Hope for Joday

SELECTED RADIO SERMONS

Series F

HERALD OF HOPE

Box 68

Los Angeles 42, California

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Herald of Hope Broadcasts

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FOREWORD

The material in this booklet has been taken from a series of radio messages entitled. "What Is Christianity?"

We sincerely hope that these messages will bring edification and comfort to many.

May God bless you abundantly.

The Voice of the Herald of Hope Brother H. J. Smith

(With sincere gratitude we dedicate this booklet to Brother Ernest Soady, Assistant Pastor of "Old Pisgah" Tabernacle, who for a number of years has so ably and willingly labored in our church and radio ministry.)

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

We know that Christianity, besides being one of the great world religions, is much more. Of course, it was based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, but in it are the keys of life or death, heaven or hell. Its cornerstone is the vicarious death and glorious resurrection of Jesus the Christ, the only begotten Son of God.

A NEW BIRTH

The basic Christian experience is that stated by Jesus Himself and found in St. John 3:5. Here we read, "... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." So. ... as we are introduced to our earthly sojourn by a physical birth, we are brought into God's spiritual realm by the new birth. Though some professing Christians may not posses or even understand these words of Christ, yet, the truth remains (St. John 3:7), "Ye MUST be born again." Such an experience is based first of all on God's promise of forgiveness, then upon our willingness to confess our sins and accept His mercies. Last but not least, is the witness of His Spirit with our spirit that we are a son of God. Some may be persuaded to accept Christ, but without true repentance. Others may repent and then accept Him, but we believe a man should not leave the penitent form without a witness of Divine acceptance within his soul. This is an important part of the basic Christian experience. My friend, have you been truly born again? There is such an experience for you. Membership in a church is not sufficient. Genuine Christianity is not a mere acceptance of a way of life. It is a personal experience of justification by faith.

Are you a Christian? Have you been born again? Do you know you have passed from death unto life? Such assurance can be yours, my friend, if you refuse to be sold short by professional religionists.

GROWTH IN GRACE

Christianity is not only a new birth, but it is a spiritual growth. Let me read 2 Peter 3:18. Here we are admonished to "... grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ..." Here is a two-fold injunction. First, "grow in grace." Our salvation is surely of "grace," the undeserved mercy of God. Except the Lord build the house, we labour in vain. Mercy freely given of God is a necessity, for mortal man could not live by earthly bread alone. It is God who justifieth. The Grace of God is not alone to be received from above, but it is to be practiced. As we have received, we must freely give—not as the unjust servant who, being freely forgiven by his lord, showed no mercy upon

a lesser servant under his supervision, but rather, passing on to others and sharing with them the free mercies of the Lord we have received from His hand.

We are not able to show forth Christian grace except we know Him who is the author of grace. We must grow in the knowledge of Christ the Lord. How can this be? Have you not read, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth"? What are we to study? The writings of famous men? These may be good, but first things should come first. We have had given to us a book, but more than a book. It is the holy inspired word of God. This we must study if we are to be approved of God and a blessing to men. David realized the importance of God's word, for he cried to the Lord, "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee." It is as true today as when it was first spoken. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

To grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is necessary that we pray. "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" are the words of life. What is prayer and why is it such a vital part of our spiritual growth? Prayer is communion with God. A marriage cannot be successful if the two parties never see each other or have any contact

or point of meeting. Neither can we be Christians without Christ. We must pray much. We must practice His Presence. We must sit at His blessed feet and learn of Him. We must discover through prayer that God is not far away as some will say. We must learn to know that Christ is real. Such is possible as we follow on to know Him. Those who have learned Him have found Him to be precious. I believe it was the Psalmist who cried out, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." God does not withdraw Himself from any earnest seeker. There awaits a revelation of God for every honest heart. The new birth is a necessity for every man, but it certainly is not the end. It is but the beginning, the first step in the growth in grace and in the knowledge of God.

A NEW DRESS

It can be well said that Christianity is a new dress. Whereas in the past we were only clothed in garments of self righteousness, now all is changed. The experience of Isaiah in chapter 61, verse 10, becomes a reality. Here we read, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God, for He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness..." Indeed, here is something better than filthy rags. Here are garments of salvation, made to order to fit our very need. Every man has a distinctive personality. God made us that way, and

therefore He knows just what clothes we need. The garments of salvation (or deliverance), what a wonderful thought! We are now free men. Though once bound, now we are free. Though once blind, now we see.

