

# THE AUSTRALIAN *Mr. H. Isaac* Christian

NATIONAL WEEKLY REPRESENTING CHURCHES OF CHRIST

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EDITORIAL . . .

## Historic Chapel Sold

On Wednesday, Aug. 26, at 3 p.m., the property of the Lake-st. church, Perth, W.A., was submitted for public auction. There must have been many sentimental pangs on the part of those who have worshipped in the Lake-st. chapel during the sixty-two years since it was erected in 1897. But there was nothing mournful about this auction. It did not mark an end, but a new beginning — a beginning in which the whole Western brotherhood of Churches of Christ was vitally concerned. For on the successful sale of this historic property depended the finalising of plans and the actual commencement of the long-hoped-for Christian Centre in Beaufort-st.

Careful plans were made for what the auctioneer called "the best publicised auction in years." Even more important than business strategy was the call to prayer. A Prayer Fellowship Letter, issued by the Combined Executive and Christian Centre Committee, said before the auction, "If we have the Lord's favor and approval, the property will be sold. If not, we shall seek the next move believing, with so many blessings in our planning, it is in his will that we shall be permitted to erect the Centre to his glory."

Those "blessings in planning" have included magnificent responses from the Western churches to Appeals for financing the Centre. As a result, the Committee was able to announce, just prior to the auction, that a total of approximately £66,000, in cash and promises, was in sight. The major portion was in direct giving. More was needed, and prayerfully expected.

Then came the day of the auction. Let Maston Bell, Honorary Secretary

of the Combined Committee, tell the story: "About eighty attended the auction . . . The highest bid of £28,700 did not reach the reserve figure, but subsequent negotiation sealed a contract which secured that cash figure, free use of the chapel by the Lake-st. congregation for twelve months, and free use of the hall for at least three months. All valuations given in the last two years indicate this to be today's fair market value, and being a cash transaction, with undisturbed continuance of the church life until our Christian

Centre is built, has given a feeling of satisfaction in the progress toward fulfilment of the great Western vision. This disposal, with funds already in the Treasurer's hands, brings our total to £53,000, which, with commitments, gives over £92,000 now in sight. We are looking forward eagerly to Monday, Sept. 14, when contractors' tenders for the new Centre are to be lodged."

An interesting sidelight is mentioned in the Daily News report (27/8/59) that the purchaser is a builder-idealist, who declared, "I shall make no alteration at all in the external design of the building, and I intend to use it for the same object as that for which it was dedicated. It will serve a Christian purpose, though not for any one denomination." He has hopes of making the property a meeting-place for people of different racial groups.

Meanwhile, Western Churches of Christ move on towards the completion of a dream. In faith, Aug. 1, 1960 has been set as provisional date for the completion of the Christian Centre, so that a W.A. opening may be held before Federal Conference.

It is a prospect like that which thrills this writer, not merely because he is Editor of a church paper vitally concerned with the on-going of the Restoration Movement in every State, but because it makes him all the prouder to be Western-born. Here is a vision the whole Australian brotherhood can share — rejoicing in it, praying for it — maybe even giving to it!



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*Christian*

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## NOTES FROM THE READINGS

as Suggested for

Sunday, Sept. 20

I CHRONICLES 29: 9-15.

After David's final appeal to the people for freewill offerings towards the projected Temple, there was much spontaneous giving, amid such general rejoicing, that David led the people in a beautiful prayer of thanksgiving. The opening portion of the prayer is included in this reading.

"Thine, O Lord, is the greatness" (v. 11). — "David recognised that it was not in his, or any man's power to add to God's glory. The building of the Temple could only manifest his and his people's devotion and gratitude for the goodness which had bestowed such wealth upon them" (Dummelow).

MATTHEW 6: 1-18.

Jesus traces "the distinction between his faith and the then current religion. The latter was manward-turning in pride, but his faith was Godward-turning in gratitude and dependent lowliness. This contrast he illustrates through three instances — almsgiving, prayer and fasting" (Buttrick).

"do not sound a trumpet" (v. 2). — Phillips has, "Don't hire a trumpeter to go before you," but Sherman is probably right in treating the expression as a metaphor, like our colloquial "Don't blow your own horn."

"hypocrites" (v. 2). — "In the Greek of the period, the word denoted an actor or stage player; hence its use in the N.T. of a pretender or dissembler, whose religion is a mask" (Davies).

