

God Made the Heart, Too

A Sermon Preached by Rev. C. Mowhead on August 19, 1945 in Indiana Methodist Church, Columbus, Ohio
Insert A *however,*

This morning, I am not going to talk about the war or the end of the war. It seems to me that there is need no more for pious phrases which commemorate the ending of the most colossal war in human history. Rather I should like to point our thoughts to the very heart of our common life where lie, after all, the most crucial issues of war and peace.

Most of us are familiar, I suppose, with the play by Karel Capek, the Czech playwright, called R.U.R. This play deals with the invention of the robot, a mechanical man. The scene is cast on a island where a factory for the mass production of these robots *is going full force.* ~~has been set up.~~ In the first act the general manager of the factory describes these robots in the following way: "Mechanically", he says, "they are more perfect than we. They have an enormously developed intelligence, but they have no soul." Now there is something of the predicament of modern man for we have developed in our world a kind of mechanistic society which is enormously intelligent. The war now ended was as much a battle of genius as it was a physical conflict between men. And it is safe to say now that it was the discovery of more perfect and ingenious mechanisms which hastened victory. The development of the atomic bomb required the best brains which the world commands. But when all of this has been done we may wake up to find ourselves fitting the description of the mechanical men in R.U.R. We have an enormously developed intelligence, but we have no soul.

Not long ago I was impressed by an article in the Christian Century ~~which was written~~ by David Lilienthal, one of the guiding lights of the much debated T.V.A. He called this article by this title: "Research Has A Moral Responsibility". He outlines the almost inconceivable possibilities in the development of scientific research. But he presses home the thesis that it is high time that scientific research consider

the welfare of the human beings who must live under the effects of that research. In other words this moral responsibility should consist in the realization that human beings think and feel and suffer and want. The time is now at hand, he declares, that we take into consideration the fact that man is a spiritual being, that he has a soul. When Capek wrote R.U.R. many years ago it was regarded rather lightly by most people as a fantasy. But these past few months bring it close to home with terrible reality.

(Luk 11:40) In one of his stinging rebukes directed against the Pharisees Jesus issued this charge: "Ye fools, did not ~~He~~ ^{He}, that made that which is without, make that which is within also?" And there is our main thought for this morning. The Great Sovereign God of this Universe has placed man in a world where it is possible for him to discover and appropriate all of these marvels of nature and science. Some scientists may not realize it, but the Creator gave to the world all of its marvels such as electricity, radio waves, water power, and all of the essential materials. In these last few days we may not have realized it but it was God who created the power of the atom which has now been ~~xx~~ released by man with such awful fury. But the God who made all of these things which lie outside of us is the same God who created within us that which men have called through the centuries the human soul. In this day we come under the same condemnation which Jesus hurled against the Pharisees. We are fools for not seeing that God made the heart, too.

The problem of our world is not solely intellectual. Never before has the ~~society~~ ^{society} of men had access to such brain power. The Nazis, for instance, were in command of the most literate, the most educated people on earth. But they forgot about the human soul. The conference at San Francisco did not lack for the very best brains that are available to our world. The world in the future will not perish for a lack of brain power. But we shall perish if we do not come to see that the same God

who gave us nature and science gave us also the human heart. Right now the human heart is the most unproduced and undiscovered field that I know anything about. And God made it, too.

Last spring I heard a man speaking who was attempting to trace the development of human life from its earliest sources. In the course of his remarks he was showing how science has enabled us to see just how the world and man have developed. But he spoke of human life as though it were a mass of developing cells which tended to become an increasing organism. When he got through one might easily have gotten the impression that science had learned all that there was to be learned about man. But all of the time he was speaking I had the feeling that he was leaving something out. As a minister I should like to have added something by tracing the development of the human heart which has grown from the days of Abraham through Moses and Joseph and David and Isaiah and Jesus and Peter and Paul. It seems to me that there is much to be learned from *them* ~~that~~ about our world and human life for God made the heart, too, and it has a reality all its own. When the scientist got through that day I felt very much like those half-savages of the jungle who were being hurried through ^a ~~the~~ journey with that haste which is typical of modern western man. After a long, frantic push they simply sat down and refused to move another step. When asked for their reason they said: "We are waiting for our souls to catch up with our bodies". In our civilization the human soul has been left far behind. It is time that we let it catch up with ~~us~~ our bodies.

What we have failed to see is, then, that the human heart is just as real as electricity and atomic power. God made it, too. And if God made it, too, then we had better at this late hour give as much heed to cultivating it as we are giving right now to greater and more efficient atomic bombs. For the truth is that only when men get that human heart

right is there going to be any chance of keeping that atomic power from destroying us. Therefore, let us ~~this morning~~ consider two things which make clearer for us the fact that GOD MADE THE HEART, TOO.

