

Introduction

1. "Angel Unaware" is the name of a book written some years ago by Dale Evans Rogers, wife of "King of the cowboys" Roy Rogers. In it she tells of the experiences of her family and herself as they ~~was~~ had born an abnormal child, as she developed, and as she finally died in childhood. The "angel unaware" was, of course, the little handicapped daughter, who brought so much of understanding of life and its meaning to her family. As one reads the book he can almost see the child's mother living, suffering, dying, as the child does so. One can almost experience the feeling of communication with God which Dale Evans Rogers learned as she prayed on behalf of her child.

2. Jesus, too, lived a rather abnormal life. His was perhaps on the opposite end of the intelligence and physical scales from that of the Rogers poor little girl. Jesus lived an example of good earthly life that has never been and can never be equalled. This Jesus was, we believe, none other than the fleshly, earthly word of God. In a sense he was God on earth. The life that he lived, including its hours of agony and persecution, make it possible for people today to be "alive to God." Just as the

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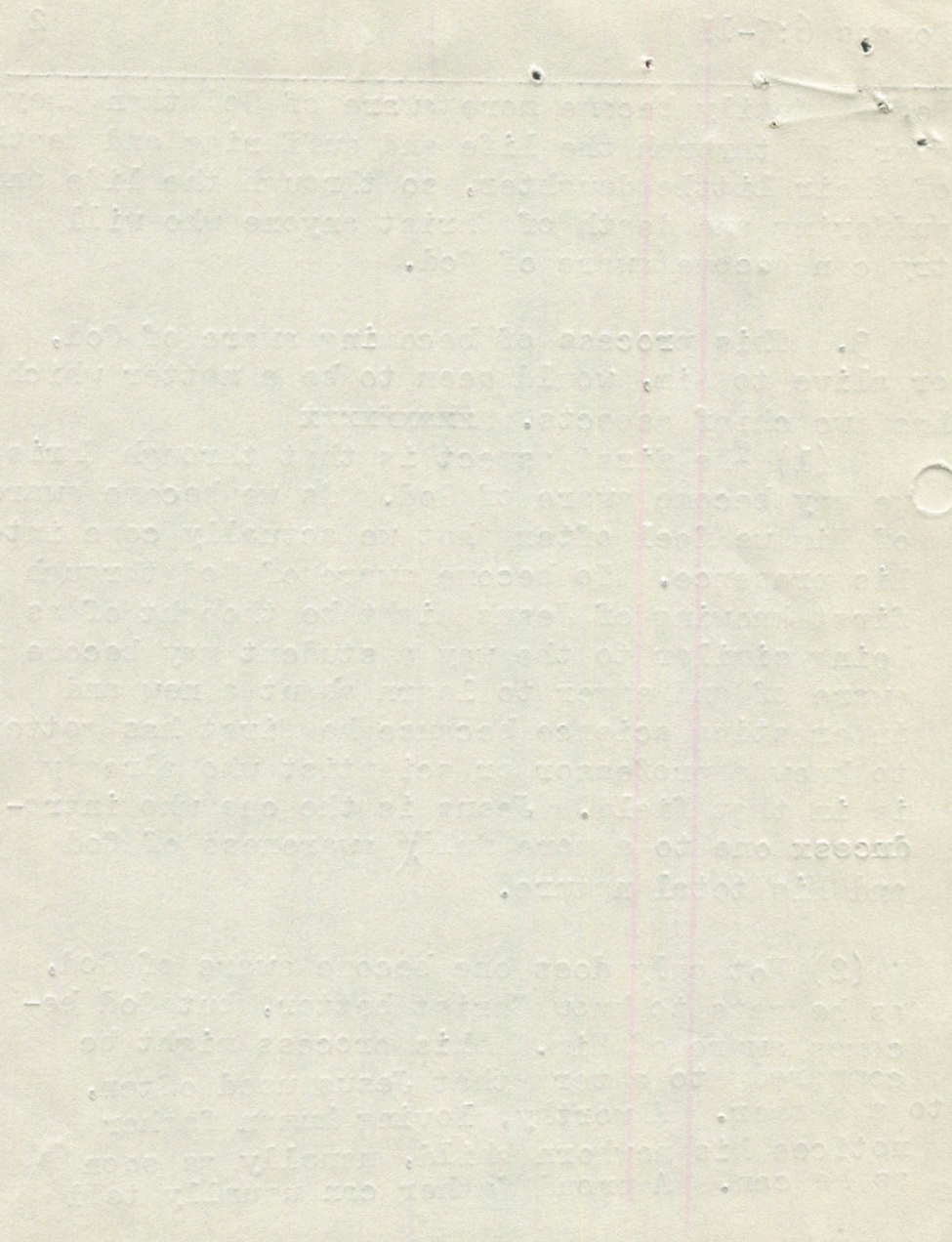
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Rogers family became more aware of God than they ever had through the life and suffering and death of their little daughter, so through the life and suffering and death of Christ anyone who will try can become aware of God.

