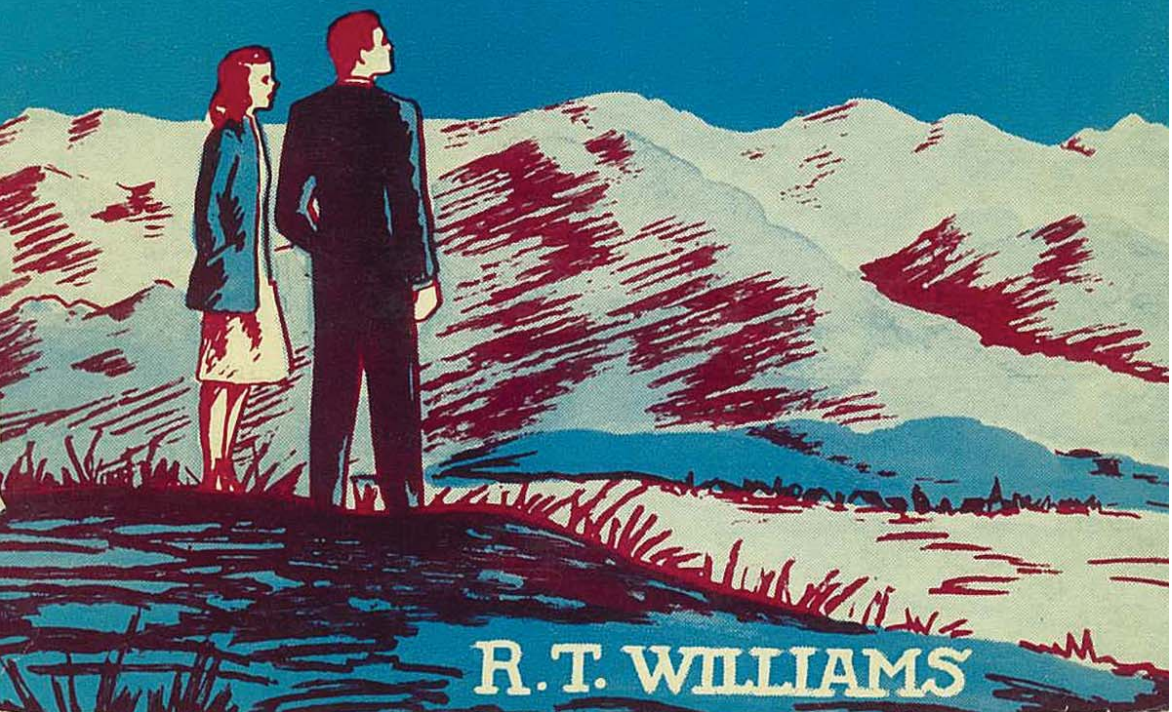


Life's Supreme Choices



R. T. WILLIAMS

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by

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FOREWORD

Years of experience in public life have brought me into direct contact with many people who have missed the way. Some of them have given up the fight, while others have continued their struggles and efforts to rebuild the wrecks they have made of their lives. Any tragedy is regrettable, especially when it has been the result of one's own mistakes that were entirely avoidable.

I have wished many times that I might have had the opportunity to give advice and help to young people facing those early crises in life. Thousands of young people blunder through their early years without much information or inspiration, depending only upon good luck, good fortune, or other uncertain influences to help them through an unknown and uncharted future. Some do well for no apparent reason, while others become confused and entangled in a mesh of mistakes, unhappy alliances, and sins, from which it is well-nigh impossible for God or man to extricate them.

One has only to open his eyes to behold the sad cases of both young and old who have missed the way in the most important decisions of their lives. They need help and they must have it. These wrecks should be repaired, but how much better it would have been to prevent the wrecks. To bring back the one who has gone astray is good, but how much more important it is to keep him from taking the wrong road. Mistakes should not be considered hopeless. However, the number of those wrecking their lives through wrong choices should be and must be greatly reduced. Hence the reason for this little message.

In the following chapters, we plan to deal with the responsibility involved in making choices, fundamental

and incidental mistakes which are made, and finally, some suggestions and principles to guide young people safely through the crises of their lives. If we can accomplish something to this end, we shall be greatly rewarded.

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INTRODUCTION

It was my privilege to spend many pleasant and rewarding hours in the companionship of Dr. R. T. Williams. Several years before his death he frequently discussed a book manuscript on which he was working. He described it as a message directed particularly to young people featuring the importance of right choices. I remember as though it were yesterday how he would emphasize the three major areas of choice—religion, vocation, and matrimony. He would declaim on the tragedy of a mistake in any one of these fields: the importance of harmony, balance, and fulfillment in these vital departments of life.

He was so right! There isn't any one thing in this complicated business of living more important than right choices. Major choices once made are so irrevocable; they have such a tremendous bearing on the ever recurring daily choices in more incidental fields.

I waxed enthusiastic as he went over his general outline, as he developed his major thesis. Many months passed. I spoke to him about it. I inquired the reason for holding up the completed material. I was eager to get the book published. I felt that in one sense it would be Dr. Williams' most important contribution to the church to give its great group of young people this stimulating, challenging message. But the author was not to be hurried. He spoke of certain sections that needed to be polished a bit. He mentioned certain parts that needed to be strengthened. He wanted it to be right.

After he passed away Mrs. Williams and R. T., Jr., presented to the Publishing House the manuscript which Dr. Williams apparently had completed during the last months of his earthly labors. It is quite fitting that his

last published message should be to young people. His interest in them never waned. To thousands of them in his own denomination and in other churches he was an outstanding Christian hero, a stalwart leader, an example to emulate. I feel that this book as none other written by Dr. Williams will carry on his ministry and his influence in ever widening circles until time shall be no more.

P. H. LUNN

CHAPTER I

THE PRIVILEGE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF CHOICE

The glory of the human personality is the power to think, to love, and to will. The comparative value of the three functions of mind mentioned need not be considered here. In reality they constitute the person, the real self, the ego, expressed in three different ways, in thought, in affection, and in willing. Intellect is not an entity, neither is love nor will. The person himself is the entity expressing himself in thought, in affection, and in choice. The intellect sees things and evaluates them, the heart loves or hates them, and the will chooses or rejects them.

Without power to reason, one would be worthless; without love, one would be cold; without will, he would be ineffective and incapable of supervising or directing. Herein lies the glory of mankind, that we have the power within us to think, to love, and to choose.

Is a man free to fix his own destiny? This is an old question, and from it three distinct theories have been developed, two of which are untrue.

First, there are those who hold that God does everything for man and consequently he has nothing to do for himself. His future is fixed. He is predestinated to success or failure, to eternal life or to eternal damnation. Nothing that he can ever do will change this set plan. This theory is obviously wrong. It is contrary to the Scriptures, to logic, and to human experience.

The second theory is that man does everything for himself and has no need of God at all. To pray and to call upon God to help him work out his destiny is to

confess both weakness and a lack of real manhood. Man is a master workman with ample ability to do for himself all that will ever need to be done. This theory, like the first, is untenable. It cannot stand the test of reasonable analysis. Without divine revelation, man has no worthwhile ideals, for ideals are a by-product of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The dearth of ideals among the heathen is a demonstration of this fact. Even if a man had high standards, he would, in himself, be without power to realize them to the fullest extent. Natural man cannot orient himself to a standard of the highest ideals.

The third view, and the right one, is that God and man co-operate in man's salvation. God does not do for a man what he can do for himself. Neither does man do that which lies solely within the power of God. The Bible statement that we are "workers together with God" has a wide application, both to personal salvation and to world evangelism.

The promises of the Bible given to man have both human and divine aspects. They contain both an offer from God and a demand upon man as conditions for their fulfillment. The position that God will do everything for a man without human co-operation is utterly untenable. From beginning to end the Bible presents God as a great healer, a divine physician, but He always requires that man co-operate with Him in the application of the cure.

"Behold, I set before you life and death; choose ye this day whom ye will serve." Note the word "will." The implication is inescapable. One can make a right choice or a wrong choice. This is a God-given power possessed by all, the responsibility of which cannot be denied.

Let us consider further the question of the freedom of the will. As all know, this has been a matter of

bitter controversy both in theology and philosophy for generations, for it is both a theological and a philosophical question. On both sides of the controversy have appeared brilliant and conscientious men and women. It is most remarkable to some of us that any controversy should be necessary at this point, for it seems logically clear to us that every man is free to make his own choices in life.

Those that hold to the freedom of the will are called "Freedomists," and those who deny the freedom of the will are known as "Necessitarians." The Necessitarians hold that certain causes will produce certain results and that both cause and result are predetermined and fixed. No power from within or from without can change either the cause or the result. This is a materialistic philosophy and ends in the blind alley of fatalism with its paralysis of energy and thought. How can anyone believe that ends are fixed, that causes are predetermined, and still have any inspiration for personal initiative? The encouraging fact is that those who claim to believe this view do not follow it to its final conclusion in practice. It is a happy fact that in this matter they live a higher standard than they preach.

Some people hold that the fall was tantamount to a complete loss of this freedom of will. They believe that man not only lost his purity of nature and happy relationship with God in Adam's sin, but also his power of choice. The claim is that the depraved nature which resulted from the fall, abrogated freedom of choice.

It is readily admitted that a bad nature influences strongly in the direction of wrong choices, and that such an evil tendency is not easily subdued, but to call a bad nature an irresistible force is going too far. The will is subject to influences both from within and from without, but it is neither forced nor compelled by them,

otherwise man would be incapable of either vice or virtue and, therefore, not subject to rewards and punishments. In other words, if we are forced to act in a certain way, without power of contrary choice, we are not morally responsible for our state of being nor for our acts. In such a case, a man could not be justly punished for wrongdoing nor rewarded meritoriously for good deeds. This view destroys the very foundation of a moral universe and strikes at the nature and justice of God.

One of the common examples referred to by determinists, to prove their contention that the will is not free but forced, is that of Pharaoh. This statement is quoted concerning God's dealing with him: "God hardened Pharaoh's heart." Those who quote this phrase ignore other statements that are recorded concerning the matter. For instance, the Bible states that Pharaoh himself was responsible, that he hardened his own heart. These statements would appear to be in conflict, but not so when rightly understood.

God gave the king two alternatives: one to let the children of Israel go, the other to refuse to let them go. Pharaoh chose the latter. Could he have done the other? It is perfectly evident that he could have. Determinists would say that there were predetermined forces from within or from without that so hardened his heart as to make it impossible for him to answer "yes" instead of "no."

The king rejected light and the will of God. The rejection of that light hardened his heart. This was the natural consequence. God hardened the heart of Pharaoh only in the sense that He gave him light, which he definitely rejected. Choosing to do right and to walk in divine light makes the spirit of man tender. Rejecting light and the appeals of God hardens one's spiritual

sensibilities. God gives the opportunity for choice, but this is far from forcing or compelling. An open door affords an opportunity to enter but does not compel entrance.

Paul faced a similar situation on the plains of Syria near the city of Damascus, but instead of rejecting light, he surrendered and became the leader in Christian thought and Christian philosophy for all time. Who would dare say Paul could not have made a different choice from the one he made?

It was my privilege one day in traveling between Jerusalem and Damascus to stand upon the very spot where it is believed Paul made his dramatic surrender to Jesus Christ. I felt that I was standing upon sacred ground. Here something had happened that rolled back the tides of superstition, ignorance, fear, and sin, and gave new hope and new courage to a struggling human race. True, there were influences working upon Paul. In his mind was the memory of the time when he stood near the wall of Jerusalem holding on his arm the coats of the persecutors while they stoned Stephen, God's saint, to death. The words of Stephen, "Forgive them, they know not what they do," were still ringing in his ears.