"They have their reward" (v. 2). — The word was used at the time in the sense of a receipt paid in full. "Jesus intimates that the Pharisees have, in the plaudits and approval of men, received all the reward they are likely to get. They can now even give a receipt for the same" (Davies).

"openly" (v. 4). — "This word is omitted from modern versions, not appearing in the oldest and best manuscripts. God does reward openly, but his best rewards are inward" (Glover).

"lead us not into temptation" (v. 13). — "We pray here that we may not be tempted 'above that we are able,' but that with the temptation God may also make 'a way of escape,' that we may be able to bear it (I Cor. 10: 13)" (Dummelow).



WILL H. CLAY, M.B.E., discusses . . .

# Capital Punishment—Right or Wrong?

Capital punishment and war are two subjects which, in a political sense, are "hot potatoes." Anyone daring to become dogmatic in stating his opinions of them, lays himself open to criticism by his fellows, and perhaps their censure. At the present time, the question of the right or wrong of capital punishment is being discussed in homes, in trains and in private conversation on every hand, but it is not yet regarded as a subject for the pulpit. There is something about it, which, due perhaps to doubt as to the teaching of the New Testament with regard to it, causes it to be either relegated to another time or to other authorities. The subject is more serious than we have cared to admit. It concerns the life and death of a fellow man. We have preferred to delegate others to decide the matter for us. This, we assume, frees us from responsibility. Pilate washed his hands, declaring that he was innocent of the blood of this just person. Hoping to evade his responsibility, he adroitly sent his prisoner to Herod who, in turn, returned him to Pilate. Eventually Jesus was judged by the people who cried, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." Pilate gave sentence, "that it should be as they required."

## The People Are the Judges

While the penalty of capital punishment remains on the Statute Book of the laws of the State, every voter must accept the responsibility for it. Every execution receives the endorsement of every person. It may be said by some that they are "opposed to capital punishment — we have never been consulted."

It is not generally recognised that every elector, whether agreed or not, is responsible for the laws by which he is governed. This is democratic government. Were it not so, the State would be in a constant state of revolution — "every man a law unto himself." The life of every man is in the hands of the government. Wars are made by governments, and we know that at such times authority is delegated to appointed officers, but the responsibility for war rests with the people. In the same sense, we delegate authority for capital punishment, but we cannot delegate responsibility for it. The value of a life in the sight of God is not seen in the ninety and nine, but in the one who has gone astray.

## An Unpleasant Reflection

It is not pleasant to reflect upon the condemned cell and its occupant, or the three weeks of waiting that follow the sentence of death. At such times, while the execution is pending, certain privileges and concessions are granted. Even the choice of delicacy for his last meal is offered — it is doubtful whether this privilege is exercised. The comfort of the Scriptures is offered by the Gaol Chaplain, who doubtless gives a conscientious ministry to his subject. To dwell upon the hours of the days and the nights of waiting for the final turn of the key which opens the door to the death that has been planned by you and me, brings a shudder. For those who are dear to the unfortunate individual — in some cases, a mother, father, a wife, a brother or a sister — well, we can never know the pent-up grief they suffer. We need not pursue this reflection further. However, the horror of the sentence, and the sin of it continue with us. The State, the people have done their worst, and it is asked, what has been accomplished? The only answer that can be given is, "The law which came by Moses, is satisfied." "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1: 17).

## The Case for Capital Punishment

### Is It Right?

Queensland is the only Australian State which has legally abolished the death penalty. Judging by the attitude of people towards "hanging," and their silence on the subject, it may be taken for granted that there is a consensus of opinion favorable to it. Reasons given for it are:

1. If the law was not given effect, the people, in some cases, would be inclined to take the law into their own hands, and lynching would result.
2. There is no justification for mercy.
3. It is kinder to hang the criminal than to confine him to prison for life.
4. It offers a sense of satisfaction to bereaved relatives of the victim.
5. It is a deterrent to others who may contemplate murder.
6. The cost of maintaining a convicted murderer in prison for life is not justified.

There may be other reasons, but a casual survey of the six offered will show that all are based on opinions; no authority can be produced for them. A brief comment on each may fit the case.

