

Hope for Today

SELECTED RADIO SERMONS

Series B

HERALD OF HOPE

Box 68

Los Angeles 42, California

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FOREWORD

Our first booklet, Hope for Today, was so well received that we felt constrained to print this second group of radio messages. Our desire is that this booklet will prove to be an even greater blessing than the first.

Please pray with us that these words may bring comfort and hope to those who need such help.

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

(We wish to dedicate this booklet to the founder and president of Christ Faith Mission, Mrs. Arglee F. Green, who for the past thirty-five years has been "Mother" to many homeless and spiritually needy men and women.)

OUR MORNING PRAYER

Father in Heaven, we thank you this morning for Jesus and for the life He gave to purchase our salvation. We feel unworthy of the least of thy tender mercies but this morning appreciate greatly the gift of thy love.

Lord, will you bless the aged ones, the lonely ones just now. Be a father and a husband to them dear Lord and teach them to lean heavily upon you in their times of trial. Hold thou their hand and steady them as they seek thy grace and endeavor to do thy will.

Be with the sick ones, the suffering ones just now and let them feel even now the touch of God upon their physical bodies. Spirit of God, quicken, encourage, and heal those who look to thee just now.

Be with that soul who has never known God. Save men I pray thee, in Jesus name. Bring back that wayward one. May they once more turn their hearts unto thee.

Bless those who listen to these words as they travel to their place of employment. Keep your hand upon the wheel of their lives, we pray, and guide them through the dangers that beset them on every side. Cause them to reach their destination safely and may they find God there also.

Oh Lord, bless our young people wherever they may be; in high school, in college, in grade school, or junior college. Keep your hand upon them and cause them to seek thy face. Pour out upon them the spirit of grace and supplication. Send revival among our youth we pray.

God bless this broadcast and make it a blessing to every needy heart. May the words spoken this morning find a lodging place in some needy heart. Bless those who faithfully write us. Bless those whose gifts make possible the continuance of this Herald of Hope program. We ask all this in the precious name of Jesus our most wonderful Saviour. Amen.

"WHEN YOU KNOW HIM"

Our lives are profoundly influenced by others with whom we associate. This holds true whether our association is continuous or only casual and occasional. I believe I have heard that there are approximately five hundred people over which we exercise some influence, and of course there are a like number that exercise an influence over our own lives. If this be true we are not as exclusive and isolated as we have thought ourselves to be.

I know I have been influenced greatly by certain people with whom I have been associated, and I have been told that I too have exerted somewhat of an influence at times over the lives of others around me. It seems in the light of certain proof I must accept such as being the case. Since this seems to be true, certainly we should desire, by our lives, to lift people to a higher plane of Christian living.

I look back with some shame and regret to the days when my life was not lived as a true Christian. I must have influenced others evilly for I always seemed to have associates in whatever I was doing that was not right. Now, I wish that I had understood these things and that I could have been at all times a more wholesome influence to my friends. But certainly life is much too short to waste on regretting what is past. There are far too many important things for us to do today. But

this now brings me to the thought for this day.

"When you know Him".—One day I met someone who influenced me greatly; more than that, He changed me completely. I am speaking of Jesus, the lovely Son of God. When first I met Him the meeting was only casual but I was somehow greatly impressed by His presence. In fact, at the first meeting I neither recognized Him nor understood that I was being influenced by Him for He came to me in the hustle and whirl of my every day life. Just a passing glance; ever so light a touch by His hand, but it awakened in me a desire for something better. I saw mirrored in the emptiness of my own soul the possibilities of a better life, and unconsciously at first but quite deliberately, I turned my steps toward God. I cannot tell you how many times He passed my way before I learned to appreciate and recognize His presence, but I well remember my first formal introduction to Him. It was at a busy intersection in down-town Detroit, Michigan, where I chanced to stop for a few moments to listen to some music; or was it chance? I am now inclined to believe it was a meeting well planned by Christ, my Savior, who had already seen my great need and was taking action in my behalf. Something was said that day; some song took hold of my heart; I recognized reality in manifestation and from that day to this I have been different. I started that day to beat a path deliberately and consistently to the throne of grace.