By this scripture we see that our God is not alone interested in bringing us into a place of deliverance, but He wants us to be like Him. It is wonderful to put off sin, but it becomes more wonderful when we put on Christ. Just ordinary garments are not enough, for the prophet continues in this same verse, "He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridgegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels." I remember also Isaiah 52:1, "...O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments." God's spiritual Zion is intended to become the joy of the whole earth, and the Lord is very particular that she be properly dressed. "Without holiness no man shall see God," the Word declares. It is true also that God is glorified only as we put Him on and the people see Christ dwelling in us. The Apostle Paul cried out, "It is no longer I, but Christ." He further declared, that "the life I now live, I live by the faith of the son of God." This Apostle indeed found a precious treasure. It was "Christ within the hope of glory."

A RADIANT LIFE

Yet Christianity is more than an experience of a new birth, and more than growth or a new dress. It is a radiant life. In Matthew 5:16, we read these words of Jesus, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Someone may say, "But brother, I thought that Christianity was a faith." Yes, my friend, it IS a faith, accompanied by holy works. If our lights do not shine, there is bound to be darkness, and men cannot see works of righteousness without the help of light. Jesus Himself is that light, and as He dwells within our hearts it is no longer I, but Christ who doeth the works. What a wonderful thought this is, Christ within me! God dwelling in tabernacles of clay in the person of His beloved Son.

What does Christ mean to you, my friend? Is He just a person that walked this earthly sod two thousand years ago, or do you know Him today? Is He to you, merely a historical personality, or do you know Him as one who lives today? Yes, my friend, to know Him aright is to find Him as the inner beauty of an outwardly radiant life. The world must see Him in you, my friend, if they are ever to be convinced that Christianity is real.

Real Christianity builds real character. In Matt. 7:24, we read the words of Jesus, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." Certainly in these days we need strong character. So many today are vacillating personalities. They lean with every wind that blows. They seem to have little strength or inner stability. I read even recently that our Government officials were deeply concerned about the softness found among our youth. Physical flabbiness is one thing, my friend, but when this flabbiness becomes a spiritual and moral thing, we certainly have reason to be troubled. And this is exactly what we find not only among our youth, but the next generation as well. Our married young people don't seem to have the spiritual and moral stability that once made this nation great. The breakdown of the American home is one of the most frightening aspects of this degenerate age. Hasty marriages, easy divorce, and then remarriage, all add up to moral looseness and the glorification of failure. No wonder juvenile delinquency is a major problem today.

Parental delinquency is more frightening. If those who were in authority in the home, set an example of real stability of character, there would be more for our youth to build his life upon. God help us! What shall we do? We must have Christ! He is still the answer, and if men will turn to Him he will take out the stony heart and in its place put one that is pliable and easily moved toward God. And He will give us a backbone, too, instead of a dish-rag, and enable us to stand for what is right. Real Christianity brings real character, my friend.

I trust by these words I can inspire someone to find such strength in God. I am satisfied that if America survives in the days that are to come, it will be because in His mercy God sends us a spiritual awakening that will undergird this nation spiritually and strengthen its moral fibre. If such does not come, we are lost. We had better pray, my friend. Consider Rome and Greece, and other mighty nations that neglected the building of character. Where are they today? They are just marks on a blotted page in history. God send America a real HOLY GHOST REVIVAL is my prayer. Such will help us to be MEN.

SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP

Christianity is not only a birth, a growth, a beautiful life and real character, but it is a wonderful fellowship. Have you ever considered the depth of spiritual fellowship, such as that which was enjoyed by the two disciples who walked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus? In Luke 24:32, they expressed their own depth of feeling as they walked and talked

with the Lord. "Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures?" There can be found no greater fellowship anywhere than can be found among genuine Christians. To be washed in the blood of Christ, to be filled with His Spirit, brings us such reality that it enhances our associations with those of like precious faith. Fellowship that springs from beautiful lives is of a heavenly sort. Its warmth, its lack of superficiality and hypocrisy, its spirit of willingness to share and to help others, cannot be duplicated anywhere else. Christianity is indeed a beautiful fellowship, first with God, and then with our fellow-creatures. Thank God for such a thing of beauty in these days of exploitation for personal gain. If you want to enjoy the beautiful things of life, my friend, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and you will find a truly satisfying and Divine fellowship.

SONSHIP WITH GOD

Christianity brings us into a place of sonship with God. John 1:12 states, "... as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name." What more could anyone ask than this blessed position? A son or a daughter of the Most High! Do you enjoy such a blessed state? Think of it, we are not called servants, but sons! Through Christ

AN EDUCATION

Christianity is more than birth, a growth, a life, or divine character. It is more than fellowship or a sonship. It is truly an EDUCATION. In St. John 8:31, 32 we read, "... If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Pilate one time asked Jesus, "What is truth?" but before he could receive an answer, he went his way to answer the clamor of the rabble seeking the Master's life. Many may ask, "What is truth?" and yet never find an answer to this all-important question, for they fail somehow to realize that real truth must come from the Giver of every good and perfect gift, and such a gift is not obtained in a careless manner. There is a condition attached to the receiving of eternal truth. Remember, Jesus said, "If ye continue in My word."