1. Lynching always takes place in spite of the law. (There may be exceptions among barbarians.)
2. Mercy is a prerogative of all good government. Where law ends, mercy begins.
3. Hanging is not to be considered as an alternative to imprisonment.
4. Neither form of punishment is kind. The moral aspect leaves us no choice — hanging has no moral support.
5. This claim cannot be sustained by experience. No case can be cited in which a premeditated murder was not committed because of the considered penalty.
6. Only a cruel, mercenary mind would advance such a reason.

## The Case Against Capital Punishment

### It Is Wrong.

Capital punishment, right or wrong, must not be determined by opinions only. The crime for which the penalty is fixed may be subject to opinion, as also is every penalty with regard to life, but not to death. No man or body of men is authorised to take life. A resort to evil that good may result is never justified. Judicial killing is nothing short of murder by statute. This may have warrant in the Mosaic covenant, but not according to Christ. Numbers 35: 16, 17, 18 records that the murderer shall surely be put to death. No such authority is found in the New Testament. John 1: 17 declares, "The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." John 8: 3-11 records the case of the woman taken in the act of adultery, for which the penalty was, according to the Mosaic code, stoning to death. All the pressure of the law was brought against her — human nature has not changed. Jesus heard the demand for her life. He was conscious of the principle at stake. He did not answer at once. And he pretended not to hear the accusers, for they appealed for an answer. He answered, "He that is without sin, let him first cast a stone at her." "They that heard him, being convicted in their own conscience, went out until Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst." After all had fled, he and

the woman were alone. He said unto her, "Woman, where are thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" She said, "No man, Lord," and Jesus said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." This story is emphasised because it is the only direct occasion recorded in the New Testament of the attitude of Jesus toward capital punishment. He referred, not to the sin, but to the penalty for it. He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it (Matt. 5: 17). He thus put an end to the old law, and introduced the law of love.

**Does Paul teach subservience to the State with regard to the death penalty?**

Many grasp the few lines found in the letter to the Roman Christians, chapter 13: 4 ("For he beareth not the sword in vain") as a warrant for capital punishment. A careful reading of the chapter will show conclusively that he was not dealing with this subject. Some take the view that Paul vindicates the doctrine of the divine rights of magistrates to order the extreme penalty, and urges his fellow-Christians to consider the power without question. Magistrates, Paul continues, "are the ministers of God as revengers to execute wrath upon them that do evil." In the same letter Paul writes, "Recompense to no man evil for evil." He also repeats the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." It has been suggested that Paul was incidentally proclaiming the sensual Emperor Nero, a minister, an officer of God, a representative of Divine authority. This, of course, we cannot accept. However, Paul was writing in the earlier part of Nero's reign, before any general persecution of the Christians, but after he had himself suffered grievous injustice from the civil power. At this time we find him defying the powers of magistrates (Acts 16: 37), who were inclined to apologise for the cruel treatment they had inflicted on him and Silas. While Paul urges non-resistance by the Christians, he himself was inclined to resist. In writing his letter he naturally is exercised in mind lest his brethren also be inclined to follow his example.

### A Warning and a Reminder

In any disturbance in the city of Rome the Jews were suspect. The Government regarded religion as a matter of State policy, and sternly repressed every innovation which threatened to disturb the public peace. Paul wrote to warn men of the consequences of rebellion, and to remind them of the powers to which they were subject. We can better understand the Scripture, "For he beareth not the sword in vain," if we have in mind the context. If we give a

liberal interpretation to the powers of magistrates as recorded in Romans 13: 4, we must consistently apply the same logic with regard to the powers of our courts, pagan and atheistic today, even when we know their ordinances and commands conflict with those of God.

### Disciples Rebel

In support of this view we are reminded of the incident in Acts 4: 18-20, when the disciples, Peter and John, were commanded to desist from preaching and teaching in the name of Jesus. They replied, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye, for we cannot but

speak the things we have seen and heard." It surely must be accepted that these men regarded their right to resist the powers of their day as indisputable.

For reasons physical and moral, capital punishment must be abolished. These offset the value and importance of all reasons advanced to the contrary. All, however, are based upon opinions. Christians are bound to rest their case solely on the teachings of the New Testament.

### Capital Punishment, Right or Wrong?

We are the judges.



(Notes supplied by A. Anderson, Sec. F.M. Board).