As Paul rode his horse from Jerusalem through Judea, Samaria, and Galilee into the upper plains of Syria, the Holy Spirit had talked to him, and when he heard a noise and saw a light he recognized the voice of Jesus Christ. The response was, "What wilt thou have me to do?" Here was a surrendered will. All of these happenings had an influence upon the will of Paul, but none compelled him to decide as he did. There is an ego, the selfhood in man, that speaks the last word after hearing the arguments for and against. I, myself, can say "yes" or "no."

Our own inner voice tells us that we are free to choose, to accept or reject. In consequence we are responsible for the measure of manhood we finally develop and the life we ultimately live. Everyone knows for himself, without being told, that he can create vice or virtue by his own decisions and acts; that he can do good or evil; keep the law or break it; and that he deserves punishment for wrong acts and reward for right conduct. What we know for ourselves should have more weight with us than some theory that needs to be reinforced by argument and clothed in fancy phrases.

Some believe that, since people are often unable to carry out decisions, this proves that there is no freedom of the will. If one decides to kill a certain man, he is a murderer in heart though he be deterred from the act by his own inability or by some interference that might arise. If a man look upon a woman to lust after her saying, "I would if I could," he has already committed adultery in his heart, though he may never have the opportunity to carry out his decision in a completed act. This is clearly the teaching of Jesus.

The will is about the last thing given up. Jesus looked upon the lame man, who lay helpless at the pool, knowing that he had been there in that condition thirty-eight years unable to walk. Jesus asked him this question, "Wilt thou be healed?" The man could not walk, but he could will to do so. He could not carry his bed, but he could will to do it. He could not heal himself, but he could will to be healed. This was the one power he could exercise. He looked up at the Master and said, "I will." The result was that he was healed and became a living example of the work of the Great Physician.

The will should not be thought of as a mere faculty of the mind or some independent function but rather as the selfhood, the ego, the person himself in action.

Will involves purpose, therefore it contributes moral quality to an act or to a decision. We are responsible for what we think and for the direction of our affections inasmuch as we are the masters of our own selves, the directors and supervisors of our characters, of our lives, and of our eternal destiny. God has made us thus and from that responsibility there is no escape. Facts must be faced frankly. The mind is subject to the will and can be directed by it. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." A man can think as he wills to think. It is also true that the affections are subject to the will, indirectly, through the power of attention. Thus, both the mind and the heart are controlled by the will.

The will is a unit, not divided parts. One may have two or more desires in conflict, but the will is never divided against itself. When the will takes sides with one desire against others, the will with that desire becomes master.

The will is the force back of faith or of unbelief. Those assertions in Scripture that man is damned for his unbelief are very disconcerting unless properly understood and rightly applied. For example, we read in John 3:18b, "He that believeth not is condemned already because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Mark 16:16 states, "He that believeth not shall be damned." John 16:8, 9 adds, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin because they believe not on me." There must be moral responsibility attributed to man in these statements and for some reason.

This condemnation could be made for only one of two reasons, ignorance or willful disobedience. It would seem unreasonable to suppose that one would be condemned for being ignorant of Christ, having had no opportunity for light. Ignorance, unless willful, could

hardly be the basis of condemnation. In some way the will is involved in the condemnation mentioned in these scriptures. The unbelief for which men are damned could not be caused by lack of light, but by a wrong attitude of mental rebellion against the light. Jesus asked this question: "Canst thou believe?" The answer was, "Lord, help thou mine unbelief." Here is a question of ignorance, not willful unbelief. The man meant to say, "I want to believe. Help me to believe. I am willing to believe. If I am ignorant, give me light; I am not rebellious. Lord help my unbelief." The man received help because he was yielded. The promise is that we shall know the doctrine if we will to do His will. If the will assumes the right attitude, the Holy Spirit can enlighten the mind and reach the heart. Here again the will is master and seriously responsible. The will is the power given to man to co-operate with God or to refuse to do so.

There is a divine plan for every life. God is a Father and loves His children with a deeper affection than man is known to have for his own offspring. An earthly father, who is normal and human, will spare no means to plan for and make possible the best things for his own son or daughter. Would God, our Heavenly Father, do less? God's plans for us are made for our own good as well as for the general plan into which we are to be fitted. His will is best for us, for back of His will is infinite love, wisdom, and unlimited power.

The passion of every young person should be to find the will of God for his life both for God's glory and for his own well-being and happiness. To save an old man from the gutter is merely to save a soul, but to save a young man from making some terrible mistake is to save a life as well, the value of which is inestimable.

Let no man blame another individual or some blind

force for his own mistakes and sins. There are hindrances, to be sure, but each one is a sovereign of his own destiny and can hew out a kingdom for himself in co-operation with God. "I delight to do thy will." "I come to do the will of him that sent me." These expressions reveal the attitude that should be assumed by every young man or woman toward God.

It is never safe to drift, to leave things to blind force, or to uncertain fortune, but it is safe to seek the will of God and do it. This should be done in both the incidental and the fundamental choices of life. It should not be overlooked that indecision is weakness and unrest. There is a certain amount of comfort of mind and heart in coming to a decision, in settling a question. The comfort is only short lived unless the decision is made on the right side with a right motive. Man is so constituted that he must decide and cannot be happy until a decision has been made. Is this not sufficient reason for believing in the freedom of the will and in human responsibility? When one decides for the right there is not only the natural comfort resulting from the act itself, but the added consolation of feeling that endless reward will come from that decision if not in this life in the life that is to be.

While one often shudders at the responsibility of exercising the will, he feels inexpressible joy when he knows that he has exercised this power rightly and has earned the approval of God. Man is the controller of his own destiny; he waves the scepter of power over his own life. This prerogative is the gift of God and must be wisely used.

As young people stand at the threshold of life and look into an uncertain future, not knowing what is in store for them, they should realize that much depends upon what they themselves do in adjusting themselves

to that unknown future. They should understand that no destiny can be given to them as a gift. The best life must be worked out through a careful and conscientious process between themselves and God by the exercise of their own choices. They should understand that no force or power on earth can lead them in the right direction if they refuse to follow, and that just as truly no influence is strong enough to compel them to do wrong. They, themselves, must decide.

In the chapters to follow we shall try to discuss more at length the crisis choices young people must make.

CHAPTER II

TWO GROUPS OF CHOICES

The human will is involved both in the larger aspects of life, and in the smallest details. Much that we do is more or less automatic, such as turning the wheel of an automobile when driving, putting food into our mouths, or walking. Many of our acts are due to habit. This does not diminish the fact that the will is involved, for it had to do with the formation of the habit and the training of the muscles for the automatic action. Furthermore, the will has power to interfere with any or all of our voluntary acts.

All of our willful acts are wise or unwise, right or wrong, and we are responsible for those acts inasmuch as we could have chosen to do otherwise than we did. In a lifetime a human being makes millions of choices and gives little thought to their significance.

To get at the real meaning of our choices it is necessary to classify them. They all fall naturally into two groups; namely, incidental choices and fundamental choices. Of the former there are millions. Of the latter there are but four—no more.

Since there are many incidental matters that must be attended to and incidental decisions that must be made, it is evident that one may have a large aggregate of wise decisions recorded in his favor or a huge sum total of mistakes chalked up against him.

Let us consider this group of incidental choices. This group is ever present with us and extends into each activity of our lives. If one needs groceries one decides the store to which one will go, the items one will buy,

the price one is willing to pay, the street one will travel on in going to and from the store, whether one will ride or walk, pay cash for the goods or buy on account. These are all incidental questions, therefore the decisions, whether wise or unwise, may not be very far-reaching in ultimate effect.

There is seemingly no limit to incidental blunders inasmuch as incidental choices are innumerable, but the contrast with the major choices of life is illustrated by the following incident. A person once said to me, "I have made a thousand mistakes and I make them every day." "Yes," I replied, "and if they are incidental you may make more than that, but you have not made that number of fundamental mistakes inasmuch as there are only a few fundamental choices that one can make in a whole lifetime." This distinction must not be overlooked.

How many incidental mistakes can one make and yet succeed? That is an important question but difficult to answer specifically. However, this much can be said that the average in incidental decisions must be somewhere above the line that divides between wisdom and folly. That is, one must make fewer bad choices than good ones. The larger the average on the side of wisdom, the greater the success, and the more mistakes the greater the failure. Is it not well, therefore, that each person carefully watch himself in the small things that make up his life? One should not make too many blunders, even though such blunders be purely incidental. Enough snowflakes can fall, though each is small, to paralyze traffic and bury a city.

We pass over the group of incidental choices with this brief mention to give more emphasis to the second group, the fundamental choices. Let no one speak lightly of mistakes in this group, for here none can be made

without the partial or total wrecking of one's life. When, therefore, we speak of mistakes, we may well hope that they will occur in the first list and never in the second.

As has been said, no one can make more than four fundamental mistakes in a lifetime. That is absolutely the limit, but, sad to say, every one of these four is far-reaching and may handicap or eternally damn the individual. The price is too great to pay for any one of these four mistakes, therefore carefully watch these fundamental choices of your human life.

Happy is that man or woman who, at the end of life, can stand in retrospection, as the sun sinks in the deep west, and the shadows gather, and say, "I have made no fundamental mistake." Is this possible? Yes, to every one this is possible, though not so probable, for many do not take time to measure and evaluate things before choosing and acting.

We have made no effort to name the incidental things that call for choices, as they are infinite in number, but we can and shall name and emphasize the ones that are fundamental; namely, the choice of an education, the choice of a career, the choice of companions, and choice in religion.

It is obvious to any thinking person that even after *one of these fundamental choices has been made wisely*, it is yet possible for any number of incidental mistakes and blunders to be made afterward. For example, one chooses a career, such as farming, and chooses a mate for life companionship. These fundamental choices open the way to a lifetime of effort. In these years thousands of incidental matters will be met with and decided upon, and in these decisions many blunders may be made.

Could one safely miss his way at any of these crises? Who can afford to make a mistake in preparing for life?

Who can risk a mistake in the matter of a career? Who can afford to blunder in the choice of companionship and marriage? Who would want to meet God, having missed his way religiously?

Not all will be safely guided through these crises, but many can be helped, and it is for these that this little book is being written. If through reading these pages, one young man or young woman can be saved from making any one of these possible mistakes, I shall be happy and feel that my effort has not been wasted. The following chapters are devoted to these fundamental choices in the order presented above. May we enter into these chapters with open minds and hearts. There is a message for every one, regardless of age or of the number of decisions already made. Even if it were too late to get help for oneself, it would not be too late to prepare oneself to help others who are now traveling these roads.

CHAPTER III

CHOOSING AN EDUCATION

By choosing an education we do not mean that one is offered something tangible or visible such as a bushel of apples or a ten-dollar bill. Education means far more than this. It is the development of one's character to certain standards and the preparation for some worthy career. This may not be a full definition but it is adequate for our present purpose.

It has been said that our personal assets may be divided into three groups, natural resources, native ability, and education. The first two are fixed and incapable of increase, while the third, alone, may be changed. Our natural resources, the tools and commodities with which we have to work in life, are restricted in variety and number. Our native ability, that with which we are born, has fixed limits. Heredity sets definite limits upon us and no application of science or philosophical principles can shove out the circle of limitations. With education, however, such is not the case. Here is a realm about which no boundaries can ever be placed. Each achievement in the field forms but a temporary boundary from which one advances into other and unexplored realms of accomplishment. No person's character reaches the limit of possible development nor is his preparation for service and life to a point beyond which he could not go. Who has ever claimed to have reached a place within or without, where he could honestly rest contented, with no desire or plan for further achievements? No, we are finite, ever struggling toward infinity, happy in the struggle, but never willing to stop and say it is enough.

The mere mention of education invariably turns the attention to schools and rightly so. Here education is the chief emphasis and here it reaches its highest ends. Every young person should go to school if it is at all possible. The price one pays in going is never so high as that paid for failing to go.

