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A SERMON FOR THE NEW YEAR

Delivered by Rev. Wm. Dobson, Pastor of First Methodist Church

Text, Romans VIII. 6.—For to be Carnally Minded is Death, but to be Spiritually Minded is Life and Peace.

Text.—For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Romans VIII. 6.
There are just two thoughts in the text, both of vital importance. One carries us up into life and peace, the other down into death and darkness. I want you to study them to-night that we may catch the exact thought of the great Apostle, then carry his thought with us over into the New Year and translate it into everyday life. All I want to do to-night, is to help you so understand the words that they may become clear to your minds and recommend themselves to your judgment.

In order to do this we shall first have to have clear views of what the New Testament means by "faith". It is one of those generic words that have been described and defined in a dozen different ways in order to accommodate conventional theories, but like all other abstract words, it can be easily dealt with from its objective side. We can describe what it does and how it ought to act under certain conditions; but when attempting a definition from the subjective side, we soon discover that we are only making a noise, we are not saying anything. But when dealing with it from the objective side, it seems to me, when reduced to the last analysis, to be simply a receptive state of the soul, a soul laid open to the touch or impressions of the unseen. These impressions are taken by the understanding, and construed into thought, which recommends itself to the judgment in the same way as the sensations received by the soul through the medium of the senses. So in the Epistle to the Hebrews, we read that faith is the assurance, the confidence of things hoped for, the proof of things not seen. I take it then that the impressions, made upon the receptive soul by the unseen, are just as valid and worthy of the soul's confidence, as are those made through the medium of the five senses, for both alike become matters of knowledge. You remember Tennison in his "In Memoriam" contrasts faith with knowledge. He said "We have but faith, we cannot know." For knowledge is of things we see. Indeed this is the popular distinction between faith and knowledge, but the Bible never contrasts faith with knowledge, but with sight. "We walk by faith not by sight," is the teaching of the New Testament. Now we are thus far clear, that faith on its objective side is a state of the soul which receives impressions from the unseen, while the understanding works up into thought, and which to the soul becomes knowledge. "Faith is the confidence of things hoped for, the proof of things not seen." So we may accept it as a truth, that when faith puts the soul in a receptive condition, it may become as conscious of the unseen as it is of the seen, and understand what the Christ meant when He said, "To know Thee, the one living and true God." Put the emphasis if you will upon the word know.

This may seem almost like pulpit cant, but the fact is, we obtain no knowledge through the senses of the seen, only as the soul is thrown into a receptive condition by the will. You and I may sit by a window, where men and women are passing by the score, and if our mind be entirely occupied with thought, we obtain no knowledge of the passing events, and if someone asks us whom we saw passing, our answer must be we do not know. Nevertheless each passing object made a distinct and well-defined impression upon the senses. The difficulty was, the soul was preoccupied, and not responsive to the sensations made by the passing events. Or if you be a student, you may so concentrate your mind upon a book or a line of thought, while men are talking and laughing all around you, that you receive no knowledge whatever of what is being said. The sensations were perfect, but the soul was unresponsive, being preoccupied. This is why the psychologists make so much of attention in the doctrine of memory. It is the sensations, which the soul receives while in a receptive condition and comprehend and are able to recall at will. Those that have no leisure thus deal with, we cannot remember. What attention does for the soul in its relations to the seen, faith does relative to the unseen. They both make the soul conscious of its environment, one of the seen, the other of the unseen.

We do not go very far in our thinking, until we come face to face with the fact that the unseen things are the realities of the universe, and the seen are only manifestations; the unseen are the substance, the seen are the attributes. The seen are conditioned by time and space, the unseen are eternal and not so conditioned. Now we are in a position to understand the afflictions here which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more, exceeding, and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are unseen are eternal.

Now in order to be clear, let us go a little further. Those of you who are in the habit of reading Herbert Spencer remember how he tells us that life depends upon its correspondence with external existences and sequences. This is philosophic language. Let me break it up for you, and put it into the language of everyday life. When your eye and mind cease to correspond with the things we have no vision, when the ear ceases to correspond with the sound-waves we have no hearing; we are deaf and blind. When our lungs cease to correspond with the atmosphere we breathe, or the digestive apparatus with the food we eat, we have neither breath nor nourishment, we are dead men and dead women. Life in perfect correspondence with its surroundings is perfect health. Non-correspondence with our surroundings is death, and no physician can save us. Now when the man or woman is in correspondence with the seen only, and has no power of corresponding with the unseen (for faith alone makes this possible) when removed from these surroundings, the inevitable consequences are death. On the other hand, when by faith, the souls are enabled to throw itself into correspondence with the unseen, even though removed from temporal surroundings, the life it then carries with it, is as eternal as its surroundings, and while reality endures, the soul must live. This is not only good theology, but it is good philosophy. It is not mysticism but as rational as geology or astronomy. To have life eternal, the life must correspond with the unseen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are unseen are eternal. It is when you understand that through faith lay open to the unseen that we become the possessors of that eternal life, which will last as long as God endures.