3. This process of becoming aware of God, or alive to Him, would seem to be a matter which has two chief aspects. ~~The first~~

(1) The first aspect is that through Christ we may become aware of God. As we become aware of Him we feel often that we actually come into His presence. To become aware of God through first knowing of Jesus might be thought of as being similar to the way a student may become aware of and eager to learn about a new and interesting science because he first has gotten to know a professor or scientist who already is in that field. Jesus is the one who introduces one to a more fully awareness of God and His total nature.

(2) Not only does one become aware of God, as he gets to know Christ better, but God becomes aware of Him. This process might be compared to a term that Jesus used often, to a Father. A worthy, loving human father notices his newborn child, usually as soon as he can. A proud father can usually tell



about anything that you want to know about his new child.

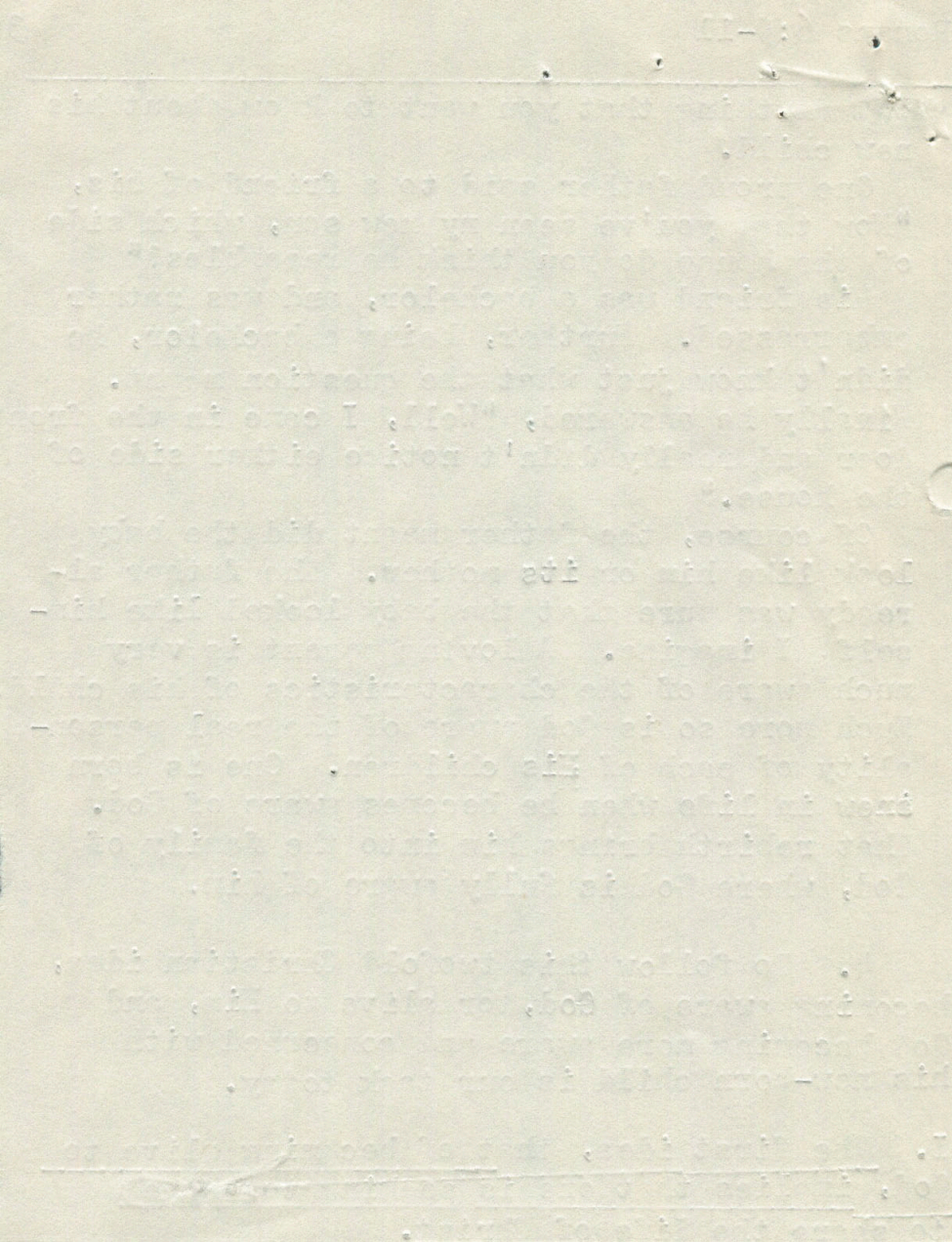
One proud father said to a friend of his, "Now that you've seen my new son, which side of the house do you think he resembles?"

His friend was a bachelor, and was rather embarrassed. Further, being a bachelor, he didn't know just what the question meant. Finally he answered, "Well, I came in the front door and really didn't notice either side of the house."

Of course, the father meant did the baby look like him or **its** mother. The father already was sure that the baby looked like himself, I imagine. A loving parent is very much aware of the characteristics of his child. Much more so is God aware of the real personality of each of **His** children. One is born **inew** in life when he becomes aware of God. That rebirth brings him into the family of God, where God is fully aware of him.