No previous age has ever offered the opportunities to attend school and to get an education that this one offers. This fact is too obvious to be questioned. But even so, there are some who are denied the advantages of a college or even of a high school education. This, however, should not prevent one from becoming educated. The schoolroom is the first choice, of course, but there is a second choice, the school of life, where one acquires an education as he lives, gathering and developing knowledge on the journey. There is a way to build the wagon, as it were, while one rides—not so easy, but possible. Some of the outstanding men of the world have gone to school but little and yet they are highly educated. Abraham Lincoln read before the flickering fire at night, handicapped but not defeated. Few men have had a greater grasp of life and a better understanding of men or have made a greater contribution to national existence and to civilization than Lincoln. His keen mind, his ambitious soul, his passionate interest in life, caused him to grow and to gather to himself resources overlooked by many who had the native ability beyond his.

Note for a moment the advantages for education we have today, such as the free library, the radio, the newspaper, the magazine, quick and easy transportation. No one need be ignorant any longer; only the blind eye fails to see; only the deaf ear fails to hear. The world is full of beauty and the "air is full of education." No man has an excuse to remain the same size from day to day mentally or spiritually. All can push out the horizon and

live a bigger life tomorrow than they did today or yesterday.

Education involves a philosophy of life. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." This conception includes more than a passing thought. In education one's thinking takes definite form in some system of thought and philosophy for character and activity. As a man thinketh now, tomorrow, and every day, as he evaluates and relates things and puts purpose and motive into them, so is he. This is education, and to fail here is to risk failure almost everywhere. Education, in a broad sense, means preparation to live. To ignore that preparation is a fatal blunder, a fundamental mistake.

But why make a mistake in this sector of one's life? Is it necessary? I doubt it. Education in its broad sense lies within the reach of everyone. It cannot be too often stated that education is not limited to the schoolroom. It is a life career and process. Even though one has finished college and university, he is ever a student, continuing to improve both himself and his skills. One's education begins in the cradle and continues until his death. It has been stated that a child learns more before the age of ten than in all the rest of life. This may not actually be so; at least it does not need to be so. Anyone can learn at any age in life.

Choosing an education means definitely more than going to college. It should include that for all young people, but it cannot stop here. One can finish the course for high school graduation, take a college course, and complete the work offered by a university, and still be uneducated in the truest and most important sense. Education must result in a right philosophy of life, whether this philosophy is formulated in the classroom or in the "school of hard knocks." In all cases, however, everything that is essential for real education lies within

reach of the people of this day, and the failure to become educated is more a matter of choice than of opportunity.

A writer tells the story of a young man in college who surrounded himself with every facility for study. Having ample funds available, he completely equipped his room with bookcases, tables, chairs, and other useful articles. He furnished himself with a study robe, slippers, and a chair with a wide arm for his book to rest on. Then, with everything in readiness for study, he sat down in complete comfort and immediately went to sleep. Situation and convenience are not the determining factors, it is the will to study, the passion to get ahead mentally, that counts more than anything else. Compare the young man just mentioned in his easy chair, with Abraham Lincoln lying before the fireplace, reading in the flickering light of the burning logs. One had every outward advantage, while the other had every namable disadvantage, yet one went to sleep while the other became educated. The difference lay within the mind, not in the environment. The mind has the power to change or challenge the environment.

In establishing life's directions one must first decide what he wants to do. Then comes the question of choosing the ways and methods for reaching that end. The first is the major problem in education. "What am I to do?" is a question that involves one's whole life. The second is also a question of education which has to do with preparation to make good in that objective. One must prepare to live the full, rich, useful life—one that reaches for the highest values and fits into the highest order of things. This is education, and to make a right choice here is fundamental. To make a mistake is tragic.

CHAPTER IV

CHOOSING A CAREER OR PROFESSION

Every person has a legitimate interest in the economic aspect of life. All of us must eat, provide for clothing and shelter. Labor and capital are often mentioned as being distinctly separate and even antagonistic. What is wrong with labor or capital? Can anyone live without labor, whether tilling the soil, digging in the mine, working in the shop or office, operating a bank, or supervising a factory? Are not all capitalists? Do not all of us have clothes, household goods or cars, and a little change in our pockets? Are these not capital? However we settle these questions, there is no argument concerning our being economists. We have to deal with the business side of life, whoever we are. When man fell, God cursed the earth for his sake and announced that man must live by the sweat of his brow. Since there are hundreds of ways to make a living and so many divergent and varied talents among people who seek employment in economic life, the great problem is to fit each person to the right job. One of the first thoughts of a parent for his child is a career—a life work. The student in school faces this question: For what shall I prepare myself? What am I to do? For what am I qualified? This is by no means a light matter. It is a stubborn question and must sooner or later be answered or the person will drift aimlessly along in haphazard uncertainty. Shall I farm, teach, preach, sell merchandise, practice law or medicine, or work in shop or factory? What shall I do? These are the pertinent questions.

Remember that this choice which must be made is not incidental but truly fundamental and much is con-

tingent upon the answer. Here the roads branch out—the right and the wrong—and no one can afford to take the wrong road. Many have missed it at this point and others may, but the consequences are always the same tragic.

While there is a wrong road, thank God, there is a right one. This does not remove the fact of hindrances, some of which are almost insurmountable barriers in the way of one's effort to enter the work of his choice. These need not be considered as permanent handicaps of life if we meet them in the spirit of a challenge and surmount them.

One's heart is deeply moved when he sees the thousands of young people leaving high schools and colleges, ambitious and prepared to do something, with few or no doors open to them. While this situation is regrettable, it must never be considered as hopeless. There is always something that can be done. This is a real challenge to the resourcefulness of our youth.

How can the young man or woman be guided in the direction of a career? Life is too complex to assume that fundamental decisions can be made with the ease and certainty of mathematical principles and formulas. But certainly there are some simple rules available that will help to guide youth and others through these crises.

First, it is wise for one to face his problem with an open mind, with frankness and honesty. It is not always easy to be frank and honest with one's own self but it is wise. What shall be my course in life? What shall I do? What shall be my career? How shall I make a living? Important? Yes, it is vital. When one comes for an answer to these questions, in my judgment, he will be safer not to set himself against certain callings or professions. He may set aside preaching, for example, and

say, "Whatever I do it will not be preach the gospel. That is one thing I will not do." He has already prejudiced the case by closing his mind in a certain direction. Preaching may be just the one thing he should do, and if he misses the right place he must take a lower position for all time. It is wisdom to be willing to do anything that is right and honorable and moral. Beyond this no one should ever have to go.

Again, he handicaps his possibilities of making a wise choice if he is determined to do some certain thing even before he is fully prepared to do that thing. It is possible that he admires some hero filling a certain position and his determination is to fill a like position, though he may not be in any sense endowed with the gifts that make success possible in that field. Every side of the problem needs to be explored as an antecedent to a final decision.

Second, one should choose a profession for which he has a degree of ability that is apparent either to him or to others or to both. Talent is something that cannot be given, bought, or in any way transferred except through the process of heredity. Education can develop talent but is powerless to impart it. Only native ability can be increased.

It is wise to realize that no one person possesses talents for everything. Some can do one thing, some another, but none can do all things. One may be limited in one direction or several, but he may take consolation that no one person has all the talents. I have noticed that people who are exceptionally beautiful in feature frequently have nothing back of it. Nature has been very careful to distribute her talents over a broad field. The musician, the artist, or the poet may be very impractical and almost in need of a guardian.

He who learns what he cannot do, who learns his limitations, is indeed wise. If one fails to learn what he cannot do, perchance his friends might have the courage to tell him. However, this is not so likely. I do not qualify for having wisdom at this point though there are some things I know I cannot do; one is to sing, yet no one has a greater passion for music than I. In all of the years no person has ever requested me to sing a solo. I have taken that as a strong hint. A man was put out of a meeting three times and the last time with a pronounced jolt against the ground. When on his feet again, he said, "They just don't want me in there. I can take a hint as good as anybody." Well, if the people do not seem to want me to sing, that might be taken as a gentle hint. I have discovered no talent in myself to sing, and it would seem that my friends have been unable to see more deeply into my bag of talents than I have. Now, I am sad that some whom I have heard endeavor to sing have not manifested a like degree of wisdom! It is my dream for the time to come, that every applicant for license to preach must first be required to speak before a group of laymen, who may vote on whether he seems to give evidence of the necessary qualifications for the ministry. Laymen, after all, speak the final word regarding a preacher's future. God never calls one to do something for which he has no natural ability. Whatever the ability it will doubtless need education, for it may be in a very poor state of cultivation.

Much time and money have been uselessly spent in trying to prepare one for some career for which no gifts existed. Occasionally when one fails to properly analyze his own case an instructor or friend will do so for him. Sometimes, however, friends may be afraid or the instructor may be selfish and seek to benefit financially, himself, at the expense of the student.

A certain young man desired to sing, which desire grew into a burning passion. He went to a voice teacher for instruction. His voice was carefully tested in every possible way by the wise, conscientious, and efficient teacher. After the tests had been made thoroughly, so that a mistake would be unlikely regarding the natural ability of the pupil, the teacher replied, "Young man, your voice has no halo, though it has other fine qualities, and since this is true it will be impossible for you to become a successful student in voice." That was sufficient for the young man. He accepted the conclusion of the teacher as final and went his way, not depressed, not discouraged, but with a determination to find his talent, knowing surely he must have one or more. It developed that he was a natural salesman and became a very successful and happy businessman. Better still, he is a good church member and is today one of the strong pillars in the kingdom of God, making a good living for himself and his family. This young man took a sensible view of his problem, and diligently sought out the talent that was his. To find that one is not always easy, but it must, nevertheless, be found, if one is to make a happy adjustment to life.

One other point needs to be mentioned, namely, that even though one finds his right field, he may discover weaknesses in himself that need to be overcome if he is to succeed. For example, one who is called to the ministry may have the essential ability to preach but have a distaste for visitation. Here is a weakness that can and must be overcome. He may be weak in raising money and financing his church. This, too, can be largely remedied.

No one will be perfect in any field, but his average should measure high in that vocation, avocation, or calling from which he gets his living and in which he

invests his life. In one's career he can have some outstanding gifts accompanied by serious weaknesses, but the average can be high if he seeks to remedy those failings. It is not one great gift, necessarily, or one serious weakness that determines the outcome of life, but rather the general average somewhere between the two extremes that measures his success.

Third, one should choose a career in which his soul can find its greatest expression. This is another way of saying that personality is the supreme thing with all of us and it must find a way to express itself if it is to grow, be happy, and fulfill its missions in the world. No crime is greater than the suppression of personality or the failure to give it opportunity for expression or expansion.

Every school should have one or more persons on its faculty whose duties are to analyze, as far as possible, the personalities of the students for the purpose of helping them find ways of developing and expressing those personalities. Nature levies a high luxury tax on all hidden or unexpressed gifts of personality. The Bible reveals God's attitude through the example of the man who buried his talent, failing or refusing to use his ability to increase the talent. The curse was severe, the penalty awful. God makes it clear that no one can bury a talent with impunity.

We praise the scientists, the musicians, and so forth, who have left their names immortal, such as Edison, Wagner, and Beethoven. What of those who possibly had even greater gifts than these mentioned, who lived and died with talents undeveloped and unexpressed? Thanks for the jewels that have been dug out of the rough, but, oh, the tragedy of those that have never been brought to light! What a loss to the world!

Ability should be discovered and expressed. One's heart grows sick while viewing the world, madly surging

and scrambling for money, trade, material wealth, forgetting that the true wealth of the world lies not in stocks and bonds, but in the personality of the people that make up the nations. Some have poetic souls and find expression in verse; some are musical and find expression in harmony; some are mechanically gifted and can create and operate machinery and run the wheels of industry; some have the fire of oratory and can move the multitudes with truth and soul passion; some have the ability of the scientist and can formulate a theory and prove or disprove that theory with careful and patient experimentation; some have the gift of knowledge and can impart information with clarity to the plastic mind of the student; others love the solid soil and the call of nature and can feed the world in basket and store.

