

teach the truth; not a narrow, limited truth, but truth unbounded and touching every side of life."

## Services and Service

By "A FLAPPER"

FIRST of all, I want you to know I believe in God, but don't go to church. Why? Because it does not seem to fill any of my needs, offers no inspiration; it leaves me rather cold and resentful.

Secondly, I might as well tell you I am a so-called "flapper."

"Church" is a vital question to me, as it is one of the things I find perplexing in life. I seem to be groping in the dark, and no one yet has given me as much as a match to light my lantern. I think of the strangest questions about God and why he did, and commanded, certain things, and when I ask a minister or good church-goer about them they stammer and hesitate and say I should go to church.

All right, I go to church. But what good does it do me? There are musical numbers, some good but the others bad, the Scripture reading (have read it myself a dozen times), and the collection is taken. Passing the "plates" in my aisle are two pious-looking men, one of whom scalped my father out of five hundred dollars and the other, married, who I happen to know comes to see the woman who lives in our alley. Usually the "offertory" on the organ is beautiful. The better it is, the better the offering. Then comes the sermon. My word! what is the minister trying to bring out? What is his point? He goes on for an hour about Noah and the Ark. He tells the story again and again. Why, I knew it by heart when I came. Mr. Blank, at my right, dozes. He is one of the pillars of the church. Finally the pastor concludes, but even in his conclusion there is no lesson, nothing I can apply in my every-day life. My questions are unanswered.

After church I join a group of young folk, and we spend the remainder of the evening at a café dancing. Over our drinks we discuss a new book, a new play, maybe wrangle over politics or a baseball score. Jane incidentally mentions she spent the past two days helping at the Children's Hospital; Cherry, that she yesterday found one of Mrs. Blank's motherless Sunday school girls on the street smoking, and to-day had found her a home.

Oh, there is more "church" in those who don't go than in the Church itself!

There must be church, civilization



## The Road to Home

Though written faithfully, his letters from home seemed to have had a way of arriving at his hotel in one city just after he had left for the next—and of never catching up.

Three weeks passed—business conferences, long night journeyings on sleepers, more conferences—with all too little news from home.

Then he turned eastward. In his hotel room in Chicago he still seemed a long way from that fireside in a New York suburb. He reached for the telephone—asked for his home number.

The bell tinkled cheerfully. His wife's voice greeted him. Its tone and inflection told him all was right with the world. She hardly needed to say, "Yes, they are well—dancing right here by the telephone. . . . Father and mother came yesterday. . . . Oh, we'll be glad to see you!"

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would be unstable without; but our present ones are doomed to failure if they don't find some way of getting close to the lives and hearts of the people, some way to command and hold the intelligent, some way to gain the confidence and love of young folk. They must be broader in that dances, motion pictures, good lectures, fine musicals, and other entertainments must find their way into the Church. They must furnish a vital, personal need in life.

Thousands of women in missionary and work societies flutter around giving benefits for foreign missions, when their own daughters are fertile soil for a little home missionary work. They have to dance in cafés when the church basement, with a perfectly good floor, is closed to them except when the Epworth League gives a painfully proper "social."

## A Stranger Within the Gates

By "ELOUISE"

THE Church is not giving me what I want. I attend it because a venerable friend is happier when I am there in the pew back of him. I am a church member a long way from home living in a perfect climate. A hike with my chum up through a canyon would satisfy my need, but I would miss Sunday dinner and my friend would miss me; so I go to church. It is the coldest experience of my week.

The church is fine architecturally, the music is excellent, the subdued light pleases me; the preacher bores me to tears. Of the two or three hundred persons attending, many are women—very old, very good, very unattractive in face and in dress. Rich old men with their wives are there. Boys and girls are not there, much of any. They are off enjoying the sunshine and the mocking-birds. I envy them; but I was trained to attend church, and the habit is hard to break. I do break it, rarely; but the beauty and the old friend draw me back. The preacher could not possibly interest a person of any intellectual ability except as a curiosity. He tells stupid incidents of his past; he relates long stories in which he is the chief guy and over which he half weeps; he talks about his own family, who sit in the pew and must listen. I should think they would want to murder him. I cannot remember that he even once awoke an idea in me. I want a Gospel sermon, free from sob stuff, based on the Bible and ignited by sincerity and a personality free from cant.

