

Sermons
New Testament
Luke 2:41-52

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Date written: June 7, 1947

Theme: The importance of education to Christian living

Proposition: Education is important in the fullest Christian life.

Text: Luke 2:52

Sources:

Places preached:

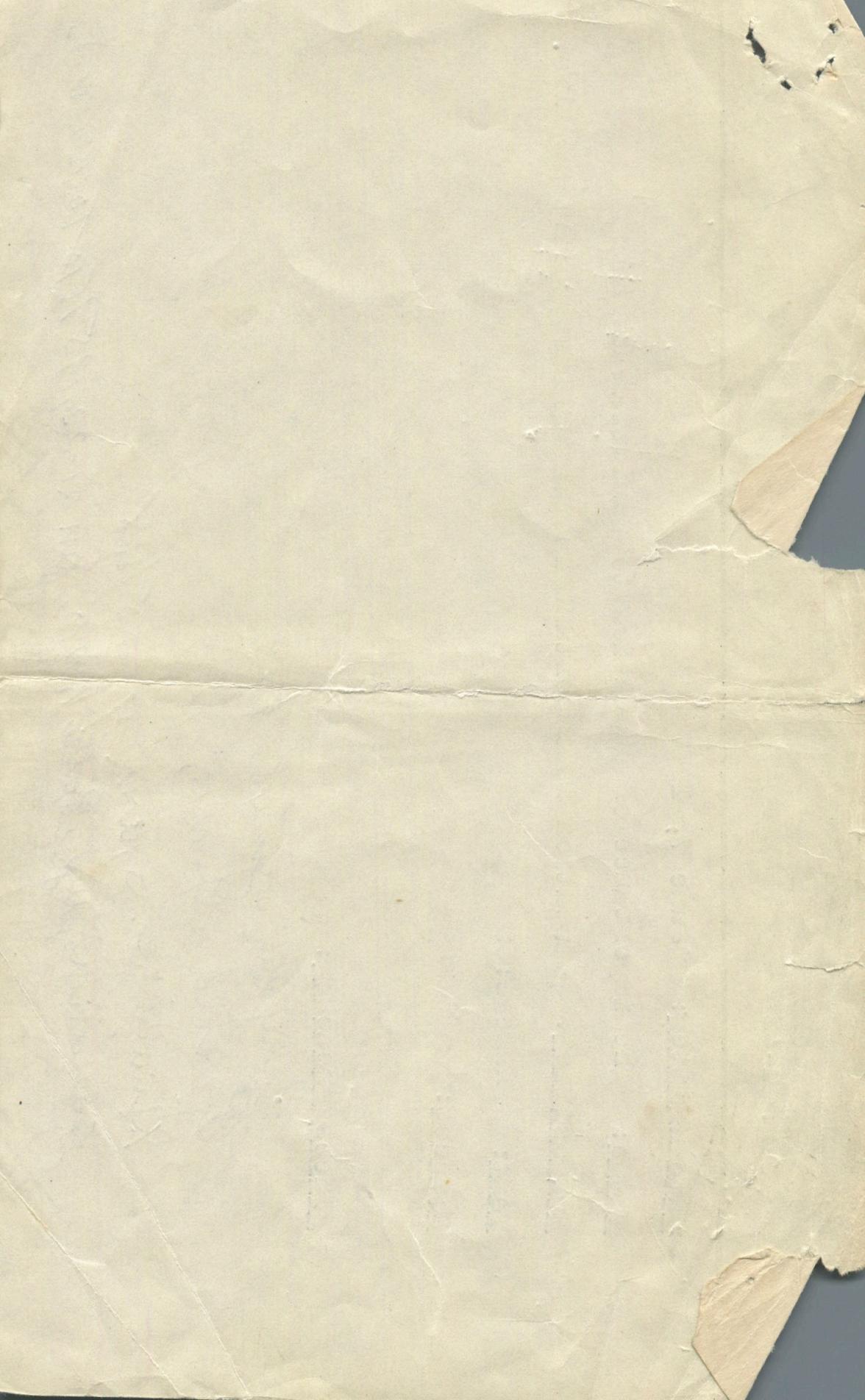
Parley oak - June 8, 1947

Genworth - June 15, 1947

Huntington, Ark 4/25/48

Shenandoah, Wyo., Radio 5WYO, Jan 21-23, 1959 (10-10:15 a.m.)

Akron - June 8, 1969 by Linnell (slightly rewritten)



Now ~~when~~ his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover.