If we keep all this in mind, we shall be in a position to interpret the text, and understand the thought of the apostle when he said "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." I know there has been a great deal said about spiritual mindedness. We are apt to think it is synonymous with being pious, or saying a whole lot of religious things. It is no such nonsense. To be spiritually minded, in the thought of the apostle, is to have one's whole soul lying open to one's surroundings, both seen and unseen and every power of one's being conditioned by all one knows of each, to possess a character which is the outgrowth of this knowledge. I do not know that we have any word in the English language, which will translate the word "mind" as used in the text. When we speak of the word mind, we generally mean those faculties of the soul by which we think or judge, but this is not its meaning here. It is used here very nearly in the sense that we use it when we say, "I have a great mind to do this or so." When you think of this sentence for a little, you find that the word mind, not only means the power of thinking and the thought itself, but it includes the will and the affections, in fact the whole powers of being. So to be spiritually minded in the apostle's sense, is to have every power of our beings conditioned by the seen and the unseen. "Not slothful in business,"—this has to do with the seen; "Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,"—this has to do with the unseen. A life conditioned by both, makes up a perfect manhood. At this point let us remember, that with a soul thus responsive to the unseen, one becomes as sure of the truths of the spiritual world as he is of the facts of the material world, which he receives through the medium of the five senses. Charles Wesley realised this more than a hundred years ago when he sang:
"Faith lends its revealing light,
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly;
The invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by mortal eye."
Again, if to be spiritually minded then, is to have one's soul in perfect harmony with all one knows, is not Christianity one of the sanest things in the world, and was not the apostle uttering a truth when he said, "I know whom I have believed" (put the emphasis if you please upon know). Yes, he knew more than this, he knew that Christ was able to keep that which he had committed unto Him till that day. And surely our Lord was uttering no Oriental rhetoric when He said "This is life eternal to know Thee, the only living and true God and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Nor would I preach another sermon, did I not know from personal experience, that in some degree may become a truth to the human soul. Christianity is more than a theology, it is the soul in correspondence with the unseen, with eternal

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

FIRST QUARTER.
WORDS AND WORKS OF JESUS AS RECORDED IN THE GOSPELS.

LESSON II.—JANUARY 14.
THE WISE MEN FIND JESUS.
Matt. 2: 1-12. Memorias verse 11.
GOLDEN TEXT.
My son, give me thine heart.—Prov. 23: 26.

Time—Possibly B. C. 5-4, within a year after the visit of the Shepherds.
Places.—Jerusalem and Bethlehem in Judea.

THE LESSON DICTIONARY.
"Herod the King"—King of Judea.
"Wise Men"—Literally, "Magi," great and learned men. "His star"—The star that announced his birth. "Scribes"—Men who copied the sacred books of the Bible, there being no printing in those days. The Scribes were also teachers of the Bible. "Frankincense"—A gum resin very fragrant when burned, and therefore used for burnt incense.
"Myrrh."—Also a gum resin, from which perfume and rare oils were made.

THE INTERVENING INCIDENTS.—Some weeks, possibly two or three months, elapsed between the birth of Jesus and the visit of the Wise Men. During this time Joseph and Mary resided at Bethlehem, when the Babe was forty days old he was presented at the temple, according to the provisions of the Jewish law applying to a firstborn child when that child was a boy. The incident of the Presentation, as it is called, with its pictures of pious old age in Simeon and Anna, ought to be studied (Luke 2: 22-38). Note also the fact that Mary brought the "offering of the poor" on this occasion, a pair of pigeons, instead of a lamb and a dove or a pigeon. The couple were too poor, apparently, to buy the lamb for a burnt offering.

The Magi.—These men were the literati of their land, the sages, scientists, seers of their people. Their business was a study of the stars, and from the motions of the planets and the positions of the heavenly bodies at certain intervals or critical hours to forecast the destinies of men or nations. They must have had very little definite knowledge of a coming King; nothing except, perhaps, a few scattered passages thrown in their path by the Jews, who at this time were everywhere. One of these prophecies, uttered by Balaam, tells of a star arising out of Jacob; there may have been other traditions floating around, not on record in the Scriptures, associating the birth of the Messiah with the appearance of a star. The point to be noted here is that these students of the stars were led by their studies and by a star to the feet of the newborn Christ. The message reached them through the avenue of their ordinary vocation. God had led his way to their hearts, and his truth found its way to their hearts by means of the studies and tasks with which they were daily familiar.

Other Instances.—The principle here illustrated—that God often speaks to men when engaged in their ordinary duties; that he approaches them along the line of their daily occupations—is amply illustrated in the case of the shepherds, and in the instance of Zacharias in the temple, but these are only two or three instances out of many. To Moses, when attending his flocks; and to Gideon, threshing grain; and to Joshua, spying out the difficulties and perils of Jericho, and to Elshaz at the plough, and to Amos the herdsman attending to his cattle, and later to the fishermen at their nets, and to Matthew at the seat of custom, and to hosts of others, came the Master, the angel, or the message, in one form or another, from on high. Not simply in the church, or in the attitude of devotion; not on occasions when people are assembled in prayer; not alone at an altar or a shrine or at the communion table, are we to expect that God will seek us out and speak to us, but in the midst of life's everyday tasks and opportunities.

