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BIBLE MESSAGES
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BIBLE MESSAGE

GOD, THE FORGOTTEN FACTOR

By the Rev. Allan A. MacRae, D.D.

Psalm 127:1a "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it."

We live in days of tremendous need for building. Families desire to build homes, nations are seeking to build better living conditions for their citizens, statesmen are endeavoring to build a new world, and each one desires to build into his project those features which will make it most worthwhile.

In this planning it is essential that all relevant factors be taken into account. Several years ago a friend of mine desired to build a house. For weeks he poured over drafts and blueprints until finally the desired plan was selected. At length all was ready, but at the last moment he learned that an important factor had been overlooked. The zoning laws of his neighborhood required that the house be set a certain distance from the street -- farther back than he had figured. When this was done a room which projected from the side of his house almost met a similar projection from the house next door. This meant insufficient light and privacy for both houses. A minor factor had been omitted in his calculations and the result was discomfort and inconvenience on the part of two families.

At one time I lived in a city which was growing rapidly but where there was an appalling lack of careful planning. Frequently one would see a street which had recently been paved and looked like a splendid addition to the town. Unfortunately, it was common in such a circumstance to come by a few days later and find representatives of the water department digging up the new street in order to lay water mains beneath it. An essential factor had been overlooked, and as a result the street was in very poor condition shortly after it had been paved. In planning our lives it is vital that we take into consideration all the factors of importance. Omission of a primary factor may easily lead to disaster. The verse with which we began our meditation this morning pointed to such a factor -- one stressed from the beginning to the end of the Bible. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." The power and control of God cannot be left out of account, if we expect to build a life, a family, a nation, or a world, that is to be worthwhile.

Our civilization has tended in recent years to become secularized. It has become quite prevalent to leave God altogether out of account in planning our lives or in planning our world. Even when religion is mentioned as a factor, we often find on investigation that what is meant is merely a code of ethics or a general desire for helpfulness. True religion is much more than that. It involves recognition of the personal activity of God. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it."

God is not a factor that can safely be ignored. It is said that during the French Revolution, a man stood up in the Chamber of Deputies in Paris, and