Thank God the day came when I entered into a relationship with Christ which is purely divine in character but quite practical in all its applications.

"When you know Him," your life will be different. You can never be the same after you have met Him and have partaken of His graces. "When You Know Him", the sins of the past will be forgotten, forgiven and forsaken. "When You Know Him", the night will have passed forever and a beautiful day, new, real and eternal will have dawned for you. "When You Know Him", the desire to live in His presence will replace the old desires for pleasant human associations. "When You Know Him", His love will warm your heart, change your life and flowing through you, will bless others. "When You Know Him", you will recognize that you are now a part of a divine kingdom which shall have no end. Yes, "When You Know Him", old things will have passed away and all things will be new. "When You Know Him", miracles are expected and experienced while His mercies are new every morning. "When You Know Him", your old associates will 'think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot', often speaking evil of you; but since you are living in the light of His presence, 'none of these things shall move you.' "When You Know Him", Heaven does not seem far away but the things of this earth

have grown strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.

If you do know Him, by this time you are rejoicing with me. If you do not know Him, will you not this day come to Him, repenting of your sins and receiving from His hand, forgiveness, fullness of joy and eternal assurance. If we somehow have lost the vital touch of His presence, may we without further delay retrace our steps to the cross of Calvary and there looking up into His lovely face again renew our consecration. To know Him is to have only one great burning desire. This was expressed so beautifully by Paul the great apostle who cried out, "Oh that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made comfortable unto His death. Yes, "When You Know Him", you too will desire to be like Him. You will be determined to follow Him all the way,—even unto death.

"TOO MUCH SUNSHINE"

About daylight as I was coming back from the prayer tower, I passed our old gardener. He has been here with "Old Pisgah" for a great many years. He had just turned a water sprinkler on in a bed of ferns at the foot of a young avocado tree and was now busy sweeping the walks with his date-palm broom. It was a little darker than usual this morning due to a night-time coastal fog that

at this time of the year, creeps inland as far as these foothills of the San Gabriel mountain range. He looked at me with a glad smile and pointed up at the fog and said, "I'm glad it's back. I won't have to water so much now. *Too much sunshine is not good.*" Those words, "too much sunshine", seemed to stay with me and from them I have drawn my thought for today.

God, our all-wise heavenly Father, knows what is best. He is intensely interested in our personal lives. We are only subjected to that which is the best for us. Sometimes this is difficult for us to understand for we love the sunshine. We have come to consider as our enemy all but the beautiful sunshine, but somehow I believe this is the farthest from the truth. Perhaps that which we felt was cruel and unnecessary was after all the best that could happen to us. Perhaps God has seen we have had too much sunshine and that our lives need to be tempered a bit more, so He sends the clouds. Here in Southern California we have much sunshine. Perhaps too much, for around us for many miles in every direction we have a barren desert, with it's sage brush, greasewood, mesquite, juniper and cactus. Even the beautiful city of Los Angeles, were it not for man's ingenuity, would be a barren waste where little that is worth while could ever grow. Water, which is the life blood of this part of the country, comes to us through many long miles of aqueduct and tunnels through the mountain

ranges. *Too much sunshine?* Yes, I am convinced, as our old gardener told me this morning, "too much sunshine is not good."

God knows our needs for He knows our weakness and frailty. He greatly desires that we find the best in life as well as being our best for others, so He permits the clouds to come. We cannot see the sun shining at times but we know it is still there above that great bank of clouds and fog. We feel the chill and damp of the night and draw back from it and sometimes fail to see it a blessing in disguise. Good days, pleasant associations, kind friends, perfect health, freedom from want; all these things delight our souls, but I wonder if they are not just like the sunshine of a pleasant day. We shouldn't only want to enjoy things, we should desire to bless the world by our presence. For this reason we must at times enter into the dark experiences of life. Please believe me, real character grows faster in the shadows than it does in bright sunshine. Real character is eternal and God is interested in seeing that it is nurtured and developed. Too much sunshine, too many good days, and we become careless with our living. Let the clouds come and we turn to God, receiving from Him that which will cause men to believe and be benefitted by our counsel and life.

