

ing to save themselves. This is impossible.

Salvation is union with Christ.

All of us have to admit that we are sinners. Christ died for sinners. He takes our place on the cross.

When you (say of a person) "Oh, he is a good man, or she is a good woman," you are not speaking Biblically.

(Isa. 22:18): "He will surely violently turn and toss thee like a ball into a large country." As to throw a ball violently and noting in its path, it rolls on and on into captivity--the Lord will punish the disobedient.

Second base: A player reaching first base is in line to move on to second however, he must go by first.

The second step in the Christian life is church membership and baptism. After one has been genuinely saved, he should affiliate himself with a church and go to work for the Lord.

Tragedy--many people have cut across the pitcher's box, and there they stand on second base, and they never went by first base.

PLAY BALL

Mark 12:34 "Not far from the kingdom"

Introduction: The words play ball signify the beginning of a game we are all familiar with. Baseball officially got under way this past week. All the teams played and their records are kept. All will be battling for top places and a pennant winner.

A boy asked if you had (only one eye) where would you like to have it? On the end of my index finger so I could stick my finger through the knothole and see the ball game."

No games are won on third base. Players must hustle. Some players loaf, grandstand, wait for four balls or blame the umpire for his errors on the field ball. All of the "Charley horses" are not in the legs or arms, but in some players heads.

There is something about the (crowds that attend ball games). There are several classes who attend.

1. The Knockers:

No place on earth can you find more knockers and kickers that at a ball game. The knock the

knock their home town, knock the coach, knock the players, knock the weather, knock the fellow in front for not sitting down, and knock the umpire.

This (sounds like a bunch of church people) to me--knock the program, knock the class, knock the preacher.

2. The Quitters:

There are those on the field who quite and give up.

There are those in the stands who give up and remark --there is no use.

(In the church) there are those who under the strain quit. Some go down with every gust of wind. There are those who work one night and quit.

3. The Bench Warmers:

They are wall flowers. They don't knock and they don't cheer. Their favorite hymn is "I Shall Not Be Moved". You can't throw them out, you can't freeze them out, and you can't fire them out.

The (church is more than a spiritual hotel) serving two meals on Sunday an excursion train to glory, or a saint's rest. The church is a great humming plant.

Instead of sitting around waiting for something to happen, for a revival to knock a home run, or waiting for a passed ball, a balk, a wild throw, to enable you to get to home plate, you ought to undertake something for Christ.

Picture a playing field:

First Base:

This is the first on the base path. All runners must pass this way. A runner cannot advance unless he goes by first base. Regardless of how well he hits the ball he must go by first base, and (touch the base) to miss this base is to be out.

This is an (initial step in the Christian) life also, a man is out unless he goes down the base path of salvation.

(First base represents salvation.) In the Christian life this is the first step, the first base.

Paul said in (Rom. 10:1-4) "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Isreal is, that they might be saved--they are going about to establish their own righteousness." He desires spiritual redemption. They had a zeal of God, they were try-

The fourth base is known as home plate.

The end of the trail. Nothing is so sad as to see a man die on third. It is like seeing a pitcher blow up in the last inning or the team go to peices in the ninth.

Up around the home plate the crowd cheers you on--team mates are there to congratulate you.

For the Christian home plate is heaven. For some mother or father is there waiting. They want you to come and make a home run.

This is when you get on the all star team.

In 1924--N.Y. and Washington played in the World Series. The teams were evenly matched and it made a wonderful series. Fans say that it was one of the most exciting events of baseball history.

They played 7 games and every game a pitcher's duel. N.Y. won 3 and Washington 3, then the deciding game. Whoever won this game would so win the series for 1924. The closing game was in Washington. The park was packed for the crucial game, and the teams went into the last inning. The score tied two and two. N.Y. came up to bat in the first of the ninth--the N.Y. fans began to

Many in the church are baptized pagans.

I wonder if it would not be a good idea sometime to close the doors of the church and not take any more new members in for a while. And then have evangelistic services for the members and get them converted before we make an attempt to redeem this people outside. I am serious about this thing, you keep your eyes and ears open to some of the things the church members say and do. Notice how some of them do more to tear down the church than to build it up. Many of our people have taken the cup of communion who have never taken the cup of salvation. They have cut across the pitchers mound and have never been to first base yet. They are members of the church but not members of the kingdom of God. They do not have their name in the score keepers book.

(Are you genuinely saved?) If you are not truly converted, your church membership will prove to no avail. You can be on roll and still die un-saved. (If your religion has not changed you) you had better change religions. There are some religions that will send you to hell.

Let us (be sure we go to first base) and be saved then to second base where we are baptised into church membership.

The (Eunuach)-first blind and was saved then he went on the second step and was baptised. Every Christian should be baptised by imersion, but baptizing will not get you in.

After a man is converted, he should join a church and be baptised. A Christian can not refuse church membership--the church is the bride of Christ. Jesus will not stand for anyone to abuse the church. Be careful how you treat the church.

= I can't understand (how a man can claim to love Jesus and then be negligent with the church.) Go to church, support the church, get in a church where you can be happy in the Lord.

Third Base:

A lot of players die on first and second. Now in the Christian's experience it is very much like that. They are saved, they unite with the church and then get in a rocking chair and sit down on second base.