-I-

For one thing it is through the heart that men learn most about God. To be sure a devout person may cast his eye about upon the splendid scenes of nature and science and find reason to uphold a belief in God. But the surest source of God's presence in the world is to be found in the human heart. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

When we want to know about the construction of matter we turn to the physicists and the chemists and the biologists. But when we want to know something of the inward life of men we do well to turn to the poets and the seers and the saints. It has always seemed to me that a person has never really lived until he gets a bit of poetry in his soul. Now as for myself I doubt whether I could write a line of poetry which I would dare show to another mortal being. But there is something about poetry which wings one toward the Infinite. It is hard to see how anyone who dislikes poetry can get very near to the heart of God. For poetry is the sign and symbol, ~~of~~ the reflection of the heart's life.

a child once gave this
~~Someone has given this~~ definition of poetry: "Prose is straight up and down along the margins, but poetry is wiggly, and when you read it, it's wiggly inside, too." There is something about a human heart which can be expressed only by poetry. That's what Wordsworth felt when he wrote:

"My heart leaps up when I behold

A rainbow in the sky."

When we want to understand the human heart we should turn to the poets for ~~their~~'s are the hearts which "leap up" toward the things of God.

A poet always captures the deepest and most sublime feelings of the human heart. Here is what another poet, says of poetry (Kenneth Slade Alling)

"Ah, what are poems?

There is a kind of tree,
Which, bruised, bleeds golden blood
Into the sea.

And now you need not ask again
Of me.

Or take the words of another poet, who had been contemplating the nature of poetry (Guy Williford):

Looking long on beauty,
My soul becomes a song,
A song so full of rapture
That all the calm night long
I capture and recapture,
Like the silver sound of rain,
Damp melody and the throb of pain.

And then I have always loved this poem by my teacher and friend, Earl Marlatt; it is called "Mountain Communion":

If you have once seen ripples
Upon a mountain lake,
You will not marvel that love can fill,
Hearts until they break.

If you have once seen granite
Above the highest grass,
You will not grieve that fragile things
Blossom and seed and pass.

If you have once seen birches
Rise starlit from the snow
You will not fear the white release
Beyond the afterglow.

~~In all of this I am trying to show that~~ God made the human heart to think and feel, and ~~that is~~ the poets who lead us to this reality. And it is reality - just as valid as an electric field or atomic power. It is, in fact, the most real aspect of all human life, for one finds God nearest and dearest in his human heart.

These poets have shown us that God ~~makes~~ made the human heart to suffer pain. It is the poets who "capture and recapture --- ~~that~~ throb of pain." And why did God fashion the heart of human life so that it does suffer pain? Well, ^{as C. S. Lewis has said,} God caused the human heart to be sensitive to pain for the same reason that it is necessary to put sign posts up along the highways. For by pain God guides the life of a human being. Pain is nature's red flag. No physica~~in~~ would want to practice medicine in a world without pain, or could he do so; pain is not the real enemey he aims at. Pain is always the physician's aid in discovering the real foe. God has made the human heart to suffer so that life may be guided along its highway. Thus ~~it might not be~~ ^{is it not} a commentary upon our times that our world today is filled with borken hearts suffering the most intense ~~agony~~ anguish? How should we know that our world has gone nearly mad ~~were~~ it not for this surge of heart suffering?

In an address to the divinity students at Harvard in 1938, Ralph Waldo Emerson used these words:

I once heard a preacher who sorely tempted me to say I would go to church no more . . . A snowstorm was falling around us. The snowstorm was real, the preacher merely spectral, and the eye felt the sad contrast in looking at him, and then out of the window behind him into the beautiful meteor of the snow. He had lived in vain. He had no one word intimating that he had laughed

or wept, was married or in love, had been commended, or cheated, or chagrined. If he had ever lived and acted, we were none the wiser for it.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." He whose heart is cold and sullen is likely to be barren in life and his relationship with God must be very dull.

In these days when ~~a~~ millions of human hearts have been crushed and torn by war we have probably had the chance to come the closest to God. The hearts of men lead them to turn to God in every need for God is the Great Heart. ~~I do not apologize for turning to the poets, for there is no better place to turn when one wants to feel more realistically the presence of the heart. This poem, I think, shows best of all, what God means to the heart:~~

By one great heart the universe is stirred;
By Its strong pulse, stars climb the darkening blue;
It throbs in each fresh sunset's changing hue,
And thrills through the low sweet song of every bird.

By It the plunging blood reds all men's veins;
Joy feel that heart against his rapturous own,
And on It, Sorrow breathes her deepest green;
It bounds through gladness and deepest pains.

Passionless beating through all Time and Space,
Relentless, calm, majestic in Its march,
Alike, though Nature shake heaven's endless arch,
Or man's heart break because of some dead face!

'Tis felt in sunshine greening the soft sod,
In children's smiling, as in mother's tears,
And, for strange comfort, through the arching years,
Men's hungry souls have called that great Heart, God!

