for them himself. So he looked through the help-wanted ads in the morning paper. Sure enough there was one office advertising for an office boy.

When school was out that afternoon, Kenneth headed straight for the tall office building downtown and was soon on the elevator on his way to the twelfth floor. At

the office number given in the want ad he found a long line of boys waiting in the hallway. He went up to the information desk, and the young lady there asked his name and wrote it on a card. "Just go and stand in the back of that line," she said, "and when your turn comes to see Mr. Brown, give him this card."

Well, it looked like the job would be filled long before Kenneth had a chance to talk with Mr. Brown. He decided, however, to wait and see what would happen. Before long the door opened and a boy came out. He pulled his cap down over his eyes and looked rather glum. Evidently he had not succeeded in getting the job. The boy at the head of the line was told he could now go in to see the manager. After several minutes he too came out and, without saying a word to anyone, walked out the door and toward the elevator.

It was almost closing time when Kenneth finally got to the head of the line and took his card in to Mr. Brown. He had wondered what it would be like to be interviewed by the boss. He tried to guess why all the other boys had been turned down. Having seen one after another go in, stay a few minutes, and then come out looking very much disappointed or even disgusted, he was not so much discouraged as curious.

Mr. Brown was a very friendly man and seemed glad to meet Kenneth. "All right, my boy," he said, "I want to see how well you can drive a nail."

He picked up a block of wood, started a nail in the center of the block, and placed it on the floor. Then, picking up a sawed-off broom handle from his desk, he said, "Drive the nail into the wood with this stick, holding it by the very end."

It looked easy. Kenneth took the stick, grasped it firmly, and swung at the nail. He missed the nail completely. He swung again and knocked the nail out of the block and across the room. Mr. Brown started another nail in the block, and Kenneth tried again. He hit the nail a few times and drove it part way into the block and then hit it a glancing blow and bent it flat.

"Do you want to try again?" asked Mr. Brown.

"It looked easy," said Kenneth, "but I was fooled. I guess I can't drive a nail with a broomstick."

"You did your best," said Mr. Brown. "Sorry you were unable to pass our test for the job today, but perhaps some other time we may have something you can do. Good day."

Like all the other boys Kenneth, disappointed and puzzled, went out of the door and down the hall toward the elevator. What kind of job was this anyway? Why would an office boy need to drive nails with a broomstick? Couldn't he use a hammer? Why should they need to drive nails in such an office? It was too much for Kenneth. He was downright baffled.

That evening at home Kenneth talked with his father and mother about his visit to the office. At first father and mother both thought it rather unusual that Mr. Brown had required such a peculiar test of the boys. Then Kenneth's father said with a smile: "I know Brown fairly well. He is a pretty keen fellow, and he is known as a good judge of people. He claims he can always pick a winner. I've been told his methods are sometimes what we call unorthodox. I believe Brown was just testing the mettle of you boys. He wanted to see how easily you give up. He also wanted to see if you would accept a challenge to

learn to do something you were unable to do when you first tried it. If I were you, Kenneth, I would practice driving nails with a stick until I could do it without a miss; and then I would go back there and demonstrate to Mr. Brown."

This is exactly what Kenneth did. Before he went to bed, he found a block of wood in the basement and an old broom which mother said was worn out and was of no further use. He sawed off the handle, got some nails, and started practicing driving them with the stick.

Early the next morning Kenneth was up swinging his broomstick at the nails, and after school was out that afternoon he worked at it until suppertime. By evening he was able to drive nail after nail without a miss.

He looked in the paper, but the want ad was not there. He was disappointed, because he was afraid some other boy had been hired.

"I'll go down there tomorrow after school and show Mr. Brown that I can drive nails with a broom handle even if he has filled the job," said Kenneth.

After school next day Kenneth was back at the office. Mr. Brown was delighted to see him. When Kenneth asked if a boy had been hired, he said: "Why no, not yet. I am still waiting to find just the right lad."