This third base is (Christian service). We have too many lily Christians, the kind that neither

toil nor spin.

You could (sweep 75% of the average church) members out and never miss them as far as doing anything for the Lord is concerned. Many never come to church, some come and warm a bench now and then. Jesus wants service. He measures a man by his output.

Many sing, "Throw out the life line" and do not have enough spiritual interest to put up a clothes line.

We sing "Standing on the promises" and sit on the premises.

It is time for Christians to roll up their sleeves and for them to go to work for Christ. God has a plan and job for you.

Many people say "What can I do for God?"

I can't sing or speak. There is a place for you to serve. Do not excuse yourself because you can not do the flashy things.

(Remember, God does not judge) Christian service on the capacity but rather by percantage. A barre is judged full by the percantage, and size.

Home Plate:

scream for a rally, but the team was retired 1-2-3 in order.

Then Washington came to bat and the home folks claped and plead for home run that would untill the ball game. The first 2 men went down in order. Then a batter, by the name of (Goslin) came up to the plate. 2 strikes were called against him, and then 2 balls. The crowd was watching every pitch on the fifth pitch, Goslin stepped into the ball and slammed it to left center field; the crowd became delirious; it seemed as though it might go over the fence. The fielders ran toward the fence to retrieve the ball in case it fell inside the park. With a resounding thud, the ball hit six inches below the clearing point and it fell in the field of play. The crowd settled down, while the runner was slowing down to a stop at third with a triple. The third base coach, sensing that this might be their best opportunity, signalled to Goslin to try to stretch a triple into a home run. The (shortstop) received the throw and spinning, he shot the ball to the anxious catcher who squatted over the plate. The crowd was in for a second thrill as the player tried to beat the ball to

So. Norfolk - April 20, 1952. P.M.

into home. It all happened in a split second. The catcher caught the perfect peg from the short, and then a cloud of dust arose as the runner slid, seemingly a split second ahead of the ball. But when the dust cleared from home plate, the umpire with extended right hand, shouted, "You're out!" The crowd was furious, managers and players jumped out to dispute with the umpire on the close decision. It seemed that the man was safe. Then the umpire behind the batter told the crowd that he would consult with the (umpires on the bases). The fans thought that they would change their decision. The four men in black conferred for a minute or so, it seemed like an hour, while the silence of drath seized the milling throng who were sure the decision would be reversed and then Washington would be winner--finally the umpire walked up to the announcer and gave him the decision. The announcer lifted the megaphone to his lips and the vast audience heard him say, "Ladies and gentlemen, the man at home is out, because he did not touch first base."

My friends, my dear friends, how will it be when you come to the end of the journey? When

you slide into Home plate? Will the umpire say "Safe" or "out"? --You did not touch 1st base? Don't miss 1st base. Make you calling and electric sure.

PLAYING THE GAME

OBJECTS: A baseball and bat or baseball accessories.

SCRIPTURE: *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain* (I Corinthians 9:24).

It looks as if we may have (a game of baseball) here today, doesn't it, boys and girls? We are not, however. I have these things to help me point out to you that this great American game of baseball is very much like the great game we call life. Perhaps you have never (thought of life as a game), but it is. There are two teams, and two captains, and if we are Christians we are all on the same team, with Christ Jesus as our Captain.

The first thing we must learn about baseball is this: there are (rules to observe). You cannot be a good player if you do not obey the rules. Three strikes mean an out, and the umpire's decision is always final. We do not like the girl or the boy who will not abide by the rules. There are rules in the Christian life, too. Our rule book is the Bible, and there we learn that if we are to play the game of life well, we must play it honestly and earnestly. It is not easy to win this game. We must put all our strength into it. *I. Rules*

If every player were the pitcher there would be no team. Some players have to play in right field or sit on the substitutes' bench, but the one who is a dependable player is the one who is willing to do what the captain says; he must obey without question. In the *II. A position for each one.*

game of life we must do what Christ tells us to do. Some will be called to be preachers or missionaries. Some will be called to be writers and singers. But many more will be called to the smaller tasks that are not spectacular. However, wherever our Captain calls us, let us go and do our best. God is looking for willing hearts.

III. Courage A baseball game (demands courage) and tenacity. Sometimes it looks as if our team will lose. Sometimes at the ninth inning the score is 10 to 1 against us. Sometimes we are tempted to quit and leave the team, but the real player is the one who grits his teeth and tries harder even when the odds seem to be against him. The (game of life) presents many situations like this. Often the skies are dark and the enemy seems to be winning, but let us have courage and confidence in our Captain and support Him who has never lost a game!

IV. Has an Official Beginning At the beginning of the baseball season in our country, the (President of the United States) tosses the first ball, and the game is on. I like to think that the (Lord Jesus started our game of life,) too, when He was born, lived and died so many years ago. We are on His side, we are playing His game, and He is living today and helping and encouraging us to do our best.

V. All games end - a time is set or a regulation inning The (game of life) will be over someday, and on that day we will stand before the Umpire of the universe. To some He will say, "Well done; you have played a good game." Others, however, will receive no commendation, but only words of censure. I hope that on that day I will hear the words "Well done." I am going to try, aren't you?

VI. Regulation innings are decided upon. The game may be called on account of darkness. The game may continue until a winner decides the game.