And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

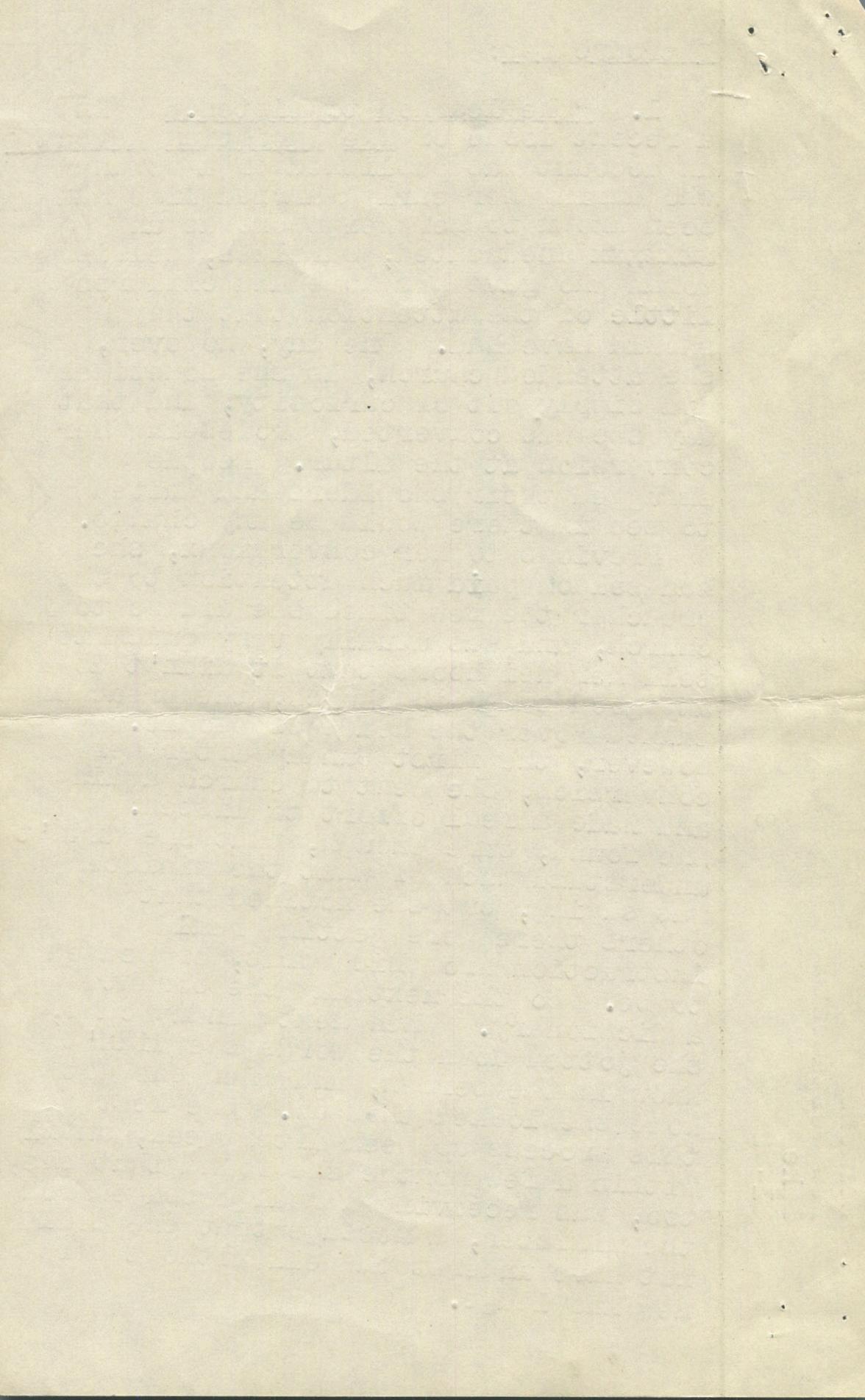
And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them; but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Introduction:

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1. "She learned to listen." In a recent issue of The Christian Advocate an account was published of a woman who during her early married life had been known to her neighbors as an ~~xxxxxx~~ uneducated, careless, selfish woman who gave her home and children little of the attention that they should have had. One day, however, she attended church, as she sometimes did simply out of curiosity, and that day she was converted, professing her conversion at the altar. People shrugged their shoulders and waited to see if there would be any change.

Previous to her conversion, she had seldom paid much attention to the preacher the few times she did go to church, and was usually very quick to tell her neighbors that it didn't do any good to go to church, the preacher talked "over the heads of people." However, the first Sunday after her conversion, she went to church again and made a real effort to listen. She found, sure enough, that she didn't understand much of what the minister was saying, but she noticed that others there were getting real instruction from his words, or seemed to be. So the next day she bought a dictionary. When next Sunday came, she jotted down the words she didn't know in the sermon, and when she got home she looked them up. She kept this process up week after week, until within a few months she found that she, too, was receiving a real message from the minister, a message that she could not have understood well without her new knowledge.



She also began reading her Bible regularly from the time of her conversion, and she soon found the dictionary of great help in understanding it. From there, her reading, always with the help of her dictionary, passed to other and broader fields.