4. To follow this twofold Christian idea, becoming aware of **God**, or alive to **Him**, and God becoming more aware and concerned with his new-born child is our task today.

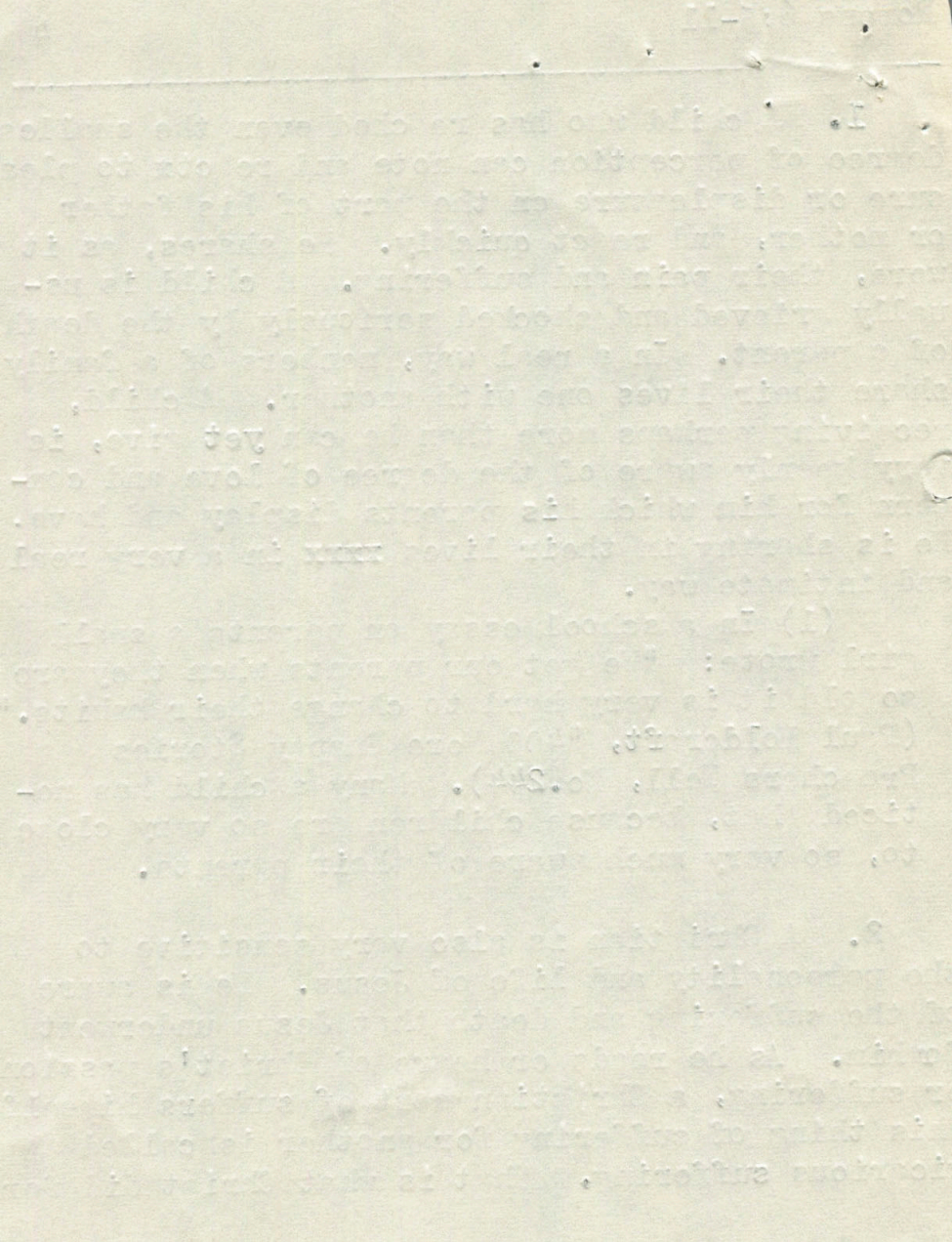
I. The first idea, that of becoming alive to God, implies that one is seeking to share to share the life of Christ.



1. A child who has reached even the smallest degree of perception can note and react to pleasure or displeasure on the part of his father or mother, and react quickly. He shares, as it were, their pain and suffering. A child is usually grieved and shocked seriously by the death of a parent. In a real way, members of a family share their lives one with another. A child, receiving perhaps more than he can yet give, is very keenly aware of the degree of love and concern for him which his parents display and have. He is sharing in their lives ~~very~~ in a very real and intimate way.

(1) In a school essay on parents a small girl wrote: "We get our parents when they are so old it is very hard to change their habits." (Paul Holdcraft, "400 More Snappy Stories Preachers Tell, No. 244). Many a child has noticed that, because children are so very close to, so very much aware of their parents.

2. A Christian is also very sensitive to the personality and life of Jesus. He is aware of the suffering and death that Jesus underwent for him. As he reads or hears of Christ's passion, or suffering, a Christian sort of suffers himself. This thing of suffering for another is called vicarious suffering. That is what Christ did for



us, suffer vicariously. As we feel pangs of pain when we ponder on the Biblical account of his last week, we are suffering vicariously just a bit.