Though we may enjoy the sunshine with its light and warmth that is so pleasing to the flesh,

let us welcome the cloudy, dark days, for in these we grow. Too much sunshine? I don't think we need to fear that we will have too much in these days for God's judgments are in the earth; and, through the clouds, through this darkness men are learning righteousness. Thank God for anything that may bring into our lives the righteousness of God. My brother, my sister, the world is searching for God. They expect to find Him in your life. When our lives have become tempered by clouds and sunshine, cold and heat, trouble and peace, joy and sorrow, sickness and then health, God is manifested in the lives of all true believers and men come to understand His ways. Thank God, He knows best.

I may be speaking to those who are passing through some cloudy days. Perhaps you have been bereaved. Perhaps sorrow has come into your life or into your home. Perhaps you are not in as good health as you used to be. Somehow you wonder about it all. Many times I have been so glad for that wonderful scripture, "All things work together for good to them that love God". All things; did you understand that? *All* things work for good to those that love the Lord. Let us not blame God because things are not better for us. Let us not complain about circumstances or surroundings. Let us rather rejoice because it is just a time of clouds, fog, dampness or dark and it will soon pass away. It comes to us just to bring out the best within our

lives. God certainly loves us. I am sure of that. There is not a doubt in my mind but that I serve a great loving heavenly father. He has proved it to me many times. One day He sent Jesus to die for my sins and transgressions and to bring me into this place of life and hope. I am so glad because I know the Lord. I wonder if you know Him, If you don't know Him you will never understand the clouds. You will never understand the things that oppose and beset men. But once you come to know Jesus, and once you begin to understand somewhat of the mystery of the cross of calvary, you will begin to understand why it is necessary for the cloudy dark days to come. In that day we will not constantly question why the cold, icy winds sweep over our unprotected souls. Jesus was the Christ of calvary and as He went the way before us, His steps led Him to the cross. But there he found God in a new way and there He opened up a way for all men into the presence of His Father. We enjoy life today because Jesus was willing to go through that cloudy, dark day. May the Lord help us to see that too much sunshine is not good and may we be willing, like the old gardener, to rejoice when the clouds come. May it never be said of us that we have had, "too much sunshine."

"A SIMPLE SERMON"

Sometimes I get tired of the extravagant display of *things* in this world. I long for simple things. I remember so well that when I began my ministry it was among the simple country folk in the South. I found it so deeply satisfying to work among them because they wore what they were on the outside. You knew at once what a man was for he was frank about it. He lived and talked about the controlling things of his life. His life was not a 'hodge-podge' of elaborate thinking and doing but he practiced a very simple existence. He lived in a humble home, his people were plain people, he ate plain food. Here in his humble mountain cabin, all 'fol-de-rol' and making-believe were at a minimum. He had his own little piece of land on which he raised his 'vittles' and he was contented there. He didn't know much about any 'new-fangled' religions or interpretations of the gospel. His was just a simple faith in his God. I am afraid such simplicity is a little out of place in this progressive age but still I get hungry for it at times. Perhaps some of you feel the same as I.

Paul the apostle had run the gauntlet from youth to maturity through all the Jewish, Pharasaical, traditionalism of his day. He knew it all for he was well learned in all matters pertaining to the Hebrew laws and customs and yet I believe, when in his misguided zeal and while persecuting the new-born

Christian church he beheld and consented to the stoning of Stephen, something about the simplicity of this young man's faith struck a tender place in his heart. After his great revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ while on the road to Damascus, and after waiting upon God in wilderness fastings and prayer, he came to a very determined conclusion. He made up his mind to "know nothing among them but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. You read about this decision in the first verses of 1 Cor. 2. Before we go further let us read our Bible lesson 1st Timothy 1:12-15. "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. and the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." The last verse we just read holds in it the seed-thought of all of Paul's sermonizing and was the foundation principle of his life. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief". Here Paul joined together the human and divine titles of the Lord. He was the son of God *and* He was the son of man. He was the Messiah of the Jews and He was the Savior of the world. He came to His own nation and when

they rejected Him He became the deliverer of all men, the Savior of the world.

