

- Oh, Father in heaven-- (organ music) (choir singing)

- Let us offer unto God our unison prayer of confession. Let us pray. Have mercy upon us, oh God, according to thy loving kindness, according to a multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out our transgressions. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquities and cleanse us from our sins for we acknowledge our transgressions and our sin is ever before us. Create in us clean hearts, oh God, and renew a right spirit within us, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen. And now as our savior Christ taught us, we pray. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (organ music) (choir singing) Our lesson from holy scriptures is taken first from the book of Genesis. The first chapter beginning with the 26 verse. Then God said, let us make man in our own image after our likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God he created him. Male and female, he created them. And God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth. God said, behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit, you shall have them for food. And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made. And behold, it was very good and there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day. And now from the gospel according to Saint John, the first chapter beginning with the first verse. In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made. In Him was light and the light was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came for testimony to bear witness to the light that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light, the true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world and the world was made through him, yet, the world knew him not. He came to his own home and his own people received him not. But, to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God. Thus ended the reading from God's holy word. (organ music) (choir singing)

- The Lord be with you. (audience responding) Let us pray. Oh Father in heaven who of thy great mercy has brought us to the end of another week in safety, give us thankful hearts as we recall thy continued goodness towards us. We thank the, oh Lord, for health, recreation, and refreshment, for interest in our work and power to do it, for the companionship of fellow workers and for all who have helped us with spiritual guidance. We also give thee thanks for the power and outreach of the mind, lighting the dark places of fear and ignorance, for imagination and insight and the impulse to discover and create, and for courage strengthened by defeat, spurring us on to greater efforts. Above all, we give thee thanks for thy son Jesus

Christ and for the gospel he proclaimed with his life, death and resurrection. Eternal God whose mercy is over all, we beseech thee for our brethren in every place and most especially for those who are in any way distressed. Visit the sick with thy comfort and healing power, come to the bereaved with thy peace and increase in them the faith that love is stronger than death. Hasten with thy protection to those who are sorely tempted. Make them strong to resist and conquer. Draw near to all who are lonely, all who are anxious, all who are cast down and discouraged and to those who suffer in the suffering of those they love that they may be strengthened with all power for endurance and patience. Look in thy might, upon those who have no helper, defend the poor and save the children of the needy. Make haste for relief of those who know the pains of hunger and those who have nowhere to lay their heads. Bring near the deliverance of those who are persecuted and those who are discriminated against, exploited and oppressed. Show thy compassion to every victim of injustice and to those who inflict loss and pain upon others, show to the man's of thy righteousness. Reveal unto us, we beseech thee those things in ourselves which are adding to the sum of human misery. Help us to repent of these our sins and give us grace to consecrate ourselves to thy service that we may be used of thee to help one another and to set forward thy blessed kingdom. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen. (organ music) (choir singing)

- Almighty God, our Heavenly Father who has spared not thine only son, but delivered him up for us all and who with him has freely given us all things, help us, we beseech thee, the with all our gifts to yield ourselves unto thee and in thy service find our deepest joy. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen. (organ music)

- My text consists of two verses taken from the two portions of scripture read as our lesson. First from Genesis. So God created man in his own image. And now from Saint John. To all who received him, who believed on his name, he gave power to become children of God. Power to become. Who is there here who does not want that? I dare say that there is not a person within the reach of my voice who does not find that phrase expressing a deep, deep desire. It is one of the fundamental longings of our age. Perhaps we can safely say that no generation has been preoccupied with it more than our own. As the outside world becomes more chaotic and less secure, we are forced inward to try to muster up ways to face it. Writers in psychology and religion have been prolific in their efforts to help us do just this. The other day I thumbed through the card catalog in our library under the general subject, applied psychology. There was of course a long list of books, but a title that caught my fancy was, "Take a Look at Yourself." I turn to the next card and there was another title by the same author, "Take a Second Look at Yourself." Well, there is no doubt about it, we are looking at ourselves. But looking at ourselves has different levels of quality. I look at myself every morning when I shave and I must confess it is a very discouraging way to begin the day. Taking a superficial look at ourselves can be a means of self despair. For some, it seems to be a means of self love. Surely we need to go deeper than this. Concurrently, we are advised to take a look at ourselves with scientific eyes and analyze ourselves with mood meters. I'm all for this if it will help, and I have no doubt but what it would, but the author, in his own most optimistic mood has not claimed for his system that his system provides a cure-all remedy for a man's needs as he looks at himself. In fact, he advises that other helps must be employed as well. Looking at ourselves is important, but there are different levels of looking. As we look at ourselves in the deepest sense with the hope that by doing so, we might find the power to become effective persons capable of living with a sense of power and accomplishment in a world like this, then we do need all of the best help that we can find. In this sermon I am inviting you to look with me at ourselves as Christians, and in