My friend, to be taught of God, first of all we must be willing to walk in His light. In this world we may perhaps be educated before we enter into our life's work, but in the things of God, we learn truth as we labor together with Him. Many are the walks to Emmaus where our hearts will burn within us as we receive Divine truth, but truth to be retained must be practiced. As Israel of old gathered sufficient manna only for the day, so we really learn only what we apply. Truth, the Truth of God, is not an abstract

Jesus, our elder brother, we are made joint heirs to the riches of God's eternal kingdom. This is indeed an elect position and one greatly to be desired. The treasures of heaven are ours, for we are in the family of God. We are made partakers of the best and are fellow-heirs with the saints of light. No good thing will God withhold from us if we walk uprightly. We can ask what we will and it shall be granted unto us. We need not worry longer about pigstys and hunger, rags or disrespect. There waits for every man who will, a robe, a ring, a kiss of love. Perhaps as the prodigal of old, we do not feel worthy of sonship, but worthiness has no part in this. A price was paid for our redemption and we have entered into the beloved through a door prepared by God. Jesus Christ Himself is that way. Have you accepted His sacrifice for you? If you can say "Yes," then you are no longer on the outside, but indeed you are a son of God and God shall deal with you as with a son. If you need correction, instruction, chastisement, He will care for all these. He will watch over you with a holy jealousy. In your going out and coming in, His eye shall be upon thee. He will uphold thee with the right hand of His power and afterward receive you into glory.

thing, but a living, vital contact with God Himself. We find Truth to be Truth indeed when we see it bring deliverance in times of need. In the furnace of affliction we learn of Christ the great deliverer, when in mercy His hand touches our life. Passing through sorrow we learn of sustaining grace when we discover underneath us the arms of a great God. When all seems to be lost and the darkness of despair settles down upon us, we are taught of Him when He giveth songs in the night. Yes, we are taught of God when we walk with Him. Faith, that substance so essential to the need of every man, is found as we hear and practice the Word of God. All men may be taught of God if they will accept such instruction. But those who earnestly desire the best in this world, must seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

A SERVICE

Let us read in Timothy 6:18, a charge directed to the believing church: "... be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." By this scripture we see that Christianity is more than a birth, a growth, or a life. It is more than character building, a fellowship or sonship. Beside education, Christianity is a SERVICE.

Some would say this Gospel of Christ is merely

one of faith. Faith that is real faith is shown to be such by the works manifested because of it. Nor is it only necessary to occasionally do something good. Christianity is a progressive manifestation of the Christ-life within, therefore are works seen wherever He dwells. Does not the Bible instruct us to do good to all men? In good works we are to abound. Around us constantly there are those who are needy. Men still hunger and thirst, and mourn and weep, and suffer and die. As long as such sad things are in the world, there will always be a place for Christian service. We must be willing to visit those in need. We must be willing to share of our means to make easier the lot of others. I have always believed the church to be more than a place where they had preaching once or twice a week. It should be a place where the needy could come and find clothing, food and a place to sleep in time of necessity. Someone may feel this is an extreme position, but I believe the scriptures will bear me out in this. If some of the finance being spent for huge, costly church edifices could be put into dormitories, rooms, a kitchen and a commissary for the poor, we would come closer to meeting the challenge of the Gospel. The Gospel is not alone a display of words. To make such words convincing, deeds must also be present.

Along this line, and not altogether divorced from it, is the next thought I would like to bring you:

A SACRIFICE

Under the Mosaic system much was made of the sacrifice of bulls, of goats, turtledoves and the like. But let me read you Romans 12:1, "... present your bodies a LIVING SACRIFICE, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. All the good things we may do for others is no good unless it is accompanied by self-sacrifice. It is no sacrifice for a millionaire to give a dollar to a needy cause. He probably would have to add several ciphers on this before it became a real sacrifice. What God is really after is all of us. I sometimes feel that He wants our best and a little bit more. This is not selfishness on His part, for the blessing only comes to those who go the extra mile. Christianity has always thrived when its adherents went beyond that which was their duty and entered into sacrificial living.

There is something rich and powerful about a completely sacrificial life. God grant that the church shall be blest with more of such.