You will say, "How simple is this message", Yes, I agree with you for our subject is just this, "A SIMPLE SERMON." Paul saw a whole world in sin but he saw a Savior who was able. Paul was willing to leave the elaborate Hebrew Religion with all it's forms and ceremonies and preach a simple gospel. His approach to the needs of all men was simply this, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God and there is none righteous, no not one".

You will note that Paul does not elevate himself above his fellow-men for in the latter part of our scripture reading he said these words, "Of whom I am chief". He knew that all men were sinners and he felt that he had been the worst of all. However in another place he stated, "By the grace of God, I am what I am". No position in the world of his day, intellectual or otherwise, could change that one truth. He was one with his brethren. They were sinners together, just needy, lost men, groping for a ray of light in a darkened world. When Paul found the truth, when he saw the light, he dedicated his life to the cause of Gospel preaching, knowing that it would be the foolishness of preaching that would save men's souls.

If I am addressing any preachers, I would beg of you, keep the Gospel messages simple. Don't

waste so much time on elaborate doctrinal discourses. Let your congregations see Christ and Him crucified as the only hope of needy men. We need more "simple sermons" today. Christian believer, don't try and sell a sinner on your church. Bring them to Christ. Christ is the need of men. He is the answer to the problems of the world. If a man can see himself a sinner and can see Jesus as the Savior, this will be sufficient to bring that lost soul to God and cause a new name to be written down in heaven.

I want to present to my listening audience a simple Gospel. I trust you have found this message just a simple Gospel easily understood. Simple truth is more capable of penetrating darkened hearts and changing men's lives than any other kind of sermonizing could ever do, however elaborate the sermon may be. God give us more simple gospel preaching.

One day when I was walking down a street with my heart heavy and my life dark, I heard some music and I heard some singing on a street corner, a busy intersection, yes, right down town in the heart of Detroit, Michigan, I heard the gospel being preached. I stopped, and there was something about the simplicity and sincerity of this gospel presentation that took hold of my heart. I couldn't erase it from my mind. It stayed with me in the days that followed. Yes, because of this simple

gospel message I was stirred and convinced of my need of God. Thank God the day came when kneeling along side of my bed in my room, I yielded myself unreservedly to Christ and peace came to my troubled soul. I am so glad for this simple gospel. I know that without Christ we are nothing. Without the Gospel we are lost men. Without Jesus we never would have the light, we never would know the way. Thank God for the simple Gospel. Thank God for simple truth that is able to lift men above the quagmire of the sin of this life and elevate us to that high plane of Christian living and reality. If we must contend, let us contend for the simple faith. If we must preach, let it be a simple gospel. I pray God will bless this "Simple Sermon" for His glory and for your good.

"SABBATH MADNESS"

Will you turn with me to the 6th chapter of St. Luke. Verse 6. "And it came to pass also on another Sabbath, that He entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered. And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether He would heal on the Sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against Him. But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, rise up and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.

Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life or destroy it? And looking round about upon them all, He said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other. And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus."

The ministry of Jesus on earth was one of power. He went about everywhere doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil. Because His frontal attack was upon Satan's kingdom, he was subjected to direct attack by His adversary in the person of these religious leaders. The greatest persecution the true church experiences usually comes through those who also profess to be something religiously. Here was a man who was physically handicapped, not having the use of his right arm. You would have thought it would have been the desire of the religious people of that day to see one of their brethren delivered from such infirmity, but No, they attached more importance to the method used, the vessel God used, the time the miracle was performed, etc., than they did to the need of the man. Jesus was certainly right when one day he accused the same religious leaders of straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. I see the same spirit manifested today among those who challenge the divine healing ministry. Certain in-

dividuals would take the Bible and try and prove to us that healing was not for us today.