doing so, I am posing two questions. What or who do we Christians say that we are? And, how do we take what we are and become what we believe we were meant to be? Surely, these questions are fundamental. Indeed, we would say that no Christian can have the power to become unless he arrives at significant answers to them. First then, what or who do we Christians say that we aren't? Our first text states that we are made in the image of God. This statement has been pointed to in Christian theology as an excellent expression of the biblical conception of man. Do you know what it means? Does it mean that man was made in the spiritual likeness of God only? Many Christians would say yes, but according to good authority, this view is foreign to the view of the Bible and actually reflects Greek dualism. It sharply distinguishes between the spiritual and the material natures of man and this can be dangerous. It can, as Paul saw it work out among Greek Christians at Corinth, cause Christians to believe that their faith deals only with the spirit and they can be even immoral with their bodies. It can, as the later church saw it work out among ascetics cause Christians to believe that only their spiritual nature is good and that all the body desires and does is evil. Both of these results still plague Christianity. But created in the image of God does not have this meaning. The Bible rather holds that man is a vital unity. That body and spirit are interrelated, interdependent, that when God created man, he regarded his creation as good because the whole man was made to bear a divine resemblance. The Biblical stress therefore, is on the wholeness of the self and the goodness of the self in so far as it is what it was created to be. That is why a psalmist poetically proclaims a high conception of man when he says, Though has made him but a little more than the angels and has crowned him with glory and honor. Centuries later, John says, we receive power to become children of God. Are you aware that in this service, we have already reaffirmed our faith in this biblical view. What the psalmist proclaimed we heard thrillingly sung just a few moments ago by our choir. What John declared, you and I bear witness to by our very presence in this chapel, for this is Christ's church and his church is living witness to the faith that by God's action in Christ, we who receive him in faith become children of God. That is through him, we become true to our real nature which the creator ordained from the beginning of creation. Now, why do I think that this restatement, this re-affirmation of our faith, is so important? Because I know that many Christians regard it as strange and even fantastic. This is so because we have become infected far more than we realize with a view of our nature that stands in sharp contrast to it. If some phases of early Christianity went overboard in emphasis upon the spirit of man to the neglect and even denial of the body of man, this century has put that emphasis in reverse order in such a way that has produced far-reaching consequences for our faith. I'm not concerned here about the kind of philosophy that teaches the view that man, to quote, originated in muck, wades awhile in muck, makes muck and in the end returns to muck. I doubt that many Christians would swallow that. I'm not concerned primarily about a pessimistic view of man given poetic form, for instance, by Lord Byron, who as you know grew very old while he was yet very young. Listen to this. Oh man, thou feeble tenant of an hour, debased by slavery or corrupt by power, who knows thee well must quit thee with disgust, degraded mass of animated dust! Thy love is lust, thy friendship all a cheat, thy smiles hypocrisy, thy words deceit. Thy nature vile, ennobled but by name, each kindred brute might bid thee blush for shame. I doubt if any Christians would go for that. They see the good in man as well as his evil. I'm not even greatly concerned about certain academic dues, although here I confess some concerns. Several weeks ago I picked up a well known textbook that is used in an introductory course in psychology. In the preface, the author states to quote, that the basic assumption of psychology is that human behavior is a result of natural processes. Supernatural phenomenon, even if they exist, are not a part of what psychologists studies. I was not surprised after reading this to find no further reference to religion and its