3. This attitude of suffering, this feeling of death within as one thinks of His death, can bring a new realization of God's nature and power. As you despair at the death of Christ, just as you despair at the loss of a loved one or friend, the relief and joy ~~and~~ gratitude should be **real** that you feel over the fact of the resurrection. God helped Christ overcome death, and He will help my loved ones too, the Christian believes. "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall **certainly** be united with him in a resurrection like his," said Paul in the words of our Scripture.

4. An old hillbilly song has words that ~~goes~~ something like:

If I could but atone

For the wrongs that I've done

To that silver-haired Daddy of mine.

A child often comes to realize how much pain he ~~has~~ been to a loving parent. Sometimes he comes to the point where he makes some drastic changes

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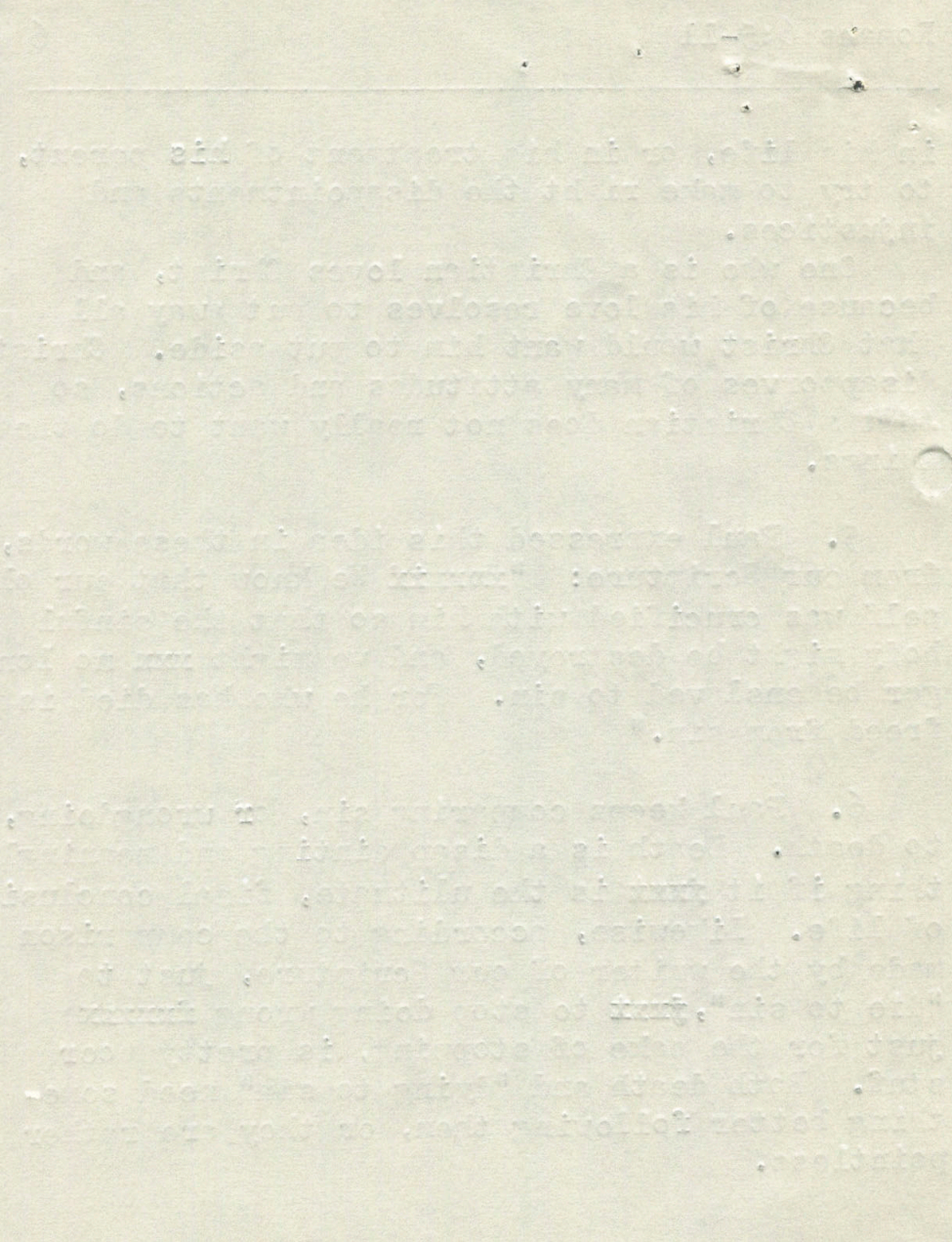
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in his life, or in his treatment of **his** parent, to try to make right the disappointments and injustices.

One who is a Christian loves Christ, and because of his love resolves to put away all that Christ would want him to put aside. Christ disapproves of many attitudes and actions, so that a Christian does not really want to do these things.

5. Paul expressed this idea in these words, from our Scripture: "~~For~~ We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might ~~now~~ no longer be enslaved to sin. For he who has died is freed from sin."