I am a business woman engaged in an honorable calling. In the five years that I have attended this church no member has called upon me, no member has invited me to his home. I have no difficulty in leaving the church each Sunday without being spoken to by any one. For the past two years I have adopted the gay habit of giving a friendly hand to any and all near me as I go down the aisle and out, greeting them as if I were the Greeting Committee. Strangers are often there. Once a sweet woman and a bright man congratulated me on being gracious to strangers. They twinkled when I whispered: "H-sh! It's a joke! I'm as much of a stranger as you—have been—long time!" My chum is in the same boat as I. We've made our common experience into a travesty. When we are tired with the daily grind, we spin away into the wild and gleefully "take off"—"the Church of the Good Angels—11 to 12."

My human need for an atmosphere of beauty, for music, this church gives me, for which thanks. If I had to get or make secure my religion there, I would have no religion. What is the matter? The Church is an institution; it is not a vital force. It has sat down—on what? On its wealth, on its long established order, on its dignity. There it sits.

## A Negro Teacher's Faith

By LAURENCE C. JONES

I WOULD no more attempt to define the place and value of the Church in my life than I would to turn the same searchlight on my own mother. I am a part of the Church, I owe much of what I am to her, and by the manna which she scatters I have my existence. Which does not mean that I am a minister. I am a colored man running an industrial school for my people in the Piney Woods section of Mississippi.

I do not think the Church is out of fashion. Many of her supposedly intrinsic doctrines may be discardable and many of her followers may be seriously speckled, but the Church as an institution is as vital as has been the vessel in which has been carried the religious thought of the people since time began. The great pillars on which she rests are the same pillars on which rest the impulses and thinking of man himself.

If the Church has not the power in the lives of men to-day which it once had, I am not willing to concede that it is the fault of the Church. The fault must be with men. Clear thinking indisputably shows the power of choice in the law of

the universe. A man may make money by carrying on a legitimate enterprise or he may make money by shady measures in a gambling den. But is honest business any less a factor in the world to-day because some men choose to make money outside of its precincts?

If the Church is losing its power in the lives of men, then woe is man! For he is getting farther and farther from the Only Source of truth than he ever was before. He is thrusting aside the gold and silver of this life and is coming to care only for the tinsel. He is giving up the manly implements which were placed in his hands with which he is to do his important work, and is accepting in their place the easily breakable and fearfully inadequate shovel and painted bucket of the child playing on the seashore.

But I do not believe the Church is losing its power in the lives of men. I think, rather, that this impression has been gained from circumstances which may be illustrated by my own experience, though perhaps generally in less pronounced contrasts. When I came to Mississippi to work as a teacher among my own people, I found the ministers of our race in the rural districts so illiterate as to be scarcely able to read the Bible intelligently. The contents of their sermons gave me little food for thought personally. But I found that the people to whom they ministered were uplifted and guided by these same sermons in a very gratifying manner. Shall I belittle the value of these rural meetings because I, perhaps, did not find in them the help I needed?

I feel that in vast ratio this is the situation of the Church in the world to-day. We are receiving our highest incentives and liveliest stimulus from the Church, but whether the local church satisfies our, for the moment, conscious need is less of a matter for criticism of the Church than it is for us to look to our own relationship to it.

## The New Revelation

By "ELIZABETH FINCH"

FIFTY years ago I was a little girl on a farm in northern Illinois.

Every Sunday my parents gathered us children into the light wagon and drove to the Baptist church in the village, two miles away.

I recall the exhilaration of that quick ride in the summer sunshine, the anticipation of the singing and of seeing the folks come together bowing and smiling their greetings.

Sitting in the pew between father and