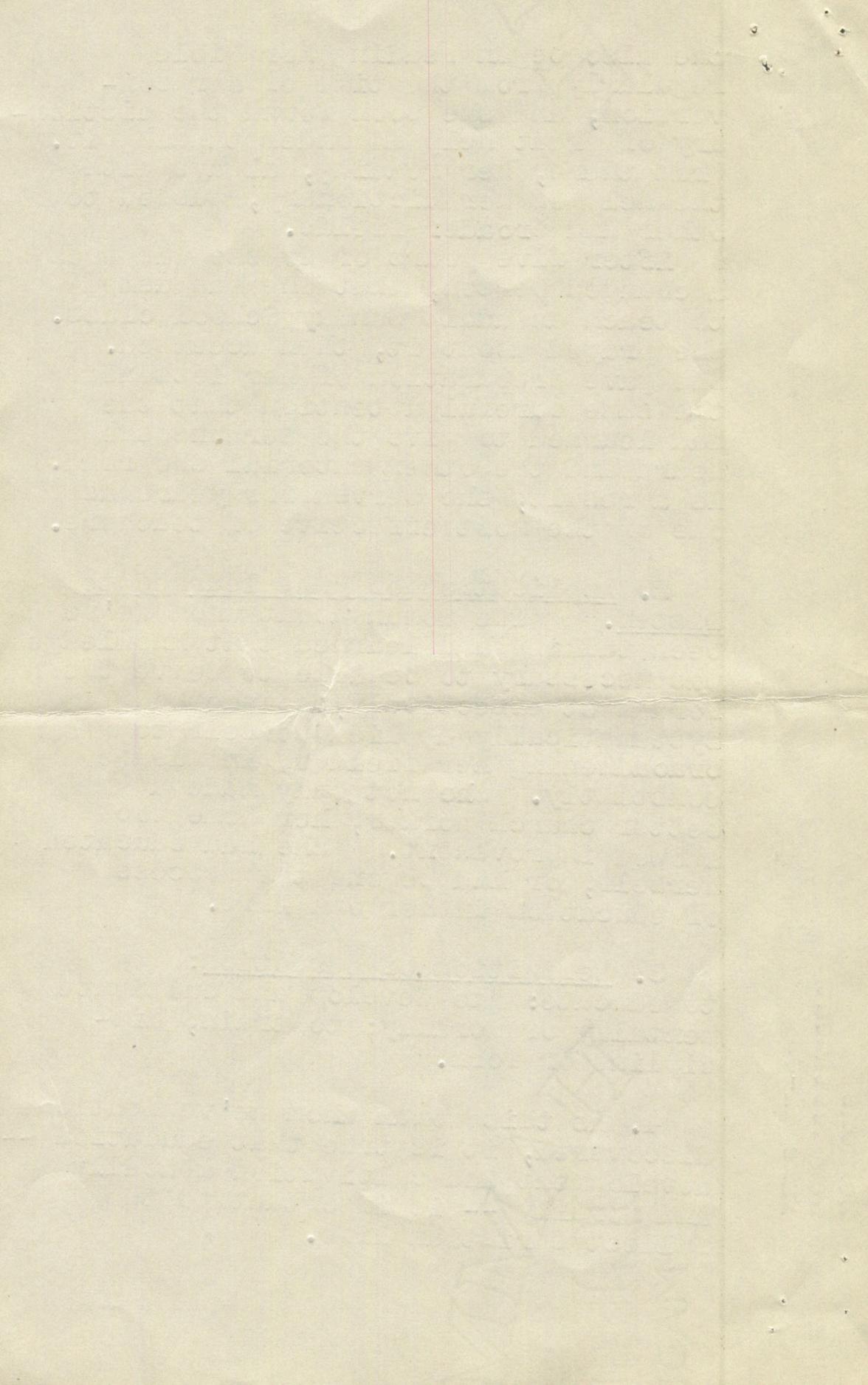
After five years or so she was such a changed person, that she was asked to teach an adult Sunday School class. She prayed about it, then accepted. She gave preparation of her lessons the same careful attention that she had learned to give the sermons she heard and the other material she read. As a result, she served for years as one of the most effective of teachers.

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2. Application of "She learned to listen." The woman about whom we've been talking had learned that knowledge was necessary to be able to serve the Lord most effectively, so she had systematically applied herself to broadening her field of knowledge constantly. She not only made a better church worker, her home too showed improvement. She had educated herself, or had begun the process of education in her own life.

3. Definition of education: to educate; "to develop and cultivate mentally or morally; to train, discipline or form."

4. As this woman whom we've mentioned discovered, it is true that education -- development and cultivation mentally and morally -- is important to the fullest Christian life.



I. The Bible demonstrates the importance of education to Christian life.

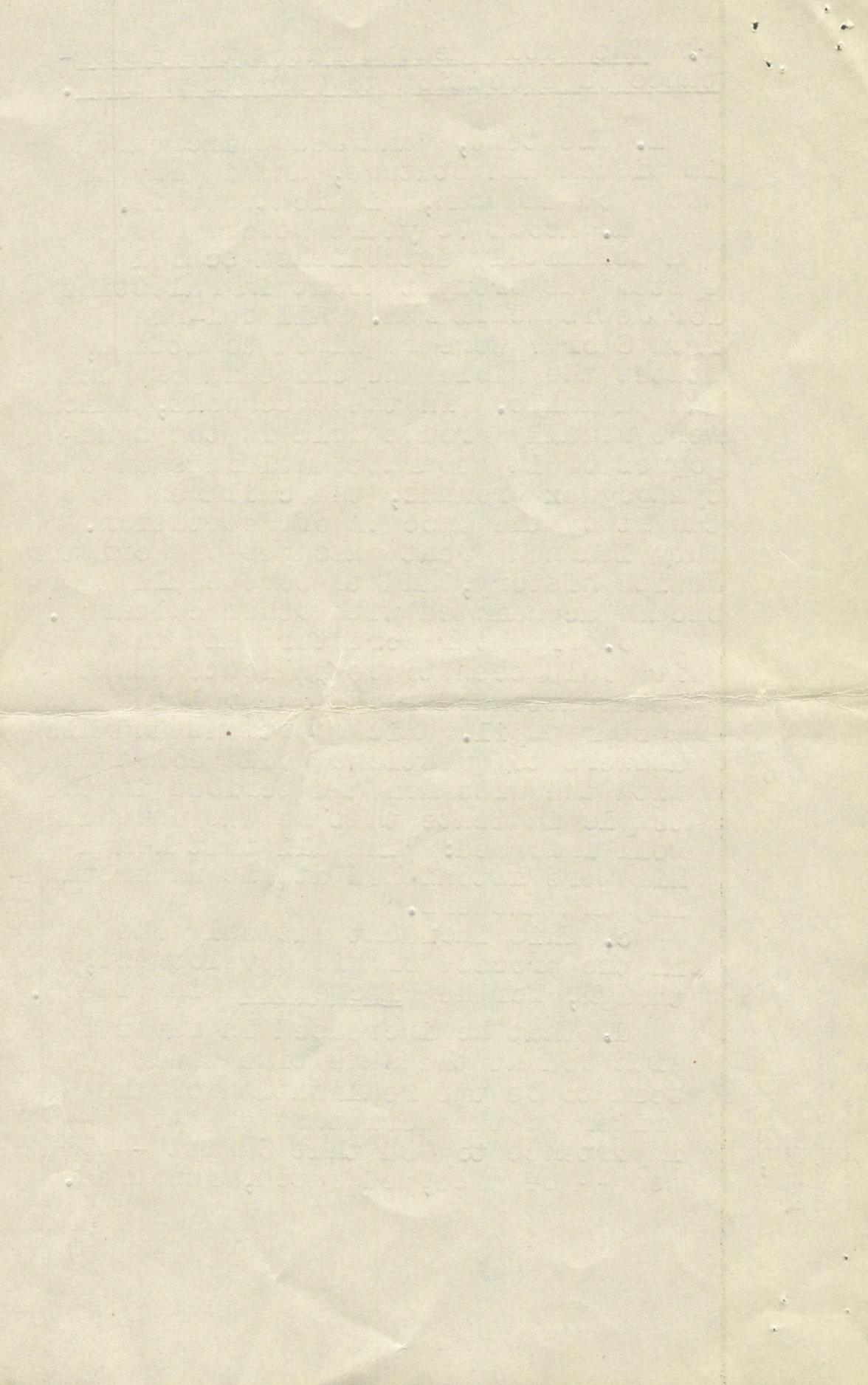
1. The text, "and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man," indicates this.