How could Michelangelo have the patience to lie on his back on a scaffold beneath the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel for seven years, painting, or stand along the walls of the beautiful cathedral portraying with his brush the entire Bible picture? How could he? The answer is not hard to find. His personality found a way to express itself and he was happy. His dexterous hands made the world brighter and better. This is always true when one finds a right career for expression of his soul. This explains the patience of the musician spending years in study and practice. He has discovered an avenue through which his soul can have unbounded freedom. He has found a way to live. One lives when he finds expression for his soul. He dies when he fails.

Happiness is never sought and found in itself. It is a consequence and a result. It is an attainment, rather than an obtainment. Happiness is the result of right development and right expression of personality. There is no other way.

This fact throws light upon the causes for the misery of the world. Round men are in square holes, and square men are in round holes. They are just misfits. Preachers are found farming, farmers preaching, singers driving cattle, herders singing, surgeons cutting meat, meat cutters practicing delicate surgery. These explain many of the tragedies that disturb the peace of society.

Why is the mother so happy surrounded by her little family of crying, laughing, affectionate babies? She has found herself, her real personality, and a way, yes, *the* way to give it true expression. But for this, she could not stand the rigors and anxiety of motherhood. What a price she pays for the throne she occupies! But think of the reward to her!

The coal miner emerges from a hole in the ground in the late afternoon, tired, face black with coal dust, and walks slowly to the cabin high upon the hillside, where his little wife meets him at the steps. With a smile and outstretched arms she receives him happily into the humble surroundings. While he washes his face she tells him how concerned she is that he looks so tired and exhausted. He turns to her, smiling, and says, "I am glad to work and toil for the sweetest wife and the dearest babies that live." Yes, he is happy. He has found a way to express his real manhood, his soul, his personality.

Put this same man into a mine behind the walls of a prison, where he must dig to pay the penalty of broken law, and where he is under the constant gaze of an armed officer, and things would be different. He is no longer moved by love and affection and personality no longer expresses its true self. Consequently he is miserable and his happiness is gone.

There is no profession, calling, vocation, or avocation that cannot give opportunity for life and happiness,

except, of course, those that are morally wrong and destructive in their consequences. These are not under consideration here and have no place in this discussion. Consequently there should be a place for everyone, for life, for liberty, and for happiness. The problem is finding the right place for the right person. In finding this place it should be the conscientious desire and the sincere effort of every one to choose a career in which he can find the greatest expression for his own soul.

Fourth, a career should be sought *in* which and *through* which one can do the most good for society. Should self-interest be entirely overlooked in this principle? No, nor will it be neglected in the larger conception of service. If one built a boat to save others from floods, that boat will save him, too. If we feed the world, we shall be included in that liberal provision. He that saves others will save himself, but he that saves his own life only will lose it. This is an immortal principle, and law of life.

Lack of moral motive is the outstanding weakness of modern education inasmuch as it offers equipment for one's own success rather than incentive for service to society. The educated man will have a distinct advantage over those less fortunate, but should he avail himself of this advantage in order to be lifted above his fellow men and be benefited to their hurt? Is this right? No, he that has much owes much. The strong are debtors to the weak, the rich to the poor, the insiders to the outsiders.

Man is a social being and therefore cannot live to himself. He is a part of society and can never divorce his personal interests from those of the group. In a true sense we stand together or fall together. The farmers of this nation must not suffer if the rest of the nation is to prosper. One group cannot remain opulent while

others are abjectly poor and miserable. There must be a meeting of the extremes in some reasonable average.

Failure to recognize this principle of life constitutes the dark cloud now so prominent on the horizon of internationalism. The materialistic spirit seems to operate on the principle that one nation can prosper and be happy at the expense of others. All recognize the necessity of foreign trade, and yet the leading powers of the world seem to be arming to destroy the very nations and people upon whom they must depend for foreign trade and commerce. No nation, of course, admits that it is arming for an attack upon another country. Armament is always carried on under the guise and pious claim of self-defense. With nations as with individuals, selfishness blinds one to true values. A selfish heart is never wise. The highest form of wisdom dwells only in those who would do unto others as they would have others do unto them.

Service is the object of an education and also the object of a career. Where can one serve and serve the best? In what career can one do good and do the most good? This does not ignore one's personal interests. Life is a mutual affair, as is friendship and labor. All relationships have the element of give and take. There is a mutual benefit in marriage, otherwise neither party would stick to the covenant. If marriage is one-sided it will not last. The relationship must be mutually satisfying. Two friends are such because both realize benefits from the friendship. Labor and capital benefit from each other or they would not and could not exist together. Each needs the other and contributes to the other. If capital succeeds, it can provide labor with opportunities to work. If labor succeeds, it can buy the products of capital. If I am an employer and can pay my employee a living wage, he in turn can buy my

goods and keep me in business. If I am an employee and give such service to my employer as to make him succeed, he can provide me with a job to support myself and family. Thus one's personal interests are served when one's life fills the larger circle of service to society. The doctor should practice medicine or surgery for humanity, considering his fees purely incidental. If his profession is for himself and if assisting the patient is only a means to an end, he has missed the true philosophy of life. He has forgotten that his business is to serve others, but in doing so he will serve and save himself. If he saves his patient for the sake of the patient and for the sake of society, he will be happy in an unselfish service. The larger concept of life always includes one's own existence and happiness but only in a secondary sense.

Considering my native ability and education, either now possessed or in the process of development, where can I do the most good in the world? This question expresses a safe principle to follow in the selection of a career.

The will of God is not to be overlooked. In addition to any consideration of talents, the place where one can give expression to his desire to do good and to give service, is in the will of God. On my own, I might come to wrong conclusions; my friends could make a wrong analysis of me, and I might be deceived regarding a career in which to accomplish desired service. Therefore, I should seek the mind of God, who makes no mistakes. Can God aid one in these crises? If I did not think so, I would be discouraged utterly, knowing human frailty and ignorance as I do. God gave me power to think, but human reason is limited in the face of complex situations. The Bible makes it clear that man should seek divine wisdom which is always freely

offered. Any person is safe if he places himself in the hands of God and appeals for divine assistance in all choices and crises of life.

There are at least two ways in which God can give assistance in the choice of a career and, in fact, in every important decision, namely, by the leading of the Spirit and by divine providences. There are many Bible references revealing God's willingness to guide people. Psalms 129:34 states, "Lead me in the way everlasting"; Revelation 7:17, "The Lamb shall lead them unto living fountains of waters"; Jeremiah 3:4, "Thou art the guide of my youth"; Psalms 25:9, "The meek will he guide in judgment"; Psalms 32:8, "I will guide thee with mine eye"; Isaiah 58:11, "The Lord shall guide thee continually"; John 16:13 (speaking of the Holy Spirit), "He will guide you into all truth." This last statement, especially, is one of great comfort. "He will guide you into all truth." Thus the Holy Spirit, who knows all things and loves us, will endeavor to direct our minds with understanding to choose the right way.

When my own understanding has reached its limits and when my own heart is perplexed and confused, I am invited to call upon God for divine assistance in finding the right road to travel. He speaks with a still small voice in the inner consciousness and impresses one that he should or should not make a certain decision. It is no surprise that God seeks to lead us, since He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that all should live. Without knowledge and wisdom people perish; therefore, He gladly grants to us both these requisites to life.

Divine providences have played a large part in history. Some of them have been clear and obvious, while others, though just as effective, have remained unnoticed. A slow, steady rain falling all night before Napoleon's

attack upon Wellington at Waterloo, slowed up Napoleon's heavy artillery sufficiently to give Blucher time to reach the battlefield and turn the tide against the French. The failure of Lee's cavalry to cut the rear of the Union army at the Battle of Gettysburg at an appointed hour doubtless defeated the Confederacy. Who knows but that such strange happenings were the hand of providence changing the course of human life and history. Many such examples are available through history, especially in God's dealing with the children of Israel. Time and again Israel would have been destroyed had it not been for an intervening providence.

Evidences of divine providence are numerous in the lives of individuals. Doors open at the most unexpected times and in the most unexpected ways just at critical moments in life. Paul saw this truth and expressed it thus: "A great door and effectual is opened unto me," and "A door was opened unto me of the Lord." Paul here refers to opportunity given to him of God directly or indirectly through His providential leadings. This is no surprise, but something to be expected when one understands something of the goodness of God and His solicitude for His children.

God does not do for His children what they can do for themselves. He compels us in many things to use our own judgment in forming relationships and in reaching well-defined objectives, yet He magnanimously offers to supplement our knowledge and strength with His own. This is the attitude of a wise, benevolent Heavenly Father toward His children. Those who earnestly seek to find the right career, with desire to serve unselfishly in that career, may and should call upon God to lead them into the path of greatest usefulness, either by His Spirit directly or through His gracious providences.

After one has found his place, then what? In the midst of his economic life is he not to do good, serve man and glorify God as well? If he fails in this he becomes a mere "career man" with a selfish heart, incapacitated to play a large part in the game of life.

Paul and Nero were contemporaries, both having a career. One was the head of an empire, the other the leader of a small group of dynamic Christians. One had unlimited resources and held power over the lives of millions of men, while the other was poor and without the power to give command. One was brutal to men, the other loved them. One leader sacrificed others for himself, the other was a living sacrifice for his friends and for all men. One left his path crimson with blood and strewn with the mangled bodies of the dead he had ordered slain. The other left his path perfumed with the fragrance of a poured out life and lighted with the torches of eternal truth. One was hated by all succeeding generations while the other was revered. One was a blight upon civilization, while the other did much to secure the future of Christian civilization. Both had honorable positions; the difference was in the men and in their objectives.

In heart, Nero was an owner; in heart, Paul was a steward. Nero put himself above God, Paul put God above himself. Let men be the stewards of wealth and influence and not the owners. Only then will they know not only how to find a career, but how to use it and how to be happy in it. "God first," should be the heart cry of him who seeks a career and fills one. Finally, whatever man finds to do, let him do it with all of his might, being "not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

CHAPTER V

CHOOSING COMPANIONSHIP AND MARRIAGE

The choice of companions is always vital, even for casual association, but especially so when the companionship becomes permanent. This is not an incidental matter. It is fundamental. God created personality for association and companionship. It is not good for man to be alone. This may be applied in a very broad sense without violence to the intent of the utterance. The desire of the child for dolls is an early expression of a craving for association. The average boy would prefer the company of a ragged waif in the back alley to a playhouse filled with toys and tools without the company of another child.

This condition of heart never changes in normal people. The hermit in the desert or cave seeks companionship with God or spirits. He who has no friends thinks of suicide and seeks death as a deliverance from an unbearable situation.

All real happiness or unhappiness arises from relationship with other personalities. Happiness results from association with personalities in agreement. Unhappiness arises from disagreement. It is not so much a matter of material equipment as of mental and spiritual understanding.

The nations of the world are restless and jittery because they are trying to build upon a material foundation, disregarding spiritual principles and realities. They depend for protection upon their armies, navies, air fleets, big guns, and poisonous gas, forgetting that the only adequate defense is manhood with right ideals and

right motives. Our most dangerous enemies are not those who attack us with material weapons but those who attack us from within. No nation can be destroyed by external forces, but when the inner defenses of manhood crumble, the nation is doomed, whatever her material defenses might be.

The danger which threatens the world's peace is a wrong attitude of nation toward nation. The brotherhood of man, based upon love and good will toward all and devotion to a great endeavor, alone can bring lasting peace to the world.

Companionship is definitely hurtful or helpful. It is doubtful if two persons can meet in association even casually and ever be quite the same again. Each modifies the other. There is an orientation of personalities that is glorious or tragic; consequently, young people, especially, need to be careful even in casual friendships.