-II-

But that which lead us most ^{directly} ~~securely~~ to the Heart of God is the life of Jesus. Jesus did not come to give a scientific view of the world. He did not put forth a great new philosophy. The Greeks had the best philosophy, and science didn't matter then. But Jesus did come to minister to the human heart. "He knew what was in the hearts of men."

Jesus pierced always to the very heart of every human life. He knew immediately what it was that forbade the full spiritual growth of

the rich young ruler. He knew immediately that sin was staining the heart of the woman at the well in ~~Sychar~~ ^{Am} Samaria. When Nicodemus came to him in the night he knew what the spiritual longing of the man was. And he was quickly sensitive to the heart of the little man Zaccheus when Zaccheus climbed a tree to witness his passing by. Always Jesus was most concerned about the human heart.

Insert B → ~~Thus it is that~~ Jesus has always been at the heart of the Christian gospel. For that heart consists not in any essential philosophy nor in any theory of the universe. The heart of the Christian gospel is in the heart of Jesus for Jesus reflected the heart of God. Somehow it is for this reason that when men give themselves up to him that they feel a reality that is not bounded by land or sea. I have always been impressed with Fosdick's great analogy. "If this gospel of an indwelling dynamic is not coupled with our admiration for Jesus, we are like a student practicing the fingering of the Hallelujah Chorus on organ from which the power has been shut off. With what accuracy his fingers travel the keys, who can tell? Once Handel's soul, on fire with the passion of harmony, burned itself into that composition. He wrote it upon his knees. But with whatever agility the student's fingers follow the notes, no Hallelujah Chorus comes from his organ to praise God and move men." *Through the years the most stirring music of the Christian church has been played when the power of Jesus was in its soul.*

In these days that lie ahead the only ~~one~~ true business of the Christian church is concerned with the human heart. Men's hearts are anguished in suffering and torment. Men's hearts are hurt and dazed and hungry. And ¹⁷ until these ~~answers are brought forth~~ ^{hearts restored} can this world succeed in righting itself - despite all knowledge and all of the glory of science. The great field of endeavor for the world is that of the human heart. And that is the field of the Christian church!

We will do well to remember that Methodism was born out of the life of a man whose heart "was strangely warmed." John Wesley had the finest

education that could be had in his day, but his work as a minister was without power. There was some coldness and stiffness about his heart which blocked every way. It was not until that frigid heart was melted by a strange warmth that he became the ~~flaming~~ flaming evangel who traveled up and down England in ministry to human hearts, *ushering in a new age.*

In these dire days the Methodist Church, yea the Christian church needs to get its heart warmed. It can never make its way in this stricken world until it has caught the fire of the great heart of Christ. In this coming year our church is stressing evangelism. And how pertinent and timely that is! But our evangelism will be sorrowfully weak if we do see that the human heart is the very threshold of God.

For twenty years now this church has maintained a student center at the gateway to a great university. One complete generation has passed through its doors and now another stands outside eager to enter. The great privilege I feel there as its minister is the thought that our student center ministers especially to the heart of youth. In a great university like this there is every provision made for the increase of knowledge and the training for a job. But all of this would be in vain if someone did not make, too, a place for the training of the heart. That has a reality and a need all its own, for God made the heart, too. That is what our Student Center tries to do. That is its great opportunity in these years ahead. What greater and more glorious task does a church like this have than the training of youthful hearts for life! In a world that has given them all knowledge of mind and science, they lack something yet. But our field is that of the heart where men are drawn most strongly to the very heart that causes the pulsations of this earth. For there we try to minister the Christian gospel. And what is the Gospel? As someone else has said it is contained in a single verse of one of the greatest of Christian hymns:

Were the whole realm of Nature mine,
That were a present far too small!
Love so ~~my~~ amazing, so Divine,
Demands my soul! —

~~In this past week the winds of peace have once again
swept over the world.~~

A — In this past week the fresher winds of peace have blown in upon our world and in their wake there have been swept away the thick, stifling clouds of war. Now it seems ~~as though~~ the sun burns more radiantly by day as the moon and the stars shine more lustrously by night. ~~And~~ Once again all of earth stirs ~~more~~ restlessly in the excitement of new life for once again peace has come in our time.

B — The Twentieth Century has not known what to do with Jesus. Most of us revere his memory out of the historic past but we are in constant trouble as we try to notch him into the framework of modern life. Frankly most of us think of him as a very good man - perhaps the noblest example of human life on this planet. But our admiration hardly stretches far enough to regard him as did the early church fathers who believed him to be the Son of God and the Son of Man. Many people here now are inclined to feel that the Christian Church has overplayed the Christ. That name is too saturated with myth to satisfy ~~the~~ many modern minds. But on the other hand we have painted Jesus with the thin colors

of sentimentality which eventually leaves him faded and weak.
Altogether we have cut ~~the~~ away the very heart of Jesus' reality .

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