They would cite the many cases that were not healed. They would criticize the evangelist who was endeavoring to try and help deliver men. They would find fault with the methods used, at the same time they disregarded or failed to recognize, or refused to admit that some good was being done. Men have always been traditionalists. They would compel others to work within their prescribed framework or else refuse to recognize any good being done. Jesus was filled with compassion toward a man who was physically in need. He disregarded the day the need was presented to Him. He did not think it was important to work within the framework or form of the antiquated Jewish traditional system. Jesus was a practical man as well as spiritual. He saw a need and He met it with the best of His ability. Let us be bold to do good as was Jesus. He went into the places where the people lived. He met man on a common ground. He recognized that all men were created equal by God. He showed no respect of persons. His work was to preach deliverance to the captives and wherever He found them He did His great work. He was willing to be misunderstood. I wonder sometimes if we are willing to be misunderstood. Jesus chose to suffer afflictions and be misunderstood rather than to enjoy the popular acclaim of the religious leaders of His day. His ministry was

to deliver man and to this ministry He dedicated His life and strength. It was said of Him, "He came to His own, and His own received Him not. But, to as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God." What was more important anyhow, the keeping of the sabbath day in traditional style, or the deliverance of this man? Jesus decided it was more important to work the works of God than to become subservient to the order of men. Ever since the day of Jesus men and women of faith have dared to approach a need in a realistic manner and do what they could about it. Let us seek to emulate them. Look round about you. What do you see? Then in the light of this honest appraisal of the present need, let us be about our Father's business. Men today are still needy. They are still hungry, sick and discouraged, and as God spoke to Moses of old, I would speak to you this morning, for I feel that is what God would do, and say unto you, "What is that in thy hand"? Moses just had a staff but God told him to use it. Use whatever you have for the glory of God. Whether you are rich or poor, use either one for the glory of God. Are you strong or are you weak? You can still use either one for the glory of God. Do you have ability or do you feel utterly lacking in this? Use what you have for the glory of God. God will certainly bless whatever you use for His glory. Though you feel you may not have much to meet the needs of men or the de-

mands of this day, little is much, I can assure you, when God is in it. When you will dare to step out, trusting God to help you meet the needs of men, He certainly will be with you. May God help us to recognize the man with the withered hand standing before us, lost perhaps in the great multitude that would keep Holy day, but a man who has great need. As you recognize him, dare to command him to stand forth in the midst and then you touch him, you touch him, you bless him. Regardless of what those around about you may say, regardless of the questionings in the minds of men, you help that man or that woman who was made in the image and in the likeness of God. God will bless you and God will use you and He will speak through you. He will strengthen and help others because you dared to do the work God called you to do. Do good now. Do good whenever there is an opportunity. Help and deliver and bless. Heed not the voice of those who would tell thee nay. Let us labor faithfully while it is day, "The night cometh when no man can work".

"TOP SECRET"

In these days with all the congressional committees making investigations of this and that, and especially since we are practically at war with another world power, we hear much talk of espionage. Some of these committees claim that this foreign power is out to get information on our secret weapons, coastal defences, etc. Again and again we hear over the radio and read in the newspapers this one expression, "Top Secret". There are a number of things that are being kept from all but a select few who are supposed, if they are loyal to our country, to keep these things secret. It does seem that it is becoming increasingly difficult to protect our interests due to the unfaithfulness of those entrusted with our protection.

I would like to use that word "Top Secret" as my subject. I would like to read you a scripture portion found in St. Luke 10, verses 21 to 24. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight, All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes

which see the things that ye see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

It seems by this scripture that there are secret things that have been kept hidden from the world for centuries and now are being revealed to a select company. This group is here called babes. Jesus called His disciples, "little children" and today we who follow the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, are also the children of the Master. If we seek to do His will, if we walk circumspectly before Him, if we walk in grace and refrain from fellowship with the world, we become worthy to join the company of those who have the "Top Secrets" of the heavenly kingdom. Have you ever read that scripture, "No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly." When certain vital government secrets are to be kept and developed, the individuals who are to be entrusted with these secrets are carefully "screened" to see if they are to be trusted with these "Top-Secrets". Will God be any less careful than man in such important matters? I think not.