Companionship is designed to be helpful always by teaching us to give and take, by revealing defects in personalities, and by lifting up standards and ideals. Abstract virtues can never impress us like virtues embodied in living beings. Virtue in action is most impressive.

It is impossible to develop character without association. If this be true, then it is simply impossible to sidestep human relationships, as such would vitiate character. Association is essential, both to human nature and to human life. The soul of man is never satisfied without human contacts and without them a career is utterly impossible.

Some of the most important values in life are reached through association. One is self-expression, the most common emphasis made by modern education. Our boys and girls are told constantly that they must learn self-expression. Inhibitions and suppression of feelings and

desires are constantly discouraged. This is common knowledge.

One can spend a lifetime in the midst of the silent desert or in the depths of the forest, with its soft music and soothing breezes; or stand in the presence of the towering mountains which patiently defy the processes of disintegration; or gaze upon the heaving bosom of the ocean where the billows roll and break, but here he would not be able to find self-expression. The desert, the forest, the mountains, the ocean are helpless to interpret one's feelings or react to them. Self-expression demands interchange and integration of vision, feelings, hopes, and joys. Only people can understand. Therefore self-expression is possible only in human associations.

Associations give us a better knowledge of ourselves. Comparison is a very valuable source of information. Through it some of our best and wisest conclusions are reached. The virtues or vices in one's associates speak to one's own mind, causing one to wonder about himself, "Am I like that? Do I want to be like that?" In a very true sense every association reflects back to one's own selfhood, giving one a better knowledge of his own being.

Association causes one to aspire to greater achievement. This fact appears among children on the playground. The feat of one inspires another to equal or surpass the other, which develops a keen spirit of competition and leads to greater and greater attainments.

The story is told of Stonewall Jackson that he won his title by a simple act. His soldiers were retreating. Jackson stood upon an elevation, facing the enemy, fearless, unmoved. His men seeing him were inspired by his undaunted courage and shouted, "See Jackson standing like a stone wall!" Filled with new hope and courage they rallied to their leader and fought their way to a

great victory. How often have we been moved by the sufferings of others, patiently borne, and immediately become ashamed of our own cowardice and whimperings. How often have we looked upon the toil and tireless effort of those fighting for achievement against odds and from their example found courage to fight our own battles. Thus, from association, we find courage to solve the problems of our own lives.

Association gives us a high motive for living. The Master said, "Weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice." This is a mutual sharing of one with the other. The high quality of unselfishness and sacrifice revealed in a companion becomes a mainspring for progress in ourselves. When we unite unselfishly in some common cause, we discover our finest qualities of manhood.

It was my sorrowful privilege a few days ago to witness a breakdown of this principle in an unfortunate wreck on the highway. Two cars came together head on. In one car was a young man, a student in a theological school. In the other were four persons, a father and mother and two sons. I arrived on the scene only a few seconds after the wreck had occurred. In one car were the four persons mentioned, all of the same family, lying still as if dead; the two occupying the front seat, covered with blood, were leaning forward with their heads against the windshield. In the back seat were the mother and son apparently dead. In the middle of the road stood the young preacher, crying hysterically and begging for help. He, too, was bruised and badly cut. I helped him into my car and started for the hospital, planning to send an ambulance immediately to the wreck.

On the way to the hospital this young preacher revealed his character most clearly. He kept saying, "Do

you think I will ever be able to walk on this leg again?" Then he would cry and wail. Not once did he seem concerned about the four people who had been injured or killed. He admitted, finally, being the cause of the wreck, losing control of his own automobile, yet he was concerned only for himself. After two days I returned to the hospital to see him. He said, "Do you think I can be punished for this wreck?" There was no intimation of concern about the people who had been injured or killed by his own act. The real character was revealed in a crisis during unguarded moments. I wondered if he could be an only child, having had no opportunity to share himself with others.

It is in association with Christ that we learn the value and virtue of unselfishness. Jesus was never concerned about himself, but about His Father's will and the sufferings of the people. These always held His attention.

Association teaches co-operation in a common cause. When I was a boy I played baseball and have never been able to forget the thrills of those days. In later life I have neither played nor seen any games. One thing has remained with me from my own experiences and through my knowledge of the game; namely, that every member of the team must give co-operation. The team is to be considered above the glory of the individual players. Occasionally a batter is called upon to make a sacrifice hit to make possible a run where he loses an opportunity in that sacrifice to lift his own record.

This co-operation in a common cause reaches its climax not in the group, as important as this is, but in that higher fellowship found in the union of two people in marriage, with all of its implications and ramifications, such as love for each other, building a home, rearing children, making a living, and living a Christian life.

The problem that faces young people is that of forming right alliances and avoiding the wrong ones, especially in marriage. This choice is vital. Marriage is a very permanent thing, despite the light and flippant conception held by many. "But," says one, "if I cannot make a go of it, can't I quit?" That is the great question. Can one ever quit? Is there any way for two people to get married and separate and ever be able to readjust themselves without awful suffering and permanent losses? They pick up the broken threads and try to weave them into a new cloth, but rarely is the weaving satisfactory. There may be separation for cause and readjustments by the innocent party that are more satisfactory than the first, but what of the guilty party? What are the results of that break and separation? Who can ever estimate the damage that has been done?

The divorce evil is striking at the very heart of society, undermining the foundations of the home. Sadly, this evil is on the increase. Why? To what is this increase due? The question has many complications. Are people less intelligent than formerly? Are they more evil than in the past? Are young people becoming indifferent to sacred traditions, such as marriage? Are moral standards breaking down? If more mistakes are made in marriage than formerly, resulting in an increase of divorces, what is the cause? Are more mistakes made today than yesterday? This is doubtful. Mistakes have always been made, but in the past marriage was accepted as final—for better or for worse. This concept is questioned by the thinking of the present generation. Undoubtedly moral principles have been weakened and the sacredness of marriage is not held in the high esteem it was generations ago. Consequently, people will not endure the unhappiness resulting from unfortunate wedding alliances. Too, since it is easy to

separate, the same care is not used in the selection of companions in marriage in many cases.

Self-expression is the major note in all messages to modern youth, as has already been stated. Young people are urged to disregard inhibitions. Psychologists teach that an emotion suppressed will die, therefore, one should suppress no emotion but give it expression. Whatever youth's tendencies are, follow them. If passion arises, give it satisfaction. In doing this, less harm will be done than by breaking down some tradition or worn-out moral code. If one is hungry he eats, does he not? If an impulse arises should it not be satisfied? With this teaching so common, can one wonder at the wave of recklessness in social life? These insinuating suggestions are pumped into the minds of our youth throughout school life. Under such environment there is little hope for self-restraint. Since marriage is more or less a matter of trial and experiment in a union that can be sustained or disregarded at will, then why be so careful in the selection of a mate? This subtle undercurrent of teaching, so common, is bearing fruit in the dissolution of homes and in the destruction of home life. This, to my mind, explains the increase in divorces.

Something needs to be done to bring the seriousness of marriage to the attention of those who are yet to face the question. Do they sufficiently understand the import of marriage? Are they aware of the far-reaching consequences of happiness or unhappiness both to the parties involved and to others? Do they understand the awful complications that result from mistakes not only to themselves but to their helpless and innocent children as well?

I have had hundreds of cases under my observation where those who have been divorced and have remarried have sought with tears and broken hearts to find peace

with God. Unable to feel clear in their own minds and hearts regarding their state they earnestly sought advice and direction. Many have told the story of marriage at a very tender age, under sudden and unanalyzed impulses or because of an unhappy home life with their parents, from which they sought escape. They had gone from a bad condition to a worse. Separation resulted. Now both parties were in new relationships, with children by their new mates. Here were two families with children who were entirely innocent involved in the picture. What could be done?

First, I investigated to find the guilty party or the innocent party, if perchance there might be one. Often there seemed to be no innocent party and the complications appeared irremediable. My heart grew sick and I cried out, "O God, cannot something be done? If not for these, then for those who have not come this road as yet." Those in trouble seem to say to me, "Touch my parching tongue with a drop of water, for I am tormented in these flames. But if you cannot help me, please help my brethren that they may not come to this place of torment."

Wrecks can be saved in some cases but the great task under consideration is to prevent wrecks. It has been my privilege a few times to lecture on the subject of "Choosing Companionships," and when I have done so I have faced a house filled with young people eagerly seeking help. This fact has given me courage to write this message. There is a distinct need and an urgent request for help everywhere. One young man said to me, "It is natural to want a girl, to have a sweetheart, to get married. I do not want to live alone. I want a wife and home, but I must not make a mistake in my choice. Will you please help me?" A young woman said, "I would rather live and die unmarried than make

a mistake in marriage, which would force me to choose between separation, with all of its consequent complications and sorrows, and a lifetime of misery arising from an unsatisfactory union." She was right. She, too, asked for advice in her selection of a lover.

Are there suggestions that might aid one in and through this important period of life? Yes, there is help for those who want it and will listen. It is this that gives me courage to offer help. May we follow a rather common custom in discussion by presenting some negative positions, in other words, mention things that should *not* influence young people in marriage.

I was entertained in a beautiful home by a most gracious hostess. One day in conversation she made a statement that profoundly interested and impressed me. The subject of the conversation was marriage. Her home was elegant in equipment. She told me that the furnishings cost \$75,000. The cost of the house itself I did not ascertain. In front of the house stood an automobile, a present from her father, that cost eight thousand dollars. One could readily see that money was no question in this home. No one there had ever felt the cruelty of poverty. My hostess said to me, "Brother Williams, I am happy in my marriage and do not anticipate having to face this question again in my lifetime, but if I were single and planned to marry, I would not be influenced by things that affect the average girl in her choice of a mate." I was interested and asked her to explain her mind, which she did in three very significant statements.

"First," she said, "I would not select a man for his money." That was rather startling, coming from a woman of her wealth and financial standing. "Go on," I said.

"Second," she said, "I would not select a man for his brains." This was still more startling, for I knew she was a woman that could scarcely be happy in full yet uninteresting surroundings, even though she had wealth and was not in need of a provider.

Again I asked her to explain the original statement. This was her third sentence: "I would not select a man for his looks." If possible, this was even more startling than the first two statements. Here before me was a wealthy, intelligent, and attractive woman who said she would not be influenced in marriage by money, brains, or looks. Yet she was right in rejecting those influences which though significant, were not supreme in value.

Money is not a prime factor even though it is convenient to have and a certain amount of it is necessary. It is foolish for young people to get married with no apparent way of making a living. However, it is unwise to marry for money. Wealth is very uncertain and elusive. It can disappear overnight through poor management, misfortune, or calamity. I have seen no happy marriages that were consummated through monetary considerations.

Looks should not be too important a factor either. Certainly it is more pleasant for one to look across the table three times a day at a handsome companion than at one too homely. So-called beauty however is even more uncertain than money. The latter might be safeguarded through married life, but beauty cannot last. Hair will turn gray, eyes will grow dim, ears will become dull of hearing, the face will wrinkle and perfection of form will disappear. Something must be present that can wear with the years, endure with changes; something that will grow deeper and richer. This attractiveness is deeper than the skin, more lasting than all outward appearances.

Passion figures in the sacredness of marriage. It is no crime. It is a created impulse, God-given. There is no reason to decry it, neither is there an excuse to be enslaved by it. If young people cannot find the right mate, they can still live a great life without one. Passion can be sublimated into some greater service, a service for all.

Paul was a man with human tendencies, but he found a way to turn his entire force of character into a larger field, service to all men. Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He found an outlet for His dynamic personality in living and in dying for all men, and in doing the will of His Heavenly Father. Sex is sacred when seen as a creative force, a climax of love. This relationship gives all and receives all. In it there is no cheating or selfishness but a mutual sharing of all for all. Lust cheats by seeking but not giving. Companionship in marriage is right. When each wills to give all and to receive all, then both are satisfied with a feeling that fullness of life is granted and received.