part in human behavior, but I was surprised that in his treatment of human drives and motivations, the author gave no acknowledgement of the possibility of moral and spiritual conditioning in human behavior. I did see that the sex drive received much of its treatment in terms of Kinsey data as though the standard of behavior should be established simply by looking at statistics that tell what people are reported doing. Now, some Christian students would grab hold of academic views like this and have a field day of rationalizing. But most, I believe, would have the insight to see that this isn't very good psychology, to say nothing about seeing its dangerous possibilities for morality. Some psychologists would. I believe I can illustrate this judgment by relating an experience which professor Albert Outler of SMU who preached the powerful sermon in this chapel last year, describes in his brilliant book, "Psychotherapy and the Christian Message." There he recalls an incident which happened during a forum sponsored several years ago by Life magazine on the pursuit of happiness. You may have read that article. He was a member of that forum along with representatives from various fields, including Doctor Erich Fromm, an internationally known psychologist. Doctor Outler reports that in the course of a rather confused discussion, a noted public opinion analyst offered a rather blunt dictum that the whole problem of the pursuit of happiness could be readily solved if people were assured of two things. That they would be protected against poverty in their old age, and could be persuaded that sex was not a moral but merely a biological matter. Says Doctor Outler, while I was clearing my throat and assorting my somewhat startled wits to comment on this provocative panacea, Doctor Fromm rushed in ahead of us all and delivered a brief but quite definitive lecture on the psychological disabilities produced by irresponsible promiscuity. I repeat, when psychology fails to look at all the facts of human behavior and response, it is not very good psychology. It can be irresponsible psychology and I believe that most Christians can determine when it is, so I am not too greatly concerned about that. No, I'm not even greatly concerned about the hysteria created by the man is a hound dog philosophy put to music. And that is saying quite a bit, saying quite a bit with a daughter on the threshold of her teens who has shown some of the symptoms. I am embarrassed by my profession that a professor has initiated a cult by suggesting similarities between its singer and certain Greek gods. What then, concerns me, and here I am dead serious. What really concerns me, it is this. That Christians, even though they might say that they see through all of these views, have nevertheless permitted the influence of this naturalistic explanation of man and this exultation of the human body and its appetites to seep into their minds and souls and devitalize their faith in themselves as made in the image of God. Brethren, we are losing the noble vision of who we are and without that, there can be no strong urge to become what we were created to be. I honestly believe that this is one of the main causes of the mediocrity that characterizes a good deal of Christian living today. But we would not be gloomy. Surely there are Christians, probably more than it would appear, who do have this vision, who do have this urge and surely there are evidences of increasing numbers who see the need for it and who are earnestly praying for it. Let us assume that this is so. Then what? That takes me to the second question. How do we take what we believe we are and become what we believe we were meant to be? We were created in the image of God. We were meant to become children of God. The answer to the second question depends in large measure, I believe, on the interpretation of freedom and what we do with it. Freedom is not only the Christian's problem, it is everybody's problem and perhaps man's central problem. And there are multitudes of people who are breaking themselves on it, they do not see or they will not see that freedom must be interpreted by the very nature in which the creator made us. For example, most of us, I dare say have been inclined at one time or another to be not one person, but several persons. William James, with delightful candor, confessed such

an inclination, but in doing so, he pointed to a fundamental truth. I am often confronted by the necessity of standing by one of my selves, he said, and relinquishing the rest. Not that I would not if I could be both handsome and fat and well dressed and a great athlete and make a million a year, a bon de bon, and a lady killer as well as a philosopher, a philanthropist, statesman, warrior, an African explorer as well as a poet and a saint. But the millionaire's work would run counter to the saints. The bon de bon and the philanthropist would trip each other. The philosopher and the lady killer could not well keep house in the same tenement of place. Such different characters may conceivably, at the outset of life, be possible to a man, but to make any one of him actual, the rest must more or less be suppressed. This illustrates what we are saying. Our very group dictates that some things we might like to be just don't mix. Of course, we can choose to persist in this multiple personality, but this is not the way to wholeness of personality, to effective, powerful living. Let us see this principle apply to freedom in moral behavior. There are those who say that they are free to behave as they please. They are free to do what appeals to them at the moment. They think it is good strategy when in Rome to do as Romans do, to change their character so that one feels relaxed and adjusted to diverse situations. And so they act much like moral chameleons, changing their color as the occasions permit or demand, all the way from unrestrained looseness to formal respectability. But soon or late, this kind of individual runs up against the stubborn fact of his own nature. Behavior tends to develop a pattern. Some things we think we are free to do become set and the time comes when we are no longer able to switch from one moral style to another and rigorous limits are imposed upon us. Let me illustrate this truth in two areas that, I think in particular, involve young people. Drinking and lovemaking. We shall deal with them separately because we believe there is danger in mixing them. (audience laughing) Someone has said, perhaps half in jest and half in seriousness, that there are two stages in the life of a drinker. The first is when he could stop, if only he would, and the second stage is when he would stop, if only he could. Of course, such a statement would be misleading if it sought to imply that all drinkers in the first stage will soon or late reach the second. But this we can say, no drinker can afford to take that possibility lightly. Professor Bacon of Yale considered the foremost authority on alcoholism, has reported that there are nearly four million drinkers in this country who are losing or who have already lost complete control. Most of these alcoholics were free to drink or not to drink in the beginning, but now they are set in their drinking in a way that is bold, pathological, and pathetic. Look at lovemaking. There are young people who boast that they are free to be indiscriminate. Love for them is free. But is it? Is it? Those persons who think they are free will establish patterns of indiscriminate expression that in time become set. And dear friends, that kind of freedom has a high price to it. It can close the door to the deepest and most precious experience of marriage. One love, faithfully and wonderfully expressed. And marriage without that has been robbed of its highest and most precious expressions. Do you see what we're saying? There is no such thing as freedom in the sense that we can continue to be free to do whatever we want to do. Our nature, the way we are made, will not allow it. There's a law about our nature that takes our free expressions and organizes them into patterns and unless we come to have profound respect for that law, we run into trouble. As someone has well put it, the real explanation for most people who can't seem to deal with life effectively is not that they are disorganized, but rather that they become organized to the wrong things. But we must not regard this law within our nature as a handicap. It is instead one of God's greatest gifts, without which there could be no development, no dependable pattern of action. A musician takes what is natural to himself, that is his special native capacities for music. Puts this principle to work and thereby develops skills and patterns of creative expression upon which he and music lovers can depend. Just so, a Christian restored to his true