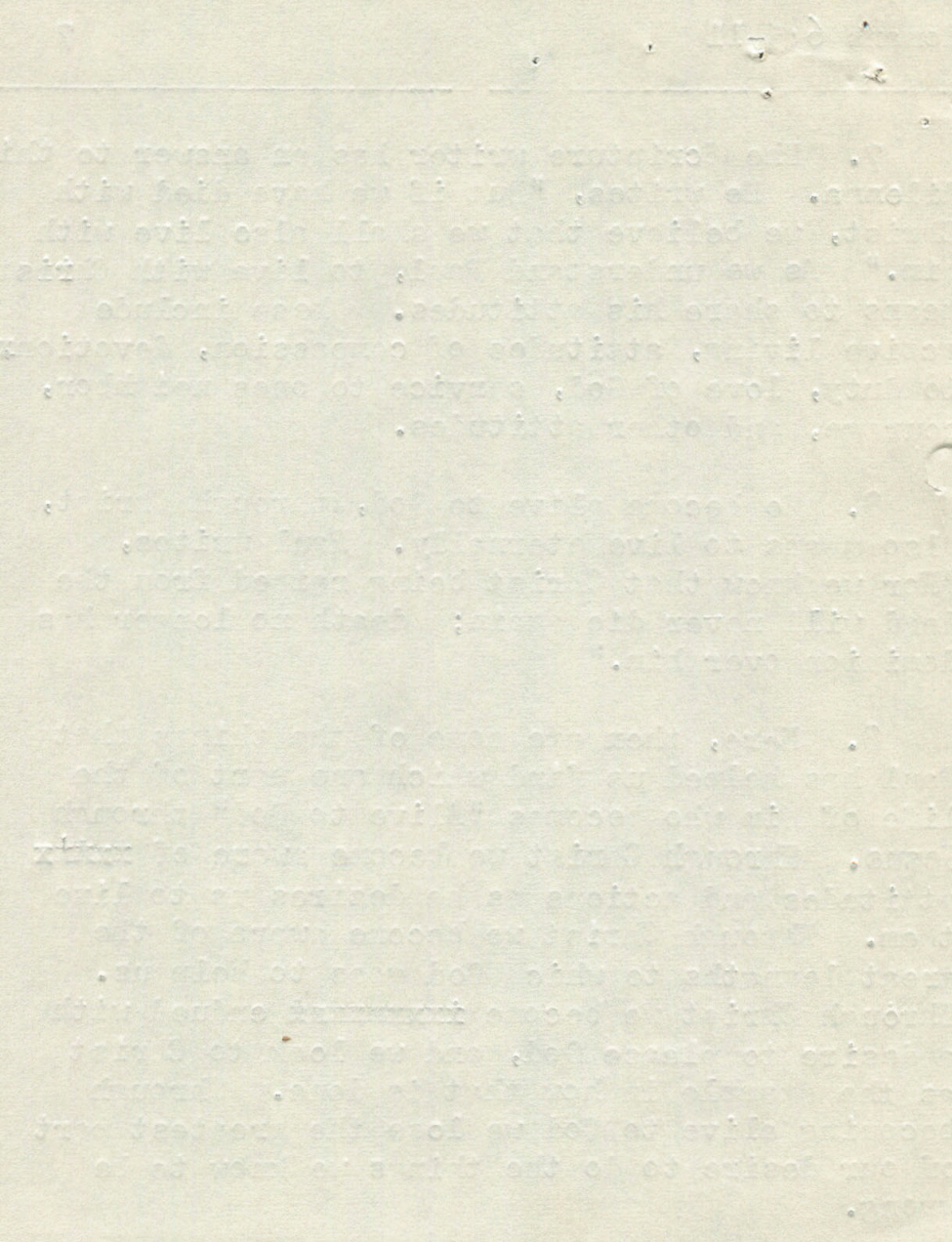
6. Paul keeps comparing sin, ~~of~~ wrongdoing, to death. Death is a disappointing and meaningless thing if it ~~just~~ is the ultimate, final conclusion of life. Likewise, according to the comparison made by the writer of our Scripture, just to "die to sin", ~~just~~ to stop doing wrong ~~for~~ just for the sake of stopping, is pretty poor stuff. Both death and "dying to sin" need something better following them, or they are rather pointless.



7. The Scripture writer has an answer to this dilemma. He writes, "But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him." As we understand Paul, to live with Christ means to share his attitudes. These include active living, attitudes of compassion, devotion to duty, love of God, service to ones neighbor, courage, and other attitudes.

8. To become alive to God, through Christ, also means to live eternally. Paul writes, "For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him."

8. Here, then are some of the things that Paul has helped us find which are part of the life of him who becomes "Alive to God" through Jesus. Through Christ we become aware of ~~some~~ attitudes and actions as he desires us to live them. Through Christ we become aware of the great lengths to which God goes to help us. Through Christ we become ~~impressed~~ endued with a desire to please God, and we look to Christ as the example in how that is done. Through becoming alive to God we lose the greatest part of our desire to do the things we know to be wrong.