The sex appeal, while important, figures too prominently in many marriages. It cannot be ignored, however, for two main reasons. Sex is the climax of human love, and secondly, it figures in more divorces than any other one cause. There are three chief causes of home trouble; namely, first, sex; second, money; third, disagreements over religion. Sex stands as the chief cause. If a happy solution can be found with these three problems, no serious trouble is likely to develop in home life.

Sex must not be considered as something vulgar, unnecessary, and out of place. It is sacred, honorable, the climax of love, and the means of propagating the race. Without normal and reasonable sex life the home will lose its romance, its love, and its strength to hold to-

gether or to furnish a happy and victorious atmosphere for living. While no one is ever justified in failure of sex control, either party to marriage is unjustified in crushing romance from married life.

It was my sad duty to ask a certain minister for his credentials, because of infidelity. His wife condemned him without mercy, saying that he deserved no consideration. After placing his papers in my pocket I turned to her and asked her if she did not think that she was largely the cause of her husband's downfall. She was furious for a moment. I asked her if she had been affectionate and had kept alive the spirit of romance in the home. She admitted for a long time she had not, but when it was too late she had awakened to a sad situation. The man had sinned, but I have often wondered if God will consider her an innocent party. Did she contribute to his delinquency?

If there were no sex appeal, no physical aspects to marriage, there would be no weddings. But companionship in marriage must go far deeper than sex. There are qualities more abiding than these.

Age will reduce or vitiate sex appeal, consequently *there must be something that will outlast it, something that sustains even when health is gone, otherwise companionship is an uncertain and flimsy affair.* Young people do not marry ghosts, spirits, or ideals, they marry human beings, and unless human nature is present, the marriage will not last. A man can get his laundry done for less money at the laundry than it will cost him to keep a wife, and his board at the boarding house for less expense than it would cost him to sustain a home. It is companionship that induces people to build homes, and at the heart of that companionship is sex life. If young people do not find it in their natures to be reasonable at this point they should be fair and just and

remain single, where sex would not be a factor in their lives, but I repeat, this, though important, is only one consideration.

Now that we have briefly considered some of the negative aspects of companionship and marriage, let us turn to those positive considerations that enter into this choice. These are factors that dare not be ignored.

May we name and emphasize a few essentials in this vital choice. It should not be necessary to state to a normal person that choice in companionship that ends in marriage is so far-reaching as to be absolutely fundamental. To make a mistake here is to well-nigh wreck both life and soul.

The first consideration is congeniality. The word "congenial" may be defined as "kindred, partaking of the same nature, sympathetic, naturally adapted." It is something subjective rather than objective. Congeniality has to do with temper, disposition, temperament, personality, *inner reaction to stimuli*.

May we refer for a moment to the woman who said she would not marry for money, looks, or brains. The conversation did not end there, as those assertions were purely negative. I asked her frankly what would influence her in marriage if she had to pass over the road again. She admitted that money would be a great convenience, that good looks would enhance the joy of home life, that brains were certainly important, then added a positive statement, "I would marry a man for his temperament." To this I replied, "I agree with you in principle but would like to suggest a better term, 'quality of spirit.'" "Yes," she said, "that is what I mean, quality of spirit." Is this not a safe position?

What is the important thing in personality? Is it the size of the body, the shape of the face, the shade

of the hair, the color of the eyes? Is it the brilliancy of the mind? A brilliant mind can be very cold and cruel. Have we not seen people exceedingly handsome or mentally brilliant with whom we would not be willing to live?

What constitutes a home? Certainly it is not the house with its carpets, furnishings, tapestry, cut glass, sterling silver, or other material equipment. It is something more spiritual and ethical. It is understanding, the congenial fellowship between the members of the household; these build and sustain a home. No one is likely to have exactly the same disposition all the time. Moments of optimism, discouragement, hope, and fear come to us all, but the predominant spirit of the person is the test. Is he predominantly optimistic or pessimistic, trustful or fearful or suspicious?

The spirit of a person creates an atmosphere which, in turn, makes happiness for himself and others possible or impossible. One does not have to marry to learn this quality in a friend. It is something felt in every moment of association. One's moods create environment that is conscious to everyone within their sphere of influence. For this reason it is wise for young people to be together in association over a long enough period of time before marriage to know to what extent this quality of spirit exists. Only then can he or she decide whether a lifetime of happiness is possible within the atmosphere created by the spirit of this companionship.

Congeniality does not imply that two people must be identical in temperament, but it does demand that the qualities of spirit be not antagonistic. Difference of temperamental structure may be helpful and complementary. One person is overcautious while another seems to have no caution at all. One will be overoptimistic

while the other tends to pessimism. Together they may modify each other and establish a happy medium. One person may be too radical, another overconservative. In this case, each will modify the other. One needs pushing, the other holding back. Incidental differences of mind often create interest and challenge.

A distinct difference exists between these facts and the quality of one's spirit. Weaknesses can be overcome, differences can be adjusted if spirits are congenial in the effort. Is the spirit of the person with whom you associate qualified to create an atmosphere in which you can feel easy and free? If not, beware. You had better wait for another day. Lack of congeniality in association is a red signal, warning of impending and inevitable danger.

Ideals demand consideration in the selection of a mate. An ideal is something elusive, abstract, and hard to define. In the circle of youth associations few words are used more frequently and understood less, for the reason that young people are dominantly hero worshipers. If they do not find a hero they create one. This disposition to hero worship really never leaves us, regardless of age. Since our very nature demands a hero or ideal, it is necessary to find something that appeals to this impulse. How often has one heard a boy or girl say, "He is my ideal." Let us not discourage this disposition. It is the foundation of something noble and grand and needs cultivation and full realization.

The abstract thing called the ideal in the mind is complex. It is made up of mental concepts, emotional reactions, likes and dislikes, inhibitions, prohibitions, and attitudes. If one considers a certain person as an ideal it is because he discovers in that person certain qualities that are elements in his own ideal. The person whom he worships as a hero seems to have those conceptions,

reactions, and attitudes that he so much admires. Disappointment comes when we fail to find those qualities of the ideal manifested in another individual.

It is not so vital that a mate be ideal, but it is vital for him to have ideals. I would have far more patience with one living beneath his ideals than with one who has no ideal to aspire to.

The life of an individual can never rise higher than his ideals. Discover the ideals of mind, of heart, of action, then you will know how high the life of a person can rise. Ideals are essential factors in forming one's character and codes of conduct. They are root causes, and causes produce effects. Furthermore, like causes produce like effects. The material that goes into a thing determines the thing itself.

Ideals should be owned, not borrowed. I do not mean by this that we should not get ideals from others, but when once had, from whatever source, they must be made our very own. Moral concepts can be passed from one generation to another, but each generation must give new birth to those concepts, making them its very own, the very fiber of its own conviction and personality. Then one can say, I stand for this, not because my mother and father did, but because it is right. It is my own conviction. Something can be given to us, but we have to appropriate it before it becomes our very own.

A hundred times I have seen a boy become seemingly deeply interested in the religious ideals of a girl while he was seeking to win her. Then after he had won her heart, he went his own way, utterly indifferent, if not antagonistic to her beliefs and convictions. Her ideals had not been appropriated by him. They were only borrowed to meet a contingency. Thus, in seeking a mate one must look for ideals in that would-be mate that are in harmony with his own. If such are not present,

the union will be one in name only. Companionship would be a sham.

Ideals, to be dynamic, must be backed by emotional life, deep feelings, moral convictions, and fixed attitudes. Ideals are beautiful but cold, lifeless, static. They need the touch of fire, the stir of holy passion with the blood stream that runs hot with determination. Then they are creative and contagious.

Do you find ideals like this in the person under consideration for a life mate? If not, stop where you are. If you are not properly mated, ten thousand times better that you remain single, where you can concentrate the powers of your life into some sacred service for humanity and where you can seek satisfaction in fellowship with mutual friends and in good deeds.

Examine objectives. All have them. What are they? The heathen have them; the ignorant have them; the educated have them; the rich and the poor have them. No one can be found who does not have objectives of some sort.

Objectives are either right or wrong, worthy or unworthy. They may be moral or immoral or they may be simply high or low. If an objective is right it has moral value; if wrong, it is immoral. Many objectives are unworthy while not essentially wrong. A person could be satisfied to operate a peanut stand while being capable of running a factory. In this case the objective, though not necessarily wrong, is certainly unworthy.

Before selecting a mate find whether the objective in the life of that person is right. Does he plan to make his living by betting, gambling, operating a tavern, cheating, breaking the law? Such objectives are wrong and should cause you to stop. Is the person who is to become your mate satisfied to live in a small circle and does he plan little things, things that do not challenge

his best efforts, his mental powers and resourcefulness? Does the person plan to advance mentally and grow bigger with experience and duty and observation? Does he plan to serve God and build a Christian home? What is the objective? Is it right? Is it worthy of his and your best? Will you be satisfied with it?

A home divided against itself cannot stand. This is true of companionship. How can two walk together unless they be agreed? The question implies a road, direction, travel, objectives. Where are you going? Perhaps nowhere, just going. What is the object of your travel? Perhaps no object, just travel. Life lived like that would be without reason or logic.

While crossing the South Seas I talked to a man whom I met on the ship. I inquired of his journey, the extent of it, the countries he anticipated visiting. After learning something of the time he expected to spend traveling and of the countries to be visited, I cautiously asked him his object in making this very expensive and extensive trip. I was utterly amazed to learn that he had no object whatever in making the trip. I can scarcely reconcile his position with reason. His object might have been health, culture, education, recreation, but no, he was just following an urge for change, for new things. Well, even that might have been an objective, but certainly not idealistic.

I tried to visualize two people traveling together, one for no definite reason, the other for culture, an objective that was clear and distinct. Would the trip be satisfactory to either of the two? Not likely. Imagine young people married, with no well-defined reason for the trip through life; just traveling to no certain place economically, socially, educationally, or spiritually. The picture is pathetic, if not disgusting. You have one trying to

build a home, the other without ambition; one with a goal, the other satisfied to do nothing.

Courtship is provided by custom for young people before marriage for more reasons than merely to provide opportunity to express admiration for each other or to indulge in thrills. It is an expression of the mating instinct and the natural process of selection. It gives sacred opportunity to study, analyze, and test every phase of character in the other individual and determine the impulses of the mind and heart.

In courtship too many follow feelings instead of judgment. Feelings cannot be eliminated, for they, as well as cool judgment, must be satisfied in lasting companionship. Marriage is not simply a thing of the mind; it is a union of hearts. But the head and the heart must work together. The mind has never gone far toward any goal or destination until superinduced, vitalized, and empowered by the affections. Therefore, an objective is something that challenges both the head and the heart. Both have a vital place in mating.

If two minds agree upon objectives and two hearts unite with two heads, there is reason to believe that such co-operation will succeed.

Courtship gives young people time and opportunity to discover in each other the objectives of mind and heart. When this discovery is made, comparisons will naturally follow. When these comparisons show agreement, the future is hopeful for continued association. When it is discovered that objectives are hopelessly divergent, the association should end before tragedy begins.

Objectives imply direction, ends, harmony of action, a unity of being, and a concentration of the powers of the whole personality upon a definite goal. Does one's own soul in this condition find a similar condition in the one

under consideration for the life mate? If not, stop and wait for another opportunity.

Character standards are the most important factors in association and mating. When facts of association are sifted to the bottom, it is discovered that only two influences are strong enough to bring two people together in abiding companionship, namely, kindred interest and similar character ideals. This is tantamount to saying that two personalities of similar caliber can live together with satisfaction. The converse of this truth also holds.

Too much emphasis is placed upon what people do in comparison with what they are. The acts of life are less important than life itself. What Jesus was in the flesh, and now is, stands out far more impressively than do all the works and miracles He did, or even the teachings He gave to the world. His acts are the natural products of himself. No one should be surprised at the things He did or question the miracles He performed. He himself was a greater miracle than was anything He ever did. We are not surprised at what He did, but would be surprised and disappointed if He had done less. The life and character of Jesus is His glory, each revealing and interpreting the other. The world can never forget either himself or what He did.