What are some of the great secrets of the ages mentioned in our Bible reading today? I am thinking of one, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself". What a wonderful truth is this,

that divinity should clothe itself in flesh and visit the world and live among men. Man in dispensations past had heard of God but now at the beginning of this enlightened age, one came direct from the eternal realm, into this world as a babe; but, He was and is that eternal one, "God the Son." Many wise and prudent of this day cannot see this. It is indeed regrettable that so many otherwise brilliant men cannot see the divinity of Christ and still consider Him just a man, a great reformer who came to an untimely death because His views were unpopular. "But unto you who believe, He is precious, and this same stone that the builders rejected is become the head of the corner." This is indeed the Lord's doings and it is marvelous in our eyes. Yes Jesus is more than just a good man. He is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe.

Another "Top-Secret" today and one that is only understood by those who have been carefully "screened" and have been accepted into the beloved, is this,—"God is in the world today." This statement may shock some, and some may even scoff at such, but the scriptures, that are only understood by those who love the Lord, plainly state that God is today manifested to the world through the person of the Holy Ghost. Jesus, when He was upon earth, stated that it was expedient that He go away, for if He went not away the comforter would not come; but, when He, (Jesus), would return to

Heaven, He would send the promise of the Father, the Holy Ghost. And here is the "Top-Secret"; He is in the world today, for Jesus promised that He would stay with us forever. I know this to be the truth for He has come to me. He has moved into this temple of clay to abide.

Another "Top-Secret", and one that is Hidden from so many is this, "God has not changed in His power and workings." Have you read, "Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today, forever." The work that He did, He is still doing and will continue to do. Oh how I pity the man or woman who claims to be a Christian and yet does not believe in the miracle working power of God today. Yes, Jesus is just the same yesterday, today and forever. Because of this truth I want to encourage your hearts to believe and trust Him. Whatever your need may be, He is able to meet that need. Though you may not immediately behold Him working, if you trust Him, He is sure to meet your need for He never changes.

The Last "Top-Secret" we will mention is this, "Jesus is coming soon". Yes He is; to receive unto Himself those who are faithful. I want to be ready, do you? Though this truth may be hidden from the eyes of the wise of this world, it still is, as it has always been, the hope of the church. "And he that hath this hope within himself, purifieth himself even as He is pure." Let us believe God. Let us

believe His Word. Let us believe in His power and faithfulness. Let us prepare to meet Him. Though the world may not understand and refuse to believe, let us who have the light on this glorious hope of the church, prepare ourselves as a bride adorned for her husband for through the ear of faith I hear His words, "Behold I come quickly and my reward is with me." And from deep within the hidden recesses of my heart, I hear these words of response, "Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus.

‘ ‘ S M O G ’ ’

Yesterday we had a very smoggy day here in Los Angeles. I don't suppose there would be need to mention that to most of the residents of this area for the results were quite evident. Most everyone you met would mention how their eyes were smarting and that they were quite uncomfortable, due to this smoky blanket that had settled down upon us. I see a spiritual lesson in smog which I would like to share with you.

Scientific men tell us that the Los Angeles smogs are caused by an atmospheric condition that will not permit the smoke to rise and pass away into the upper atmosphere. This reminds me of the activity of our adversary. The Bible terms him the "prince of the powers of the air". He endeavors to seal off the earth from heaven above so that our prayers will be hindered from getting through

to God and at the same time smothers us with a combination of many undesired things. For our scientific friends tell us that this Los Angeles smog is composed of many waste gases coming from many different sources, from our automobile exhausts, factory and refining smoke and from the backyard incinerator. This is certainly like sin. The hindrances to the Christian life are from many different sources and the combination of all of them becomes a real challenge to the Christian life. The Word mentions some of them in the parable of the sower: Some fell among thorns; some on stony ground; some the birds of the air came and ate as it fell by the wayside; some fell on good soil but the soil was too thin and the sun smote the new plants and they withered. Yes there certainly are many hindrances to our spiritual living in these days and it seems that only the greatest of determination will assure us of success in this Christian life.