9. There is an even greater thing that happens as one becomes alive to God. It is the ~~thing~~ other thing we mentioned at the beginning, that

II. To be alive to God means that God becomes strongly aware of you.

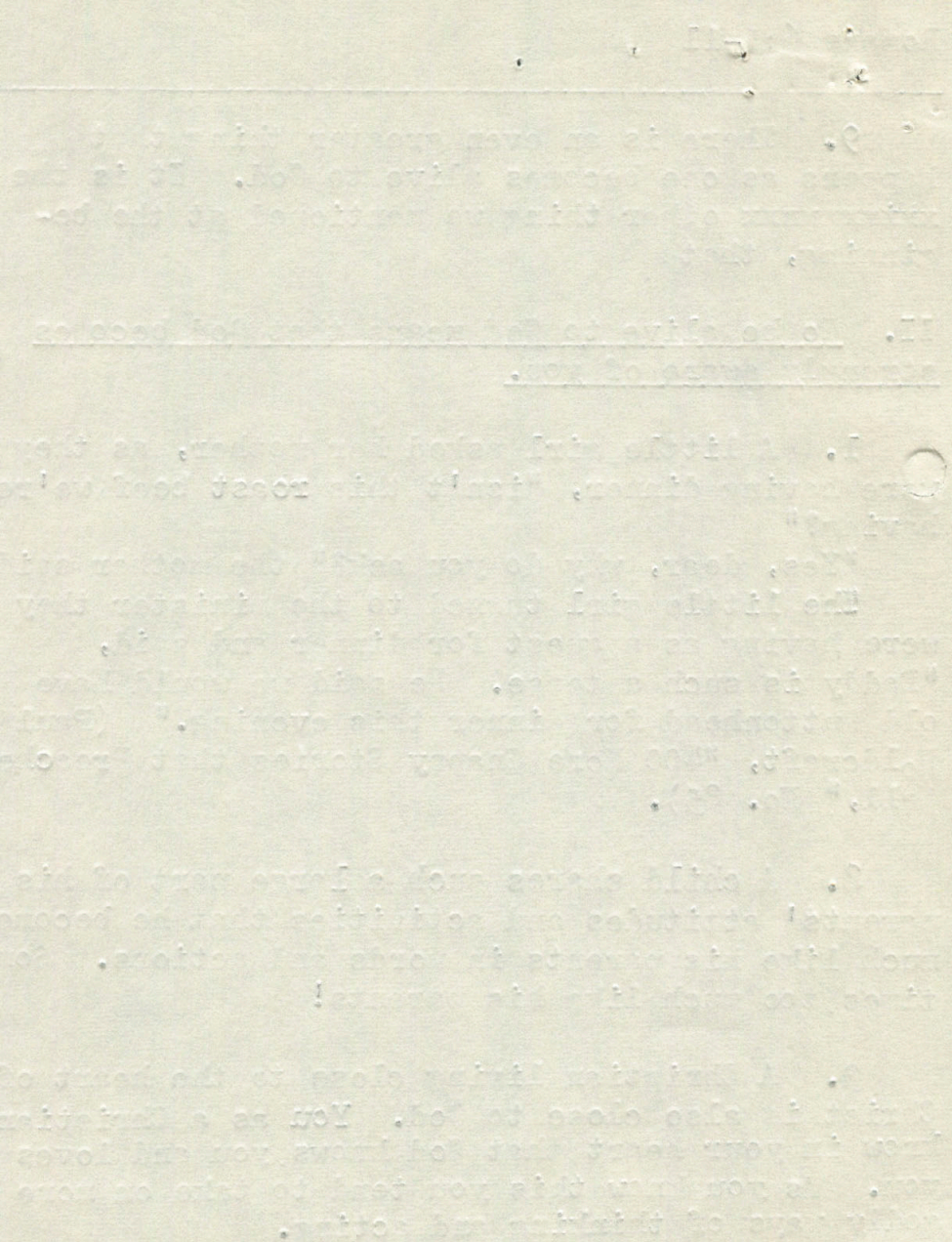
1. A little girl asked her mother, as they were having dinner, "isn't this ~~toast~~ beef we're having?"

"Yes, dear, why do you ask?" the mother said.

The little girl turned to the minister they were having as a guest for dinner and said, "Daddy is such a tease. He said we would have old Muttonhead for dinner this evening." (Paul Holdcraft, "400 More Snappy Stories that Preachers Tell," No. 85).

2. A child shares such a large part of his parents' attitudes and activities that he becomes much like his parents in words and actions. Sometimes too much like his parents!

3. A Christian living close to the heart of Christ is also close to God. You as a Christian know in your heart that God knows you and loves you. As you know this you tend to take on more godly ways of thinking and acting.