In studying His teaching and life, one is impressed with the fact that He said little or nothing about creeds, institutions, heredity, or environment. Not that these were unimportant, but it was the individual with whom He was concerned. His interest was in personality and character. His plan was to heal and transform the individual, who in turn would carry the message of life to the next person, and so on and on. When He saved the slave and his master, he destroyed slavery without the necessity of enactment of laws. The institution of

evil disappears with the passing of evil from the hearts of individuals. Social reform with Him was secondary and indirect. The new birth of the person accomplished these results with one quick, direct, and master stroke. Transformation brings reformation. Reformation without transformation fails. "I am the light of the world," "the way, the truth, and the life." "Ye are the salt of the earth." "Ye are the light of the world." These significant statements place tremendous emphasis upon the caliber of the individual.

It cannot be too often stated that personality is the supreme value. This is denied by those who do not believe in a personal God. Logic compels all to admit that God is identified with whatever is of the highest value. If this high value is not personality, it must be something else. What else could it be? The weak and shameful answer is, an "order," a "social order," whatever that is, in which all personalities participate. This to the materialist is a higher value than personality. It is the supreme value, and consequently it is God. But the supreme thing on earth is human personality. The supreme thing in heaven and in all existence is a personal God.

This Supreme Person made man in His own image. This reveals the highest values. I refuse to accept the premise that a higher value than personality exists nor an order consisting of actions and reactions and associations of personalities. If personality is the highest value, then it is logical that God is a person. Our object in touching these vital facts is to impress upon the reader that individual character is important—supremely important.

Common interest and character alone can unite two persons. This is true both in the realm of the religious and the secular. Underworld characters are drawn to-

gether in a common cause. That cause may be gambling, drinking, robbery, or other licentious, shameful, fleshly indulgences but it is a common cause that brings them together, a community of interest. But this is not all. Such persons are similar in character, depraved and vicious. They stick together against society and law as long as *they are one in interest and in quality of character*. Change the character of any one of this group or destroy his interest and at once he becomes a misfit and leaves the group either voluntarily or involuntarily. A lawless character and a law-abiding citizen cannot pull together successfully, as they are going in different directions with divergent interests and dissimilarity of character.

The constant friction of the largest social groups, such as is found in the government, is based on this principle. Some citizens want gambling, liquor, a wide-open country *for the expression of the base side of fallen human nature*. Others want a clean Sabbath and prohibition of immorality of all kinds. We have seen this fight in years past and still it continues. Why? Some desire a clean country while others prefer the freedom of action in things moral or immoral. This condition is as old as the fall of man and will last to the close of the ages. The situation is better or worse according to the swing of individual character one way or the other. When the government is in the hands of the righteous the country has peace. When in the control of the unrighteous, the nation has war and distress. What is the way out? Can we improve the order of things? Yes, but the road leads along the route of individual character.

Read the reports of outbreaks of lawlessness from time to time and consider the names of those individuals identified with the crime. It is indeed revealing. Often the criminals are not even citizens of the country but

aliens who should have been deported. In almost all cases, they are persons out of harmony with the ideals and the spirit of the country politically, socially, and religiously. The cost of crime in the United States is fifteen billion dollars a year, which is paid not by the vicious class but by the hard-working, law-abiding citizens.

Most people would like to have a right social order, but this is possible only with a right condition of those who make up this order. The form of government possessed by any people is more or less the product of the character of the masses under that government. Democracy is possible if the people under the democratic form of government live up to certain standards of life and character. They must be intelligent, law-abiding, liberty-loving, and respectful of others' rights. They must believe in freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of worship. When the people in general fall below these standards, the way is opened for another form of government to arise. If the people demand liberty, they will get it. But if they are willing to sell their souls for a mess of pottage, they will become slaves to those who buy them.

People are more important than government, inasmuch as they are the creators of government. This principle is occasionally overlooked. We spend more time worrying about the coat we wear than about the condition of the man who wears the coat. No social order can be higher than the people that constitute that order. What has mention of this larger social group to do with our consideration of the character of the individual? What happens to the larger group is the same that occurs to the individual, only there it is more noticeable.

Why are so many divorces applied for in the courts? Mainly because the interests and the characters of the

individuals involved are divergent. One wants to be saving and to get ahead while the other is extravagant and wasteful. One tries to keep a good name financially in the community while the other does not. One likes the church, the other dislikes it. One is interested in high class music, the other prefers jazz. One is clean in mind, the other corrupt. How can harmony and happiness be possible under such conditions? It cannot be. All that would be hoped for here is endurance and sorrow.

Greater than common interest is common character. If characters are similar, interests can be made to harmonize in some way. Young people may be drawn together by sex appeal, but this will not last without the background of character. The pooling of their finances or economic ability may influence them, but this cannot last without kindred character structure. In rare instances we hear of love at first sight that really lasts. Sometimes a hasty marriage is successful, but the chances against it are too great, the risk too enormous. A man may accidentally run into a gold mine, but the rule is that gold mines are found by those who intelligently seek for them and often at personal sacrifice and danger. The same is true in marriage. Some marriages are like the grab bag. Who can afford the danger of a mistake? Mistakes are entirely too many, even with careful effort to avoid them. What should guide one in this important hour? The answer is, character. What kind of character do I want to live with all of my life? That question should be answered by every person.

Good character is the basis of confidence in humanity. One's word is worth no more than the character that backs it, but is worth exactly that. The foreknowledge of God has been a stumbling block to many, possibly because none of us fully understand it. How

can God know what will happen or what man will do? Reference is made to this question with no thought of discussion or explanation, only to prepare the way to state that even men can and do have a good degree of foreknowledge concerning those whose characters are well known and established. You are well acquainted with certain friends whom you have known so long and so well as to be able to tell quite accurately what they will do under certain conditions. Would this man steal? No, he could not steal, for that is contrary to his well-established character. I know people whom I would defend against slander without asking for evidence. Their character is all the evidence I need. If tempted to dishonesty or immorality, they will stand like the rock of Gibraltar, unmovable, fixed in God. I would smile at a report of a lapse in their ethics. My confidence is founded upon the character of the individual. I know that it is dependable.

Character is the basis of happiness. All happiness comes from fellowship between personalities. Those of similar personality are capable of understanding close fellowship. One is foolish to expect happiness from any other source. Why, therefore, do young people deceive themselves into thinking that they can be happy when mated with dissimilar characters? It has never been and it can never be done. Character is dynamic. It transforms, orientates, and changes things. The orator who turns a hostile audience into good humor and wins their loyal support does so not altogether by means of his eloquence and logic, but by the dynamic of his personality. Character creates tone, stirs interest, brings to life latent forces, contributes to right social order wherever it appears. Character radiates light and life.

In the analysis of character for companionship, look for three things: intellect, moral principles, and

pleasures. These are simple points but infallible as a test of character. Would you be willing to spend your life with John or Mary? How can you know without experience? It is too late to discover the mistake through actual experience. The test must be made in time to avoid the mistake. Settle these three questions in the choice of a companion or mate and you will not be likely to go wrong.

First, what is the quality or strength of his or her intellect? This may not be necessarily a matter of education. The intellect is native, one of those resources with which we are born, that cannot be changed. Of course, it can be developed, for the mind can be educated, trained, and enriched. What quality of intellect do you find? Go back to the grandparents if possible. You are not marrying any of them, but you may come nearer to that than you think. All you find and more will be embodied in the one you seek as a companion. Does the girl have a background of intelligence? Are divorces and divided families back of her? She is not responsible, but who can tell what dispositions and mental qualities may be passed on to the children?

A great preacher said he would rather marry a girl of intelligence who is not a Christian than a fool who professes religion. The argument was that an intelligent girl can be led into religion while the fool might backslide. I can see his point, but under no condition would I advise a Christian to marry a non-Christian. Intelligent people are likely to respond to logic and right emotional appeals. What he meant was simply this, he would marry the girl, not her religion. If she were a person that could be lived with without religion, she would be more wonderful with it. If she could be lived with only with religion, the danger would be too great. She might

lose it. What then? Three qualities of mind are important, creative ability, courage, and honesty.

Some people have no imagination, consequently they are *drab, cold, colorless, without mental tone*. Such people would be uninteresting to an opposite type, for life mating. Fortunate is he who has a creative mind, which quality is not confined to the realm of the genius. We common folk often have it to some extent. We can see things to do that are vibrant with life and energy. This is how we meet the recurring contingencies of life. One young woman sits with folded hands complaining that she has nothing to do with in her home. Another gets a dry goods box and decorates it into a beautiful piece of furniture. She has no kitchen cabinet, but creates one out of orange boxes and there places her dishes and pans and proudly shows her creation to her husband upon his return from work. This creative quality makes an atmosphere of romance that keeps alive the spirit of the home. Watch the boy you love as he faces his problems. Does he have a creative mind? Do you? This is a good test of character.

Another test is courage. How does it happen that some people go on and on in the face of difficulty while others with as much or more native ability give up and become a burden to society? If they had no ability, it would be unjust to lay complaint against them. But do they just "give up" in the presence of difficulty? If so, they have no fight in them. Who wants to be tied to this sort of person? It is tragic to see an ambitious and energetic and brave woman married to a listless, lazy, unimaginative man. What can she do? It is like hitching a spirited horse to a stump. He cannot move it. Progress is impossible.

Intellectual honesty is an element in character too important to be overlooked and none too common. It

is natural for one to put his best foot forward in order to make the best possible impression. In doing this, one is often tempted to go too far for the sake of appearance. A student is asked by a teacher if he understands a problem or the explanation given. Rather than appear to be a fool while the other pupils seem to have understood the matter clearly already, he may answer in the affirmative to save face. He is not ahead by this. Not only is he uninformed but he has injured his own mind by a mild form of mental dishonesty. Mild, inasmuch as he has hurt no one but himself. There is a normal human pride and self-respect in all young people that urges them to try to keep up with their friends. This self-respect is injured when too much pampered and can develop into intellectual dishonesty. This finally becomes a permanent trait of character. As such it is a hindrance to one's own self and disgusting to others.

Though rather rare, frankness is a quality most desirable. It wears, endures, and wins friends. The more it is seen the more it is appreciated. The opposite is a very objectionable characteristic if not a real vice. Being deceitful, or only appearing so, not only undermines one's own character structure, but makes one's warmest friends uncomfortable.

People living together for an entire lifetime want to be at ease about each other, not having to question whether each is on the "up and up," in the open, or not concealing something. This is most vital in happiness. It is a question whether happiness is possible in an atmosphere of insincerity. Nothing can make one feel more uncertain than to live with a person whose intellectual honesty is in question. Honesty is far more valuable in companionship than any amount of face saving, or pride protecting. It is an element of char-

acter one wants in the mate with whom he is to live for a lifetime.

Not only should we look for the intellectual qualities of the mate, but the moral principles as well. One with high moral principles could not live satisfactorily with one not possessing them. A woman enjoys a good home, well equipped, and, in addition, nourishing food and attractive clothes. She would appreciate a husband who has resourcefulness, energy, and adaptability. But a noble woman would not want the products of gambling, cheating, unscrupulous business methods. She would rather have less of life's comforts and be able to enjoy them with a good conscience and self-respect, together with the companionship of a real man, than to have the luxuries of life together with the company of a man she could not respect or love. One with high moral principles would be unhappy living with one without them. This is fundamental.