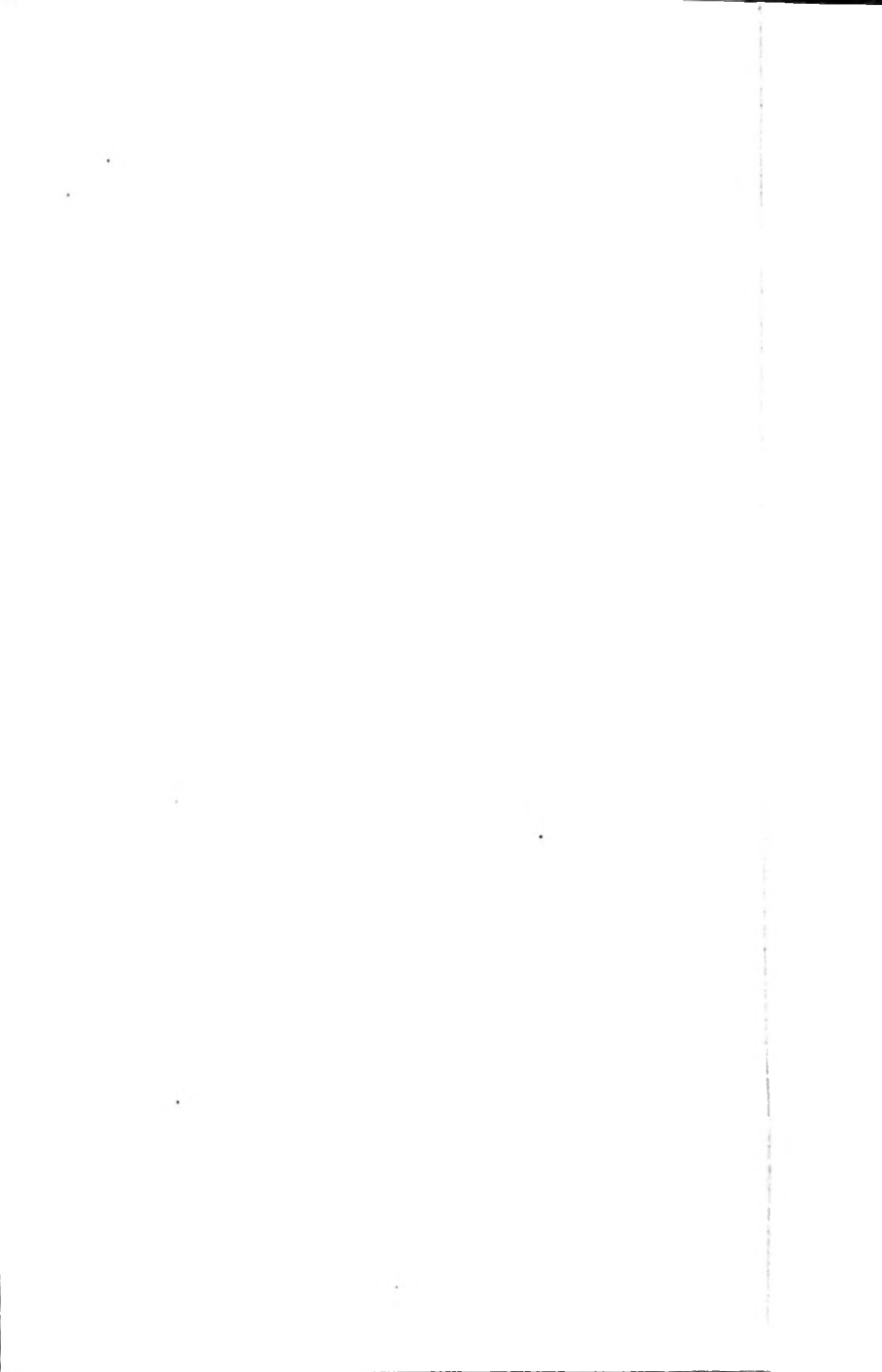
Then Kenneth asked to be allowed to try the nail driving with the broomstick again. The block was soon in place and a nail started. Kenneth took the stick and with a few well-aimed strokes drove the nail clear in to the head. Then he drove another nail and still another.

"That is enough," said Mr. Brown. "You are the lad I have been looking for. Long ago I took as my motto a text I learned at Sunday school as a boy. It is found in

the book of Ecclesiastes, and it says: 'Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might.' You may not have known that text, but you are that kind of boy. You have determination and stick-to-it-iveness. You will make a success of this job and any other job you undertake if you keep up that fine spirit."

This was a long time ago, and it was Kenneth's first job. He is vice-president of the business now, but he has never forgotten the broomstick test and the text that went with it: "Do it with your might."





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