### Annual Meetings, India

E. W. Heard, secretary of the Committee of Management, India, in reporting on these meetings, held July 29 to August 2, said, "The Annual Meetings were conducted in a fine spirit, with the visiting speaker, S. T. Nevagiri, giving a fine series of addresses on *The Early Christian Church and Its Growth*. We were also glad to have Miss Vawser and Shantabai in the meetings, fresh from their Australian successes."

The Board's greetings were conveyed to the Conference, as was also their expression of thanks for the Conference contribution to the work in New Guinea. (Conference contributed approximately £80 for New Guinea, and the women have approximately £28 for a project to be named.)

A resolution was passed, "That the churches send help, according to their ability, to the work in New Guinea as a sacrifice of thanksgiving, well pleasing unto God."

The membership now stands at just under 1,000 (including resident and isolated), and there has been an all-round increase in church attendance during the year. There was a total of 56 baptisms for the year.

For the first time an Indian secretary — Hariba Waghmodi — was elected, and E. W. Heard becomes Vice-Chairman of the Conference. Dr. S. S. Patil is the Chairman.

### ADDITIONAL BAPTISMS.

Since the end of the Conference year other baptisms have taken place.

At Baramati three were baptised on Aug. 16. One was a young man from Poona, whose parents are Hindus who had previously been in the Criminal Tribes Settlement there. The other two were teachers in the Mission High School who, since joining the staff, have, through the efforts of Mr. Waghmodi and Miss Salve, come to see the truth of the New Testament teaching on believer's baptism and desired immersion.

In Dhond a clerk of the Ashwood Memorial Hospital, through Miss Roberts' teaching, expressed a desire for immersion. He was baptised with six others, including two Hindu women who had come to a knowledge of the Saviour.

### BUILDINGS.

Recently permission has been given from the Government to proceed with the erection at Dhond of the Rest House, and at Baramati of the extension to the High School. Both places are now free to commence building operations. Once Miss Vawser returns from her holiday break she will be getting right into the work at the High School.

### HARVEST.

The first harvest is in full swing, but it will not be a very wonderful one in most places. Where irrigation was possible things look well. We are quite satisfied with ours that we irrigated, but the non-irrigated was poor. Return monsoons, on which we depend so much, should be along within two weeks to enable us to go on with the sowing of Jowari. —B. V. Coventry.

## THE MINISTRIES OF OUR



# WOMEN

## FEDERAL ACTIVITIES

## PERSONAL RELATIONS

Mrs. A. A. McRoberts, S.A.

(John 15: 9-14).

Jesus said . . . "So shall ye be my disciples." As we read through these words of Jesus from the pen of John the beloved, this phrase stands out rather solemnly.

Look for a moment at the verses which follow:

V. 9 says . . . "Continue ye in my love."

V. 10 . . . "If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love."

V. 11 . . . "That my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full."

V. 12 . . . "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you."

V. 14 . . . "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. So shall ye be my disciples."

There are no half measures represented here. He doesn't say, "Continue ye now and again in my love," or "If ye keep some of my commandments ye shall abide in my love." No! Each verse is positive, and a necessity, if our lives are to conform to the Divine pattern.

Our relationship with God must be honest, true and very real, otherwise we are not his disciples. There is no evidence here that we can call on God only in extremities. We must know God, and know him constantly.

I think of the poignant words of Lassiter, when in his extreme need he wrote in his diary, "Of all the things I want to do I can't, because I have never known God." He wanted to pray, but didn't know how. And what of Judas? In his extremity he must have wanted to pray and find God, but the awful deed stood between him and the only helper he could know. Their plight was desperate, and in smaller ways, less publicised than theirs, we have our moments of sorrow and need, and yet can't find the way to God.

We ask ourselves why someone should suffer, or why a young person should be killed when on the threshold of life, and there is no answer if we don't know God. Surely, in the time of greatest need, the source of our comfort and peace is found in the depth of our knowledge of God.

This personal relationship of ours with God, then, must be that which

grows, never recedes, but goes on to bring about an ultimate perfection, which should be the goal of all those who seek to be disciples of the Lord. The Bible tells us in Matt. 5: 48, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect;" and again, in Col. 1: 28, "That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus;" and Heb. 13: 21, "Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ."

So here, in the writings of John, we find that we are to be as Jesus was . . . we are to love as he loved us — we are to keep the commandments of God as he kept them — we are to be filled with joy over the things of the Spirit as he was.