a. About 75 years before Jesus a definitely established school system was brought about in Palestine for Jewish children. All children from 6 or 7 were required to attend, states the Bible Encyclopedia of Funk and Wagnalls. In these schools, which were usually groups held in the synagogues or in separate buildings on the synagogues grounds, the children were taught by the process of repetition. They learned great passages of Scripture, Jewish history, and to some small degree became acquainted with other cultures.

b. From our Scripture and text it would seem to be indicated that Jesus attended such a school and was a star pupil. His questions and his answers to questions while conversing with the wise men and scribes in the temple indicate that he was unusually well informed: "and all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."

c. This incident was only one in the process of his development, though, for he "increased" in wisdom.

d. That he increased in favor with God at the same time would seem to be the realization of the writer of the Scripture of the importance to God that Christ -- and men -- be wise, educated, informed.

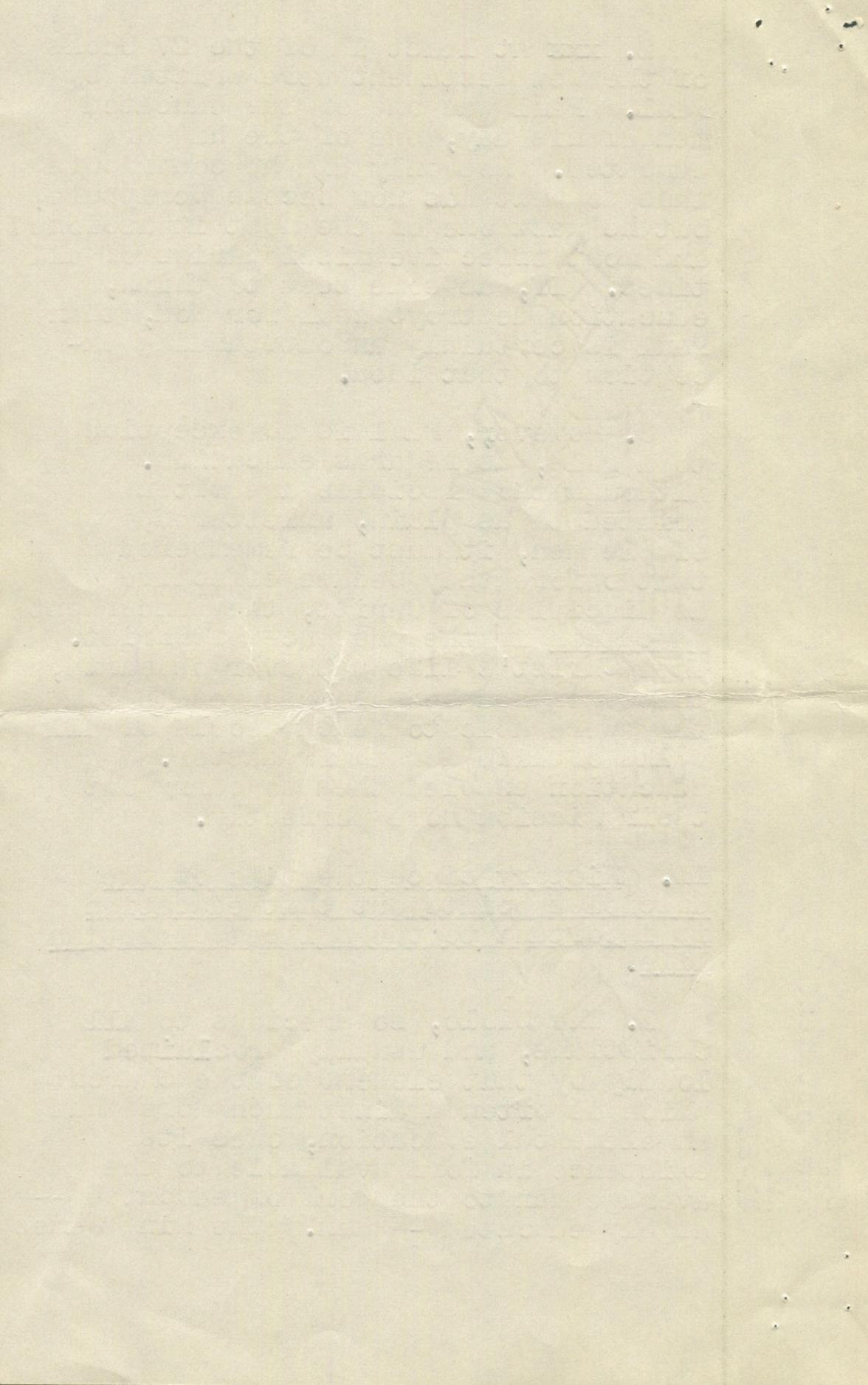


2. ~~The~~ At least 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament were written by Paul. Paul was one of the educated men of his day, one of the higher educated. Not only did he contribute thus to what has now become Scripture, but he was one of the most impassioned and most effective missionaries of all times. If, as some seem to think, education destroys zeal for God, than Paul is certainly an outstanding exception to that idea.