nature is a child of God by his faith in Jesus Christ, puts this principle to work and Godliness takes form in what he is and what he does with ever increasing power and dependability. God has made us this way, not so much to limit our untrue nature as to enable us to fulfill our true nature. We were made to love and the Christian holds that body and mind and soul are involved in this loving. When man chooses to turn love to license, his love is pathetically limited. When it is turned to God's purposes in marriage and the family, it is wonderfully fulfilled, and the home becomes less with patterns of fidelity and shared joy that are dependable. In the light of this truth, I think we can see more clearly what sin is and what its punishment is. Much of the Bible's use of sin indicates that it is to deviate from the right way, to miss the goal. We sin, therefore when we chose to rebel against God's will for us to live as a child of his, which was the goal of our creation, and we are punished in this life by limitations and unfulfillment which we impose upon ourselves by our sinning. But we also see more clearly what redemption is. Through Christ, it means self realization to grow toward the goal of our being. Now, why have I dwelt so long upon this problem of freedom? Because I heard a Dean say not very long ago that more students shipwreck their academic career on the misuse of freedom than any one other single thing, and to me this is great tragedy. Their parents sent them here knowing that they would have more freedom than they ever had before, and in spite of certain protests, you do. And your parents willingly consented to this freedom because they know that freedom is necessary for growth. And then for any one of you to shipwreck upon it, that is tragic. Just so it is with us all, God gave His children freedom for the sake of this children's growth. Then for us to shipwreck upon it, that is the human tragedy and it is especially tragic because through Christ, we have the means both to avoid freedom's misuse and to fulfill freedom's end. The power to become, it is our faith that the Christian can possess this power, but he does not create it. Any writer who tries to stir up Christians to generate their own power, is misleading. We need resources of power to become effective persons in this kind of world that are far greater than our puny efforts can muster. The Christian does not approach his needs in this way. With the Christ to make it possible, he places himself in his true relationship with God who is the creator of all power. Thus he does not create his own power, he appropriates it. And that is infinitely better than anything he can generate. Do you doubt this? Then review your knowledge of early Christianity. The Christian faith took root in and overcame a more pagan world than we live in, where life was cheap, where pessimism flourished, where cruelty and immorality were taken for granted. Read Paul's letters again if you need reminding and within this mess, Paul dared his converts to bear the image of the heavenly man, Christ, and they did just that. These were not men and women of exceptional caliber. The answer is not to be found there. Rather, the answer is this. They took literally the word of God that renewed after the image of him that created them, they would receive power. That is the key to their profound and lasting mark upon history. And it is my sincere conviction that if this Christian generation is to have visions of great living, of growing into effective persons who are able to live with power in this time that surely calls out for great living, then we must break through this crust of modern disbelief that has reduced us Christians to mediocrity. We must know our faith, we must feel it. We must show it. We must live it. This is the only way that an unbelieving world will ever be persuaded and saved, and if we fail, then this is our great sin. We, we who are Christians will cause humanity to miss creation's goal. Let us earnestly pray that we who bear the image of Christ and his name will not contribute to that calamity. Let us pray. Oh God of grace and God of glory, on thy people pour thy power, crown thine ancient church's story, bring her bud to glorious flower. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the facing of this hour. Set our feet on lofty places, gird our lives that they may be armored with all Christ-like graces in the fight to set men free. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage that we

fail not man nor thee. And now unto him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy to the only wise God, our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power now and forever. (choir singing)