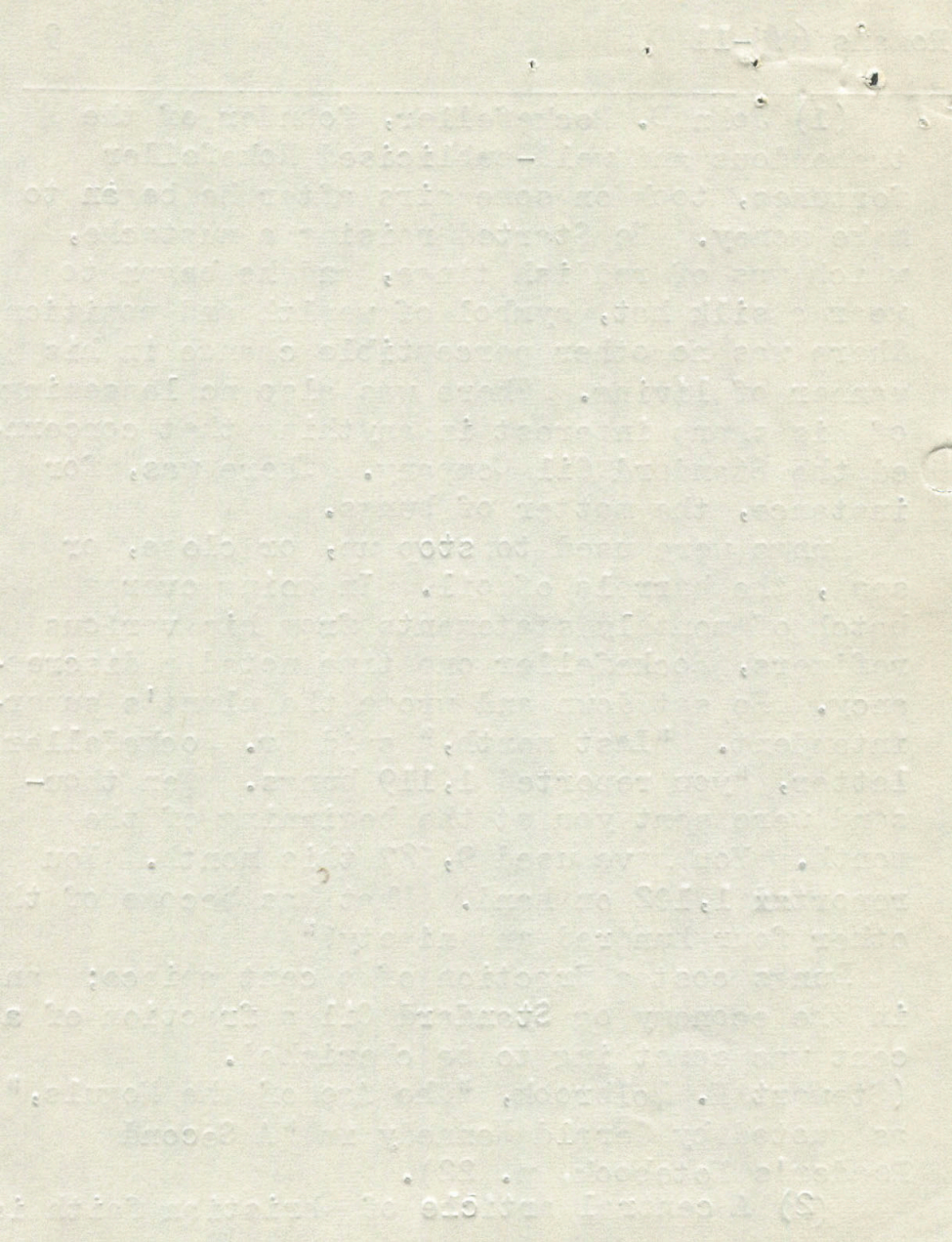


(1) John D. Rockefeller, founder of the tremendous and well-publicised Rockefeller fortunes, took on some airs after he began to make money. He started raising a mustache, which was of reddish tinge, and he began to wear a silk hat, symbol of wealth and position. There was no other perceptible change in his manner of living. There was also no lessening of his sharp interest in anything that concerned the Standard Oil Company. There was, for instance, the matter of bungs.

Bungs were used to **stop** up, or close, or seal, the barrels of oil. In going over a batch of monthly statements from his various refiners, Rockefeller one time noted a discrepancy. He sat down and wrote the plant's superintendent. "Last month," said Mr. Rockefeller's letter, "you reported 1,119 bungs. Ten thousand were sent you at the beginning of the month. You have used 9,527 this month. You reported ~~1,102~~ 1,102 on hand. What has become of the other four hundred and ninety?"

Bungs cost a fraction of a cent apiece; and in the economy of Standard Oil a fraction of a cent was something to be cherished. (Stewart H. Holbrook, "The Age of the Moguls," as quoted by Gerald Kennedy in "A Second Reader's Notebook, p. 22).