3. However, Paul is no exception to a rule, as regards education. Although the disciples are often pointed to as plain, unlettered, simple men, it must be remembered that before they became effective as disciples of Christ, they underwent education in the presence of Christ. When Christ's life was over on earth, these men had been so changed that they were able to reach people of all walks of life for their master. Education enabled them to carry out their mission more perfectly.

II. History since the time of the disciples points out that education is important to the fullest Christian life.

1. The Bible, so precious to all Christians, and usually proclaimed loudly by that element of the church which is often against much more than an elemental education, owes its existence in form available to the average man to the work of educated -- highly educated -- men. The King James



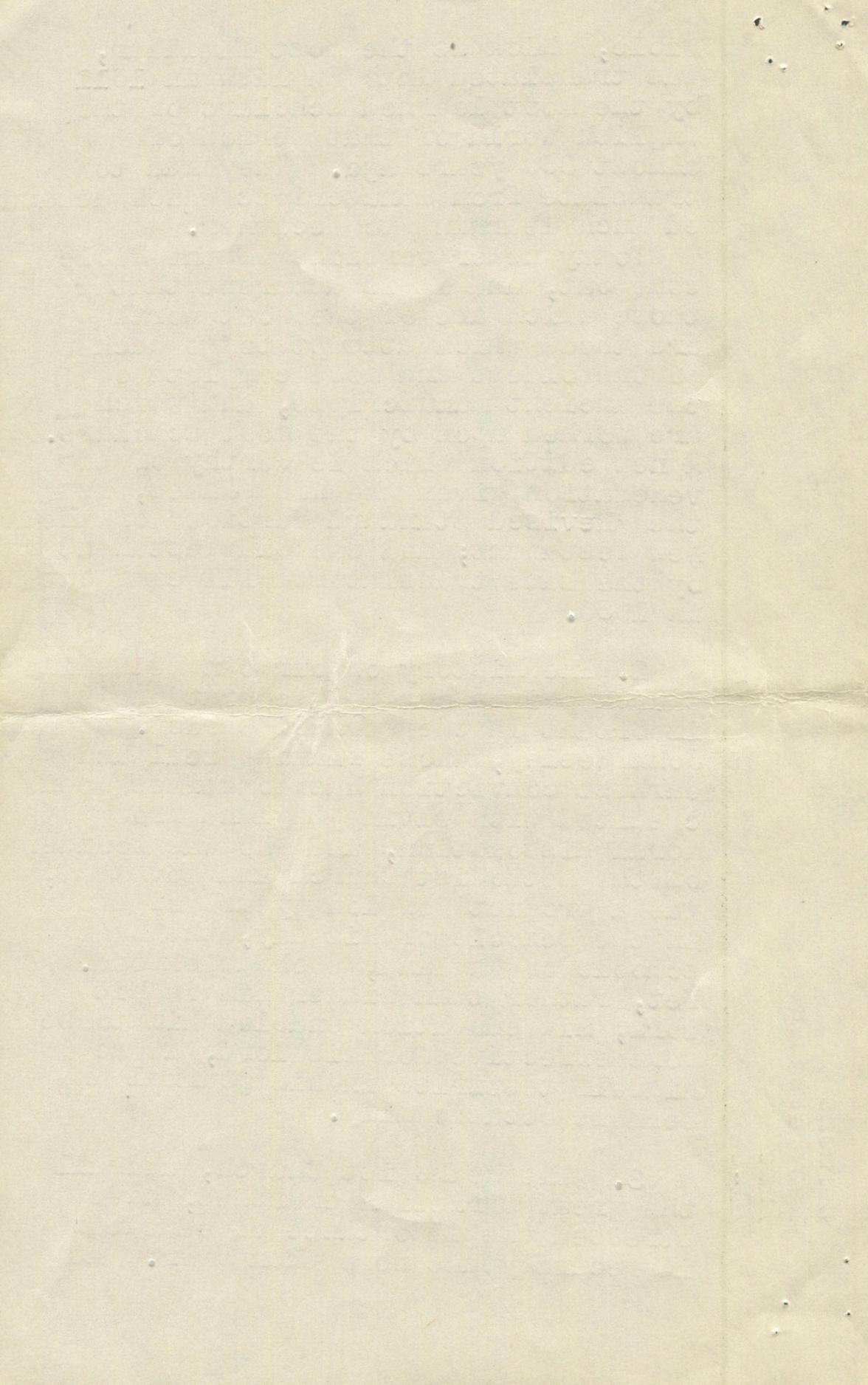
Bible, which is the most familiar, was translated into English in 1611 by the most learned scholars of the English world of that period of almost 350 years ago. They had to translate from manuscripts which demanded much learning to decipher.

Today newer versions of the Bible come out, and it is apparent that those which are of the most worth are those which attempt to go back to the oldest and most complete of the ancient manuscripts, and which are worked upon by the most scholars. A new edition which is worthy of the veneration given the King James, is the "Revised Standard Version" of the New Testament; and the Old Testament by the same translators will come out in 1950.