Then what of our relationship with our fellow creatures? No doubt herein is our hardest assignment. If we only had to live close to God to attain perfection the goal wouldn't seem so far away, but we have also to live close to God in human relationship. So many of us live only for ourselves and for our own little world, whilst Jesus taught all men to live fully for God's great world. He wants us all to become emotionally mature — to grow up and make real things the issue. A little less anger, fewer grievances because we've been hurt, and more concern for a full stature — emotionally, socially, mentally and physically mature.

George Leaver tells of a dangerous situation which arose in the course of one of Scott's expeditions to the frozen South. Scott had allowed one of the men to "get on his nerves," with the result that his attitude to this man was less tolerant than it should have been. All the men saw the tragic possibilities of the situation and agreed that someone should speak to Scott. But who was to beard the lion?

At length Bill Wilson, whom they all held in high esteem, undertook the ordeal. Dreading the issue, he approached his leader and, having spoken, was relieved when Scott simply rose and said, "Thanks, Bill." It was noticed that, ever after, Scott's face brightened at Wilson's approach, and when, twelve years later, the two bodies were found amidst the ice, Scott's arm was thrown around the body of Wilson. Scott grew to maturity in his emotional life because there was a mature adult near him. Wilson spent long hours at the feet of his Master learn-

ing the things of life, the real things to live for. "So shall ye be my disciples," Jesus said.

Agnes Sandford writes, "As his radiance fills our lives, we see the world lit once more with the beauty and wonder of the first creation of God. We feel again the lightness and joy that came unbidden to our childish hearts. Once more the air is filled with dancing specks of light. Once more the flowers glow with the radiance of eternity and their beauties unfold before us, hue upon hue, until we can hardly bear the ache of loving them. But most beautiful in all the world to our newly comprehending eyes is man, whom God made in his image and likeness, and into whom he breathed the breath of life."

When in reality this radiance fills our lives then is our joy full . . . we will keep the commandments as he kept them and we will love as he loved.

The perfection that seems to us a thing so far removed from us, we will evidence to others in our living. Thus our vine bears the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5: 22), and Jesus will say of us, "Ye are my disciples."

I feel our personal relationship with God can be beautifully described in the Red Indian Version of the 23rd Psalm, given to us by Isabel Crawford.

"The great Father above a Shepherd Chief is. I am his and with him I want not. He throws out to me a rope, and the name of that rope is love, and he draws me, and he draws me, and he draws me to where the grass is green and the water not dangerous, and I eat and lie down satisfied.

"Sometimes my heart is very weak and falls down, but he lifts it up again and draws me into a good road.

"His name is wonderful . . . sometime, it may be very soon, it may be longer, it may be a long, long time, he will draw me into a place between mountains. It is dark there, but I'll draw back not, I'll be afraid not, for it is there, between those mountains, that the Shepherd Chief will meet me, and the hunger I have felt in my heart all through this life will be satisfied.

"Sometimes he makes the love rope into a whip, but afterwards he gives me a staff to lean upon.

"He spreads a table before me with all kinds of food, and we sit down and eat that which satisfies us. He puts his hand upon my head, and all the tired is gone.

"My cup he fills till it runs over. What I tell you is true, I lie not. These roads that are away ahead will stay with me through this life, and afterwards I will go to live in the Big Tepee and sit down with the Shepherd Chief forever."



# OUR FAMILY PAGE

## How Far Can You Reach?

How far can you reach? With your hands — a few feet. With your voice — a city block by yelling. With your eyes — several miles, if you have a good vantage point. When all this is considered, it is not too impressive.

How far can you reach with your heart? Now the distance is greatly increased, for you have no physical limitation. You can reach out to include a member of your family in a distant city, or a refugee child your offerings have helped to feed, your local church leaders, or the missionary in the loneliest outpost. The only limits are your own imagination and interests.

How far can you reach through prayer? There is no limit. We can reach up to God, and with his help accomplish things of which we would never dare to dream. We can reach around the world, to join with others who seek to know his will. And as we do, we find God reaching out to us. In the words of Edwin Markham—

"We may send our little timid thought  
Across the void, out to God's  
reaching hands—  
Send out our love and faith to  
thread the deep—  
Thought after thought until the  
little cord  
Has greatedened to a chain no  
chance can break,  
And we are anchored to the  
Infinite!"  
—Friendly Link, Lower Hutt, N.Z.