A WALK

Along with the giving of our means and our energies and our service, we must not neglect the truth contained in Collosians 2:6, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so WALK ye in Him." Christianity must be more than mere

A WARFARE

Christianity is a new birth, a growth in grace, and a new life; Christianity shows real character to the world. It is a fellowship, a sonship, an education, a service and a sacrifice. It certainly brings a holy walk. But Christianity is also a warfare.

Read with me I Timothy 6:12, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life,..." Many have thought faith to be a passive thing; yet, real faith is born in conflict. If we are Christians, it means a battle with powerful foes. Yet, the battle is not ours, but the Lord's. This Christian battle is not fought against flesh and blood. Our foes are the principalities, powers, rulers of darkness. We wrestle against spiritual wickedness in high places. Physical prowess means nothing in this battle, for

the battlefield is in the soul and the warfare must be waged in the spirit. The outside conflicts are but evidences of inner spiritual turmoil.

How important in such a conflict are the weapons we must use. The blessed sword of the Spirit, the Word of the living God...this is an aggressive weapon. With it we slay the wicked. The proper use of the Word means more than a quoting of sacred writ. It is the living of a life in God...a consistent, unchallengeable walk with Christ in the Spirit. It is a life built upon the holy principles laid down so clearly in the Bible. God help us to see the scriptures as more than a blunderbus to fight against people. The Word of God is the weapon of a consecrated life.

Fiery darts will be hurled at us and, as surely as they are well aimed, they will find their mark unless we know how to use our defensive armor in the fight. The shield of faith will be our sure protection in the heat of the fray. Let us hold fast the profession of this Christian faith without wavering, for to waver is to go down before a well-aimed barb of the evil one. To remain confident though everything around is shaking, is to be assured of complete and glorious victory.

The Psalmist said that if it had not been the Lord who was on our side, Israel would long ago have been consumed. Yet, survival is an established fact,

not only to ancient Israel, but to the Church of Jesus Christ as well. The Church is indestructible because Christ is the unchanging, powerful One. and He is the head of the Church. 2 Corinthians 4:8 and 9 tell us the story of the overcoming Church. Here we read, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed." Yes, my friend, this is indeed a battle, but the Lord is our captain and He doesn't fight from a safe base completely separated from the actual conflict. He goeth before His sheep. He is in the front lines of this great camp and never asks us to go where He has not gone ahead. He is our leader who has been "tempted in all points like as we, yet without sin." He knows how to succour the tempted and to give strength to the weak. He can be trusted to always be ready whenever we need His help. His promised grace shall always be sufficient.

At times you may find yourself surrounded by foes, but remember in such times, "Greater is He that is within you..." He is indeed more than all that can be against you.

As we get closer and closer to the end of this age, the conflict shall increase in tempo and fury. We must spend much time in prayer and increasingly become more acquainted with God's precious Word. Thus we can be assured of constant and complete victory.

A RACE

Of a truth, as we have stated, Christianity is a warfare, but in Hebrews 12:1 the writer admonishes, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Yes, Christianity is a race. It is a race against time. There is so much to be done and time is running out. These are indeed the last days and the signs in earth and air shout loudly that this is so. The dealing of God with the Gentile nations is soon to be finished. God is turning once more to His ancient people. Strong are His dealings with Israel in these days. The fig tree is surely budding, and as we see this sign in the earth we ought to add wings to our feet and determination to our testimony and never cease our witness until all men everywhere hear the good news that Jesus died to redeem fallen man.

Not all who run a race win the prize. Some seem to have put too little effort in preparation. If we desire to win this race, we must spend long hours in spiritual training. Although we need be fleet of feet, we discover the way to victory while on our knees.

This race is one with many handicaps. At times

there is much opposition from our enemy. We are compassed about with a determined enemy. We are heckled, harassed, and hindered every step of the way. Yet, in our patience we must possess our souls. Our eyes must be upon Jesus. He ran the race before us, and, winning the prize, is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God. He intercedes for you before the Father, my friend. You are not alone. Though encompassed by a very determined enemy, we also are encompassed about with a great cloud of witnesses, who encourage us onward. Not only men of earth witness to us of God's strength and our ability through Him to win this race, but an innumerable company of angels are on the side of this first-born Church.

Many times we seem to be hedged in by our adversary. A wall formidable and high separates us from success. The prize we seek lies beyond these things somewhere. Listen to the voice of God that comes to us through the ages past: "I will make thy feet like unto the feet of hinds." By God we shall run through this troop; by God I shall leap over this wall. Our strength is divine strength. By God's help we shall win in this race. The prize is just before us, my friend. Let us press on and put additional effort in this last mile. There is great joy that awaits us and a "well done" from our Lord.