2. The history of our own Methodist Church points out that education is important in the work of Christ.

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John Wesley, whose flaming zeal and earnest conviction has sometimes been credited with saving England from moral dissolution, and who was founder of the Methodist Church and movement, was a product of long years of study in the schools of his day, the best schools of England, such as Oxford. Yet, rather than hinder him in his work, his education enabled him to be more effective for his lord, as he himself testifies in his journal and sermons occasionally.

3. The Methodist Church, and all the great Christian churches, have stressed the importance of education in recent years more than ever. As



a result, great colleges and universities have been founded by them, with such things as state-supported and controlled schools coming as a general thing after the churches had demonstrated the value of education. In the church-related colleges and universities, incidently, Bible and religious courses are required subjects. Since this movement by the churches for education, ~~xxxxxx~~ gained momentum, slavery has been abolished in many parts of the world, prejudice of all times is being fought steadfastly by an increasing number, men are coming more and more to recognize that all the world is a dwelling place for one family, and Christian living,--in spite of terrible failures--is on the increase.

4. Most of the hearers of this sermon can read and write. Yet only a few decades ago more than 50% of the American population was illiterate, and a great many of these opposed educational movements as ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ unnecessary, immoral, and un-Christian. Yet, how many of you now would deny that the simple abilities to read and write help bring you closer to God?

III. In our present culture, education helps people lead a fuller Christian life.

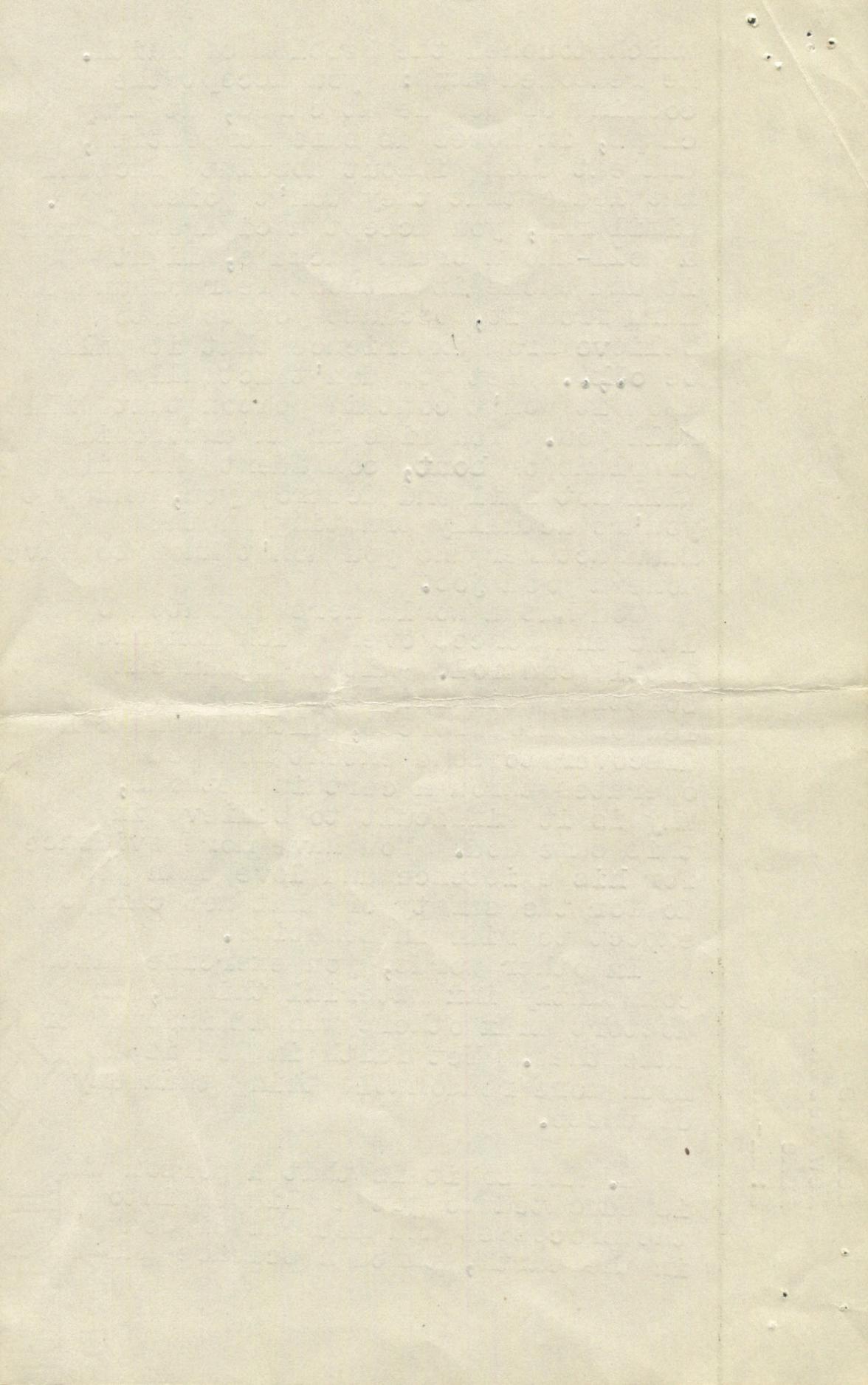
1. During the war there appeared in a post newspaper of an army outfit stationed in the Pacific an article by the Catholic chaplain of the outfit,

which touched the problem of faith. He reasoned thus: you accept the cooking of people at cafes, at army camps, in homes as safe for eating, and eat them without absolute factual knowledge that they won't poison you. Similarly, you accept a cigarette from a well-known brand package, light it and smoke it without fear of undue harm from it, because you come to believe from experience that it will be o.k.. Yet you don't actually know it won't contain poison that will kill you. You ride in an automobile or plane or ~~boat~~, confident that it will not fail and destroy you, and yet you're actually trusting in the manufacturer who you don't know to have done a good job.