At times this smog hangs like a choking blanket next to the ground but then in response to an ocean breeze it is driven away back over the mountains to the East. Prayer exerts an influence like a cool ocean breeze. It gains the mastery over the forces of evil and causes them to flee before it. After prayer has prevailed, we can again breathe deeply of God's great blessings. I was thinking how terrible it must have been in London, England some time ago when they had that black fog. During

those days when that heavy blanket of fog refused to move from that great city, the air became more and more polluted until it became almost as dark as night. Men could not find their way to work or to their homes. Traffic came to a virtual standstill and many died because of the choking polluted air that penetrated homes and offices until the residents could not see but a few feet from them, even when they were inside the buildings. Sin is just like that. It may manifest itself in a small way at first but as time goes on it picks up momentum until it smothers men in its inky black shroud.

Last night two pitiful specimens of humanity came to the doors of "Old Pisgah". Both these men were under the influence of drink. They had gone far down the road to ruin and a drunkards grave. After we fed them some supper, (for they were hungry), I talked to them about God. I found out that one of them, a soft spoken man who spoke with college English, had been a major in the United States army. I thought as I stood before that poor, broken man, dirty and disheveled; what would this man look like in the uniform of the United States army. No doubt one time he was a young man full of hope and great ambitions until drink became his ruin. He kept muttering over and over through his tears, "I'm no good, I'm just no good". The cloud of sin had finally engulfed him. As I looked at these men and as they told me of one of their buddies, who came from a good

home and whom I knew well, and who was now in San Quentin for attempted burglary to get money for more drink, I remembered the scripture "the wages of sin is death".

Though you may not live in this Los Angeles area and you therefore escape the smog we suffer under at times, still a spiritual smog is covering the whole world today. It is made up of many confusing elements that tend to distress and destroy man. Our only hope is from the Lord, for as in this area, though we may have high-salaried men who try to alleviate this evil condition and so far have miserably failed, so in the spiritual sense, there is no hope outside of God. But I hear a voice of prophecy speaking out of the ages past and gone, "Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him." Yes, regardless of your condition today, poor, needy, lost, sick or dying,—there is help for you from above. Let us fall upon our knees and beseech the father of mercies to send us help. Certainly deliverance shall come on the wings of prayer for God is faithful. "Prayer changes things."

I realize that perhaps listening to this broadcast today there are some who have been ill for a long time and you have despaired almost like this poor man we have been talking about. You have thought that there was no longer any hope, but as I spoke to him last night, I want to speak to you. Your condition may not be the same as his but after all

the adversary of our soul afflicts us in so many ways. Sometimes we have mental afflictions, some times physical. Sometimes habits fasten themselves upon us from which we cannot seem to free ourselves. From all of these things Jesus came to deliver men. I am so glad this morning He is just the same as He always was. He is able to do exceeding, abundant, above all we could ask or think. I am glad He has never changed and that prayer still avails and God still moves when we call upon Him. Though you may be sick and despair of health, let me exhort you to turn your face toward God and as you kneel in prayer, commit your ways unto the Lord, trust also in Him and He shall bring to pass that which is needed. Perhaps God wants to work a miracle in your life or in your body, even today. Will you trust in the Lord and lean heavily upon Him for God is the portion of all needy men. If you are listening to this broadcast and you do not know Jesus as your personal Savior; you are lost in sin. You have felt those icy fingers clutching you for you are not prepared to meet God and you feel them pulling you down, down, down, farther along the road of sin until you are beginning to despair that you will ever be able to get back. Let me encourage your heart to seek God. Let us remember that Jesus is just the same, yesterday, today, forever. Though the smoggy, cloudy, dark blanket of sin may have settled down over your life, blinding you, smother-

ing you, frightening you, remember this; One day Jesus died upon the cross of Calvary to bring you out of it all into the glorious light of eternity. He had to pass through the gloom also but thank God He arose from the tomb triumphant and today He is exalted at God's right hand; our all-sufficient Savior. Regardless what your need may be, He is sufficient.

CLOSING PRAYER

Bless thy people, dear Lord, with blessings that make rich and add no sorrow. May men everywhere come to know thee, whom to know is life eternal.

In Jesus' name, Amen.