(2) A central article of Christian faith is



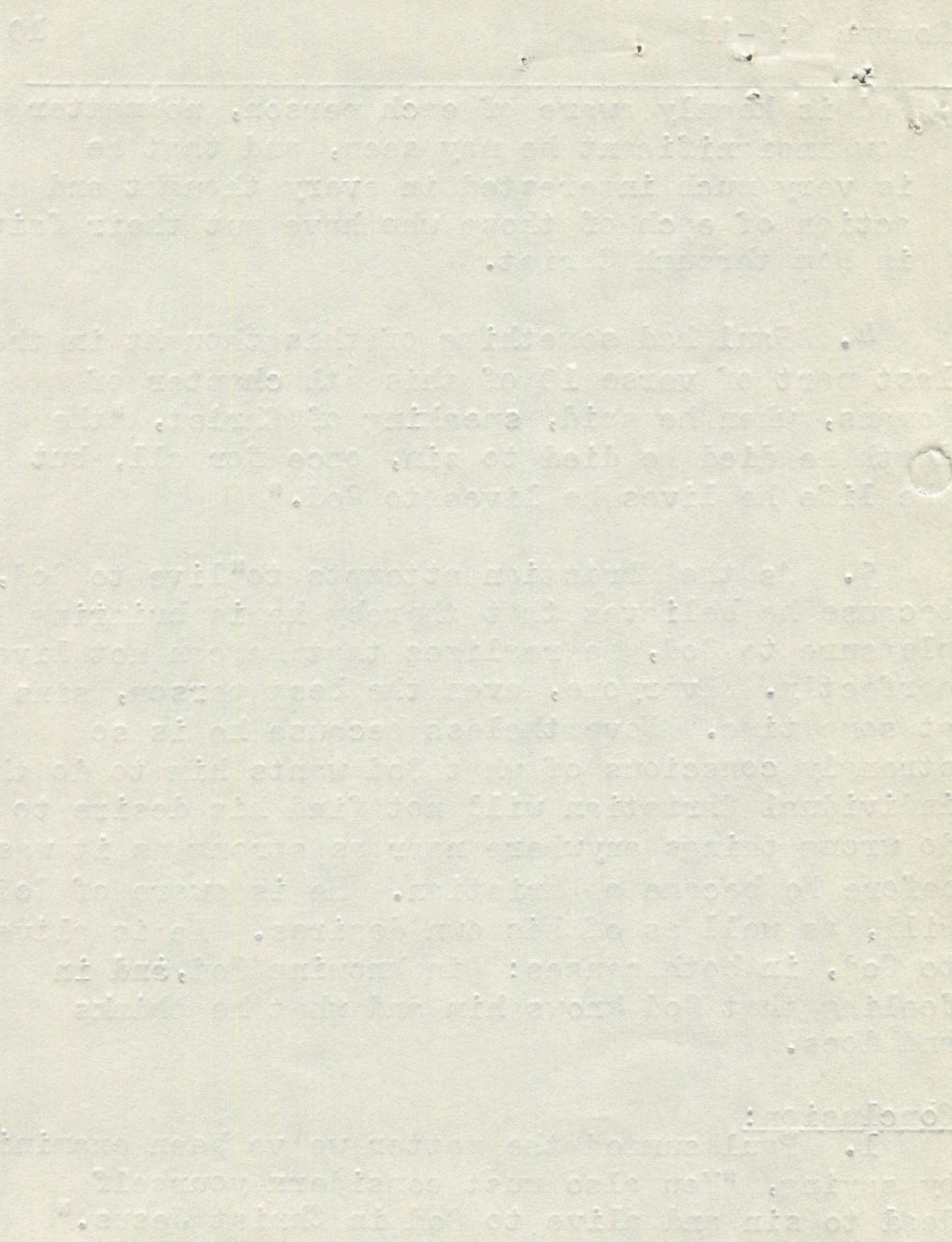
God is keenly aware of each person, no matter how insignificant he may seem, and that he is very much interested in every thought and action of each of those who have put their faith in Him through Christ.

4. Paul had something of this thought in the last part of verse 10 of this 6th chapter of Romans, when he said, "speaking of Christ, "the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God."

5. As the Christian attempts to "live to God," because he believes that thereby he is bringing pleasure to God, he realizes that he can not live perfectly. Everyone, even the best person, sins at some time. Nevertheless because he is so strongly conscious of what God wants him to do the individual Christian will not find his desire to do wrong things anywhere near as strong as it was before he became a Christian. He is aware of God's will, as well as of his own desires. He is alive to God, in both senses: in knowing God, and in feeling that God knows him and what he thinks and does.

Conclusion:

1. Paul summed the matter we've been examining by saying, "You also must consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."



2. Because of Christ, or in Christ Jesus, you as a Christian can feel yourself becoming increasingly dead to wrongdoing as you become more alive to God.

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SUMMARY PRAYER for period at end of Sermon

Eternal Father, whom we know through Jesus Christ, thy Word on earth, we thank Thee for the opportunity to know Thee a bit better every day. For those days which pass wherein we waste the time so that we know thee no better, or perhaps less well, than at the beginning, we pray mercy. For those days in which through friends, through nature, or through the pages of Scripture we come to be more alive to Thee, we give Thee thanks.

Help us, O God, to think on thee more frequently, as Thou hast shown thyself to us in Jesus. As we become more aware of Thee, may we realize Thy ever-present love and mercy for each of us. As we feel Thee near may we have less desire for wrongdoing. We would please Thee, because we love Thee.

We would be alive to Thee, our God and Our Saviour. In ~~the~~ name of Thy Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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