God has a world here operated by laws and forces over which man has little control. Although man can sometime gain slight control over some few of those forces, although he can discover to some extent how God operates through certain methods, why is it difficult to believe in this same God? You have more evidence for his existence and love than you do for the safety of that new car you expect to ride in sometime.

In other words, you exercise faith constantly in material things, in doctors and others who administer or make them. Yet faith in God is a much more reasonable thing than any of these.

2. And so it is that a person who is educated to get a glimpses into the processes and methods of God in the earth, through science and other

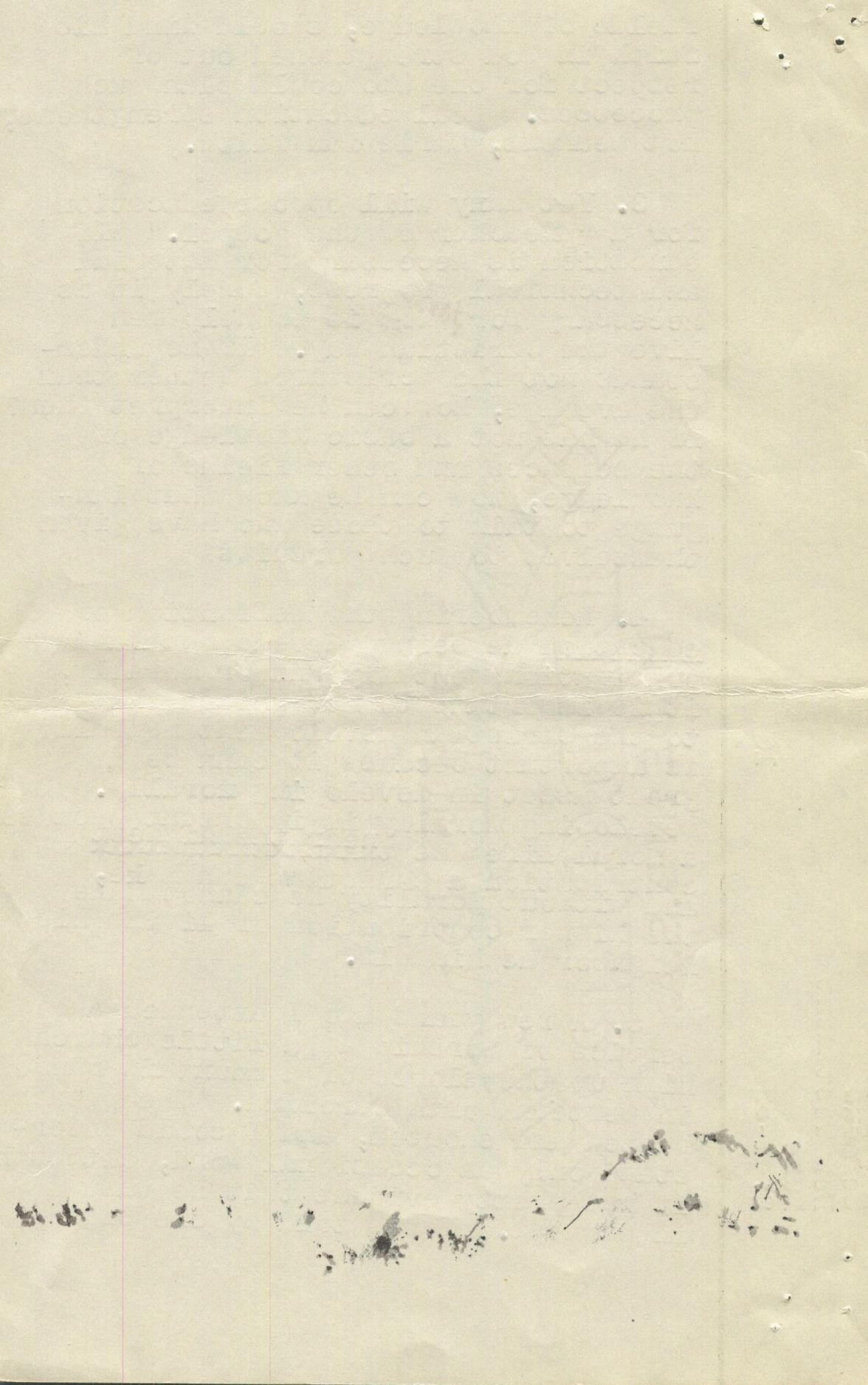


fields of knowledge, should find his faith in God strengthened out of respect for one who could plan such processes. Real education strengthens, not weakens, Christian faith.

3. Yet many will oppose education for a "preacher of the gospel." If education is necessary for material and technical progress, surely it is necessary for ~~whom~~^{those} ~~is to~~ help men live the Christian way. If he understands not the Scriptures better than the average, how can he interpret them? If he has not a basic knowledge of the sciences and other fields of knowledge, how can he know what language to talk to those who have given themselves to such pursuits?

4. Remembering the definition of education as being "development and cultivation mentally ~~and~~ or morally," it is important to recognize that to the Christian development mentally is important because it can be a great asset in developing morally. Developing morally is important because a moral life is ~~the~~^{near the highest} ~~the~~ ~~highest~~ contribution a Christian can make, and without morality he cannot make the higher contribution of ~~living~~^{investing} his neighbor as himself.