POWER

My friend, Christianity is VICTORY. In I John 5:4 we have this note of triumph, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Keep on believing, my friend, some of these days we shall shout "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." In His Name we labor. By His power we overcome. At His bidding we move forward. We are more than conquerors through Christ who loved us.

Shall any force be able to keep us from this victory which is our promise? In Romans 8:35 and 37 we read that neither tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or sword shall be able to separate us from the love of Christ. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him..." In Rev. 15:2, we read of a great company standing on a sea of glass with the harps of God in their hands. These are those who have gotten the victory over the beast who tormented them. Their song is one of victory.

My friend, let us press on. Our victory is assured. God is for us and much more than all that can be against us. May our faith in Him remain strong, and may we fight on, as men who know their God.

Christianity is a religion of power, miracle and demonstration of the Holy Ghost. In Acts 1:8 we read the words of Jesus, "... ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:", and in St. Mark 16:17 we read, "... these signs shall follow them that believe."

How greatly we need the power of God in these days. This is an age of power. All we hear about is an increase of horsepower in automobiles. In airplanes it has gone from piston engines to turboprops and then to jets. We hear of rockets and missiles and man-made satelites. Surely, man is power-conscious. But God has always been power-conscious. His is the power that made the worlds, flung them out in their proper orbit, and His power keeps them there. Such a God will not leave His people helpless in the midst of an age of power. We, too, have power available for our every need.

God saves men today. Surely here is a genuine miracle. He heals sick bodies. Some may declare that such power is no longer the possession of the church, but I'm glad there are many today who know that God has never changed and shall do as He has always done. He still works miracles in physical bodies. In the church today He manifests Himself in signs and wonders and gifts of the Holy

Ghost. Think not that the voice of God is no longer among us. He still speaks today through oral gifts He has given men. The voice of prophecy, the tongue, the interpretation, all these are still in evidence. Blessed is that church that still believes in a miracle-working God and gives place for the power of the Holy Ghost to work in its midst.

Where there is no vision the people perish. Thank God for the power that brings visions to young men and causes old men to dream dreams with spiritual significance. Even in these days, God is pouring out of His Spirit upon His servants and His handmaids and we hear them prophesy. My friend, God has not yet turned the work of His true church over to carnal, heady and wilful men. His church is still led by His Spirit. Much has been revealed to men by the Holy Ghost, and I am satisfied that MORE will be revealed.

Some may not share this faith with me, but I do not look for this church age to close in defeat. God's people have always been victorious. They always shall be. I am still praying and believeing for an outpouring of the Spirit that shall surpass Pentecost and Azusa and Topeka, and wherever else the Spirit of God was outpoured in days gone by. God is the God of Pentecost, and Pentecost means POWER. Through Jesus we can ask what we will and it shall be granted unto us. I pray for rain in this time of

I believe in the soon-coming of Christ. I believe in the translation of the saints and the revelation of Jesus Christ to the world. This I believe to be true Christianity. Not all who say, "Lord, Lord," shall enter in, for God's people shall be a holy people. His church is a sanctified body, over which Christ is the head. Christianity is a holy religion.

ETERNAL REALITY

Yes, I believe this age will close with a blaze of glory and a crash of judgment, but that is not the end. The Word of God gives us assurance of immortality. We shall-live on eternally in a better place than this. John 17:3 declares, "and this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Some day we shall see Him as He is, and in that day we shall be like Him. Death shall be swallowed up in victory, the former things will have passed away; all tears shall be dried and joy shall be full and eternal. Life, and life more abundant, shall be the portion of those who belong to Christ. They shall enter into the gates of that eternal city to go no more out. Gates of pearl, streets of gold, foundation walls of precious stones, all these shall become realities in that place of realized immortality. But best of all, we shall see Him, in whom our soul delights. The Lily of the Valley, the Bright and Morning Star, the Rose of Sharon, the Altogether Lovely One, shall dwell in the midst of a people redeemed by the precious flow from the fountain opened in the House of David for all sin and uncleanness.

They shall need no sun, nor moon, nor other light in that holy city, for the Lamb of God shall be the light thereof. He shall lead His people unto living fountains of water and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

This, my friend, is Christianity, the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. The lovely Son of God . . . conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of a virgin, cradled in a manger, walking the shores of Galilee, doing good to all men, crucified, dying, buried, rising the third day, returning to His Father, sending the Holy Ghost upon His waiting church, coming again to receive His own unto Himself, living with them eternally. Is this not a wonderful thing, this Gospel of Hope, the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ? Blessed shall all men be who embrace this truth. Theirs is an eternal inheritance with the saints of light. Theirs is a home eternal in the bosom of God and in the presence of His Christ.