## Your Burdens

A beautiful story is told of a woman who complained that her burdens were too heavy to bear. One night she had a vivid dream in which her Lord appeared and relieved her of her cross. He led her into a large field filled with many other crosses of every conceivable size and shape.

Her Lord said, "Everyone must bear a cross and bear it alone. Since your cross is more than you can bear, go and choose you one you think is not too burdensome, yet worthy of your strength and courage."

The woman then went into the field of crosses and searched diligently for the cross she thought she could bear. At last she chose one and said to her Lord, "I have found the cross I can bear — it is neither too heavy nor too light." So her Lord gave it to her, and when she picked it up, lo, it was her own cross, the very one she had returned to her Lord.—The Think Tank.

## If He Should Come

If Christ should seek my door today—  
Hands bleeding,  
Voice broken, pleading —  
Would I pursue my little round  
Of work and play,  
Unheeding?  
  
No, I would thrust aside each plan  
Of pleasure,  
And I would treasure  
Each moment in his company  
As gems no man  
Could measure.  
  
Yet he is knocking . . . Heart, will  
you  
Thus grieve him?  
Self-crowned, leave him  
Still waiting at the door? Then,  
haste  
And open  
To receive him. —M. Barton.

## On the Move All Their Life

This is the story of a family which has been in flight all its life. There are the parents, old Armenian refugees, and their son Gregor.

Both husband and wife have been married before. For the father it was before World War I. His wife and four children were killed by the Bolsheviks.

The mother's story is almost the same. Her husband and children were killed before her eyes in Russia.

They found comfort in each other's company, and eventually married. Then they had to flee with their four children half-way across Russia to the West. They arrived in south Germany in 1944.

But their ill-luck was not yet over. One child died during the flight, and a second soon afterwards with tuberculosis.

Gregor, who remains with them — his sister has married a German and resettled in America — has also inherited T.B. symptoms.

Heavy work was impossible for him. Commerce also had to be ruled out, for he had only been two years at school during the family's many journeys. And jobs were few in a struggling Germany.

It was at this time that most Armenians were leaving Germany. Most of them moved to America, but only Lebanon was open to the T.B.-afflicted family. They accepted.

With his German training as a shoe-maker he found work to support his parents and himself. Things were brighter — until more unemployment. Germany once more was the family's decision. They returned.

In a life-time's movement this was perhaps the most profitable move. With the help of loans (which he paid off promptly), Gregor started a shoe-making business of his own. His health continues to hold out. He has three German employees.

Such is the movement of just one refugee family.

For such, surely, we should pray, and to such we should go on reaching out the helping hand of brotherhood.

And who can read of such without a prayer of gratitude to God for our homes and families, for the roots that go down deep into the love of God itself.

## PRAYER AND POWER

Prayer is more powerful than electricity. There are darknesses which prayer can banish, that no electric light can ever reach. Prayer brings quietness to the troubled heart, it gives spaciousness to the most crowded day, it restores the vision that is lost, it purifies every outgate of the soul.—George Morrison.

The story is told about an old rural minister some years ago who was seeking to inspire his somewhat apathetic audience. He said:

"This church must get up and walk."

"Amen," exclaimed a pious brother, "let her walk!"

"This church," added the minister, "must run."

"Amen, let her run," said the saintly man.

"More than that," shouted the preacher, encouraged by the response, "this church must fly."

"Amen," responded the pious one, "let her fly."

"Brethren, it takes money to make a church fly," exclaimed the minister.

"Amen," said the saint, "let her walk."—World Call.



**Theme for the Week:**  
**"FAITH AND HOPE"**

**Sunday, September 20**

Ephesians 6: 13-19.

Thought Text: "Still on your feet, when all the task is over" (v. 13, Knox).

Paul had magnificent fighting spirit. He simply couldn't conceive how a Christian, with all the divine resources at his disposal to make him "more than conqueror," could ever go down without rising to fight again. "Knocked down, but never knocked out" is J. B. Phillips' graphic translation of one of Paul's phrases. The final gong might find the Christian fighter swaying on his feet — but he would be on his feet! "Having done all, stand!"

Have we crumpled under some heavy blow, and given up too soon? The suffering or death of a loved one; the bewilderment of our own pain; disillusionments, disappointments? Paul had all that — but when his task was over, he was still on his feet; in fact, on the tip-toe of expectancy for what lay ahead.