The Star.—It is not worth while to spend much time trying to find out what the star was which led the Wise Men. It has been guessed that perhaps it may have been a triple conjunction of three planets, Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars, which took place some time before Christ's birth; or possibly a comet; or a star created for this express purpose and then put out for ever. But these are all guesses, without much help for the student who wishes to get the truth out of the Word. The truth that they were led, and that they were led by a method which associated itself with their daily tasks, is one to be emphasized and kept in mind. Micah's Prophecy.—The reference of the scribes to the passage here cited from Mic. 5: 2 shows that this chapter in the prophet was understood to refer to the Messiah. The whole chapter should be read. It very often happens that such additional light is thrown upon a scriptural citation when we turn to the original place where it occurs and read it there.

The Gifts.—The mystical meaning of these gifts is beautifully indicated in Longfellow's poem:
"They laid their offerings at his feet;
The gold was a tribute to the King;
The frankincense, with its odor sweet,
Was for the Priest, the Paraclete;
The myrrh for the body's burying."
It may be doubted whether these Magi saw any such mystical meaning in their gifts; the presents were such as were befitting their rank and the customs of the East and the dignity of the new King. The gold, however, was of immediate practical help. This couple, with the wonderful Babe, came into immediate peril by reason of this visit of the Wise Men, and had to flee into Egypt. The gold brought to them served, doubtless, as needed help in the trying hour that was upon them.

THE LESSON QUESTIONS.
The Wise Men at Jerusalem.—
What events, if any, intervene between last Sunday's lesson and this one? At what age was the infant Jesus first

BLOOD IMPURITIES

Three Things Cause them.—One Thing Cures Them.

OTTAWA, ONTARIO.
St. Catharines, Sept. 18th 1905.
It gives me much pleasure to certify that "Fruit-a-tives" have entirely cured me of a disagreeable skin disease. I had a dreadful rash on my face, arms and hands, the rash was red and itchy and my face and hands were feverish. I was advised to take "Fruit-a-tives" to purify the blood and I am very thankful that I took this medicine. After I had taken one box of the tablets, I was much better.



and when I had taken two boxes, the rash was entirely gone. The swelling in my face and hands was gone, the pain in the back had left me, and I was quite well again, and my complexion is clearer than it has been for years. I want to thank "Fruit-a-tives" for this great cure—as before I used this medicine I had used many kinds of salves and took quantities of medicines but these did me no good. But "Fruit-a-tives" at once seemed to do me good—and they entirely took away the fearful rash.
(Sgd.) Mrs. F. Mailhot.

This case of Mrs. Mailhot proves one great truth—that you can't CURE pimples, blackheads, blotches, red rash and other skin diseases with salves and ointments. Simply because the disease is not with the skin but WITH THE BLOOD. The skin trouble is the RESULT of blood trouble. "Fruit-a-tives" proves this because when salves and ointments are left off—and "Fruit-a-tives" taken to purify and enrich the blood, the skin diseases are cured to stay cured.
Pimples, red rash, eczema etc., come from disease of one of three organs—liver, kidneys or stomach. It may be all three—but certainly one. And this one affects the other two.
And there will be skin disease
—as long as the bowels are constipated
—as long as the kidneys retain urea or tissue waste
—as long as the stomach does not digest food properly and the body is improperly nourished
Ointments won't cure—salves won't cure—soaps won't cure. Because the trouble is the BLOOD—not the skin. But "Fruit-a-tives" will cure—"Fruit-a-tives" do cure—because "Fruit-a-tives" PURIFY THE BLOOD.
"Fruit-a-tives" act on the liver—stimulate it to excrete more bile—and thus make the bowels move regularly every day. This rids the system of one source of blood poisoning. These famous liver tablets act on the kidneys—prevent the formation of excessive uric acid—and insure the kidneys being strong and healthy. They act on the skin—strengthen the glands and stimulate them to throw off the impurities which the blood brings to them.
With bowels, liver, kidneys, stomach and skin working properly—the blood is pure and rich—and there can be no pimples or blemishes to mar the complexion.

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brought to the temple, and for what purpose? What persons in the temple took special note of the Child? Give, if possible, the exact words of Simeon upon seeing the Child. By what means had the Wise Men been guided in their search for Jesus? Why did they inquire at Jerusalem? Why were Herod and those with him troubled by their inquiry? Who informed Herod concerning the place where Christ should be born?

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No. 41	St. John's	No. 42	St. John's
No. 43	St. John's	No. 44	St. John's
No. 45	St. John's	No. 46	St. John's
No. 47	St. John's	No. 48	St. John's
No. 49	St. John's	No. 50	St. John's
No. 51	St. John's	No. 52	St. John's
No. 53	St. John's	No. 54	St. John's
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No. 87	St. John's	No. 88	St. John's
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No. 91	St. John's	No. 92	St. John's
No. 93	St. John's	No. 94	St. John's
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