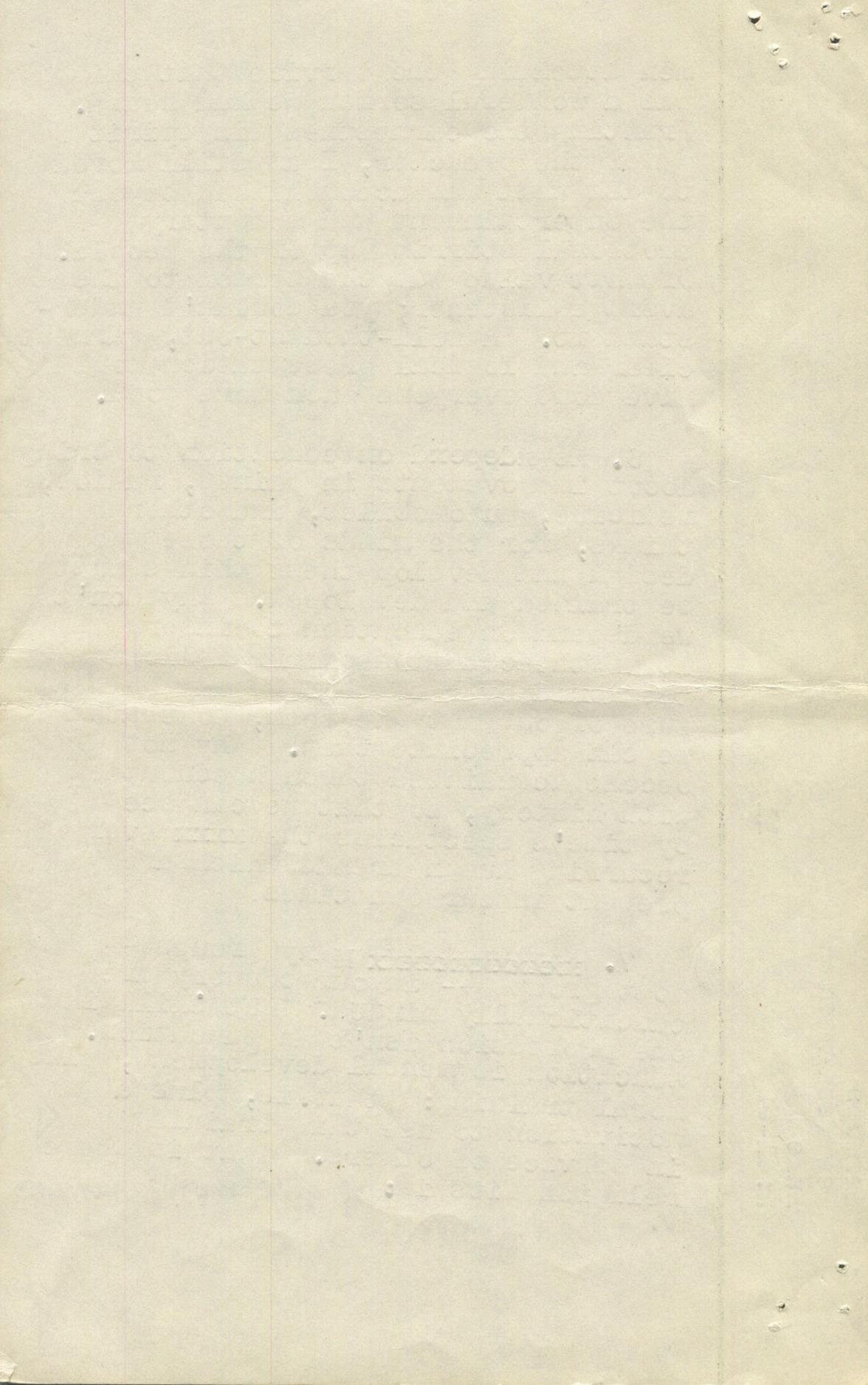
5. A few years ago I attended a service of worship at a little church high up the slopes of a mountain range in western North Carolina. The preacher ranted and shouted, and I could understand only an occasional word, although it was pretty evident that he was in earnest. I was told by one of the



men attending the service that this was a wonderful sermon we had heard. Granting the earnestness in spirit of the preacher, I am still moved to ask what was accomplished beyond the entertainment and momentary emotional stirring up of the people? Of what value was the sermon to the average listener; you couldn't understand it. A well-thought-out, earnest, clear and logical presentation would have done everyone much more good.

6. ~~As~~ ^{We} depend on education to bring about improvements in paints, radios, medicine, automobiles, and other things, for the minds of those who design and develop these things must be trained and developed. Why don't we depend on education to inform us of the condition of our fellowmen the world over so that we may be sure of our duty to them, so that we can appreciate them. Why not become acquainted through education with history, so that we can see by time's spectacles the ~~times~~ ever recurring human trends which are present in our own times?

7. ~~Fortunately~~ Many groups -- most groups -- in our country are educationally minded. ^{in a sense} But skill in one profession isn't an education. Education is mental development, plus moral training: that is, plus a motivation to use this training in service of others. That is where religion fits in. *We give moral motivation in religious instruction.*



a. Through Sunday schools, but at most only 52 hours a year.

b. Through Bible Schools, usually from 1 to 4 weeks of 15 hours per week.

c. Through providing instruction for religious teaching in the schools, usually not more than 2 or 3 hours -- often only 1 -- a week for 36 weeks.

d. Through church-related colleges and universities, where Bible and religious education is set on a plane with other fields of study, and is made important and required.

e. Through well-trained ministers and workers, who are familiar with technical knowledge in other fields to some extent but who know the necessity of Christianity in their work, whatever it may be.

Conclusion:

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The Bible, history, and our present day, all show that Christian living is better if one has education: proper development of mentality and morals.

All education doesn't come through schools, as our first story of the woman who learned to listen indicates, but however it comes, it is necessary to the fullest Christian life.

As Jesus grew in stature and wisdom under the tutelage of parents, synagoge -- his school --, and observation, so should we through mediums provided us today -- school, college, others, reading, study --, that we too may increase in favor with God and man.