O Captain of our souls, forgive us when we are tempted to give up too easily and too soon. Help us to put on the whole armor of God — and stand fast! Amen.

**Monday, September 21**

Luke 17: 1-6.

Thought Text: "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed . . ." (v. 6).

No wonder the disciples needed to pray, "Lord, increase our faith!", if their faith seemed to their Lord like something less than a grain of mustard seed. Mercifully, he does not set the sights too high for frail mortals. All he asks is for "faith as a grain of mustard seed" — in it the life-giving, creative power that even the tiniest seed possesses.

Dr. Campbell Morgan tells of the Italian who ordered that a huge block of granite should be placed over his tomb, to make sure that

# WHEN SOARS the SOUL

## A Week of Daily Devotions, Based on Readings Suggested by the "Book of Family Worship"

he, at least, would never rise from the dead! But before the block was put in position, a bird dropped an acorn on the spot, and the power in the acorn split the enormous slab clean in the middle, as an oak tree thrust its way upwards.

Faith that has in it the life-power of a seed can remove mountains — mountains of greed, fear, bitterness, hate, difficulty.

Lord, make me ready for the ventures of faith this day demands.

**Tuesday, September 22**

2 Peter 1: 1-11.

Thought Text: "To those who have been given . . . a faith as precious as our own" (v. 1, Williams).

Ronald Knox translates this phrase, "To those who share with us the common privilege of faith." Those two words, "precious" and "privilege," keep recurring through the various translations — and there is no doubt that for Peter, faith was both a privilege and the most precious possession he could ever share with men — a faith centred in the Man of whom he wrote, "To you who believe, he is precious."

Does faith mean that much to me? What am I doing to share it?

Lord, we pray for all with whom we have fellowship in faith, even through the barriers raised by fear and misunderstanding. Draw us closer, we pray. Amen.

**Wednesday, September 23**

Psalm 146.

Thought Text: "Happy is he . . . whose hope is in the Lord his God" (v. 5).

"Hope not in princes," writes the disillusioned Psalmist. He knew what it was to be let down by those he trusted. But there was One who had never failed him — One who he was sure never would fail him: "Hope thou in God!"

The forty-second Psalm is a moving portrayal of a man, at times tormented and overwhelmed, winning through to such a hope and faith: "The Lord will command his loving-kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me." If things seem dark to you now, tune in to that "song in the night."

O Christ our hope, use thy servants today to bring courage and cheer to all in need. Amen.

**Thursday, September 24**

Jeremiah 14: 1-9.

Thought Text: "Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name" (v. 9).

In a time of catastrophe, the prophet well knows that a sinful people deserve the judgment of God — yet he cannot believe that the One who is "the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble" will act like a stranger or over-night guest, confused or impotent in the face of crisis. He is in the midst of the people who bear his name. He must act!

The Cross tells us how wonderfully he did act, with that Man in the midst of human need dying to make us all the children of God. Who can doubt that such a God is still at work amongst us?

O God our Saviour, we thank thee for the wonder of thy nearness, the fullness of thy love. Amen.

**Friday, September 25**

Psalm 130.

Thought Text: "My soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope" (v. 5).

This Psalm is the heart-felt cry of a penitent man, deeply conscious of his sin, and yearning for forgiveness. He knew where his hope lay. "There is forgiveness with thee!" he cried, and would not surrender that hope, even if it seemed that he must wait for assurance and comfort with the intense longing of a city guard who, "keeping vigil during the interminable night, peers into the east for the first gray of dawn."

In Christ, ours is a fuller, richer word of forgiveness. But do we wait for him with a longing like this?

Dear Lord, keep our souls expectant, eager and steadfast in hope.

**Saturday, September 26**

Romans 5: 1-11.

Thought Text: "Character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us" (vv. 4, 5, R.S.V.).

True Christian hope — or as J. B. Phillips calls it, "happy certainty" — is never lightly abandoned in the midst of life's reverses. Paul sees suffering and endurance producing a character in which hope in Christ is stronger and surer. Other hopes betray man's longings, but this one never!

For those with lesser hopes, life is full of disappointments — crumpled lottery tickets, betting cards, and all the other withering carrots that delude the donkeys of the human race! But Jesus never disappoints!

We thank thee, Lord, for the happy certainties of a hope that has never failed one who has put his trust in thee. Amen.