Moral principles, I think, have root more in heredity than in environment. This may account for the fact that some persons can do things seemingly without compunction that shock someone who has a high sense of right. We usually attribute this fact to differences in degrees of light. But some never seem to respond to light sufficiently to lift them to high moral standards. Teaching may have a vital bearing, but heredity has more. This is an important reason why young people should know those whom they seek for mating, and, if possible, their forebears. Blood counts. Lack of high moral principle will reveal itself, not only in the external side of home life, but in those sacred intimacies where homes are built or wrecked. Traits of this nature appear very early in life. You will see differences in young boys and girls while in school. Some cheat in examinations, while others would rather fail than have

credit undeserved. With some it is just a matter of getting by. With others principle means more than honors or success. See if the young man you go with is on the square with his parents, or tries to "put it over" on the old people. If he puts it over on *them*, remember *you* will be next. This disposition roots itself in heredity. The discovery of this nature means far more to you than the fun resulting from little tricks which, on the surface, seem so innocent and harmless.

Conscience is founded on principle and light. True, it is a creature of education and can be trained to almost any kind of conduct, right or wrong. Moral nature lies back of this education, for you cannot educate what does not exist. The cannibal can be educated away from his cannibalism. The tiger cannot be trained from his man-eating instincts. The savage can be saved but the wild beast can never be lifted to respect the life of others. The human being can be made sympathetic, but the beast will eat the flesh of an innocent child, lie down in the bushes, lick its jaws, and sleep without regret. One can be affected with light, the other cannot. Why? The answer is moral nature, the source of moral principles.

In some, moral nature is strong. In others, it is rather weak, and remains so from lack of effort to strengthen it. Look for moral principles in that would-be companion. Can he enter deeply into the joys and sufferings of others? Can he respect the rights of others? Does he think only of himself and what he would like to do? These are straws that determine the direction of the wind—winds that might develop into whirlwinds and cyclones of ill will and vicious passions. Do you want to do right? Are you determined to do right whatever the results? If the answer is yes, then look for this disposition in the prospective mate.

Another vital moral principle is that of purity—purity of mind, of conversation, and of habits. This quality is not hard to discover in any one. In fact, it is self-revealing in most natural ways, and at the most unguarded moments. What is within will come out through words, conversations, stories, and acts. A pure character cannot with contentment lie in a bed of filth or be held in the embrace of uncleanness.

The third factor in character is pleasure. In my opinion, nothing is more certain as a revelation of one's real self than the sort of pleasures one desires or indulges in. Mistakes in the analysis of intellect and moral principles are possible, but in the test of pleasures mistakes are highly improbable if the analysis is made with any degree of care. One's labor in shop or factory, field, or store cannot tell the story of character. Labor is prompted by economic necessity. Not so with pleasures. One will labor for pay in a job he does not like, but one's pleasures are not backed by necessity. One who claims to be a musician or an artist can be easily tested by the type of music or art enjoyed. Does the musician like jazz, swing, or classical music? This will determine the quality of the musician or artist.

The books on the library shelf are silent witnesses of the literary tastes of the home. The books read are the revelation of character. The sort of entertainment one craves infallibly exposes personality structure. When the week's work is done or vacation time arrives, that which allures one in these hours of freedom and leisure will reveal the quality of his inner being.

Pleasures arise in the physical, mental, and spiritual elements of character. In which one of these fields does one set up the throne of personality? If in the first, the entire life and character exists on the plane of the flesh, with mind and heart subordinated. If the throne

is in the mind, the body and the spirit will be kept under. If in the spirit, the mind and body will take a lower position and the whole being and life will be properly co-ordinated. Do the pleasures lead in the direction of God and religion and the church or toward physical indulgence, unclean language, filthy stories, obscene pictures, and the like?

Days of courtship are invaluable in that they give necessary opportunities for young people to test each other before it is too late. Then they can know, if fair and unbiased and willing to listen to the voice of wisdom, what choice is likely to be right or what may be wrong. What friends mutually enjoy most will be an indicator of the probability of permanent companionship.

CHAPTER VI

CHOOSING RELIGION

Religion is the supreme question in every life, or it is nothing. It stands for the highest values, or else it is useless, and unworthy of one's consideration. All interest in religion ultimately focalizes in God. He is the center.

Other things are of secondary importance, and must find their meaning and values in relation to Him. Inspiration in the human heart to be righteous and good comes from Him. "Be ye holy; for I am holy," is reason for turning from all forms of evil, and seeking the likeness of God. The urge to righteousness is not a command, or promise, but is based on the moral character of God. He himself means more to us than anything He has said or done. The vital question, therefore, for young people to settle is their attitude toward God, not merely the church or religion. He is our religion and our salvation.

Pilate touched this central theme, perhaps unintentionally and unconsciously, when he asked the immortal question, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" The question was not one of the disposition of the teachings, the philosophy, or the miracles of Jesus, but of Jesus himself. The Master makes the same truth more clear and meaningful, saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." God is the center of the whole issue. He is the issue.

This emphasis is made as an answer to the common excuses of young people who say they want to be religious, but do not desire to join a certain church, or ac-

cept the standards of the church for right and wrong. A young man said to me, "I want to be religious but I do not want to do everything others require of me, for I do not consider some things sinful that others condemn." This is an evasion of the issue. God is the issue, not a church, or certain questions of right or wrong. Without Him no agreement can ever be reached on questions of righteousness or moral turpitude. This fact accounts for the low moral standards of this generation, and the breakdown of so many sacred traditions. God has been relegated to the background in thought, in preaching, and in ethical practices. The world needs a revival of God-consciousness. To neglect Him in religious discussions is to go in circles and settle no vital questions.

This choice vitally affects all decisions whether incidental or fundamental. It relates itself to the choice of an education, to the choice of companionship, and to the choice of a career. Deciding the question of God and religion immediately simplifies all other questions and problems, and gives them meaning and content. It is the climax of everything.

In no way is God a liability. Just the opposite is true. He is the supreme asset. If one sound reason could be advanced for rejecting God, I would not urge a young person to consider religion. Being the supreme value, God must stand above all questions and arguments.

The political air of today is filled with voices discussing ways and means of providing security, especially for old age. No one can object to the ideal, but who has found a way to eliminate the element of uncertainty in anything purely human? Thrones crumble, governments change, booms slump into depressions and panics, fortunes turn into poverty, health gives way to infirmity and disease, but faith in God floods the world with light and reveals the road to safety and security. God offers

a way through and up to triumph and victory. Here are assets that remain unaffected by changing world conditions.

Character finds its foundation and safety in God. If the church is built upon a rock the individual with faith in God has the same rock as the foundation for his life. This foundation will abide.

Happiness is secure in God. Since He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, happiness in Him is not subject to, or dependent upon, passing or changing conditions. If happiness were founded in wealth, the passing of wealth would end happiness. If happiness were founded in human honor, the passing of honor would mark the end of happiness. If happiness were dependent upon health, the approach of infirmity and sickness would nullify it. If God, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, is the foundation of happiness, we can be happy through all changes common to men. The roots of happiness go deeper than the shallow soil of wealth, honor, or physical strength. To abide, happiness must receive its blood supply from the heart of God.

Choosing religion is life's most far-reaching decision. A mistake in choosing an education, a career, or companionship would be a lifetime handicap, but the results would not necessarily be fatal. Not so with religion. This affects not only the life we now live, but our eternal happiness as well. Thus, choosing God affects not only the other choices common to man, but settles eternal destiny. This is the one decision upon which no one can afford to make a mistake.

"I have set before you life and death." "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" Life and death stand before us. Jesus Christ presents himself to the

mind, the conscience, the affections, and the will of every human being. What shall be done with Him?

The responsibility of religious choice cannot be evaded. To say, "No," is to make a decision. To say, "Yes," also is to make a decision. Refusing to face the problem is a form of negative decision. Eventually, however, the choice must be definite.

Responsibility for this choice is essentially one's very own. This is a responsibility that cannot be delegated to another. Salvation is a very personal thing. Every effort to side-step this decision induces weakness of character. More is involved in this choice than the direct or indirect results to one's own character. God is to be considered. He cannot be disregarded and grieved with impunity. The Holy Spirit dealing with the human heart is on a mission of mercy and should not be mistreated.

Why should young people decide for God and consecrate to Him their lives and personalities? First, let us inquire if there are reasons for not accepting Christ. Can one reason be found for not being religious? The answer is no. All of the atheists and sinners of the ages have been unable to advance one unanswerable argument for rejecting God and religion.

Why should young people choose God? First, God needs them. I do not believe this places human life higher than its real importance. Evidently God wants the fellowship of those whom He has created in His own image. This thought is borne out by creation and redemption. God needs workers in His harvest field. The fields are ripe unto the harvest and the laborers are few. God considers both the soul and the life of a young person highly valuable. Oh, that God could have the energies, the service, the lives of all young people of this generation. If so, He could transform the nations of the world.

Second, they need God. Those in perfect health, with good jobs, surrounded by happy friends may question this statement, but the time will come when all will admit the need of God. Changes are imminent and certain. Fortunes will pass, friends will die, old age will come, all of which will convince people, ultimately, of the need of God. God needs us, but we need Him far more than He needs us.

Third, without God there is no salvation. No other name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved, except the name Christ Jesus. Salvation cannot be found in education, morals, or ethical standards. Men are dead in trespasses and in sins and in need of an impartation of divine life. "What difference does it make, what I do with Jesus?" asked a young man. The answer is simple, "It means heaven or hell."

When should I choose God? No other answer could be better than God's own, "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." There is no valid reason for the postponement of the day of salvation. One has everything to gain and nothing to lose by making his decision early in life. Habits once formed become strong and consequently hard to change. When once the trend of life is set, it is not an easy matter to change it. If one travels the right road from the beginning, he will not be compelled to reverse himself, lose valuable time, and suffer inevitable losses. To choose God early in life lays a foundation for all other decisions one has to make. With God as the center of one's life, it becomes easier to decide the questions of education, a career, and of life companionship. These are pertinent reasons for choosing God early in life.

We must recognize the claims of God not only upon the soul, but upon the life, with time and talents as well.

If God owns one's soul by right of creation, preservation, and redemption, He also is the Owner of all that goes with life—time, talent, money, opportunity, and all other assets. One who puts off the day of choosing God not only jeopardizes his own best interests but falls below the high moral principles of stewardship. This, the most vital choice of one's entire life, the one that involves both time and eternity, should be made as early as possible.

No one knows when death will come. Some young people foolishly think they have no time for God, being wrapped up in the pleasures of youth. They forget that their time is not their own, and that it could be spent to greater advantage to themselves in relationship with God. Others think they have plenty of time, and postpone the day of decision to a later period in life. In doing this they forget that they are robbing God and doing themselves untold damage. Not only that, but in failing to decide for God they run the risk of being cut off, unsaved. Death is no respecter of persons. It takes the aged, those in middle life, the young, and even the baby from the cradle or the arms of its mother. Today is the day of choice, for we know not what tomorrow may bring.

The responsibility of choice, we repeat, cannot be relegated to another. There are some decisions that each person is compelled, by the nature of things, to make for himself. In coming to a decision, one is subject to influences, for and against the right, but is never compelled to follow either. Choice of religion is one's own responsibility. Parents and friends can lead one to the threshold of salvation, but beyond this one must go alone. The relationship between God and a person is so important and sacred that no intermediary is ever permitted to participate. The issue is between God and a human soul.

After many years of fellowship with God, I am confirmed in my conviction that only in service to Jesus Christ is found the assurance that making right choices in life can bring. If I could make the journey through life again I would travel the same road.

I pray for everyone who reads this book that he may have the consolation at the end of life, just before he crosses the divide and stands before his God to give account for the life he has lived, that he may be able to say truthfully, "Although I have made many incidental mistakes, I have made no fundamental mistakes in the four vital choices of my life. My choice of an education was right. My choice of a career was right. My choice of a companion was wise. I chose God early in life. To Him who gave me wisdom, to Him who transformed my character, to Him who gave me my opportunities, to Him who has sustained me, I give all the glory. Now I leave this world, and face Him whom I love and whom I have served, and from whom I hope to hear the words, 'Well done.'"